



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

GENERAL PAPER

8881/02

Paper 2

3 September 2025

INSERT

1 hour 30 minutes

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 Protestant¹ 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.

¹ 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 Ruth² 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

² 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



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

Candidate's Name

CT Group

GP Tutor's Name

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GENERAL PAPER

8881/02

Paper 2

3 September 2025

1 hour 30 minutes

Candidates answer on the Question Paper.

READ THESE INSTRUCTIONS FIRST

Write your name, CT group and GP tutor's name in the spaces at the top of this page.

Write in dark blue or black pen.

Do not use paper clips, glue, correction fluid or correction tape.

Answer **all** questions.

The Insert contains the passage 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 |

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 | Why does the author present the view of quitting as 'sinful' (line 1)? | <i>For Examiner's Use</i> |
| | | |
| | [1] | |
| | | |
| 2 | What does the use of the word 'relic' (line 5) suggest about the view that perseverance is a virtue? | |
| | | |
| | [1] | |
| | | |
| 3 | In paragraph 2, explain how the author supports his assertion about perseverance being put 'on a pedestal' (line 8). | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | [2] | |
| 4 | According to the author in paragraph 3, why are quitters 'finally coming out of the closet' (lines 24-25)? | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | [2] | |

5 In paragraph 5, how does the use of language convey society's disapproval of quitting?

.....

.....

.....

..... [2]

6 In paragraph 6, what contrasts are there between the 'persistent view' (line 41) and the author's own views of quitting?

.....

.....

.....

..... [2]

7 Explain how the final sentence in paragraph 6 (lines 46-48) serves as an effective conclusion to the author's argument.

.....

..... [1]

8 Summarise the reasons for not giving up.

.....[8]

Number of words: _____

From all the passages

- 9 Passage 1 states that 'Quitting is presented as an extremity' (lines 38-39).

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

.....

.....

.....

..... [2]

- 10 Passage 2 states that 'giving up guarantees failure' (line 7).

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

.....

.....

.....

..... [2]

*For
Examiner's
Use*

How far do you agree with their views?

- the ideas and opinions from **at least** one of the reading passages
- examples drawn from your own experience and that of your society.

This image shows a full page of a handwriting practice worksheet. It consists of multiple rows of horizontal dotted lines spaced evenly apart, providing a guide for letter height and placement. The background is plain white, and there are no other markings or text on the page.

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Suggested Answer Key

From Passage 1

1. Why does the author present the view of quitting as 'sinful' (line 1)? [1m]

| From the passage/Lift | | Suggested Answer | Marks |
|---|---|---|-------|
| How did the idea that perseverance is virtuous and quitting is <u>sinful</u> ever get its hooks in us? A major source, of course, is the nettlesome notion known as the Protestant ¹ work ethic. (l. 1-3) | A | The author presents the view that quitting is 'sinful' as it <u>goes against a religious</u> perspective on work. | 1m |

2. What does the use of the word 'relic' (line 5) suggest about the view that perseverance is a virtue? [1m]

| From the passage/Lift | | Suggested Answer | Marks |
|---|---|--|-------|
| ...treating perseverance as a virtue is a relic of the Protestant Reformation, but it still remains an indelible part of the American dream that <u>fails to keep pace with modern sentiments</u> . (l. 5-7) | A | It suggests that the idea of perseverance as a virtue is outdated/no longer relevant in the modern context. | 1m |

3. In paragraph 2, explain how the author supports his assertion about perseverance being put 'on a pedestal' (line 8). [2m]

| From the passage/Lift | | Suggested Answer | Marks |
|--|---|---|-------|
| ... 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. (l. 10-13) | A | The author <u>raises examples of anti-work movements</u> in China, Japan and South Korea | 1m |
| <u>[W]idely reported</u> revolts ... (l. 10) OR If it weren't such an entrenched ideal, then the recent mini backlash against it wouldn't be <u>so newsworthy</u> . (i. 9-10) | B | that have received <u>viral/much media attention/scrutiny</u> | 1m |

