

INSERT

ST ANDREW'S JUNIOR COLLEGE
JC2 Preliminary Examination



Name: _____ ()

Civics Group: _____

GENERAL PAPER

8881/02

Paper 2

2 September 2025, Tuesday

INSERT

1 hour 30 minutes

READ THESE INSTRUCTIONS FIRST

This Insert contains the passages for Paper 2.

Passage 1. *An author cautions about the dangers of woke culture.*

- 1 Woke culture began as a movement awakening people to social injustices, urging society to confront racism, gender inequality and historical wrongs. Yet, in its extreme form, it has become something else entirely: an ideological straitjacket that stifles debate, demands ideological purity, and thrives on public shaming rather than meaningful change.
- 2 At the heart of the problem lies woke culture's impulse to suppress all that dissents and offends, viewing differences of opinion as moral failures. The very people who once championed open discussion now undermine free speech. Take J.K. Rowling, the renowned author of Harry Potter, who was demonised as transphobic for raising concerns about the transitioning of minors and a woman's right to use single-sex spaces. Instead of engaging with Rowling's arguments, critics cancelled and even intimidated her with violence, branding her a source of hate speech. Similarly, woke culture obsessively cleanses the past, rather than learning from it. Since the police killing of George Floyd erupted into the Black Lives Matter protests in 2020, woke protesters have defaced and destroyed colonial statues around the world. Race campaigners have also branded the decision not to remove Cecil Rhode's* statue in Oxford University as an act of institutional racism, ignoring the opportunity to learn from its history and contextualisation. As the nineteenth-century philosopher Ernest Renan put it, the social capital of a people is its 'shared possession of a rich heritage of memories'. Who benefits from the senseless destruction of this heritage? In an open society, disagreement should lead to debate, not witch hunts and removals.
- 3 Woke culture also fails to deal with the complexity of the world by reducing individuals to groups based on race, gender and class. It turns complicated issues into simple clashes of good and evil, conferring a halo of virtue on those who pick the right side. In 2023, the Israel-Hamas war shattered this worldview that the powerless can do no wrong, unlike the powerful, and that nobody can be both. The polarised passions and viral slogans were worsened by the echo-chamber effect of social media, where many were transfixed by the scale of Hamas's destructions or Gaza's agony. This binary worldview is tailor-made for posturing, but it prohibits the nuanced judgments that complicated real-world issues demand.
- 4 And posturing it is, for wokeism is performative and tokenistic in nature: Large corporations embracing the language of social justice continue to exploit workers; fashion brands loudly promoting body positivity still encourage excessive consumerism; technology giants championing diversity initiatives routinely neglect children's rights. The hypocrisy is blatant, but ultimately devoid of real substance. Such hollowness has regrettably crept into education, where wokeness is reshaping curricula under the banner of "decolonisation". In some cases, this has led to valuable discussions about historical biases. But in its extreme form, it has produced absurdities, such as calls to remove Shakespeare for being too "Eurocentric", or attempts to rewrite "nasty" Roald Dahl novels for troubling content. If the pursuit of justice comes at the cost of intellectual richness and integrity, perhaps no real progress is being made.
- 5 At the end of the day, movements that rely on coercion rather than conversation do not build lasting change. Instead, they create black-and-white worldviews, backlash, and ultimately, bitterness. A society that seeks to build a better future by cancelling people for their imperfections is like a gardener who uproots every plant that doesn't bloom immediately — eventually, nothing is left but barren soil. Will woke culture now decide whether it wants to be a force for meaningful change, or merely an instrument of moral absolutism?

**a British imperialist linked to the slave trade*

Passage 2. *An author praises how wokeness paves the way for a better future.*

- 1 The term “woke” has become central to modern social discourse. Originally from African American vernacular English, where it referred to awareness of racial injustice, its meaning has expanded. Today, being “woke” means recognising injustices and striving for fairness to make a better world.
- 2 Wokeness enlightens our minds by developing critical thinking, helping us to question assumptions. In particular, it encourages us to examine historical contexts and recognise systemic inequalities: How do past events shape present realities? Why do some groups face persistent barriers? This habit of inquiry gives us the courage to challenge harmful norms and make ethical decisions. 5
- 3 Wokeness also fosters empathy and understanding. Acknowledging the struggles of marginalised communities nurtures compassion in workplaces, schools, and public spaces. Such inclusive attitudes ensure that diverse voices are valued. This builds a stronger society, fostering trust, collaboration and innovation. 10
- 4 Empowered by wokeness, campaigners around the world have agitated for social progress. History shows that the abolition of slavery, the civil rights movement, and gender equality advances were driven by individuals who recognised oppression and demanded change. Today, wokeness is about individuals seeking solutions through personal activism. It is about consumers holding companies accountable by demanding ethical leadership and sustainability. It is about informed citizens challenging governments on key issues. Wokeness is awareness put to action. 15 20
- 5 Wokeness even extends to environmental injustices to build a more habitable world. Since climate change and pollution disproportionately affect vulnerable communities, a woke perspective pushes for greater social protections, and even climate reparations. Wokeness demands equity by addressing power imbalances of the past to protect future generations. 25
- 6 Being woke is about awareness, empathy, and action. It is about addressing oppression and privilege to build a fairer world. In a world facing deep social and environmental challenges, wokeness is a commitment to justice and a better future for all.

Passage 3. *A Generation Z youth laments how woke culture stifles, rather than liberates.*

- 1 I used to think woke culture was about standing up for justice and advocating for the marginalised. But over time, I have realised that woke culture is fundamentally about control. It is about watching every word, every opinion, every action, in fear that one wrong move could lead to public humiliation and cancellation.
- 2 As a content creator, I have seen this play out constantly, both online and in real life. 5
Social media is a minefield where people pounce on the smallest misstep. Say the wrong thing, and suddenly, you are the enemy: there is no room for questioning dominant narratives or asking an “unacceptable” question. First, it was tearing down statues and declaring the “correct” pronouns. Now, it is anti-semitism. What is the next untouchable? Perceptions, rather than intent, reign supreme — and perception is 10
shaped by an algorithm that thrives on outrage.
- 3 Woke culture enforces ideological conformity, policing thought rigidly. If you criticise a prevailing narrative or even suggest a nuanced take, you risk being seen as a traitor. Ironically, the riots of BLM protesters – which were praised by “progressives” – caused \$1 billion in damage and the death of 25 people in 140 cities. Who entertains these 15
alternative views? Has the need to fight for “justice” blinded woke activists to our shared humanity?
- 4 I no longer believe in woke culture that thrives on fear and self-censorship. This generational shift has made us more performative, less authentic, and more divided. We should start talking to one another, not tearing others down. 20