



**ANGLO-CHINESE JUNIOR COLLEGE
JC2 PRELIMINARY EXAMINATION 2019**

GENERAL PAPER

8807/01

Paper 1

Additional Materials: Answer Paper

1 hour 30 minutes

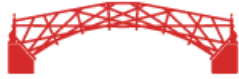
READ THESE INSTRUCTIONS FIRST

Write your index number and name on all the work you hand in.
Write in dark blue or black pen on both sides of the paper.
Do not use staples, paper clips, highlighters, glue or correction fluid.

Answer **one** question.
Note that up to **20** marks out of **50** will be awarded for your use of language.

At the end of the examination, fasten all your work securely together.
All questions in this paper carry equal marks.

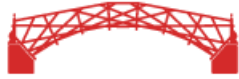
This document consists of **2** printed pages.



Answer **one** question.

Answers should be between 500 and 800 words in length.

1. 'Small actions can eventually change the world.' How far do you agree?
2. 'We are merely paying lip service to the arts.' How true is this in your society?
3. Do you agree that family is more important than ever in the modern world?
4. Is a focus on beauty necessarily harmful?
5. Examine the view that there is still a glass ceiling for women in sports.
6. 'In the age of information, ignorance is a choice.' Comment.
7. Consider the view that science solves all problems.
8. 'The real heroes of environmentalism are rebels.' Discuss.
9. 'A strong economy is the foundation of progress.' To what extent is this true in your society?
10. Is capital punishment ever justifiable?
11. 'In the modern world, speed is everything.' Discuss.
12. 'The power of the masses is overrated.' Do you agree?



ANGLO-CHINESE JUNIOR COLLEGE
JC2 PRELIMINARY EXAMINATION 2019

GENERAL PAPER

8807/02

Paper 2

INSERT

1 hour 30 minutes

READ THESE INSTRUCTIONS FIRST

This insert contains the passage for Paper 2.

This document consists of **3** printed pages.





Stephen Buranyi makes several observations about the worldwide revolt against plastic.

- 1 Plastic is everywhere, and suddenly we have decided that is a very bad thing. Until recently, plastic enjoyed a sort of anonymity in ubiquity: we were so thoroughly surrounded that we hardly noticed it. You might be surprised to learn, for instance, that today's cars and planes are, by volume, about 50% plastic. More clothing is made out of polyester and nylon, both plastics, than cotton or wool. Add this to the more obvious expanse of toys, household bric-a-brac and consumer packaging, and the extent of plastic's empire becomes clear. It is the colourful yet banal background material of modern life. Each year, the world produces around 340 million tonnes of the stuff, enough to fill every skyscraper in New York City. Humankind has produced unfathomable quantities of plastic for decades, first passing the 100 million tonne mark in the early 1990s. But for some reason, it is only very recently that people have really begun to care. 5 10
- 2 The result is a worldwide revolt against plastic, one that transcends both borders and political divides. Protest groups from the US to South Korea have dumped piles of what they say is unwanted and excessive plastic packaging at supermarkets. Earlier this year, angry customers in the UK posted so many crisp packets back to their manufacturers, in protest at the fact they were not recyclable, that the postal service was overwhelmed. Prince Charles has given speeches about the dangers of plastic, while Kim Kardashian has posted on Instagram about the 'plastic crisis', and claims to have given up straws. At the highest levels of government, the plastic panic can resemble a scrambled response to a natural disaster, or a public health crisis. The United Nations has declared a 'war' on single-use plastic. In Britain, Theresa May has called it a 'scourge', and committed the government to a 25-year plan that would phase out disposable packaging by 2042. India claimed it would do the same, but by 2022. 15 20
- 3 All this has added up to a feeling that we might be on the verge of a great environmental victory, of the kind not seen since the successful action against acid rain and CFCs three decades ago. But getting rid of plastic would require more than a packaging-free aisle at the supermarket and soggy cardboard drinking straws at the pub. Plastic is everywhere not because it was always better than the natural materials it replaced, but because it was lighter and cheaper – so much cheaper, in fact, that it was easier to justify throwing away. Customers found this convenient, and businesses were happy to sell them a new plastic container for every soda or sandwich they bought. In the same way steel enabled new frontiers in building, plastic made possible the throwaway culture that we have come to take for granted. To take on plastic is in some way to take on consumerism itself. It requires us to recognise just how radically our way of life has reshaped the planet in the span of a single lifetime, and ask whether it is too much. 25 30
- 4 The most astounding thing about the anti-plastic movement is just how fast it has grown. To travel back even to 2015 is to enter to a world in which almost all of the things we currently know about plastic are already known, but people are not very angry about it. Sometimes alarming stories about plastic did break through into the media and catch the interest of the public – the garbage patch was a media favourite, and every so often there was a new panic about overflowing landfills, or the massive quantities of waste we ship overseas – but it was nothing like today. 35
- 5 What exactly caused this change is a question of great debate. The most plausible answer is not that the science on plastic reached a critical mass, or that we became saturated with images of adorable sea creatures choking on our waste (although those things are important). It is that, at a deep level, the whole way we think about plastic has been transformed. We used to see it as litter – a nuisance but not a menace. That idea has been undermined by the recent widespread acknowledgment that plastic is far more pervasive and sinister than most people had ever imagined. 40 45
- 6 The shift in thinking started with the public outcry over microbeads, the small, abrasive grains of plastic that companies began pouring into cosmetic and cleaning products in the mid-1990s to add grit. Scientists began raising the alarm about potential dangers posed to sea life in 2010,