4. According to the author in paragraph 3, why are quitters ‘finally coming out of the closet’ (lines 24-25)? [2m]

| From the passage / Lift | | Suggested Answer | Marks |
|---|---|---|----------------------------|
| Young Chinese workers are dispirited by the cocktail of (l. 19) | A | They are disheartened/demoralised by a combination/mixture of They are driven/forced/compelled by a disheartening/demoralising combination/mixture of | 1-2 pts = 1m 3 pts = 2m |
| Covid restrictions, highly competitive working environments and social pressures to <u>get married and do well financially</u> . (l. 20-21) | B | (INF) <u>stressful/oppressive</u> social expectations OR <u>limited freedoms, extremely demanding workplaces and narrow cultural expectations/definitions of success.</u> (any two) | |
| “Rest is <u>resistance</u> .” (l. 24) | C | and a desire to <u>oppose/fight back/rebel</u> against such ideals/norms/restrictions. | |

5. In paragraph 5, how does the use of language convey society’s disapproval of quitting? [2m]

| From the passage/Lift | | Suggested Answer | Marks |
|--|----|---|--------------------|
| | | The use of | |
| ... quitting is so <u>reviled</u> ... (l. 36) | A1 | [Identify word/phrase] “ <u>reviled</u> ”, which is a specific word/lexical choice OR | Any 2 pairs for 2m |
| | A2 | [Justify why it conveys disapproval] suggests/implies that quitting is something that is <u>loathed/viewed with much anger</u> by society | |
| Quitting carries a <u>foul odour</u> (l. 36-37) | B1 | [Identify word/phrase] “ <u>foul odour</u> ”, which is a metaphor/figurative language | |
| | B2 | [Justify why it conveys disapproval] suggests/implies that quitting is something that triggers/elicits <u>revulsion/disgust</u> | |
| ... you’ll be known as a <u>failure, a flake, a wastrel</u> (l. 39-40) | C1 | [Identify word/phrase] the terms “ <u>failure</u> ”, “ <u>flake</u> ”, and “ <u>wastrel</u> ” in succession/the rule of three in giving three words—“ <u>failure</u> ”, “ <u>flake</u> ”, and “ <u>wastrel</u> ”—to describe someone who is not successful | |

| | | | |
|--|----|---|--|
| | C2 | [Justify why it conveys disapproval] <u>emphasises</u> how quitting is <u>associated with failing/not succeeding</u> . OR are <u>derogatory/disparaging/highly critical descriptions</u> of people who quit. | |
|--|----|---|--|

6. In paragraph 6, what contrasts are there between the ‘persistent view’ (line 41) and the author’s own views of quitting? [2m]

| From the passage/Lift | | Suggested Answer | Marks |
|--|----|--|---------|
| There is still a persistent view that quitting is proof of a weak character —of a lack of initiative and follow-through. (l. 41-42) | A1 | [Contrast about character: Quitting is weak character vs it is a form of strength] The constant view of quitting is that it is evidence of a lack of will/resilience/a feeble will (Not: a lack of integrity/dishonest) OR an <u>absence of proactiveness/an inability to see things to fruition</u> , Note: The dash shows that “a lack of initiative and follow-through” is an explanation of “weak character”. That being the case, accept any one of “weak character”, “lack of initiative”, or “lack of follow-through” | 1m or 0 |
| Conversely though, such views are a shame, because in choosing to transform our lives in positive ways, quitting is a <u>form of strength</u> . (l. 43-44) | A2 | whereas the author believes that quitting represents a <u>type of fortitude/courage/resilience</u> OR shows that one is <u>undaunted/can persist until things are done</u> . | |
| AND | | | |
| Quitting also means you'll <u>never amount to anything</u> . (l. 42) | B1 | [Contrast about personal success: Quitting means never succeeding vs it can help us better achieve our goals] The enduring view of quitting is that it means one <u>cannot ever succeed/accomplish anything</u> of note, | 1m or 0 |
| we can better <u>achieve our goals</u> when we can swap out one destiny for another. (44-45) | B2 | whereas the author believes that quitting allows one to <u>fulfil their aspirations/accomplish their objectives/targets</u> . | |

