



**CHIJ ST THERESA'S CONVENT  
PRELIMINARY EXAMINATION 2007  
SECONDARY FOUR EXPRESS/ FIVE NORMAL ACADEMIC  
ENGLISH LANGUAGE PAPER 1**

127/01

**TIME 1 HOUR 45 MINUTES**

**INSTRUCTIONS TO CANDIDATES**

Write your name and class and register number on every sheet of paper.  
Write in dark blue or black pen on both sides of the paper.  
Do not use correction fluid or tape.

Answer **one** question from Section One.

The question in Section Two is compulsory.

Begin your answer to Section **B**<sup>2</sup> on a new and separate sheet of paper.

Hand in your answers Section **A**<sup>1</sup> and Section **B**<sup>2</sup> SEPARATELY.

All questions carry equal marks.

You are reminded of the need for good English and clear presentation in your answers.

*This question paper consists of 3 printed pages.*

**Section One [30 marks]**

**You are advised to write between 350 and 500 words on one of the following topics.**

**At the head of your composition, write the number of the topic you have chosen.**

1. Beauty
  2. Write about a time when you were part of an event during which things started to go wrong and you were helpless to do anything about it.
  3. "Values education is most important in this modern society." Do you agree?
  4. Work experience for students is hugely beneficial. Discuss.
  5. What are some of the challenges that you, as a young person living in Singapore would face in your lifetime?
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## Section Two [30 marks]

Begin your answer on a fresh sheet of paper.

You are advised to write between 250 and 350 words for this section.  
You should read the information carefully and plan your answer before beginning to write.

Graduation is a significant milestone in your Secondary school life. The school's student Graduation Committee would like to help the graduating students of your cohort commemorate their graduation in a more significant way. You are the Publicity Head of the committee and have been asked to **evaluate** the options available to celebrate graduation in the form of an article. You hope to **convince** the student population to **vote** for the most **suitable** option to **celebrate** their graduation. Below are the ideas brainstormed by the school's Graduation Committee:

1. *Dinner and Dance at a hotel:*

The most common and traditional way of celebrating a student's graduation in many schools. It is familiar to the organisers and to the student population. Some students in the Graduation Committee, however, wondered aloud if "we would ever be able to go beyond Prom Night".

2. *Graduation trip:*

Instead of a one day event, graduating students can look forward to a 3-5 day overseas trip at the end of the O-levels examinations. One of the prominent figures of the school's Alumni owns a tour agency and has offered to help. Even so, some students expressed concern that the cost of the trip may be a deterrent.

3. *Community service project:*

A radical way to celebrate graduation, where graduating students get together to serve their school community instead of the other way around. The project is aimed at giving the graduating girls an opportunity to give back to the school in a particular way. This suggestion split the Graduation Committee into two camps: scepticism at the graduating students' reaction to doing volunteer work, versus enthusiasm that they would rise to the challenge and needs instead.

**Decide** which **idea** you think is best for the **purpose** of making this year's graduation a **memorable** one. It should provide a **fitting closure** to the four to five years of a student's Secondary school life. The **article** should contain the **reasons and relevant explanations** for your choice, and some **suggestions** of ways the students can volunteer their **contributions** in the **organisation** of the event.

The magazine article will be read by the teaching staff, students and parents of your school. Your school's Graduation Committee is also relying on your article to **generate interest** in the graduation event and also to show the graduating girls the **significance and importance** of their graduation.



**CHIJ ST THERESA'S CONVENT  
PRELIMINARY EXAMINATION 2007  
SEC 4 EXPRESS/SEC 5 NORMAL  
ENGLISH LANGUAGE 1127/2  
PAPER 2**

**TIME :** 1 hr 40 minutes

**INSTRUCTIONS TO CANDIDATES**

Write your answers on the answer sheets provided.

Write in dark blue or black pen on both sides of the answer sheets.

Do not use highlighters, glue, correction fluid or tape.