- and people were shocked to learn that microbeads were in thousands of products, from Johnson & Johnson's spot-clearing face scrubs, to supposedly eco-friendly brands like the Body Shop. Microbeads were only the beginning. After scientists started showing how microfibrils from our laundry ended up lodged in the guts of fish, newspapers ran articles with headlines such as 'Yoga pants are destroying the Earth'. Then tyres, which are about 60% plastic, were revealed to shed plastic fibres while in motion, potentially more harmful than microbeads and clothing combined. 50
- 7 People now realise that plastic is in our household products, coffee cups, teabags and clothing – but it seems to have escaped our ability to catch it. It slips through our fingers and our water filters and sloshes into rivers and oceans like effluent from a sinister industrial factory. It is no longer embodied by a Big Mac container on the side of the road. It has come to seem more like a previously unnoticed chemical listed halfway down the small print on a hairspray bottle, ready to mutate fish or punch a hole in the ozone layer. The appeal of the fight against plastic is that there is the sense that you have joined an insurgent political campaign and organisations benefit from a chance at opportunism. We have entered a phase where every brand, organisation and politician strains to be seen to be doing something. 60
- 8 However, the anti-plastic movement is not without its problems. Framing litter as a personal failing was remarkably convenient. In 1988, the year global plastic production pulled even with steel, Margaret Thatcher, picking up litter in St James's Park for a photo opportunity, captured the tone perfectly. 'This is not the fault of the government,' she told reporters. 'It is the fault of the people who knowingly and thoughtlessly throw it down.' Noticeably absent from her indictment was anyone who manufactured or sold plastic in the first place. The packaging and drinks industries were quick to push the idea that recycling could keep their products out of landfill. The plastic industry made grand claims about the potential for recycling their products. The problem with these rosy claims was that plastic is one of the worst materials for recycling. Glass, steel and aluminium can be melted and reformed a nearly infinite number of times to make new products of the same quality as the first. Plastic, by contrast, significantly degrades each time it is recycled. A plastic bottle cannot be recycled to make a plastic bottle of the same quality. Instead, recycled plastic becomes clothing fibres, or slats for furniture, which then might go on to be road filler, or plastic insulation, neither of which are further recyclable. Each stage is essentially a one-way ratchet towards landfill or the ocean. 70
- 9 Although the public's enthusiasm for anti-plastic campaigns is partly motivated by the feeling that it is a simpler and more solvable problem than climate change, the two issues are more closely connected than most people realise. This is the paradox of plastic, or at least our current obsession with it: learning about the scale of the problem moved us to act, but the more we push against it, the more it begins to seem just as boundless and intractable as all the other environmental problems we have failed to solve. And it brings us up against the same obstacles: unregulatable business, the globalised world, and our own unsustainable way of life. We need to recognise that plastic is not just an isolated problem that we can banish from our lives, but simply the most visible product of our past half-century of rampant consumption. 80



**ANGLO-CHINESE JUNIOR COLLEGE
JC2 PRELIMINARY EXAMINATION 2019**

CANDIDATE
NAME

INDEX
NUMBER

GENERAL PAPER

8807/02

Paper 2

1 hour 30 minutes

Candidates answer on the Question Paper.

Additional Materials: 1 insert

READ THESE INSTRUCTIONS FIRST

Write your index number and name on all the work you hand in.
Write in dark blue or black pen in the spaces provided on the Question Paper.
Do not use staples, paper clips, highlighters, glue or correction fluid.

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.

At the end of the examination, fasten all your work securely together.
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

This document consists of **6** printed pages.





Read the passage in the insert and then answer **all** the questions. Note that up to fifteen marks will be given for the quality and accuracy of your use of English throughout this Paper.

NOTE: When a question asks for an answer IN YOUR OWN WORDS AS FAR AS POSSIBLE and you select the appropriate material from the passage for your answer, you must still use your own words to express it. Little credit can be given to answers which only copy words or phrases from the passage.

- 1 **Using your own words as far as possible**, explain the author's use of the phrase 'anonymity in ubiquity' (line 2).

.....
.....
.....
.....

[2]

- 2 What is the author's purpose in describing plastic as a 'colourful yet banal' background material of modern life (lines 6-7)?

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.....
.....

[2]

- 3 Explain what the author means when he describes the revolt against plastic as 'worldwide' (line 11). **Use your own words as far as possible.**

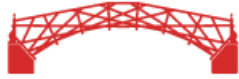
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[2]

- 4 What does the author mean by 'to take on plastic is in some way to take on consumerism itself' (line 30-31) and why is this so? **Use your own words as far as possible.**

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[2]



- 5 Explain the author's use of the word 'even' in the phrase 'To travel back even to 2015' (lines 33-34). **Use your own words as far as possible.**

.....
.....
..... [2]

- 6 Why is framing litter as a personal failing described as being 'remarkably convenient' (line 66)? **Use your own words as far as possible.**

..... [1]

- 7 In paragraph 8, what does the author imply by using the words 'grand' (line 72) and 'rosy' (line 73) to describe the claims made by the plastic industry?

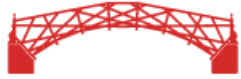
..... [1]

- 8 How does the author illustrate his assertion that the plastic industry has 'made grand claims about the potential for recycling their products' (line 72)? **Use your own words as far as possible.**

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..... [3]

- 9 Why are the problems of plastic and climate change 'more closely connected than most people realise' (lines 81-82)? **Use your own words as far as possible.**

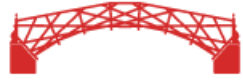
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[10]

Band	
Marks	



Dr.Kenny Education



ACJC General Paper Department
JC2 Preliminary Exam 2019 Paper 2 Answer Scheme

1. Using your own words as far as possible, explain the author's use of the phrase 'anonymity in ubiquity' (line 2). [2m]

Table with 2 columns: From Passage and Paraphrased. It contains three rows of text comparing the original passage to paraphrased versions.

Question type: Literal

Examiners' notes: Some students mistakenly thought that 'hardly noticed' means that plastic is 'not seen'.

2. What is the author's purpose in describing plastic as a 'colourful yet banal' background material to modern life? (lines 6-7). [2m]

Table with 2 columns: From Passage and Inferred. It contains three rows of text comparing the original passage to inferred purposes.

1-2pts=1m, 3pts=2m

Question type: Use of language / Inference

Examiners' notes: Most students did not pick out the author's purpose and the function of the phrase as intended with the word 'yet'. Some students mistakenly thought that the word 'banal' is derived from 'bane' and means 'detrimental' and 'harmful'.





