



YISHUN INNOVA JUNIOR COLLEGE
JC2 PRELIMINARY EXAMINATION
in preparation for General Certificate of Education Advanced Level
Higher 1

CANDIDATE
NAME

CLASS

INDEX
NUMBER

GENERAL PAPER

8807/02

Paper 2

19th August 2021

INSERT

1 hour 30 minutes

READ THESE INSTRUCTIONS FIRST

This Insert contains the passages for Paper 2.

This document consists of 3 printed pages and 1 blank page.

Passage 1. Scott Stoner considers the importance of memories.

- 1 In the *Mysterious Flame of Queen Loana* by Umberto Eco, a 59-year-old rare book dealer named Yambo suffers a stroke and is unable to recall any of his personal experiences – what it feels like to brush his teeth or who he is married to. In a desperate attempt to recall his lost memories, he returns to his childhood home only to suffer a severe sense of displacement. Yambo compares that unsettling feeling to ‘revisiting a world you have never seen before: like coming home, after a long journey, to someone else’s house’. Indeed, our memories make us who we are. Without memories, we are nameless faces in a fleeting crowd, stripped of individuality, and unable to connect to others and our environment. 5
- 2 While memories are fallible in accurately capturing past events, this imperfection is precisely what gives us our individuality. Our memories are filtered and distilled from pure reality into a personal brew that is formulated by our own unique physiologies and emotional backgrounds. They are our personal (and highly subjective) interpretations of the past upon which we spin whole narratives and create whole universes – separate from but still tethered to the actual universe. This is what makes us unique. Yet, this is also why a loss in memory is acutely unsettling. Like Yambo, without our personal memories, we feel like we are returning to a house we never had a chance to decorate and a space we never resided in. 10 15
- 3 Memories are not just personal. They are frequently forged and crystallised through interactions with others. It is this collective social memory that is integral in shaping cultural and communal identity. It is little wonder that cultures across the world strive to enshrine memories in formal ways such as history books, commemorative plaques, monuments and statues. Some even resort to alternative means like ballads, chants, verses and dance to escape the limitations of such formal recordings to preserve the visceral aspects of their culture. This archival obsession extends to preserving the most commonplace of objects. At the Jewish Museum in Berlin, such objects provide the most vivid records of lived lives. For the National Museum of African American History in Washington, many of its artefacts are humble objects, arising from lives lived in poverty and the museum built this collection through public call-outs rather than through participating in expensive auctions. While highly inconspicuous, the objects chart an important (and often hidden) history of slavery and its aftermath. This is why communities have gone to such lengths to curate memory repositories – the fundamental belief is that memories of the past will go a long way to informing who we are today. 20 25 30
- 4 Memories are also crucial as they provide psychological respite and reassurance, especially in times of crisis. We can look to happier times to give us strength, and will ourselves to push through the obstacles and restore the better days. Beyond that, memories establish a connection between past and present that continually reminds individuals that they do not merely exist in the now but are part of something larger. Individuals are reminded that they are heirs to the institutions and narratives that their ancestors worked hard to establish; they are also protectors - shaping, sustaining, and developing the culture and environment that will be passed down to the future generations. For tragedy-struck communities, this connection forged by memories elevates their sense of purpose and motivates them to forge ahead bravely. When a major earthquake and tsunami struck the Tohoku region of Japan in 2011, efforts were made to rescue a single pine tree (the sole survivor of 70, 000 trees that once dotted the coast of Rikuzentakata City). While the forest will not recover within this generation, the pine tree is carefully preserved for posterity in memory of what things were like before. For the locals, the pine tree is no longer a simple tree but a historical symbol, connecting the devastated community with the flourishing land before the 2011 tragedy. It also keeps the memory of the coastal forest intact to inspire locals to rebuild the land to its former glory. 35 40 45
- 5 Whether as a personal compass to make sense of our surroundings and give direction to our lives, or as an anchor for entire communities and nations, memories hold societies together. It is our enhanced capacity for memory that separates us from all other living creatures; it allows us to make sense of our world and make connections the same way we cannot count beyond a number if we cannot remember what came before. 50

Passage 2. David Rieff considers the importance of forgetting.