Answer **all** questions.

Leave a space of **one** line between your answers to **each** part of a question, e.g. between **1(a)** and **1(b)**.

Leave a space of at least **three** lines after your completed answer to each **whole** question.

Hand in your answers to Questions 1 to 12 **SEPARATELY** from Question 13.

**INFORMATION FOR CANDIDATES**

The number of marks is given in brackets [ ] at the end of each question or part question.  
Mistakes in spelling, punctuation and grammar may be penalized in any part of the Paper.

*This question paper consists of 7 printed pages.*

Read Passage A and Passage B and then answer all the questions which follow below.

You are required to answer the questions in the order set.

Mistakes in spelling, punctuation and grammar may be penalized in any part of the paper.

NOTE: When a question asks you to answer in your own words, YOU MUST NOT COPY THE WORDS IN THE PASSAGE IN YOUR ANSWER.

### Passage A

- 1 Japan's population is in decline. As of last October 1<sup>st</sup>, the government announced last week, giving the results of its latest five-yearly census, Japan's 127m-odd population was 19000 fewer than a year earlier. Deaths had outstripped births for the first time in a period of peace since records have been kept. A falling population, the *Yomiuri Shimbun* duly wailed, meant that national survival was at stake. It may have a point with no change in the current fertility rate---below 1.3 children per woman of a child-bearing age--the last Japanese will die out as soon as 2800. Such are the perils of extrapolation. The more immediate demographic issue, though, is not so much the predicted fall in Japan's population, to as low as 100million in 2050, some say, but rather a shift in its composition. For as well as a low birth rate, life expectancy continues to lengthen (if that were not so, Japan's population would have started to fall some time ago). 5
- 2 Japan is graying at an unprecedented rate. Today, Japan's proportion of elderly, at 19%, is the highest in the world, and is forecast to reach almost 30% by 2025. In particular, an exceptionally large group of Japanese, the baby-boom generation, is making its way towards retirement. After the second World War, returning Japanese soldiers married, settled down and produced children in large numbers. Between 1947 and 1949, an average of 2.7m children were born a year (with another 2.3m in 1950). That was 30-40% more than in the succeeding years. It made for a more defined population pyramid than, say, America, where the baby-boomers were born over several more years. The population statistics are ringing alarm bells. Today, the country's demographic profile looks something like a Japanese lantern. Soon, it will look more like a narrow-based urn. 15
- 3 From next year, the baby-boomers start to retire (60 being the minimum mandatory retirement age for now). The prospect is causing some anguish among policy-makers. As youngsters, these people were the shock troops during the golden period of Japan's post-war economic transformation. Today, they are the custodians of years of accumulated technical and management skills. Their absence, some suggest, will lead to a shortage of skilled workers and mentors, a loss of productivity and even a surplus of office space. *Mama-san* in her bar in Ginza will miss this lot. 25
- 4 A less noticed aspect of the graying of Japan is the coming sharp decline in the population of the youngest workers. At present, some 16 million Japanese are in their 20s, many of them children of baby-boomer parents. But the number in this age bracket will shrink by about 3 million over the next decade. The consequence of all this is, first, that fewer workers will support an ever growing number of non-workers, other things being equal; and, second, that the demographic shape of the workforce is assuming that of an inverted pyramid, with fewer young workers at the base where once there were many. These factors combined lead some commentators to speak of dire consequences: of a national malaise led by a decline in living and even education standards (soon, for instance, you will be able to gain a place at university simply by sitting the exam), 35

accompanied by a government bankrupted by retirement obligations.