3. Explain what the author means when he describes the revolt against plastic as 'worldwide' (line 11)? **Use your own words as far as possible.** [2m]

From Passage	Paraphrased
The result is a worldwide revolt against plastic, one that transcends both borders (line 11)	The revolt against plastic extends over/ crosses/ goes beyond physical boundaries/ geographical territories/ countries/ nations and (2-part answer) OR The revolt against plastic is global in nature and
and (transcends) political divides . (lines 11-12)	extends over/ crosses/ goes beyond different/ polarising/ dissimilar political beliefs/ ideologies/ allegiances/ convictions. <i>(allow lift for 'political')</i> (2-part answer)

Question type: *Literal*

Examiners' notes: *Some students did not accurately paraphrase 'political divides' and did not capture the idea of 'divides' as differences.*

4. What does the author mean by 'to take on plastic is in some way to take on consumerism itself' (line 30-31) and why is this so? **Use your own words as far as possible.** [2m]

From Passage	Paraphrased
To take on plastic is in some way to take on consumerism itself. (lines 30-31)	Tackling/ Confronting/ Battling the problem of plastic is <u>thereby/ therefore</u> battling the problem of consumerism. (idea of causation) OR Tackling/ Confronting/ Battling the problem of plastic is <u>akin to/ like/ equivalent to/ partially</u> tackling/ confronting/ battling the problem of consumerism. (idea of similarity)
In the same way steel enabled new frontiers in building, plastic made possible the throwaway culture that we have come to take for granted . (lines 29-30) OR It requires us to recognise just how radically our way of life has reshaped the planet in the span of a single lifetime, and ask whether it is too much. (lines 31-32)	This is because plastic made possible habits/ a lifestyle which are/ is wasteful/ that involves thoughtless/ mindless/ careless disposal/ discarding of waste. OR This is because tackling the problem of plastic requires us to acknowledge how drastically/ severely our habits have/ culture has changed/ transformed our planet. OR (Inferred) This is because tackling the problem of plastic requires us to confront the severity/ magnitude of both the problems of consumerism and plastic.

Question type: *Literal*

Examiners' notes: *Some students did not capture the idea of causation or similarity and merely copied the structure of the phrase. Some students also inaccurately paraphrased 'throwaway culture' to be merely 'consumerist lifestyle', a description which is not sufficiently specific. The extent/degree suggested by the word 'radically' was often not captured.*



5. Explain the author's use of the word 'even' in the phrase 'To travel back even to 2015' (lines 33-34). **Use your own words as far as possible.** [2m]

From Passage	Paraphrased
The most astounding thing about the anti-plastic movement is just how fast it has grown . To travel back even to 2015 is to enter to a world in which almost all of the things we currently know about plastic are already known , but people are not very angry about it. (lines 33-35)	<p>Function The author uses the word 'even' to emphasise how... as recent as 2015/ only a few years ago/ not too long ago (idea of recentness)</p> <p>OR in just a few years/ in a matter of a few years/ in such a short time (idea of short duration)</p> <p>OR surprisingly/unexpectedly quick/ swift (idea of speed or rate of change)</p>
	<p>Context people were aware/ cognisant of the problem of plastic yet not upset/ indifferent about it. (focus on change in people's attitude)</p> <p>OR the anti-plastic movement has progressed/ advanced/ gained traction/ become more significant. (focus on growth of anti-plastic movement)</p>

Question type: Use of language

Examiners' notes: Some students did not capture the function of the word 'even'. Many students who chose to focus on the change in people's attitude did not reflect the idea that people were already aware of the problem.

6. Why is framing litter as a personal failing described as being 'remarkably convenient' (line 66)? **Use your own words as far as possible.** [1m]

From Passage	Paraphrased/Inferred
"This is not the fault of the government," she told reporters. "It is the fault of the people who knowingly and thoughtlessly throw it down." Noticeably absent from her indictment was anyone who manufactured or sold plastic in the first place. (lines 68-70)	<p>Framing litter as a personal failing is described as remarkably convenient as it absolves the government and companies from any blame/ accountability/ responsibility for the problem.</p> <p>OR Framing litter as a personal failing is described as remarkably convenient as it allows the government and companies to make consumers the scapegoats.</p>

Question type: Literal/ Inference

Examiners' notes: Some students mistakenly thought that 'remarkably convenient' merely means it is easy and practical to blame consumers.

7. In paragraph 8, what does the author imply by using the words 'grand' (line 72) and 'rosy' (line 73) to describe the claims made by the plastic industry? [1m]

From Passage	Inferred
The plastic industry made grand claims about the potential for recycling their products. The problem with these rosy claims was that plastic is one of the worst materials for recycling. (lines 71-73)	These claims are exaggerated/ distorted/ false/ misleading/ overly optimistic.

Question type: Inference/ Vocabulary (Use of Language)

Examiners' notes: This question was quite well done.



8. How does the author illustrate his assertion that the plastic industry has 'made grand claims about the potential for recycling their products' (line 72)? **Use your own words as far as possible.** [3m]

From Passage	Paraphrased
The problem with these rosy claims was that plastic is one of the worst materials for recycling. (lines 72-73)	The author illustrates this by stating the fact that plastic is actually one of the most difficult/ challenging materials for recycling. OR The author illustrates this by stating the fact that plastic is in reality one of the least suitable materials for recycling.
Glass, steel and aluminium can be melted and reformed a nearly infinite number of times to make new products of the same quality as the first. Plastic, by contrast, significantly degrades each time it is recycled. (lines 75-76) A plastic bottle cannot be recycled to make a plastic bottle of the same quality . (line 76)	(In comparison to other materials,) plastic breaks down/ deteriorates considerably/ to a large extent each time it is recycled. (Note: extent/ degree word needed) OR (In comparison to other materials,) recycled plastic products are unable to maintain/ retain the standard/ grade/ condition of the original items. <i>(allow lift for 'cannot be')</i> OR (In comparison to other materials), recycled plastic products will not be of similar/ equal standard/ grade/ condition as the original. <i>(allow lift for 'cannot be')</i>
Instead, recycled plastic becomes clothing fibres, or slats for furniture, which then might go on to be road filler, or plastic insulation, neither of which are further recyclable . Each stage is essentially a one-way ratchet towards landfill or the ocean. (lines 77-79)	Eventually, some plastic can no longer be reused/ cannot be repurposed anymore (and end up as waste). <i>(allow lift for 'recyclable')</i> OR The process is irreversible/ cannot be undone.

