GP June Intensive Revision

**Comprehension Learning Skills 6 – Application Question**

The application question requires the student to apply his understanding of the passage to the context of requirement as seen in the question. In doing so, the students will need to conduct the following steps:

### Understand the main ideas in the passage

### Understanding of the question

### Strategy of Development

### Writing Approach

### 1) Understand the main ideas in the passage

To have a good understanding of the passage, students need to comprehend the following areas of discussion:

1. the main theme of the passage
2. the main ideas of the passage
3. the derivation of the main proposition

Theme : Pessimism and optimism

main ideas – views by the society, usefulness, impact on the society, causes (category)

proposition by the author - both are beneficial

**2) Understanding of the question**

A good understanding of the question will provide students the information on how to answer the question. Students need to take know of the following requirements:

* the proposition required for the question (main argument)
* the types of application
* agreement or disagreement
* extent of agreement
* application of the writer’s point of view to the context of question
* comparison of the writer’s point of view to the context of the question
* the nature of discussion
* the analysis of causes
* the provision of solutions
* the prediction of consequences and possibilities
* the application of the ideas and proposition
* other forms of generation of ideas
* the context of application - is this applicable to you and your society?
* the society
* your personal experiences
* the government
* the time period

**Example 1**

**Q. John Ciardi says happiness is the pursuit itself rather than the possession of anything concrete. Erich Fromm says man’s happiness is superficial because it is directed by bureaucracy.**

**Which author’s view do you subscribe to more and explain why. Discuss the concerns your generation has in its search for happiness.**

**In your answer, develop some of the points made by the authors and give your own views.**

**1) What is the focus of the question?**

To assess and select the view which is more agreeable to you in your understanding of happiness and explain and evaluate the apprehension of the youngsters in their pursuit for happiness.

**2) Proposition of the requirement of the question.**

Having considered the diverse views of both writers on the notion of happiness, I would feel that John Ciardi’s perception of happiness is more rational and sensible. As for the concern, both writers have also underlined some factors that shape the apprehension of the young people in Singapore in their pursuit of happiness.

**3) Nature of Application**

The nature of discussion is based on the application of ideas on the basis of alignment of discussion and use of information from the passage for the assessment of the condition in Singapore about the young people’s life.

**4) Context of Application**

The context of application is based on personal evaluation and society.

perspectives

1. agree with the writer A or B
2. disagree with writer A or B
3. Identify one point from passage A as the concern of your generation
4. identify one point from passage B as the concern of your generation

#### Writing Approach

1. Introduction
   1. Establish the background of the discussion

Summarize the writer’s view (may not be necessary)

* 1. requirement of the question

(eg. How applicable is the notion to your society?)

* 1. your stand on the issue (Agreement or disagreement) or how the question is to be answered (extent of agreement)

1. Main Body – For one point
   1. Quote the noun phrase and sub-clause in the passage that will explain the perspective

* Explain what the writer says
  1. Provide the explanation of the ideas of the writer and depict how it is related to the focus of the question
* Explain how you agree or disagree with the writer
* (cannot use the substituted word that are used to explain the writer’s idea or reason)
  1. Apply the discussion to the context of the question – state the example in relation to your country or examples in the real world according to the category
  2. Other perspectives of discussion (If necessary – extent of agreement)
* counter-arguments
* rebuttals
* constraints of the applications

1. Conclusion
   1. Link the main points of discussion and link to the requirement of the question
   2. retrospective summary and link to the stand

**Types of Questions**

**Example 1**

In passage 1, Trevor Turner describes the manifestations of narcissism in society and discusses some possible reasons for it. In passage 2, Lakshmi Chanudhry examines how the new media has fostered narcissism in people’s lives.

Which author do you find more convincing? To what extent are these views relevant to you and your generation?

Justify your views using materials from the passages as well as your own experiences and observations.

**Example 2**

Johann Hari takes a strong stand in support of liberal eugenics.

How convincing do you find his arguments in light of your own experience and   
knowledge?

**Example 3**

Passage 1 suggests that freedom of though and expressions are universal rights. Passage 2 claims that limiting freedom of speech is justified.