7. Explain how the final sentence in paragraph 6 (lines 46-48) serves as an effective conclusion to the author's argument. [1m]

| From the passage/Lift | | Suggested Answer | Marks |
|---|---|---|-------|
| 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. (l. 46-48) | A | <p>It serves as an effective conclusion as</p> <p>i. [Summative explanation] it effectively <u>sums up</u> the author's ideas/reasons for <u>why quitting has value/is not all bad</u>.</p> <p>OR</p> <p>ii. [Functional explanation] it represents a <u>call to action</u> (for people/us) to <u>consider the value of quitting</u>.</p> <p>OR</p> <p>iii. [Stylistic explanation] the use of the first person pronoun <u>invites introspection/self-reflection on quitting</u>.</p> | 1m |

From Passage 2

8. Summarise the reasons for not giving up. Write your summary in **no more than 120 words**. [8]

NOTE:

- **BOLD** = key word(s)/phrase(s) that *ideally* should be paraphrased
- UNDERLINE = key ideas that need to be captured (but need not be paraphrased)

| From the passage | Point | Suggested answer |
|---|-------|---|
| Yet history is replete with stories of individuals who refused to give up, ultimately achieving <u>remarkable success</u> . (l. 2-3) | A | [Perseverance leads to distinctive achievement] The past is full of narratives showing how perseverance leads to <u>outstanding achievement</u> . |
| Giving up guarantees failure, while perseverance <u>opens the door</u> to <u>potential success</u> . (l. 7-8) | B | [Brings promising outcomes] Perseverance brings <u>promising/possible favourable outcomes</u> . |
| those who persist are <u>far more likely</u> to <u>achieve their goals</u> . They understand, as Babe Ruth did, that every strike brings them closer to the next 'home run'. (l. 10-12) | C | [Increased likelihood of hitting personal targets] and the <u>increased possibility/greater chance of one reaching personal targets</u> . |
| The act of persevering in the face of adversity also <u>builds resilience</u> and <u>character</u> . (l. 13) | D | [Develops mental toughness and values] Additionally, it/(optional: forging on in difficult circumstances) <u>develops</u> one's mental toughness/fortitude , Note: i. Do not accept lines 14-15 as it does not give a reason for not giving up. It expresses the idea that 'strength, determination, and a willingness to stay on course despite setbacks' are prerequisites to overcoming challenges ii. Accept either 'resilience' or 'character' |
| ... contribute to <u>personal growth</u> (l. 15) | E | [Self-improvement] leading to improvement of the <u>self</u> |
| but also serve as a source of <u>inspiration</u> for others facing <u>similar struggles</u> . (l. 16) | F | [Form of motivation for others] and also <u>motivating/encouraging</u> others undergoing <u>common setbacks</u> . Note: Do not accept lines 17-18 as being 'a living testament ...' is merely an illustration of being a 'source of inspiration'. |
| never giving up fosters a <u>mindset</u> of continuous <u>improvement</u> (l. 20-21) | G | [Cultivates a mentality of sustained growth] It also spurs/cultivates a <u>mentality</u> of sustained/continual <u>growth</u> , Accept as BOD: 'habit' |
| This iterative process of <u>trial and error</u> provides <u>valuable insights</u> that refine your approach and deepen your understanding with each step. (l. 21-22) | H | [Experimentation brings about key takeaways] and through the process of <u>experimentation</u> , one gains <u>meaningful/positive takeaways</u> , |

| | | |
|--|---|--|
| Embracing challenges and persisting through them is what ultimately leads to mastery in any endeavour. (l. 23-24) | I | [Gaining expertise] eventually culminating in expertise in an area/pursuit. Accept as BOD: full/complete understanding |
| What matters is the unwavering commitment to your aspirations—because they <u>represent what is most meaningful</u> to you. (l. 27-28) | J | [Staying true to one's goals] Perseverance is <u>symbolic</u> of what is most significant/what one considers <u>most worthy</u> |
| The decision to never give up is a powerful <u>declaration of faith in oneself</u> ... (l. 29) | K | [Impactful demonstration of belief] and it is an impactful/profound <u>demonstration of belief in oneself</u> |
| ... and a <u>refusal to be defined</u> by temporary setbacks . (l. 29-30) | L | [Resisting the label of momentary failure] as well as a <u>resistance to the label</u> of momentary failure . |
| In choosing not to give up, you <u>affirm who you are</u> and what you stand for. (l. 32-33) | M | [Acknowledgement of one's identity] It is ultimately an <u>acknowledgement/recognition of one's identity</u> . |