Question type: *Literal*

Examiners' notes: Many students did not accurately paraphrase the degree/extent of words and phrases like 'worst' and 'significantly degrades'. The words 'same' and 'quality' were often lifted.

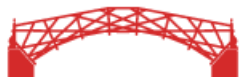
9. Why are the problems of plastic and climate change 'more closely connected than most people realise' (lines 81-82)? **Use your own words as far as possible.** [2m]

From Passage	Paraphrased
Although the public's enthusiasm for anti-plastic campaigns is partly motivated by the feeling that it is a simpler and more solvable problem than climate change, the two issues are more closely connected than most people realise. (lines 81-83)	Although most people think that the problem of plastic is less challenging to overcome, OR Although most people think that the problem of plastic is easier to deal with/ overcome,
...seem just as boundless and intractable as all the other environmental problems we have failed to solve. (lines 85-86)	the truth is that it is just as widespread/ limitless <u>and</u> hard to manage/ control, (2-part answer)
And it brings us up against the same obstacles : unregulatable business, the globalised world, and our own unsustainable way of life. (lines 86-87)	and poses similar/ identical challenges/ difficulties. OR <i>(Accept if students paraphrase <u>all</u> 3 obstacles, instead of paraphrasing 'same obstacles')</i>

1-2pts=1m, 3pts=2m

Question type: *Literal*

Examiners' notes: Most students focused on how the problems of plastic and climate change are similar and did not answer the question of why they are 'more closely connected than most people realise'.



10. Using material from paragraphs 5-7 (lines 40-64) only, summarise how and why people's attitude towards plastic has changed. Write your summary in no more than 120 words, not counting the opening words which are printed below. Use your own words as far as possible. **"People's attitude towards plastic has changed. They..."**

From the passage		Paraphrased	
1	We used to see it (line 43)	1	(People's attitude towards plastic has changed. They...) previously/ formerly perceived/ viewed/ understood
2	as litter – a nuisance (line 43-44)	2	it to be annoying/ bothersome/ inconvenient
3	but not a menace (line 44)	3	but not harmful/ dangerous/ hazardous.
4	That idea has been undermined by the recent widespread acknowledgment (lines 44-45)	4	That idea has been challenged/ weakened/ discounted by the recent common/ extensive understanding/ recognition
5	that plastic is far more pervasive (lines 45)	5	that plastic is so much more/ even more ubiquitous/prevalent <i>(allow lift for 'more') *must have the comparative element</i>
6	and sinister... (lines 45)	6	and insidious/ threatening
7	than most people had ever imagined . (lines 45-46)	7	than we had ever thought/ perceived it to be.
8	The shift in thinking started with the public outcry over microbeads (line 47)	8	The shift in thinking started with the mass/ popular uproar/ commotion over microbeads.
9	Scientists began raising the alarm about potential dangers posed to sea life in 2010, (line 49) After scientists started showing how microscopic fibres from our laundry ended up lodged in the guts of fish (lines 52-53)	9	Scientists started to highlight/ draw attention to possible harms/ threats to sea life
10	and people were shocked to learn... (line 50)	10	and people were surprised/ stunned to realise/ find out
11	that microbeads were in thousands of products , from Johnson & Johnson's spot-clearing face scrubs... (lines 50-51) People now realise that plastic is in our household products, coffee cups, teabags and clothing... (lines 58-59)	11	that microbeads (plastic) are (is) found in many/ numerous items/ goods, OR (inferred) that microbeads (plastic) are (is) found in everyday items, OR (inferred) microbeads (plastic) are (is) ubiquitous/ everywhere in our lives/ found in everything,
12	to supposedly eco-friendly brands like the Body Shop. Microbeads were only the beginning. (lines 50-51)	12	including in products apparently/ seemingly /ostensibly less detrimental/ harmful to the environment.
13	newspapers ran articles with headlines such as "Yoga pants are destroying the Earth". (lines 53-54)	13	The media began to report/ publicise the harmful effects of microscopic fibres (plastic).
14	Then tyres, which are about 60% plastic, were revealed to shed plastic fibres while in motion, potentially more harmful than microbeads and clothing combined. (lines 54-55)	14	Plastic fibres were then shown to be possibly more detrimental/ worse than microbeads.
15	People now realise that plastic is in our household products, coffee cups, teabags and clothing – but it seems to have escaped our ability to catch it . It slips through our fingers and our water filters and sloshes into rivers and oceans like effluent from a sinister industrial factory. (lines 56-58)	15	The hidden/ invisible/ evasive nature of plastic prevents people from managing the problem/ tackling the issue.
16	It is no longer embodied by a Big Mac container on the side of the road. It has come to seem more like a previously unnoticed chemical listed halfway down the small print on a hairspray bottle, ready to mutate fish or punch a hole in the ozone layer. (lines 58-61)	16	(Inferred) The severity/ magnitude of the problem is highlighted.
17	The appeal of the fight against plastic... (line 61)	17	The movement/ campaign/ effort against plastic is attractive/ draws people
18	is that there is the sense that you have joined an insurgent political campaign (line 62)	18	because people feel/ think that they have participated in a revolt/ revolution/ rebellion
19	and organisations benefit from a chance at opportunism . (lines 62-63)	19	and organisations gain from being able to take advantage of/ exploit on the situation. <i>*must have negative connotation</i>
20	We have entered a phase where every brand, organisation and politician strains to be seen to be doing something. (lines 63-64)	20	In the fight against plastic, we have reached a stage where everyone strives/ endeavours to be visible/ noticed (in their efforts).

Mark allocation:

No. of Points	1-2	3-4	5-6	7-8	9	10-11	12-13	14 & above
Marks	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8



11. Stephen Buranyi discusses the motivations behind the anti-plastic movement and the issues that come with it. How far would you agree with his observations, relating your arguments to your own experience and that of your society?

Requirement

Students should...

- explain the motivations behind the anti-plastic movement and the accompanying issues
- describe the underlying motivations and the issues of the anti-plastic movement
- show understanding and engage with the ideas and views raised in the passage
- support their views with relevant examples from their own society

Explanation

Students should discuss some of the following in relation to their own society:

- the motivations behind the anti-plastic movement and the prevalent problems
- the various political, economic, social, cultural and environmental impacts of the anti-plastic movement
- how people participate in the anti-plastic movement and the positive and negative outcomes of it

Evaluation

Students should...