How far should your society address the demand for freedom of thoughts and expression? Justify your view with reference to relevant material from the two passages as well as your knowledge and experience. (8)

**Practice Question 5**

*Frank Furedi writes …*

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| --- | --- | --- |
| 1  2  3 | The rise of catchphrases such as the ‘politics of fear’. ‘fear of crime’ and ‘fear of the future’ is testimony to the cultural significance of fear today. Many of us seem to make sense of our experiences through the narrative of fear. Fear is not simply associated with high-profile catastrophic threats such as terrorist attacks, global warming, AIDS or a potential flu pandemic; rather, as many academics have pointed out, there are also the ‘quiet fears’ of everyday life.  The impact of fear is determined by the situation people find themselves in, but it is also, to some extent, the product of social construction. In other words, fear is determined by the self, and the interaction of the self with others; it is also shaped by a cultural script that instructs people on how to respond to threats to their security. So getting to grips with fear in contemporary society will require an assessment of the influence of culture. Instead of treating fear as a self-evident emotion, a taken-for-granted concept, we should explore the meaning attached to fear and the rules and customs that govern the way in which fear is experienced and expressed.  So, the meaning and experience of fear are continually shaped by historical and cultural factors. The historical fear of famine is very different, for example, from today‘s ‘powerful fear’ of being fat. The meaning that societies once attached to fear of God or the fear of Hell is not quite the same as today‘s fear of pollution or of cancer. Today, the role of culture is arguably more significant than it was in previous times. This is because individual fears are cultuvated through the media and are less and less the outcome of direct experience. Fear is decreasingly experienced first-hand and increasingly experinced on a discursive and abstract level. There has been a general shift from a fearsome life towards a life with a fearsome media. Even Osama bin Laden seems to have grasped this trend. In an interview in October 2001, when asked ‘why is the Western media establishment so anti-humane’, bin Laden replied: ‘[Because] it implants fear and helplessness in the psyche of the people of Europe and the United States.’ This indirect aspect of fear is the most distinctive feature of contemporary fear culture. | 5  10  20  25 |
|  |  |  |
| 4 | However, the influence of fear today cannot be explained as a direct outcome of the power of the media. The rise of individual means that fear is also experineced in a fragmented and atomised form. That is why fear is rarely experienced as a form of collective security, as it often was in earlier times. The fear we sense today is no longer the fear of ‘dangerous classes’, rather, fear has ‘come home’ and become privatised. The sensibility of fear is internalised in an isolated fashion such that we develop a rather ‘ambient’ fear towards life in general. This is a kind that requires us to vigilantly monitor every banal minute of our lives since even mundane acts are now viewed as inherently risky and dangerous. | 30  35 |
|  |  |  |
| 5 | Society is more fearful today than it was in the past. Some believe that today‘s magnitude and nature of fear is different than it was in the past, since it semes that fear is everywhere. Studies on the fear of crime argue that there has been a growth of fear in everyday life. However, a useful starting point to gaining an insight into the socio-cultural nature of contemporary fear is to emphasise the quality and meaning of fear rather than its quantity. | 40 |
| 6  7    8  9  10  11 | A distinguishing feature of contemporary fear is that it appears to have an independent existence. Fear today seems to exist in an objectified form as a clearly identifiable social problem. Fear *in itself*, rather than the thing that we have become fearful in response to is a distinct problem of our times. Clasically, societies associated with fear with a clearly formulated threat: the fear of death, the fear of a specific enemy, the fear of hunger. The threat was defined as the object of fear: the problem was not the feeling of fear, but the things that were feared: death, illness, hunger. Today, many see the very act of fearing as a threat in itsel. Consider the debate about the fear of crime. Nowadays fear of crime is seen as a serious problem that is to some extent distinct from real acts of crime. Distinctive policies have been developed that aim to reduce fear levels, rather than reduce crime. Indeed, it seems that the fear of crime is now recognised as a more widespread problem than crime itself.  Fear today is a virus. It can attach itself to a wide variety of events and phenomena. Consider the fear of terrorism. Since 9/11, this fear has continually expanded to cover almost all aspects of modern life. Corporations must re-examine their deifnition of risk and take seriously the possibility of scenarious that only science fiction writers could have imagined possible one year ago. In the five years since 9/11, what were previously seen as fairly normal hazards have been turned into exceptional threats by their association with the action of terrorists. So we no longer worry about the apparently everyday hazard posed by a nuclear power station, we also fear that it may be used as a weapon of mass destruction against us by terrorists.  On top of that, public anxiety and concerns are discussed as material factors that can have a decisive impact on people‘s health and wellbeing. Many in contemporary medical culture claim that stress and fear are likely to increase the risk of heart disease, cancer and chronic lung disease. In Britian, the conclusion of an inquiry into the alleged health effects of using a mobile phone is now regarded as a model for how to respond to contemporary health fears, particularly those related to environmental health. There is always a potential for people‘s health anxieties to turn into a major problem. However, it is only fairly recently that fear has also been discussed as an autonomous cause of illness.  How then can we manage our feelings of fear, in order to offset their damaging impact, rather than focusing on the source of the problem? If people fear that their health is at risk, than this fear is often seen as actually posing a risk to their health. The legal systems in the US and the UK have internalised this view of fear; courts are now moving towards compensating people for their feelings of fear, even when there is an absence of a perceptiable physical threat. In the past ‘fright’ – that is, a reaction to an actual event – was compensated, whereas now the fear that something negative might happen is also seen as grounds for making a compensation claim.  A proper sociological understanding of fear requires further research into the way in which this emotion is mediated through today‘s cultural outlook. The tendency to engage with uncertainty through the prism of fear and therefore to anticipate the worst possible outcome, can be understood as a ‘crisis of causality’. We must address not simply the emotion of fear and the threats to which it is a response, but also this crisis that shapes the fearful subject. As indicated previously, twenty-first century fear culture is increasingly being normalised as a force in its own right. In such circumstances, fear is a means through which people respond to and make sense of the world.  This stands in sharp contrast to the approach taken by US President Fraklin D Roosevelt in his inaugural address in 1933 when he stated that the ‘only thing we have to fear is fear itself.’ Roosevelt was trying to assure the public that it is possible and necessary to minimise the impact of fear. His was a positive vision of a future where fear would be put in its place by a society that believed in itself. Today, politicians are far more likely to advise the public to fear everything, including fear itself | 45  50  55  60  65  70  75  80  85  90 |