- 1 During the Bosnian war in 1993, an American reporter famously labelled that war was 'in large measure a slaughter fuelled by the inability to forget'. He was also known to carry around copies of two poems written by Wisława Szymborska – 'The End and the Beginning' and 'Reality Demands'. The two poems, increasingly creased and faded, were a reminder for him of the ethical imperative of forgetting so that life can go on – as it must. Forgetting, perhaps is counterintuitive for most societies today who venerate the necessity of remembering. We have been taught that the remembering of the past and the memorialising of collective historical memory is one of humanity's highest moral obligations. But what if this is wrong (at least part of the time)? What if collective historical memory, as it is employed by communities and nations, has far too often led to war rather than peace, to resentment rather than reconciliation, and to the determination to exact revenge rather than offer forgiveness for injuries both real and imagined? 5 10
- 2 Of course, the prescription is not moral amnesia. To be wholly without memory would be to be without a world. It is also not fair to stop groups from memorialising their dead and acknowledging their fallen war heroes. Forgetting can do injustice to the past but too much remembering does an injustice to the present. While it is impossible to state with confidence which is worse, forgetting or remembering, the latter seems to have become a far greater risk than the former especially when people throughout the world are obsessed by a new cult of memory. Furthermore, given humanity's tendency towards aggression, forgetting may be the only safe response. Forgetting should be a cause for relief rather than disapproval. 15
- 3 To remember all the aggression and other moral catastrophes is to remember how little remembering does to change who we are and what we are capable of. The inability to forget can be actively dangerous. We only have to look to countries like Ireland, the United States, Australia and countless others, turning up example after example of historical memory being manipulated into ideology and insidiously crafted into slogans and battle cries. Historical memory often times can be the birth of further conflict and hatred. Even if the foray into the past to retrieve and commemorate a nation's past is driven by leaders with no malicious intentions, and done simply to 'foster national unity and patriotism', things are never that innocent. Every nation's historical memory is inevitably filled with conflicts and consequently, sufferings. Accordingly, these episodes are painful and emotional. Meddling with the past can unknowingly stir unpleasant memories and feelings, and when this occurs, responses become angry and ungoverned by logic. Needless things may be said that cannot be retracted. 20 25 30
- 4 Furthermore, what many national leaders do not realise is that creating national cohesion by recalling common struggles and conflicts can create an 'us' versus 'them' narrative. The perpetrator, aggressor, wrong-doer, whether they be an individual, community within the nation, or another nation, will be cast in a bad light (ironically) to foster solidarity. This is not to suggest that there is an easy solution. However, at least, let there be no turning of a blind eye to the high price societies have paid and are continuing to pay for the solace of remembrance. Is it not conceivable that were our societies to expend even a fraction of the energy on forgetting that they now do on remembering, then peace in some of the worst places in the world might be a step closer? 35 40
- 5 As for the poet Wisława Szymborska, she was born in 1923 and lived through Poland's agonies under Germans and Russians alike. For her generation, the soil of the nation's countryside and the paving stones of its cities were drenched in blood, suffused with tragic, unbearable, and destructive memories. Yet, even for her, everything must end, including mourning. In 'Reality Demands', she writes that 'Reality demands we also state the following: life goes on'. Life goes on. This is a lesson we must learn, otherwise, the blood never dries, and, long after the quarrel has stopped making any sense, the memory of the grudge endures. 45

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GENERAL PAPER

8807/02

Paper 2

19th August 2021

1 hour 30 minutes

Candidates answer on the Question Paper.

READ THESE INSTRUCTIONS FIRST

Write your class, index number and name on all the work you hand in.

Write in dark blue or black pen.

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

Answer **all** questions.

The Insert contains the passages 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 the 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 and **1** Insert.

Read the passages 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 and phrases from the passage.

From Passage 1

1 In paragraph 1, the author shares how memories make us who we are. In doing this, how does the author try to engage the interest of the reader?

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

2 Explain what the author means by 'we feel like we are returning to a house we never had a chance to decorate and a space we never resided in' (lines 15–16).