| | | | | | | | | |
|---------------|-----|-----|---|---|---|---|---|-----|
| Points | 1-2 | 3-4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10+ |
| Marks | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 |

Possible summary

The past shows that perseverance leads to outstanding achievement^A. It brings promising outcomes^B and the increased possibility of one reaching personal targets^C. Additionally, it develops one's mental fortitude^D, leading to improvement of the self^E, and motivating others undergoing common setbacks^F. It also cultivates a mentality of sustained growth^G and through the process of experimentation, one gains positive takeaways^H, eventually culminating in expertise in an area^I. Perseverance is symbolic of what one considers most worthy^J and it is a profound demonstration of belief in oneself^K, as well as a resistance to the label of momentary failure^L. It is ultimately an acknowledgment of one's identity^M. (13 points, 103 words)

From all the passages

9. Passage 1 states that 'Quitting is presented as an extremity'. (lines 38-39).

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

| Pt | From Passage 3 | Suggested answer | Mk |
|----|---|--|----|
| | [MAIN IDEA expressed in lines 38-39 in Passage 1] - Giving up is commonly perceived to be an overly drastic choice, even though there were good/compelling reasons for leaving. | | |
| A1 | ... when I confided in some teammates that I wanted to leave, they chastised me <u>for lacking willpower</u> and <u>commitment</u> . (l. 8-10) | Identify The idea from Passage 3 found in lines (8-10), is that when the author shared with/told her teammates that she intended to quit volleyball, she was judged/reprimanded by them <u>for not possessing determination/grit and dedication/discipline</u> | 1 |
| A2 | I was <u>constantly injured</u> ... (l. 6) OR ... <u>advised by doctors to stop playing the sport to let my body recover</u> (l. 6-7) OR ... I felt that I should spend the <u>remaining time in my youth to explore other interests</u> . (l. 7-8) | found in line 6, is that the author was <u>plagued by injuries</u> while playing volleyball. found in lines (6-7), is that it was <u>medically recommended</u> to the author by <u>that she leaves the sport to foster her physical rehabilitation</u> . found in lines (7-8), is that the author felt that she would <u>very much rather pursue different passions/delve into different pursuits while she is still young</u> . | |
| B1 | | Justify This supports the claim in Passage 1 because [Principle – quitting is a drastic decision that is seen as a personal weakness or failing] it shows the common perception people have that quitting is <u>seen as a grave character flaw</u> . | |
| B2 | | [Principle – quitting is discouraged even when there are valid reasons for doing so] it shows that quitting is dissuaded/deemed wrong <u>even when there are valid/strong reasons</u> to do so. | 1 |

10. Passage 2 states that ‘giving up guarantees failure’ (line 7).

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

| Pt | From Passage 3 | Suggested answer | Mk |
|----|--|--|----|
| | [MAIN IDEA expressed in line 7 of Passage 2] - Quitting means that one can never succeed | | |
| A | I have been able to do so many things that actually make me happy in my time now. (l. 15-16) | Identify The idea from Passage 3, found in lines 15-16 is that since quitting, the author has gained the freedom/time to pursue/involve herself in activities that bring her joy/pleasure/satisfaction. | 1 |
| B | | Justify [Principle: Quitting gives one the ability to attain other forms of success] This undermines the claim in Passage 2 because obtaining joy/being happy is <u>a different kind of success.</u> | 1 |

RED HERRINGS (0)

‘Choosing to walk away from my sport was the best decision of my life.’ (line 15) and ‘There has not been a second since I walked away that I regret the decision I made.’ (lines 16-17) and ‘“quitting” was the best thing I’ve ever done for myself.’ (line 18)

- These are all WRONG because they do not link back to failure or success

11. The reading passages cover a range of views about perseverance and quitting. [12]

How far do you agree with their views?