- question/show reasons to explain if the author's ideas are applicable or not applicable to their own society
- provide insightful analysis of the anti-plastic movement in their own society and raise relevant issues that have emerged/are emerging
- critically evaluate the underlying motivations of various stakeholders and the issues of the anti-plastic movement
- provide cogent development of arguments
- give examples from their own society to support their views

Coherence

Students should...

- adopt a consistent viewpoint
- argue logically
- organise answers into cohesive, themed paragraphs
- link paragraphs to show continuity and direction of argument
- maintain relevance to the task in everything they write
- end with a summative or concluding paragraph/ sentence

Examiners' notes:

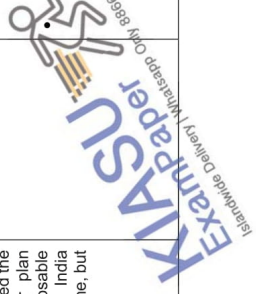
- Some students did not choose appropriate references. They chose references that were not claims and offered examples, facts about plastic or context instead.
- Some students were often not explicit in indicating whether they were talking about a motivation, an issue, or both when providing references.
- Some students were often only talking about waste or recycling in general, without linking their discussion to the motivations of the anti-plastic movement, specific issues brought about by the use of plastic in their society, or the obstacles faced in getting various stakeholders to reduce the production of an array of plastic products and disposal of plastic waste.
- Some students merely gave observations and descriptions of Singapore society without considering specific underlying reasons, motivations and implications.

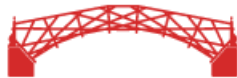




11. Stephen Buranyi discusses the motivations behind the anti-plastic movement and the issues that come with it. How far would you agree with his observations, relating your arguments to your own experience and that of your society?

References	Guiding Questions / Discussion Issues	Applicable	Less / Not applicable
<p>Motivation 1: The urgency of the problem is raised as notable celebrities, governments and international organisations are creating awareness.</p> <p>'Prince Charles has given speeches about the dangers of plastic, while Kim Kardashian has posted on Instagram about the "plastic crisis", and claims to have given up straws. At the highest levels of government the plastic panic can resemble a scrambled response to a natural disaster, or a public health crisis. The United Nations has declared a "war" on single-use plastic. In Britain, Theresa May has called it a "scourge", and committed the government to a 25-year plan that would phase out disposable packaging by 2042. India claimed it would do the same, but by 2022.' (lines 15-21)</p>	<p>Do we have local celebrities or government officials rallying us to support the anti-plastic movement?</p> <p>Do we react positively to them or are we unmoved by them?</p> <p>Are we responding to the international call to reduce and to curb the use of plastic and acknowledging the harm it has on the environment?</p>	<p>There is a growing recognition that recycling is a sector for growth and investment, with the potential for improving city infrastructure, offering many employment opportunities, and creating a way less toxic and way more liveable environment for everyone.</p> <p>The World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) is bringing businesses in Singapore together under PACT – a Plastic ACTION commitment to stop excessive and unnecessary plastic production and ensure existing plastic is effectively recovered and recycled, supported by the National Environment Agency and Zero Waste SG, PACT pools together the knowledge and experience of companies, complementing their will to change, rethink business models, and innovate, such that the existing linear system of excessive and wasteful consumption is disrupted and replaced by a circular economy that is regenerative and restorative by design.</p> <p>Member of Parliament, Louis Ng called on the government to do more to tackle the city-state's chronic plastic over-use problem and move "towards a plastic-lite Singapore" by banning single-use plastic in the public sector and to put a charge on plastic carrier bags.</p> <p>Several policies have been put in place to tackle plastic waste, e.g. the Singapore Packaging Agreement, Public Sector Sustainability Plan 2017-2020 to call on the public sector to eliminate single-use plastic from catering and events.</p>	<p>Rather than celebrities and high ranking governmental officials, the raising of awareness of the plastic crisis seems to be more of a ground up movement from the community. Singaporeans taking part in the anti-plastic movement may not necessarily be notable figures of society.</p> <p>17 year-old Ang Zyn Yee is an advocate of a straw-free environment through her initiative, 'Straw-Free Singapore'. To date, she has managed to convince corporations such as Wildlife Reserves Singapore to go straw-free and more than 20 F&B establishments in Changi Airport to go straw-lite.</p> <p>Plastic-Lite Singapore, a community and volunteer-based platform started in early September 2016 to inspire and encourage Singaporeans towards a lifestyle where the usage of plastics, particularly single-use plastics, can be minimised, with simple programmes and initiatives.</p>