- 5 Yet, this all far from inevitable. Atsushi Seike, a labour economist at Keio University, 40  
argues that, since the great bulk of older workers are company employees, the solution  
lies in fixing the corporate employment and retirement systems to allow people to work  
longer more easily. Those pension systems were designed for the age of the pyramid.  
When lots of young people were coming into the workforce, mandatory retirement was 45  
adopted by companies who wanted to make room for them, the policy was also useful for  
getting rid of surplus workers that employment-protection laws otherwise stopped from  
being laid off. As a result, nine-tenths of companies with more than 30 employees today  
set a mandatory retirement age, usually 60, the legal minimum.
- 6 The government and some companies are starting to respond to the new circumstances. 50  
To bring corporate practices into line, a law passed in 2004 requiring companies to raise  
the minimum mandatory retirement age to 65 by 2013---or, if that is not feasible, to  
provide employment until they are eligible for the fixed part of the pension given by the  
government. These adjustments, Mr. Seike thinks, are just tinkering at the edges of an  
outdated system. Since life expectancy has leapt by nearly 30 years since the war, to 82 55  
on average, then the minimum age for pensions should be raised swiftly at least to 67 and  
preferably to 70. Moreover, he believes, mandatory retirement---forcing people to stop  
when they are keen to work longer and capable of doing so--- 'has no place in a society  
that hopes to make full use of its older citizens.' It should be scrapped altogether.
- 7 Certainly, most older Japanese want to work. Indeed, the average working man finally 60  
leaves the labour market when he is approaching 70. The problem is that he is given jobs  
that do not always match his abilities. A system of pay based on seniority rather than  
merit, which once ensured employee loyalty, now impose a financial burden on  
companies, making them unwilling to keep even good workers in their former jobs. So  
getting rid of mandatory retirement would also put welcome pressure on companies to  
revise pay scales better to reflect ability rather than length of service. That, surely, would 65  
suit ambitious younger people too.

*Taken from the The Economist Magazine*

### *Passage B*

- 1 One of the side-effects of the Second World War was the most momentous social change 5  
of the past half century. As men marched off to fight, women put aside their grooming  
magazines and gardening gloves and took their husbands' places in factories and on the  
farms. They never looked back. Many people worry about the impact on family life upon  
their entry into the labour force, but most now take it for granted that women have as  
much to offer as men.
- 2 Another change as large as that one is now under way. In a further half century it will  
seem just as absurd that western societies today are content to press another potentially  
productive set of workers to stay at home sipping tea and potting begonias – and pay  
them for it to boot.

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- 2 The question of how to deal with the growing number of retired people has recently been seen as chiefly a financial puzzle; how to pay for the leisure of those lazing layabouts. Today government and company pensions kick in at or before 65. But the issue is more than just a financial one: it raises social as well as economic questions, and its resolution will involve governments, employers and people. 15
- 3 The baby-boom generation which started to turn sixty this year, contains the largest number of people ever voluntarily to give up work in such a short time. Because it is far greater than the generation that follows it – or any that preceded it – it casts a shadow over the companies it is set to leave behind. Japan expects its workforce to fall by 16% (some 10 million people) over the next 25 years. Europe will see the number of workers nearing retirement grow by a quarter. Some companies are already complaining of the shortage of skills, even before they have started to dole out carriage clocks and fountain pens by the barrow-load. 20
- 4 There are several ways of dealing with a falling supply of labour: work might be shifted offshore to take advantage of the abundant cheap labour in poorer countries. More lenient immigration laws might allow in more skilled labour from abroad; new equipment could enhance the productivity of a better educated workforce. But one of the readiest sources of skilled labour is closer to hand. 25
- 5 If staying on at work were up to older employees alone, many would jump at the chance. That is partly because they would no longer be able to retire in the style that they have been led to expect. Corporate retirement schemes and health benefits are becoming if ever less generous. Last week General Motors joined the line of revisionists with an announcement that it will cap health care spending by its retired workers. 30
- 6 That will not be the first cut. Baby boomers say they want to stay in the workforce for more than money. Many also want to carry on working beyond the standard retirement age for the mental stimulation. Their productivity may decline as they get older – although people gain in experience, their capacity for sharp thinking falls off – but the traditional pattern of retirement, in which one day an employee is in a bustling office busy as a bee and the next he is good only for tending to the garden and the fireside chair does not make sense for the economy, for companies and for the people. 40
- 7 If baby boomers want to work longer and companies want more skilled workers what is the problem? Part of the answer is that labour markets work particularly badly for the older workers. Pensions need to be unhooked from final salaries, so that workers are not heavily penalized if they should take pay cuts to stay in employment. That is already happening with a decline of company's defined benefit schemes. State and private pensions should encourage people to postpone retirement. That is already happening in Sweden and Switzerland which both have high labour-participation rates among older people. Pensions should be designed so that they allow part time workers to continue to contribute even after their official retirement age since governments benefit if people work longer (they pay more in tax and cost less in benefits). They should be eagerly enacting such measures. But instead of freeing up labour markets to help older people work, governments are focussing on legislating to ban discrimination on grounds of age. European Union member countries are introducing such laws, even though experience in 50