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

Possible Areas of Evaluation

| Passage/ Para | Author argues that | Possible areas of evaluation |
|----------------------|--|--|
| Passage 1, Para 3 | Lines 23 - 25 <i>Work has become intolerable. Rest is resistance... Quitters, it seems, are finally coming out of the closet.</i> | <p><u>AGREE:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In a society where a culture of long working hours and relentless pursuit of efficiency have often been normalised, this view of work seems to resonate with many overworked Singaporeans today, even despite the fact that this view directly challenges deeply-entrenched national values like resilience and grit. <p><u>Possible EV & examples to support:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In a society that assigns value to people based on their perceived economic productivity, there is an unhealthy culture of overwork in Singapore that is often masked as a badge of honour. Singapore is consistently ranked among the world's most overworked nations, with long working hours and high levels of stress – which can partially be attributed to the nation's economic success that has historically been linked to discipline, resilience, and productivity. This deeply ingrained productivity-driven culture unfortunately often comes at the expense of well-being. Therefore, framing the act of prioritising rest or mental health is seen as a countercultural move in a society that prizes pragmatism and competitiveness, which is a perspective increasingly relevant amid rising reports of burnout and the government's growing emphasis on workplace mental health initiatives. • For instance, the Ministry of Manpower reported declining job satisfaction and work-life balance in recent years, while the increasing popularity of four-day work week trials and hybrid work arrangements in some firms reflects a shift in attitudes towards overwork and mindless perseverance. Singapore's own experience of the global "Great Resignation," where younger workers in particular have been more willing to resign from roles that compromise their well-being or fail to provide purpose, also reflects this increasing 'resistance'. The growth of gig economy platforms such as Grab and Foodpanda, and the rising interest in freelance or self-employed work, further illustrate how some Singaporeans are asserting their autonomy and dignity over rigid social norms and employment structures. |

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| | | <p><u>DISAGREE:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contrary to what the author argues, Singapore’s small size, lack of natural resources, and vulnerability to global market shifts have fostered a collective national ethos that equates survival with productivity, making rest or withdrawal from the workforce appear less like resistance and more like irresponsibility. <p><u>Possible EV & examples to support:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> While the idea that “rest is resistance” has gained traction globally, such views may not resonate as strongly with many Singaporeans due to the nation’s unique socio-economic context. The state’s strong emphasis on self-reliance and meritocracy reinforces this, as seen in policies that tie access to housing loans, healthcare subsidies, and retirement security to sustained employment and CPF contributions, thereby discouraging prolonged rest or unconventional work paths. Moreover, societal attitudes shaped by ‘kiasu’ and ‘kiasi’ mentalities often valorise resilience, pragmatism, and sacrifice, which explains why initiatives such as four-day work week trials remain limited and have not been widely embraced across industries. Even during the COVID-19 pandemic, when hybrid work briefly became the norm, many employers and employees reverted quickly to long hours and in-person productivity once restrictions eased, reflecting the persistence of traditional work expectations. Consequently, the notion of rest as an act of defiance may struggle to gain wider acceptance in Singapore, where economic security and national progress are often seen as outweighing individual desires for balance and disengagement. |
| Passage 1, Para 6 | Lines 43-45 <i>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.</i> | <p><u>AGREE:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The idea that quitting can be a form of strength and a way to pursue a more fulfilling path seems largely aligned with Singaporeans’ mindsets about their work, particularly amongst younger generations seeking autonomy and purpose in their careers. This also aligns with the nation’s growing embrace of innovation and self-improvement. <p><u>Possible EV & examples to support:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In recent years, there has been a growing trend of Singaporeans leaving high-pressure jobs in finance, tech, or civil service to explore startups, freelance work, or creative pursuits, reflecting a desire to align work with personal goals rather than simply stability. These high-pressure jobs can even be argued to have cultivated resilience and adaptability, enabling workers to take calculated risks, such as leaving stable corporate roles to join entrepreneurial ventures or small-scale creative enterprises. Furthermore, the constant economic restructuring brought about by technological disruptions led to a shift in mindset towards how one should view their career. As a result, in recent years, the government has encouraged mid-career Singaporeans to be more adaptable and flexible by seeking |