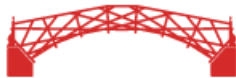




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<p>Motivation 2: We now want to tackle waste management and discourage a throwaway culture</p> <p>'Customers found this convenient, and businesses were happy to sell them a new plastic container for every soda or sandwich they bought. In the same way steel enabled new frontiers in building, plastic made possible the throwaway culture that we have come to take for granted. To take on plastic is in some way to take on consumerism itself. It requires us to recognise just how radically our way of life has reshaped the planet in the span of a single lifetime, and ask whether it is too much.'</p> <p>(lines 27-32)</p>	<p>Are consumers too reliant on convenience such that they pay no attention to the environmental damage caused by their use of plastic, or are they willing to inconvenience themselves in exchange for a greener environment?</p> <p>Are businesses feeding our desire for convenience and keeping us lazy and indifferent towards changing our consumption habits nurtured by our excessively consumerist culture?</p>	<p>The Singapore society is well aware of the impact of the throwaway culture and the environmentalist movement here is growing. Businesses are also concerned about their consumers' consumption habits especially with regard to the use of plastics, in takeaway containers and packaging.</p> <p>Four major supermarket chains, namely NTUC FairPrice, Sheng Siong, Dairy Farm Singapore Group and Prime Group, have teamed up with the Singapore Environment Council (SEC) and DBS Bank to engage customers to take fewer single-use bags and opt for reusable bags instead. The 'One Less Plastic' campaign, launched in December 2018 aims to reduce the consumption of disposable plastic bags by 25% over 2019, with hopes of spurring permanent change in consumers' use of plastic bags.</p>	<p>Consumers assume that supermarkets that sell reusable bags might be trying to profit from the sale of these bags. This act undermines the intention of encouraging reduced use of plastic and limits the throwaway culture and mindset prioritises convenience above all.</p> <p>With Singapore's fast-paced society, plastic is favoured as we crave convenience at a low cost. This can be seen through the pervasive use of plastic (hawker centres, shopping malls, wet markets, convenient stores). The cost for plastic packaging, or even plastic takeaway containers is usually very nominal. The additional 10 cents or 20 cents does not have that great an impact on the consumer, and most would be happy to pay for the convenience plastic brings.</p>
<p>Motivation 3: People now know that plastic has far more harmful consequences than earlier believed.</p> <p>'That idea has been undermined by the recent widespread acknowledgment that plastics far more pervasive and sinister than most people had ever imagined.'</p> <p>(lines 44-46)</p>	<p>How aware are we of the extent of the plastic problem and its effects on us and our environment?</p> <p>Do we think of plastic as being dangerous to our health or well-being?</p>	<p>Singaporeans are educated and well aware of the dire effects of plastic use. The younger generation has long grown up in a climate of environmentalism, and public education on the 3 Rs: reuse, reduce, and recycle. Recent studies show that in Singapore, an average person uses 146 bags from supermarkets alone. With our wasteful model of consumption, we are rapidly producing and consuming plastic at a rate that will leave a toxic plastic legacy on Earth. As plastic does not decompose, it will continue to be in our land, water and air for the next 400 years, or 16 generations. As such, there are now concerted efforts to change our lifestyles, whether it is using metal straws or carrying our own bags and containers for takeout in a bid to cut down on single-use plastic.</p> <p>The Singapore Environment Council School Green Awards is a voluntary environmental programme which serves as a platform for students to develop and showcase their environmental efforts, through customised activities which will help them gain better understanding of the environment.</p>	<p>Even though there has been growing awareness of the issues surrounding plastic, the majority of Singaporeans either choose to be ignorant, or have no sense of urgency with regard to the plastic crisis.</p> <p>The Singapore Food Agency (SFA) has told The Straits Times that while microplastics is an emerging area of concern, the World Health Organisation (WHO) has indicated there is no evidence currently that it has an impact on human health. This might imply that Singapore agencies do not understand the origin of this issue and do not place sufficient emphasis on plastic use and its impacts.</p> <p>Singapore's Senior Minister of State for Environment and Water Resources, Dr Amy Khor, has stated that unlike other countries with mandatory plastic bag charges, Singapore incinerates plastic waste before putting it in landfills and hence does not face the land and water pollution issues that plague those countries. The Ministry's stand is that plastic bags were "necessary for responsible and hygienic bagging of waste" in Singapore's hot and humid climate. These points play on the concerns that the everyman has in Singapore, whether it is industries or consumers. We do not even see that plastic is harmful.</p>



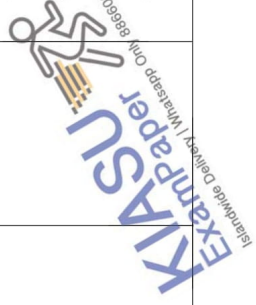
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<p>Motivation 4: Individuals are drawn to the cause of fighting against plastic use.</p> <p>Corporations and organizations use the opportunities presented to fight for the environment. As a consequence, their brand image may become more visible in society.</p> <p>'The appeal of the fight against plastic is that there is the sense that you have joined an insurgent political campaign and even presented opportunism for any organisation.' (lines 62-64)</p>	<p>Do Singapore companies and organisations come together in a concerted effort to fight against plastic?</p> <p>Do organisations see the anti-plastic movement as bringing them opportunities – to reduce cost, to change their processes, to boost their image, etc.?</p> <p>Are organisations genuinely concerned about the environment or is this just corporate social responsibility that has become obligatory?</p>	<p>The World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) announced on 3 June 2019 that more than 270 F&B outlets in Singapore will remove straws completely from their premises or provide them only on request from July 1 onwards. Conscientious businesses and early adopters such as Plain Vanilla Bakery, KFC, Deliveroo, Millennium Hotels and IKEA have reduced single-use plastic waste as they shift their businesses towards sustainable practices. This could also be seen as opportunistic in furthering their corporate image as they jump on the bandwagon of environmentalism.</p> <p>15 businesses have also pledged to longer-term goals to reduce their plastic production and use by 2030. For example, the Lo and Behold Group (with 13 restaurants and businesses) is now looking at biodegradable alternatives for delivery and takeaway packaging.</p>	<p>This call for action has mostly fallen on deaf ears in Singapore, as consumers may not be as convinced by the fight against plastic. Since there is no rubbish piling up in the streets, Singaporeans do not perceive a waste problem or feel personally responsible to reduce waste. Some consumers have also raised the concern that going straw-free is inefficient and may just be 'corporate green washing'. Businesses in Singapore have conflicting interests, as they are mostly still profit-driven and could be concerned with the high costs or inconvenience of going plastic-free. Supermarkets, convenience stores, and most food & beverage companies still rely on plastic, not to mention factories and heavy industries. Joining the plastic-free movement is not even a consideration at all.</p>
<p>Motivation 5: The acknowledgment that the problem of plastic is closely linked to the problem of climate change has prompted urgent and immediate action.</p> <p>'Although the public's enthusiasm for anti-plastic campaigns is partly motivated by the feeling that it is a simpler and more solvable problem than climate change, the two issues are more closely connected than most people realise.' (lines 81-83)</p>	<p>Do Singaporeans see any link between the two issues?</p> <p>Will tackling the problem of plastic aid our efforts against climate change?</p> <p>Can we make a difference to environmental issues by taking on plastic?</p> <p>Do we think that the anti-plastic movement is more likely to succeed than attempts at dealing with climate change?</p>	<p>Singaporeans are not blind to the fact that plastic use impacts our environment. As a tiny island state situated near the equator, we will most likely face the brunt of climate change. This is not far from the public consciousness, and many Singaporeans are now taking action to address plastic use.</p> <p>The Singapore society is beginning to understand the urgency of the issue of using plastic and how it impacts climate change as cafes now see more consumers purchasing "keepcups" for their takeaway drinks. Some retailers, such as Starbucks and Dutch Colony, also give incentives when consumers bring their own cups.</p>	<p>Being a rather cautious society, Singaporeans are sceptical about whether they can meaningfully make a difference as individuals. At the same time, some people think plastic is better for the environment as no water (a scarce resource in Singapore) is required to wash it. Others think everything can be recycled so it does not harm the environment. These ignorant perspectives are still prevalent in the Singapore society, especially since disposable plastic is now part of the culture and convenience wins in our society.</p> <p>Though some pockets of corporations are encouraging their consumers to bring their own cups, containers and dining utensils for takeaway, some large F&B retailers are still opposed to the idea, harping on the notion that it might compromise cleanliness – a big deal in spotless Singapore, where plastic bags are seen as necessary to hygienically dispose wet waste. None of the major retailers, however, seem worried by the reputational risk of being associated with plastic wastefulness, as the majority of their customers are still nonchalant about the plastic issue and how it is related to environmental degradation and climate change.</p>