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

3 Why has the author placed 'and often hidden' (line 27) in brackets?

.....
..... [1]

4 In paragraph 4, how does the reference to the single pine tree demonstrate that the 'connection forged by memories elevates their sense of purpose and motivates them to forge ahead bravely' (lines 38–39)? **Use your own words as far as possible.**

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..... [3]

From Passage 2

6 In paragraph 1, why does the author choose to describe the two poems that the American reporter owned as 'increasingly creased and faded' (line 4)?

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..... [2]

7 What **two** contrasts does the author make in lines 8–11 about the outcomes of employing collective historical memory? **Use your own words as far as possible.**

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

8 In lines 27–31, explain why the author suggests that to commemorate a nation's past is 'never that innocent'. **Use your own words as far as possible.**

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..... [3]

9 Explain the author's use of the phrase 'at least' in line 36.

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..... [2]

**Yishun Innova Junior College
Preliminary Examination 2021
General Paper
Paper 2 Answer Scheme**

From Passage 1

1. In paragraph 1, the author shares how memories make us who we are. In doing this, how does the author try to engage the interest of the reader? [2]

Author's Intention / Language Use

From the Passage	Suggested Answer
<p>In the <i>Mysterious Flame of Queen Loana</i> by Umberto Eco, a 59-year-old rare book dealer named Yambo suffers a stroke and is <u>unable to recall any of his personal experiences</u> – what it <u>feels like to brush his teeth or who he is married to</u>. In a desperate attempt to recall his lost memories, he returns to his childhood home only to suffer a <u>severe sense of displacement</u>. Yambo compares that <u>unsettling feeling</u> to <u>'revisiting a world you have never seen before: like coming home, after a long journey, to someone else's house'</u>.</p>	<p>The author engages the interest of the reader by</p> <p>(a1) <i>[technique]</i> alluding to Umberto Eco's <i>Mysterious Flame of Queen Loana</i> which centres around an amnesiac character // giving the example of a fictitious character, Yambo, who lost his memories. [1]</p> <p>(b1) <i>[application]</i> This acts as a hook that makes the passage more interesting to read. // This makes the opening more memorable for the reader. // This allows the reader to immerse more deeply in the narrative. [1]</p> <p>OR</p> <p>(a2) <i>[technique]</i> providing an analogy that compares the disconnection resulting from memory loss to entering a foreign place / returning to a stranger's home. [1]</p> <p>(b2) <i>[application]</i> This allows the reader to better visualise / understand / empathise with the author's point about how losing one's memories leads to a loss of identity. [1]</p> <p>OR</p>

	<p>(a3) <i>[technique]</i> using a comparison / an analogy of returning to an unfamiliar home after a long time away. [1]</p> <p>(b3) <i>[application]</i> to help the reader understand / visualise // to make it clearer to the reader the unsettling feeling of losing one's memories. [1]</p> <p>OR</p> <p>(a4) <i>[technique]</i> employing phrases like 'coming home, after a long journey, to someone else's house'. [1]</p> <p>(b4) <i>[application]</i> This invokes a sense of futility in the reader with regard to Yambo's circumstances, that despite his longing, he never finds connection / familiarity with his surroundings. [1]</p> <p>OR</p> <p><u>BOD</u></p> <p>(a5) <i>[technique]</i> describing Yambo's inability to do a series of basic actions (like brushing his teeth). [1]</p> <p>(b5) <i>[application]</i> This invokes pity in the reader for the character of Yambo. [1]</p> <p>Any other logical answer is accepted.</p> <p>Any 1 pair (a+b) correct = 2m Correct technique given with wrong application = 1m Wrong technique given correct application = 1m No technique given with correct application = 0m</p> <p>No context given = 0m</p>
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2. Explain what the author means by 'we feel like we are returning to a house we never had a chance to decorate and a space we never resided in' (lines 15–16). [2]

Closet Paraphrase + Inference

From the Passage	Suggested Answer
<p>Like Yambo, without our personal memories, we feel like we are returning to a house we never had a chance to decorate</p> <p>and a space we never resided in.</p>	<p>He means that <u>without our personal memories</u>.</p> <p>(a) our past will be devoid of our personal influences / elements / personal connection [1]</p> <p><i>Note: do not accept literal paraphrases like 'coming back to the home we have never designed'</i></p> <p>(b) and we feel a sense of detachment / lack of belonging to the past. [1]</p> <p><i>Note: do not accept literal paraphrases like 'not our house'</i></p> <p>Penalise 1m for lack of context.</p>