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| | | <p>jobs in growth industries for greater security, given how the scaling up of AI in many sectors has led to a growing number of Singaporeans being laid off.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Government support for such transitions, through initiatives like Startup SG, Career Switch programmes, and SkillsFuture credit for reskilling, has made it more feasible for individuals to pivot careers without excessive risk. Moreover, rising awareness of mental health and burnout, highlighted by campaigns from organisations such as the Institute of Mental Health and Mind Matters, has encouraged people to prioritise well-being over traditional markers of success. These societal shifts indicate that, despite Singapore's historically pragmatic and risk-averse culture, the concept of quitting strategically to achieve personal growth aligns increasingly with the values and aspirations of many Singaporeans today. <p><u>DISAGREE:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Although the idea that quitting can be a form of strength offers a compelling vision of personal agency, it may be difficult for many Singaporeans to embrace it due to prevailing societal attitudes. <p><u>Possible EV & examples to support:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Filial responsibility is deeply ingrained in Singaporean culture, and leaving a secure job could be perceived as jeopardising family welfare, especially when children or elderly relatives depend on stable incomes. With these family commitments, quitting a job which may not match their expectations may come at a huge cost which Singaporeans are not willing to bear. Furthermore, the culture of careful planning and risk aversion is reinforced by initiatives such as SkillsFuture, which encourages methodical career development and upskilling rather than abrupt career changes, and by widespread financial literacy programmes that emphasise long-term financial security. Additionally, Singapore's collective mindset places importance on reputation and social standing, so leaving a stable government or corporate position for a less conventional path—such as pursuing entrepreneurship or freelance work—may be seen as risky or a loss of face. With a high cost of living, particularly in housing and education, these cultural, social, and economic pressures make the kind of transformative quitting envisioned by the author challenging for many Singaporeans to enact. |
| Passage 2, Para 2 | <u>Lines 7-8</u> <i>Giving up guarantees failure, while perseverance opens the door to potential success.</i> | <p><u>AGREE:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> This idea is salient to Singaporeans since the nation's systems are designed to reward perseverance and continuous effort rather than quitting. Importantly, the government and other community-based initiatives soften the blow of setbacks by cushioning risks and encouraging citizens to keep persevering rather than giving up, which leads to more possibilities and potential success. |

Possible EV & examples as support:

- For instance, SkillsFuture shows the Singapore government's farsightedness **in preparing citizens for a rapidly changing, technology-driven economy**. In today's work climate of digitalisation and global competition, **perseverance in upskilling is rewarded**: those who persist in learning new skills through the scheme align themselves with future industries and remain employable. This demonstrates how government foresight ensures that individual perseverance translates into long-term opportunity. In fact, **– there has been a significant increase in the SkillsFuture transition programmes** which equip employees for new sectors or job roles, and previous trainees of the programmes easily secured new jobs upon completion of their courses. **Given that such institutional support is only available to Singaporeans who persist in upskilling**, this suggests that perseverance does play an important role in providing new opportunities and possible success.
- Additionally, the **Job Support Scheme** implemented during the Covid-19 crisis to help employers retain local workers by subsidising a portion of their wages during the economic downturn illustrated how **when businesses access support structures, they can remain viable** and maintain some degree of stability. With Singapore's ecosystem of support, perseverance is rewarded with opportunity.
- Even more striking is the **Yellow Ribbon Project**, which supports ex-offenders in reintegrating into society. For them, **the temptation to give up, in the face of social stigma and a volatile job market is strong. But those who persevere by seeking training, mentorship, and employment** through Yellow Ribbon initiatives often succeed in rebuilding stable, meaningful lives. Their success stories which are well-documented by the media demonstrate that **persistence, when coupled with government and community support, can overcome the weight of past mistakes**.