**In this article, Furedi talks about the nature and magnitude of fear in society, past and present. Is the phenomenon of fear today a valid concern for you and your generation?**

**In giving your views, explain why you agree or disagree with the writer. (8)**

**Structure:**

**1. Requirement of the question:**

i) Agreement or disagreement with the writer’s views.

ii) Is fear a valid concern for you and your generation.

**2. Identify the writers’ view and explain your reasons for agreement or disagreement**

**Writer’s view**

‘individual fears are cultivated through the media and are less and less the outcome of direct experience’

‘fear is experience on a discursive and abstract level’

**Why do you agree?**

We are living in an urbanized city with modern facilities to prevent us from perilous dangers that may occur. On the other hand, the mass media has been spreading the notion of danger in all forms through fictional portrays through movies and books or non-fictional reporting on the various media platforms which induces an emotional response to these perilous situations despite knowing that it is less likely to happen to us. As we know more about the happenings of dangerous events, we will be more fearful of the situation.

**Why do you disagree?**

Individuals are able to discern the reality from fictions as we more to find out about the discrepancies that were projected by the new media and we are capable of self-censorship. Our response to the occurrence of fateful events cannot be seen as a fear but a cautionary response to danger.

**Writer’s view**

‘Society is more fearful today than it was in the past.’

In the contemporary society, everyone feels that ‘fear is everywhere’ – fear is developed independently through socio-cultural development.

In the past, our fear is linked to the occurrence but our fear in the modern society is fear itself rather the fear of the event as seen from how our fear of crime is a more serious problem than the problem of crime.

**Why do you agree?**

The reactionary behavior of human emotion is permanent but the occurrence of fateful event is temporary and random. It is natural for human to feel the fear and remains feeling the fear even when the element of danger is cleared away. Furthermore, with the proliferation of information with new media technology, the reports on fateful events will create the notion that we are constantly under threat and thus, fear in a contemporary society will not dissipate.

**Why do you disagree?**

People are now more educated and knowledgeable and they are aware of the means and rights to help from the society as we can dial for police protection and call for firefighters for help. Our efficient modern facilities will aid us in reducing the dangers that we will face. Furthermore, many psychological studies and researches are done to help individuals to overcome some of the phobia that we may feel that will undermine our abilities to handle our daily lives.

**Part II of the requirement**

**Is the phenomenon of fear today is a valid concern for you and your generation?**

**A Valid concern**

**Writer’s view**

The sensibility of fear is internalized in an isolated fashion such that we develop a rather ‘ambient’ fear towards life in general.

The social, economic and political development has created a sense of insecurity about the future that will affect us in a subtle but intensive manner. We are constantly pressurized by a more competitive ethos, intensified by globalization where events occurring in another nation can affect us. In Singapore, the recent election has evolved a topic on foreign immigration which is an evident of xenophobia.

It is only fairly recently that fear has also been discussed as autonomous cause of illness.

From this aspect, it is valid as many psychological symptoms of fear have become a prominent development in Singapore. Cases of phobia and mental illnesses that arise out stress and anxiety of fear are reported. The rising numbers of suicides in Singapore among the youths due to the fear of failure in their academic performance and in their social lives are concrete evidences that the fear of failures in our society is an issue we cannot ignore. The is a need for the government to introduce educational policies that will help the students to raise their resilience among the youths to shape them to be more capable in handling fear of failures.