3. Why has the author placed 'and often hidden' (line 27) in brackets? [1]

Punctuation

From the Passage	Suggested Answer
<p>While highly inconspicuous, the objects chart an important (and often hidden) <u>history of slavery</u> and its aftermath.</p>	<p>(a) <i>[function]</i> The use of brackets is to show the author's opinion / comment / insight // additional information // give an informative sidenote</p> <p>(b) <i>[context]</i> that the artefacts not only map a crucial but also frequently / usually concealed / unseen history of slavery and its consequences / repercussions.</p> <p>(a)+(b) = 1m</p>

4. In paragraph 4, how does the reference to the single pine tree demonstrate that the 'connection forged by memories elevates their sense of purpose and motivates them to forge ahead bravely' (lines 38–39)? **Use your own words as far as possible.** [3]

Point-Illustration

From the Passage	Suggested Answer
<p>For tragedy-struck communities, this connection forged by memories elevates their sense of purpose and motivates them to forge ahead bravely. When a major earthquake and tsunami struck the Tohoku region of Japan in 2011, efforts were made to rescue a single pine tree (the sole survivor of 70, 000 trees that once dotted the coast of Rikuzentakata City). While the forest will not recover within this generation, the pine tree is carefully preserved for posterity in memory of what things were like before. For the locals, the pine tree is no longer a simple tree but a historical symbol, <u>connecting</u> the devastated community with the flourishing land before the 2011 tragedy. It also keeps the memory of the coastal forest intact to <u>inspire locals</u> to <u>rebuild</u> the <u>land</u> to its former glory.</p>	<p>The reference to the single pine tree demonstrates the quotation by</p> <p>(a) Foregrounding / using the pine tree as the one remaining tree that existed <u>before</u> the earthquake and tsunami when the coastal region was very much alive / thriving / fertile / prospering and still exists <u>now</u> when the area has been destroyed / badly hit by the natural disaster. [1]</p> <p>(b) In so doing, the <u>connection</u> encourages / compels / stirs / galvanises / rallies the <u>people of that area</u> [1]</p> <p>(c) to <u>reconstruct / restore</u> the <u>coastal land / area / region</u> to what it once was / its previously thriving self. [1]</p> <p><i>Point (a) illustrates the 'connection forged by memories'. Point (b) illustrates 'elevates their sense of purpose and motivates them' and point (c) demonstrates 'forge ahead bravely'.</i></p>

5. Using material from paragraphs 3–4 (lines 17–46), summarise what the author has to say about (R-1) why memories are important and (R-2) the manner in which they are preserved.

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.** [8]

Memories are important because...

Pt	Req	From the Passage	Suggested Answer
1	R-2	They are frequently forged and crystallised through interactions with others.	when preserved through communication / dealings / relationships with others,
2	R-1	It is this collective social memory that is integral in shaping cultural and communal identity the fundamental belief is that memories of the past will go a long way to informing who we are today .	it is the shared communal memory that is essential in determining / crafting / moulding / influencing our social / traditional / common / shared / collective character / uniqueness .
3	R-2	It is little wonder that cultures across the world strive to enshrine memories in formal ways such as history books, commemorative plaques, monuments and statues . <i>(inferred)</i> ...such formal recordings...	Thus, many groups / communities worldwide endeavor to preserve these memories in an official / institutionalised manner / way .
4	R-2	Some even resort to alternative means like ballads, chants, verses and dance... <i>(inferred)</i>	Others turn to the arts / cultural expressions // non-official / non-institutionalised methods .
5	R-2	to preserve the visceral aspects of their <u>culture</u> .	to maintain / conserve the sentimental / emotional / instinctive features / parts / portions / elements of their <u>culture</u> .
6	R-2	This archival obsession extends to preserving the most commonplace of objects... For the National Museum of African American History in Washington, many of its artefacts are humble objects, arising from lives lived in poverty	There is a fascination to document our ordinary / daily / modest / simple items.