DISAGREE:

- While perseverance is important, success in Singapore is not guaranteed by effort alone. This is particularly so given the persistence of **race- or age-based stigma against workers as well as the elevated challenges of doing business in Singapore**. Consequently, some Singaporeans may still find it difficult to attain success no matter how hard they work or persevere..

Possible EV & examples as support:

- An example is the experience of many mid-career workers in their 40s and 50s today. **Even with SkillsFuture credits and retraining, many still struggle to secure employment** in sectors like tech and finance, where employers often prefer younger candidates with more relevant experience. There continue to be cases where these workers persevered through multiple upskilling courses, yet remained unemployed or underemployed due to **ageism**. The Ministry of Manpower

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| | | <p>reported that there are a sizeable number of Singaporeans facing age-related discrimination during their job search. Another group that may struggle to obtain good employment regardless of how much they persevere in their job search are the ethnic minorities. Due to racial and cultural bias held by employers that result in preconceived notions about the work ethic of minorities and a cultural preference associated with the majority Chinese population, a significant proportion of Malay and Indian job applicants reported race-based discrimination compared to their Chinese counterparts. This shows that in Singapore's current labour market, perseverance alone does not always open the door to success for certain groups of Singaporeans, and that social barriers can still block opportunities despite effort.</p> <p>Likewise, while Singapore provides extensive support for entrepreneurs through grants like Startup SG Founder and schemes from Enterprise Singapore, these initiatives cannot eliminate the inherent risks of business, which are particularly pronounced due to the high operating costs and the difficulty of acquiring and retaining workers in Singapore. Many entrepreneurs persevere by working long hours, attending government workshops, and tapping into startup grants, yet still fail because of how costly it is to rent commercial space and pay for labour, given the tight labour market here. Additionally, entrepreneurs often find it extremely tough to offer remuneration good enough to attract and retain skilled labour given Singapore's high cost of living. For instance, it is notoriously difficult to succeed in the F&B sector in Singapore, even with resilience and government support, and with much perseverance by the F&B owners themselves. In fact, in recent years, even restaurant chains and Michelin-star restaurants have shuttered because of the severe economic headwinds, operating costs and manpower shortage.</p> |
| Passage 2, Para 3 | <p><u>Lines 15-16</u> <i>These qualities not only contribute to personal growth but also serve as a source of inspiration for others facing similar struggles.</i></p> | <p>AGREE:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> This idea is particularly relevant to Singaporeans because of how viscerally stories of triumph over adversity serve to reinforce shared Singaporean values like resilience, hard work, and the can-do spirit. Such stories are especially salient to Singapore's nation-building ethos, given how Singapore's leaders have repeatedly stressed the importance of fortitude, discipline, and a strong work ethic for national survival and progress. <p>Possible EV & examples as support:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The triumphant stories of William Tan, a wheelchair racer who overcame polio and became the first person to complete seven marathons across seven continents in seven days in a wheelchair in 2023, and Yip Pin Xiu, a Paralympic gold medalist, are significant not just because both have transformed personal challenges into achievements that motivate others with disabilities. They are also important given how their perseverance and success tap into Singapore's history of a |