America tells them that making older people hard to fire discourages companies from hiring them.

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- 8 Companies, as well as governments, need to be flexible. That is beginning to happen, partly because employers are keen to attract more women in the part time jobs that often appeal to them and are attractive to the old as well. Big, well managed companies tend to offer that sort of flexibility others will have to learn.
- 9 Lastly older workers need to adapt. In many cultures age is related to seniority and therefore to pay. The older the worker the more expensive he is. Boomers will find work only if they accept that their wages will be based on what they are worth to the company - rather than their salary at the top of their career. Although a shortage of skills might push up wages for all workers, older ones may nevertheless have to accept a relative decline in salary and status. Baby boomers have been changing the world since the nineteen sixties. They are about to do it again by turning the world of work upside down. This social upheaval may be quieter than the last one they were responsible for but its consequences will be more **profound** and longer lasting.

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*Adapted from the Economist Magazine*

From Passage A

Paragraph 1

- 1 a. What evidence is there that the population is declining? ( 2 m )
- b. What does the word 'wailed' suggest about the way the Yomiuri Shimbun views the issue of falling population. ( 1 m )
- 2 a. According to the passage, what is the more immediate demographic issue? ( 1 m )
- b. In your own words, explain why Japan's population had not fallen despite the low birth rate? ( 1 m )

Paragraph 2

3. “*Japan is graying at an unprecedented rate*” (line 12)

X Explain in your own words what the phrase in bold means. (2 m)

4. ‘Soon, it will look more like something *like a narrow-based urn*’ ( Line 22-23 )  
What does this indicate about Japan’s demographic patterns? (1 m)

Paragraph 4

5. The writer says that ‘*soon, for instance, you will be able to gain a place at university simply by sitting the exam.*’ (Line 37-38) (1 m)

What does this example show about the availability of university places? (1 m)

6. Explain how a decline in living standards can be considered a part of a ‘*national malaise*’. (2 m)

Paragraph 5

7. What was the main reason for a mandatory retirement age to be set at 60? (1 m)

Paragraph 6

8. ‘*These adjustments are just tinkering at the edges of an outdated system*’  
What do the words in bold imply about Mr Seike’s attitude towards the changes? (2 m)

9. In your own words, explain what arguments are there to raise the age for retirement and to scrap the mandatory retirement law in modern society? (2 m)

Passage B

Paragraph 1

10a. Quote a phrase in the passage that suggests that having women join the labour force is a development that has revolutionized society. (1 m)

b. Write down the sentence in this paragraph that implies that men and women have traditional stereotyped roles. (1 m)

Paragraph 2

11. 'It will seem just as absurd that western societies today are content to press another potentially <sup>new set of</sup> workers to stay at home sipping tea and potting begonias'. (line 8-9)  
In your own words, explain what attitude does the writer have about workers retiring at an early age? ( 1 m )
12. For each of the following words or phrases give **one** word or short phrase (of **not more than seven** words) which has the same meaning <sup>as</sup> that the word or phrase in the passage. ( 5 m )