7	R-1	At the Jewish Museum in Berlin, such objects provide the most vivid records of lived lives.	These items offer the extremely authentic / lucid / clear records / perspectives of how people in the past <u>led / conducted</u> their everyday living.
8	R-2	...and the museum built this collection through public call-outs ...	This archive was built through appealing / advertising / campaigning / reaching (to) the community / society
9	R-1	... the objects chart an important (and often hidden) history of slavery (inferred)	Such an archive helps to map / trace out / plot / show a progression of an essential / crucial / vital and often concealed / obscured aspects of history
10	R-1	and its aftermath.	and the repercussions / ramifications / consequences.
11	R-1	Memories are also crucial as they provide psychological respite (<u>especially in times of crisis</u>)	<u>During crises</u> , memories are important in offering mental relief / breather
12	R-1	and reassurance , <u>especially in times of crisis.</u>	and comfort / encouragement / cheer / emotional support. <i>*For pts 11 & 12, penalise lack of context for the correctly paraphrased point; if both points are paraphrased correctly but no context is given, penalise for the lack of context only once.</i>
13	R-1	We can look to happier times to give us strength,	We can turn to / think about more cheerful / joyful / better moments to feel uplifted / encouraged / motivated / rejuvenated / energised / empowered
14	R-1	and will <u>ourselves</u> to push through the obstacles OR and motivates <u>them</u> to forge ahead bravely.	and encourage / commit <u>ourselves</u> to persevere / endure / persist / press on courageously through the difficulties / hardships / hindrances / hard times
15	R-1	and restore the better days. .. rebuild the land to its former glory	and rebuild / reconstruct / bring back the previously good / happier times // how things used to be.
16	R-1	Beyond that, memories <u>establish a connection between past and present</u> that continually reminds individuals	Memories forge / build / create a network / bridge / link between the past and present/current times that constantly / consistently / frequently / regularly highlight to people / help individuals remember
17	R-1	Beyond that, memories establish a connection between past and present that continually reminds individuals that they <u>do not merely exist</u> in the now	Memories forge / build / create a network / bridge / link between the past and present/current times that constantly / consistently / frequently / regularly highlight to people / help individuals remember that they <u>do not only / solely live / survive</u> in the present / current times / today

18	R-1	but are <u>part of something larger</u> .	but they are <u>a factor / component / player / member / have a role in more significant / important matters</u> .
19	R-1	Individuals are reminded that they are heirs to the institutions and narratives that <u>their ancestors worked hard to establish</u>	Individuals remember that they are successors to the communities and histories <u>that their predecessors strived to build up</u> .
20	R-1	[they are reminded that] they are also protectors – OR shaping, sustaining, and developing the <u>culture and environment</u>	and that they also have to defend / safeguard / guard / preserve their <u>norms and surroundings</u> OR and that they are instrumental in forming / building / creating / influencing, keeping / maintaining / continuing, and growing / expanding / promoting the <u>culture and environment (2 out of 3 needed)</u>
21	R-1	that will be passed down to the <u>future generations</u> .	that will be shared / carried on to later / <u>younger generations/successors</u> .
22	R-1	<u>For tragedy-struck communities</u> , this connection forged by memories elevates their sense of purpose	<u>For societies that were hit by calamities/suffering/catastrophes/adversities</u> , the links created by memories heighten / increase their motivation / drive / determination / passion to work towards / reach / achieve their goals.

Points	1-2	3-4	5-6	7-8	9	10-11	12-13	≥14
Mark	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8

Sample Summary

Memories are important because communal memories are essential in determining customs and common character². Memories are preserved officially³ or through the arts⁴. The fascination to document objects from our ordinary lives includes modest items⁶. Appealing to the community built the archive⁸, mapping the essential and obscured aspects of history⁹ and their repercussions¹⁰. During crises, memories offer mental relief¹¹ and comfort¹². Remembering more cheerful moments empower people¹³, encouraging them to persevere through the difficulties¹⁴ and rebuild the glorious past¹⁵. Memories forge networks between the eras which constantly help people remember that they do not only live presently¹⁷, but are factors in something more significant¹⁸. As successors to what their predecessors did¹⁹, individuals should defend their norms and surroundings²⁰ that are shared to later generations²¹.