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| | | <p>tumultuous and challenging road to and from independence, and contribute to the shared narrative of how resilience and perseverance have a sustained relevance for Singapore's continued survival in the world today. Indeed, their inspiring stories have often been lauded by local politicians to show that perseverance not only enables personal growth but also strengthens communal resilience, motivating others to strive beyond their limitations.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Furthermore, the government also utilises social initiatives like the President's Challenge to introduce fellowships such as ITE Inspire and the Springboard Fellowship to formally recognise graduates and individuals who have bounced back from adversity. By highlighting those who have persevered through challenges, these fellowships not only reward personal resilience but also position recipients as role models for their peers. Institutionalising such recognition at a national level reflects Singapore's societal emphasis on merit, effort, and communal inspiration, sending a clear message that perseverance should rightly be emulated. <p><u>DISAGREE:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> However, putting the spotlight on and celebrating the stories of individuals who have may have overcome their own humble beginnings to become successful risks overrepresentation of exceptional cases as well as papering over the cracks of Singapore's meritocracy, which is weakened by structural barriers. <p><u>Possible EV & examples as support:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> While Yip Pin Xiu's achievements are extraordinary and widely celebrated, her experience may not be replicable by all individuals facing similar forms of adversity. She had access to specialised coaching, institutional support, and early talent identification, resources that many aspiring para-athletes or people with disabilities may not have. Moreover, her elite-level success is an exceptional outcome rather than the norm, and most individuals confronting similar challenges may not achieve comparable recognition, no matter how persevering they are. Additionally, frequent media coverage of individuals who have persevered and overcome disadvantaged backgrounds to achieve relative success in various areas may give an inaccurate representation of how forgiving Singapore's meritocracy truly is. For instance, the Straits Times covered the story of how Adalia Tan successfully graduated with a communications degree at NUS and is now vice-president of DBS People of Purpose despite growing up in a two-room rental flat and having divorced parents. Yet, Tan's experience, while inspiring, is anything but typical. Another example is Shanice Lim, who Business Insider lauded as someone who had left a Michelin-starred restaurant to start a hawker stall and become her own boss, glossing over the familial advantage she enjoyed, since she actually received a five-figure sum of money from her father to help her start her business. |
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| <p>Passage 3/ Para 2</p> | <p><u>Lines 9 – 11</u> <i>Despite all this, when I confided in some teammates that I wanted to leave, they chastised me for lacking willpower and commitment.</i></p> | <p>AGREE: This attitude is mirrored in Singapore to some extent, particularly amongst older Singaporeans. Though there has been greater exposure to concepts such as second chances, “alternate pathways” and learning beyond grades, a segment of Singaporeans, especially those in the older generations, remain critical when they perceive someone giving up on something, possibly due to generational differences in perspectives on what constitutes fulfilment and achievement.</p> <p>Possible EV and Examples as support:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In the area of fulfilment in romantic relationships, for instance, key differences exist between how much significance the younger and older generations attach to marriage. While the younger generation may not see a point in persevering with a failing marriage, amongst the older generation, there is still stigma attached to divorcees as there are a significant number who view the ending of a marriage as taboo. Emanating from Asian cultures where marriage and the family are traditionally seen as sacrosanct, divorcees are perceived negatively by many, especially older Singaporeans, and individuals are often being indicted for not trying harder to keep their marriage together. While mindsets are changing especially amongst the younger generation, women still seem to bear the brunt of this taboo and often come under pressure to stay in an unhappy marriage especially if they have children. This is despite the fact that there may be very strong psychological and physical reasons for not staying in an unhappy marriage. • Some find themselves taking “prestigious courses” such as medicine and law but soon find that it is not their passion or can’t see themselves continuing with them. More such stories are being heard as younger Singaporeans are increasingly unwilling to conform to the traditional definition of success which has largely been material success. Vocations in medicine and law are still seen to be a passport to attain the traditional 5Cs (car, condominium, cash, credit card and country club membership) especially among older Singaporeans. However, increasingly, younger Singaporeans are prioritising more abstract values like purpose and work-life balance. This shift away from traditional material metrics of success can be attributed to Singapore’s development and maturity over the decades which has seen most Singaporeans’ basic needs being met. This in turn has led to a greater freedom in striving for intrinsic-valued aspirations such as mental health. Last year, at the SG Courts’ Conversations with the Community, Singapore’s Chief highlighted his concern about young lawyers leaving the profession because of excessive workload/ poor work-life balance, and poor workplace culture. These examples exemplify the shifting priorities of young Singaporeans who choose to leave prestigious careers instead of tolerating a mismatch of work expectations, or suffering sustained |
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| | | <p>overwork. This form of 'giving up' are generally viewed poorly by the older generation, given that the latter would have simply persevered and stayed in the job, exposing a generation gap in the way both groups view one's relationship with work. Indeed, where most in the older generation may have seen themselves sticking to one career their whole lives and some even serving just one company their whole lives in their hustle to eke out a living and provide for their family, the younger generation sees intrinsic needs as, if not more, important in their career journey.</p> |
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