**From Passage A and Passage B**

*Passage A*

- (i) perils (line 7)
- (ii) prospect (line 23)
- (iii) surplus (line 27)
- (iv) dire consequences (line 36)

*Passage B*

- (v) profound (line 68)

**Summary Question**

Passage B

13. The writer suggests that amongst many ways of dealing with a falling supply of labour such as shifting operations overseas to relaxing immigrant laws to attract more foreign workers to hiring older workers. **Using your own words as far as possible**, explain what factors would make older workers rejoin the workforce, the problems this will bring and what changes will have to be instituted for this to take place ( 25 m )

**Use the material from Passage B from Lines 29 to Line 68**

Your summary, which must be in continuous writing (not note form), must not be more than 150 words (not counting the words given to help you begin).

Begin your summary as follows:

Older employees would welcome the chance to continue working because .....

## Answer Sheets

CHIJ St Theresa's Convent Paper 2 2007

### Passage A

- Q1a) Japan's population had gone down by 19000, as compared to a year earlier. Also, the number of deaths in Japan had outnumbered the number of births in Japan since records have been kept.
- Q1b) The word 'wailed' suggests that the Yomiuri Shimbun views the issue with great bitterness and grief.
- Q2a) The more immediate demographic issue is the change in demographic composition with greater number of aged elderly and less young people.
- Q2b) Japan's population had not fallen despite the low birth rate as Japanese have been living longer than before.
- Q3a) The phrase meant that the population was aging at an alarmingly fast rate that is unseen in history.
- Q4. This shows that Japan's demographic patterns have a narrow base indicating very few young people in the population, and a large top, showing a large group of elderly.
- Q5. This shows that the number of university places will outnumber the number of applicants. Applicants will be able to gain entry by sitting for the mandatory examination, with no need for any other selection criteria with the reduced demand for university places.
- Q6. A decline in living standards also causes a decline in the local economy and societal standards, affecting the country's standing in the global arena.
- Q7. A mandatory retirement age was necessary when there were a lot of young people in the workforce in order for companies to get rid of surplus employees and make way for the younger and more energetic workforce, displacing the aging ones.
- Q8. The words in bold indicate that Mr Seike feels that the changes were inadequate in making major and productive changes to the current situation. Also, the changes do not tackle the problem's core but merely attempting to mold the solution around the problem as it develops.
- Q9. The life expectancy of Japanese was increasing, thus the society should leverage on such to allow gainful employment for older workers for them to continue to the economy while they can. A mandatory retirement law will only serve to

demoralize the keen elderly who wish to work longer while they can. Abolishing that law will thus allow the elderly to feel wanted by the society and not burden the society and their families.

### Passage B

Q10a) The phrase is 'momentous social change'.

Q10b) The sentence is 'As men marched off to fight, women put aside their grooming magazines and gardening gloves and took their husbands' places in factories and on the farms'.

Q11. The writer disapproves companies that retire their still-productive workers, wasting their talent and keenness to continue working.

- Q12.
- i) Imminent danger
  - ii) Future outlook
  - iii) Greater than needed amount
  - iv) Disastrous effects
  - v) Deeper in meaning

Q13. Points Should Include:

Factors:

- Rejoin workforce for mental stimulation
- Inability to cope with sudden retirement and sense of loss after retirement

Problems:

- Labour market does not welcome older workers
- Age related seniority linked to salary level due to culture

Changes:

- Pensions need to be delinked from employees salaries in order to minimize salary reductions should pay cuts be required for older workers to remain employed
- Pensions from state and private institutions must encourage people to delay retirement
- Pensions have to be tailored to allow non full-time workers to continue contributing after retirement
- Companies and government institutions have to be actively flexible to allow more elderly to fill up any employment opportunities available
- Older workers have to adapt to decreasing pay and declining statuses as they age in order to stay gainfully employed.