(119 words, 17 points)

From Passage 2

6. In paragraph 1, why does the author choose to describe the two poems that the American reporter owned as 'increasingly creased and faded' (line 4)? [2]

[Inference]

From the Passage	Suggested Answer
<p>The two poems, increasingly creased and faded,</p> <p>were a reminder for him of the ethical imperative of <u>forgetting</u> so that <u>life</u> can go on – as it must.</p>	<p>The author suggests that</p> <p>(a) the American reporter constantly / repeatedly referred to / referenced / relied on the hardcopy poems, [1]</p> <p>(b) as they re-affirmed / strengthened his conviction / resolve // helped him keep in mind / remember that it was very important / crucial / vital in the moral sense <u>to forget</u> so that <u>life</u> can continue / one can <u>continue living / carry on with life</u> [1]</p>

7. What **two** contrasts does the author make in lines 8–11 about the outcomes of employing collective historical memory? **Use your own words as far as possible.** [2]

Direct Paraphrase – Paired response

From the Passage	Suggested Answer
<p>What if collective historical memory, as it is employed by communities and nations, has far too often led to war rather than peace,</p> <p>to resentment rather than reconciliation,</p> <p>and to the determination to exact revenge rather than offer forgiveness for injuries both real and imagined?</p>	<p>The author feels that employing collective historical memory more often than not leads to</p> <p>(a) conflict / fighting / bloodshed / clashes rather than harmony,</p> <p>(b) bearing a grudge / bitterness as opposed to restoration / coming to terms with each other / coming to an agreement</p> <p>(c) and the single-minded resolve to inflict / enact punishment / retribution rather than to pardon / absolve / exonerate those who wronged / hurt / caused sufferings / pain to them that may or may not exist.</p> <p>1 mark for 1 point (up to a maximum of 2 marks)</p>

8. In lines 27–31, explain why the author suggests that to commemorate a nation's past is 'never that innocent'. Use your own words as far as possible. [3]

Direct Paraphrase

From the Passage	Suggested Answer
<p>... things are never that innocent. Every nation's historical memory is inevitably filled with conflicts and consequently, sufferings.</p> <p>Accordingly, these episodes are painful and emotional.</p> <p>Meddling with the past can unknowingly stir unpleasant memories and feelings, and when this occurs,</p> <p>responses become angry and ungoverned by logic.</p> <p>Needless things may be <u>said</u> that cannot be retracted.</p>	<p>The author believes that because</p> <p>(a) All countries' historical memory is undoubtedly full of in-fighting / disputes / disagreements and struggles / hardships</p> <p>(b) which can evoke / cause distress / agony / anguish / grief / misery / heartbreak / sorrow.</p> <p>(c) Interfering with history can unexpectedly / unintentionally / unwittingly bring up / rile up distasteful / horrible / awful memories and emotions.</p> <p>(d) causing enraged / furious / infuriated / incensed and rash / insensible / irrational / unreasonable / unfounded / unjustified reactions, and</p> <p>(e) unnecessarily hurtful remarks / comments may be made that cannot be taken back / withdrawn / remedied.</p> <p>1-2 pts = 1m 3 pts = 2m 4-5 pts = 3m</p>

9. Explain the author's use of the phrase 'at least' in line 36. [2]

Vocabulary Inferential

From the Passage	Suggested Answer
<p>This is <u>not</u> to suggest that there is an easy solution</p> <p>However, at least, let there be no turning of a blind eye to the high price <u>societies</u> have paid and are continuing to pay for the solace of <u>remembrance</u>.</p>	<p>The author uses the phrase to show that</p> <p>(a) the minimum / the basic thing / the smallest amount we can do is that [1]</p> <p>(b) even though there is no simple / straightforward / uncomplicated resolution / response // while parties cannot come to a consensus, we can still acknowledge / recognise / see the great expense / cost / sacrifice shouldered by <u>societies</u> for the comfort / consolation of <u>remembrance</u>. [1]</p>

10. One writer thinks that memories are important for individuals and societies, while the other believes that it might be better to forget.