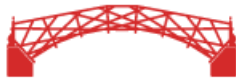


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<p>Issue 1: The problem of plastic is much larger than we perceive it to be because:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - It stems from our pervasive consumerist culture - It is too big for us to handle - It is intertwined with several other issues which are as challenging to deal with. <p>'To take on plastic is in some way to take on consumerism itself'. (lines 30-31)</p> <p>'People now realise that plastic is in our household products, coffee cups, teabags and clothing – but it seems to have escaped our ability to catch it. It slips through our fingers and our water filters and sloshes into rivers and oceans like effluent from a sinister industrial factory'. (lines 57-59)</p> <p>'This is the paradox of plastic, or at least our current obsession with it: learning about the scale of the problem moved us to act, but the more we push against it, the more it begins to seem just as boundless and intractable as all the other environmental problems we have failed to solve'. (lines 83-86)</p> <p>'And it brings us up against the same obstacles: unregulatable business, the globalised world, and our own unsustainable way of life. We need to recognise that plastic isn't just an isolated problem that we can banish from our lives, but simply the most visible product of our past half-century of rampant consumption'. (lines 86-89)</p>	<p>Guiding Questions / Discussion Issues</p> <p>Are Singaporeans motivated to act in the interest of the environment, or are they defeated by the enormity of the task?</p> <p>Does consumerism fuel plastic use in Singapore?</p> <p>Are Singaporeans able to tackle our lifestyles and our consumptive behaviour alongside the problem of plastic? Do Singaporeans see any link between the two issues?</p> <p>Is the pervasiveness of plastic recognised and addressed as a problem in Singapore?</p> <p>Are we able to control the problem? Is it within our means?</p> <p>Does Singapore's position in the globalised world contribute to this problem?</p> <p>What conditions are Singapore facing that might limit the success of tackling the plastic problem?</p>	<p>Applicable</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Retailers and companies are set up to feed Singapore's obsession with convenience, efficiency, and cost-cutting as plastics are cheap and easy to use. This habit of using plastics for many decades now has ingrained a certain psyche in most of us. The average Singaporean uses an unconscionable 13 plastic bags a day, and this has become a big part of our convenience culture where deliveries and take-out meals are becoming increasingly common. • It is also undeniable that Singapore, being a highly globalised city, is also engaged in global capitalism and consumerist behaviour. In an international economy that prioritises economic growth and development, the unsustainability of the plastic problem is far larger than just what Singaporeans alone consume. • As much as Singaporeans are usually concerned about cost-savings, economic disincentives fail to work on the general populace. It is unlikely that charging or taxing single-use plastics will work in the long run if people lack social conviction and political will for change. • As a developed country in the relatively poorer region of Southeast Asian nations, Singapore is guilty of dumping its plastic waste in developing countries. Singapore exported almost 42,000 tonnes of plastic waste to countries including Malaysia, Vietnam and Indonesia in 2016, according to the latest United Nations trade data. This essentially puts the problem 'out of sight and out of mind'. Just as quickly as plastic trash is thrown away and removed by Singapore's efficient cleaning system, it vanishes from the consumer consciousness once Singaporeans have engaged in excessive consumption of plastics. 	<p>Less / Not applicable</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Singapore recognises the problem and has pledged to take steps against plastic waste. It says it aims to become a "zero waste" nation, meaning it will eventually not send any waste to landfill, and this is mostly supported by non-governmental organisations in Singapore. The NEA has also said that it will be implementing initiatives aimed at increasing recycling rates and reducing waste at the source. • Some companies are in fact exercising self-regulation and have taken concrete measures to reduce their plastic footprint, at the same time serving their economic interests and garnering social goodwill. KFC became the first fast food chain in Singapore to remove plastic straws and lids from its restaurants, a move that will save 17.8 metric tonnes of single-use plastic a year. • Government agencies are collaborating to get the best possible outcome. Let's Recycle Together is a new campaign by Zero Waste SG which aims to encourage more HDB residents to recycle using the existing blue recycling bins in their estates, and to educate them on recycling correctly. This ground-up campaign complements the National Recycling Programme by the National Environment Agency (NEA). This is part of a long-term approach which requires time for results to show, but would be highly effective in mitigating environmental impact if successful. • Several initiatives which have been proposed may alleviate the problem or buy the authorities more time to work out more comprehensive responses. For example, RedMart, one of the largest online supermarkets in Singapore, switched to oxo-biodegradable bags which are designed to harmlessly biodegrade in the presence of oxygen. This allows people to stick with their consumption habits while being more environmentally-friendly.