How far do you agree with the opinions expressed in these **two** passages? Support your answer with examples drawn from your own experience and that of your society. [10]

Introduction

In Singapore, people are encouraged to think back on the past in order to understand how we have come to be in these past decades of immense growth. Memories are invoked in order to draw empathy from people in Singapore's nation-building and national education efforts. While some might feel that attempts to appeal to the masses by evoking emotions associated with our nation's past tribulations might seem contrived, I agree more with Stoner's arguments that drawing on memories to appeal to Singaporean society's collective conscience has largely been effective in serving multiple purposes.

Body Paragraph 1 – Supporting Viewpoint Paragraph based on Passage 1

In passage 1, Scott Stoner claims in lines 28 to 29 that "communities have gone to such lengths to curate memory repositories – the fundamental belief is that memories of the past will go a long way to informing who we are today." His point is that communities extend great efforts to preserve the collective memories of their past in various ways, be it formally in books, statues and so on to more aesthetic and visceral aspects related to the performing arts which will play a crucial role in contributing to our identity. This is likewise true in the case of my society, Singapore. Being a country forged from a melting pot of cultures originating from different places of the world, Singapore would not have what is now called the Singaporean identity if not for the government's far-sightedness in spending massive amounts of resources to preserve our memories of the past in various forms. The charting of the immigrant story in history books has taught countless generations of children as they progress through the Singapore education system about their nation's past as a harbour which provided shelter and a livelihood to many races of immigrants

coming from countries like China, India, Arabia and the Malay Archipelago. The purpose of the immigrant narrative is not merely to preserve the memories of how the nation was founded, but more importantly, to inform today's generation about the values such as hard work, integrity and resilience that our forefathers embodied, notwithstanding where they originated from, and these values form the cornerstone of our Singaporean identity. Other than formal education, our society also curates our collective memories in the performing arts, providing a visceral aspect that tugs at our heartstrings. A significant example is the annual National Day Parade where performers representing our four key races - Chinese, Malay, Indian and Eurasian would weave together a mesmerising fantasia of our collective memories to show our journey from humble disparate beginnings to a harmonious, united society that thrives on the same enduring values of our forefathers. Moreover, our society has gone to great lengths to keep the collective memories of our shared experiences alive as it changes to become a modern cosmopolitan juggernaut. These shared experiences are formed from our childhood memories of growing up in our Housing and Development Board estates which gives our society a distinctive character we can call our own. The National Museum of Singapore curates many artefacts that are commonplace objects which give us a sense of nostalgia of what our lives used to be like. In the Growing Up Gallery section of the museum, visitors are able to see the popular toys and games children used to play growing up, such as the hoop throwing game and wind-up toys. The conservation of these memories in these artefacts is one way for Singapore to retain its character and soul, instead of being just another generic modern city. So, I agree with Stoner's claim that curating memory repositories go a long way to informing who we are.

Body Paragraph 2 - Opposing Viewpoint Paragraph based on Passage 2

David Rieff, on the other hand, feels strongly about the importance of forgetting. He writes that "many national leaders do not realise" that "creating national cohesion by recalling common struggles and conflicts can create an 'us' versus 'them' narrative". In attempting to strengthen patriotism and cohesion, some nations will deliberately make a showcase of how much the country has been through together. Yet, these past struggles, especially if they involve war, and massive bloodshed, can have the opposite effect of polarising groups of people. Actively reminding the current generation of these memories is akin to fanning the flames of resentment as citizens focus on the suffering and begrudge the aggressor. While there is an element of truth to what Rieff postulates here, I ultimately disagree with him especially considering the posture of our Singapore leaders towards fostering a collective memory of our shared past and shared sacrifices in war to encourage a greater sense of nationhood. As a relatively young nation, comprehensive and deliberate efforts have been taken to emphasise the importance of being rooted to the nation and being willing to defend it should the situation arise. To do so, the government has gone to great lengths to frame our historical narratives to propound national identity and values. The result is a single overriding approved narrative presented in official texts and consequently, the act of remembering is meticulously capitalised upon as a tool for political socialisation with little risk of it stirring resentment or unrest. The portrayal of Singapore's history in History and Social Studies textbook clearly evinces my point. From Singapore's founding by Stamford Raffles in 1819, to the colonial period, to the Japanese Occupation and even the narrating of our merger with Malaysia and then independence, the narrative is indubitably one of how Singapore struggled to get to where we are today. Even the narrativising of the Japanese Occupation (the only experience of war in living memory for Singaporeans) with its details of the *Sook Ching*, an operation aimed 'to identify and eliminate suspected anti-Japanese elements among the Chinese community' via cruel means, carefully fashioned into a larger narrative that