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<p>Issue 2: Individuals, corporations and politicians are jumping onto the bandwagon to deal with the problem of plastic, with no genuine concern, rather focusing on being visible.</p> <p>'We have entered a phase where where every brand, organisation and politician strains to be seen to be doing something.' (lines 64-65)</p>	<p>Are the responses of individuals, organisations and the government merely a form of lip service to the severity of the problem?</p> <p>Are the different stakeholders in Singapore genuinely concerned about and doing something about the plastic problem?</p>	<p>While many agree with the common-sense argument to reduce plastic use, attempts to bring results are not always well thought-out or received. Some groups and organisations faced major backlash as their efforts came across as opportunistic or unrealistic. National University of Singapore (NUS) launched straw-ban campaign iReject in October 2018 at certain food and beverage outlets on campus. Students were not upset over the message of being environmentally conscious, but rather the abruptness of the ban and how it was executed as the campaign felt like a half-hearted attempt to care. In this case, the university only notified students via email about the campaign one day before it was implemented. This top-down ban did not go well as more feel that education and choice should go hand in hand. Others feel that more focus should be on changing students' consumption habits.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Applying quick solutions like banning or charging for plastic bags without fully understanding its environmental effect can be a waste of resources, in terms of manpower, time and taxpayers' money, especially when government resources are limited. A more rational approach argues that focusing simply on banning or charging for plastic bags can be a distraction from the real problem, giving a false sense of achievement in thinking that we have reduced our environmental impact when in fact we have not. Besides, Singapore should invest in innovative plastic waste treatment technologies to minimise use of plastic packaging and increase plastic waste recycling rate. The National Research Foundation grant by NEA and should be striving towards zero waste instead of zero plastic bags 	<p>There are evident efforts to encourage recycling in Singapore, with blue bins conveniently housed in neighbourhood estates around the island. These blue bins have been in existence since April 2001, when they were launched under the National Environment Agency's (NEA) National Recycling Programme (NRP). The NRP collects paper, plastic, glass and metal recyclables together in the blue recycling bins that are emptied and processed by public waste collectors (PWCs), working towards becoming a Zero Waste Nation by reusing and recycling all materials.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In April 2017, ten Singaporean environmental groups called for stronger action against plastic waste by co-signing an op-ed "Plastics: Enough Trash Talk". This is the first of such a united show of support which was spearheaded by WWF. "Plastics: Enough Trash Talk" reveals the true extent and impact of the plastic problem and shows how convenience can numb common sense. This shows concerted advocacy to fight against the problem of plastic.





References	Guiding Questions / Discussion Issues	Applicable	Less / Not applicable
<p>Issue 3: Corporations and governments are shifting the responsibility of the problem of plastic waste onto individuals.</p> <p>'Framing litter as a personal failing was remarkably convenient.' (lines 66-67)</p> <p>In 1988, the year global plastic production pulled even with steel, Margaret Thatcher, picking up litter in St James's Park for a photo opportunity, captured the tone perfectly. "This is not the fault of the government," she told reporters. "It is the fault of the people who knowingly and thoughtlessly throw it down." Noticeably absent from her indictment was anyone who manufactured or sold plastic in the first place. (lines 66-71)</p>	<p>Is the excessive use of plastic and littering seen as the fault of the individual in Singapore?</p> <p>Do the Singaporean government and local companies take responsibility for this?</p>	<p>The rhetoric behind the numerous anti-litter campaigns in Singapore is built on individual responsibility, and any offences are deemed to be the individual's fault. Just last year, the National Environment Agency (NEA) issued 39,000 litterbugs fines. The lurid yellow vests worn by offenders served with Corrective Work Orders (CWOs) and made to clean the streets have also been redesigned to make them even more readily distinguishable, in a bid to deter offenders. This leverages on the importance Singaporeans place on their personal reputations, and the problem of litter (amongst other environmental issues) is hence framed as a personal failing and not so much as something larger to be tackled by other stakeholders. This is fairly reasonable given how there are indeed countless cases of individuals carelessly disposing of (single-use) plastic product by the roadside or near waterways, including plastic bags which were unnecessarily taken when purchasing just one item that could have been stored in one's pocket or bag.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Last year, MP Louis Ng called on the government to do more to tackle the city-state's chronic plastic over-use problem and move towards a plastic-lite Singapore by banning single-use plastic in the public sector, and putting a charge on carrier bags to address this urgent public safety issue. This was met with a familiar response from the Ministry of Environment and Water Resources (MEWR) – that plastic pollution will be tackled through public education not policy, in order to build "a national consciousness to care for the environment". This clearly shows the approach in viewing plastic use as a personal responsibility. (Also mentioned in Motivation #1 Applicable) 	<p>There have been ground-up efforts in Singapore as several companies in the supermarket, hotel, food & beverage industries have pledged to take targeted measures to reduce plastic use, taking responsibility of the issue. The companies are committed to taking measures to cut plastic use within the stipulated time frames they set, starting with the removal of unnecessary plastics from their operations. Four major supermarket chains will be working with the Singapore Environment Council (SEC) and DBS Bank to encourage customers to take fewer single-use plastic bags and opt for reusable bags instead.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Singapore government acknowledges the problem of plastic and has set aside resources for relevant research to tackle it. Singapore is at the forefront of scientific research, which may involve finding better materials, improving waste management or removing plastics from nature. The government offers research grants for companies and organisations to develop sustainable waste management technologies, and has planned to make it mandatory for large generators of packaging waste to report the types and quantities they use and their reduction plans by 2021.
<p>Issue 4:</p> <p>The plastic industry is making exaggerated claims about the potential of recycling their products.</p> <p>'The problem with these rosy claims was that plastic is one of the worst materials for recycling.' (line 74)</p> <p>'Each stage is essentially a one-way ratchet towards landfill or the ocean.' (lines 79-80)</p>	<p>Are the recycling efforts in Singapore really effective?</p> <p>What happens to all the plastic in Singapore?</p>	<p>MEWR, as part of Zero Waste SG, proposed a circular economy approach where they launched research for the sustainable design for plastic materials, with the aim of allowing plastics to be more reusable and easier to recycle. At this point, it is still not known if this approach has been effective or feasible in businesses and corporations.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In an effort to go green, BreadTalk introduced biodegradable bags. However, as there are many varieties of biodegradable plastic, some only degrade at higher temperatures, and when they do, form microplastic particles that are harmful to the oceans. 	<p>Singapore is at the forefront of research into new technologies to recycle plastics. A team of researchers from the National University of Singapore and the Singapore Institute of Manufacturing Technology have converted polyethylene terephthalate (PET) bottles into a highly insulating and absorbent material called aerogel, that turns the plastic waste that ends up in oceans and landfills into a life-saving material, say, for making cheap fire-resistant jackets for all people. They are making true the claim that certain plastics can indeed be recycled and put to other use.</p>