emphasises National Education messages of resilience. The suffering that is bound to bring about resentment is not the focus, rather, the focus is on Singapore coming together and pulling through difficult times. Very aptly, the 'Recollections' that is read at the annual National Day Parade and in National Day Celebrations in schools across Singapore starts with the following lines: 'There was a time, not long ago, when other flags flew in Singapore. The British flag in colonial rule, and the Japanese flag in war. There was no freedom, no justice'. The 'Recollections' is typically read by one individual, and at specific points, the audience will respond with various phrases reiterating the sufferings of our nation and how '[w]e pledge to keep our nation free with justice and equality'. The point of this Recollections is clear: we should not 'take for granted what we have will always be' and to commemorate how 'against all odds' we 'build a nation of our own'. This, too, is the message of our History and Social Studies textbooks. Remembering, or more specifically, remembering a state-approved interpretation of the past, is crucial for Singaporeans and is the foundation of much of our nation-building efforts. Yes, some have pointed out that emphasising a past ridden with conflicts can lead to feelings of resentment against the aggressor, and eventually cause tensions. This does seem to be the case especially if the conflict being remembered is as devastating as the Japanese Occupation. There seems a good chance that Singaporeans may focus on the brutality and torture that the Japanese soldiers resorted to when executing the Sook Ching Operation. Accompanied with the empathy felt for their ancestors' sufferings, bringing up this chapter of Singapore's history, may prevent closure. Indeed, when Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong visited Japan for the Nikkei Conference in May 2013, he spoke frankly about the long shadow that Japan's World War II record cast on its relations with some of its Asian neighbours 70 years on. He spoke about how his uncle was 'taken away and never came back' and how, as a 10-year-old he had seen a mass grave being dug up beside his school. PM Lee, however, asserted that Singapore was an example of a country that chose to close accounts and forge constructive relations with Japan. Is this (forgetting) then not the basis of laying the past to rest and like Rieff and Szymborska suggest – let 'life go on'? Is this then not the best way to resolve the 'us' versus 'them' tensions and to save diplomatic relations? Yes, I admit that there is much sense to this. Yet, to forget, or to cease remembrance and commemoration of the past, is to ignore the elephant in the room, and even deny closure for the victims and their descendants. PM Lee's larger point was that all countries should face up to history and move on. He did not suggest *forgetting*. In fact, he suggested 'acceptance'. To 'accept' is to remember but to come to terms with the past deed. I therefore agree more with Stoner because I feel that remembering in a constructive way (without unnecessary emphasis on the brutality), much like what Singapore has done, can be valuable for all. Similar to Singapore, we remember the past but we *accept* it as a foregone conclusion to slowly heal from and to glean valuable lessons. This is why Singapore, unlike some other South East Asian countries, is able to annually commemorate Total Defence Day on 15 February, the very day colonial Singapore surrendered to Japan in 1942. Singapore remembers but in a constructive manner to reflect, re-build, and renew. There might be stirring tensions but they may perhaps be exacerbated by forgetting and denying closure. I therefore disagree with Rieff's point and find Stoner's arguments to be more calibrated for the Singapore context.

Conclusion

Memories have been, and will continue to be, essential in forging a common identity for Singaporeans. As Singapore continues to become more multinational and multicultural, with greater movement of talents across our borders, we should continue to rely on the shared bank of memories to strengthen our ever so fragile social fabric.

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3. "War memory and nation-buidling in South East Asia" by Kevin Blackburn
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