

# JC 2 Preliminary Examination 2016

CANDIDATE'S NAME

GP TUTOR'S NAME

CLASS

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## General Certificate of Education

**GENERAL PAPER**

**8807/01**

Paper 1

24 August 2016

Additional Materials: Answer Paper

1 hour 30 minutes

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### READ THESE INSTRUCTIONS FIRST

Write your name, civics class and GP tutor's name on all the work you hand in.  
Write in dark blue or black pen on both sides of the paper.  
Do not use 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.

### EXAMINER'S USE

<b>Content</b>	<b>/ 30</b>	<b>Comments:</b>
<b>Language</b>	<b>/ 20</b>	
<b>Total</b>	<b>/ 50</b>	

Answer **one** question.

Answers should be between 500 and 800 words in length.

1. How important is tradition in your society today?
2. Discuss the claim that Singapore is not doing enough to promote creativity among young people.
3. Consider the view that the best way to fight poverty is to improve the lives of women.
4. Should celebrities be held to higher standards of moral behaviour?
5. To what extent can small countries influence global affairs?
6. 'Music does nothing other than entertain.' Do you agree?
7. Discuss the view that too much faith is placed in green technology.
8. 'Businesses should always seek to maximise profits at all cost.' Is this attitude still applicable today?
9. How effective are international efforts in tackling global health threats?
10. 'Promises should never be broken.' What is your view?
11. 'Censorship does more harm than good.' How far is this true today?
12. 'People should be more concerned about the food they eat and where it comes from.' To what extent do you agree?

- are exactly what educators are counting on to unleash stories' change-creating potential. 50  
 The biggest transformations happen when children actively engage – even empathise –  
 with a particular narrative, recognising how it matters to *them*. For instance, one lesson  
 about the 1938 *Kristallnacht* attacks delves into the historical narrative, describing how  
 Nazis burned synagogues and looted Jewish shops while most ordinary Germans just  
 watched. This real-life story prompts class discussion that touches on what it means to 55  
 be a bystander. Kids consider how they might have reacted when Jewish people were  
 persecuted under Nazi rule, but they are also thinking about similar matters closer to  
 home, such as whether they should stand up for a friend who is being badmouthed. When  
 students explore the significance of stories in this way, their thoughts and choices shift  
 measurably. They show more empathy and concern for others, and they are more likely 60  
 to intervene when other students are bullied.
- 6 The stories we tell ourselves are integral to our wellbeing. Depressed people often cling  
 to long-established internal narratives with refrains like 'I'm not good enough to achieve  
 much.' Counsellors who practice psychodynamic therapy help clients recognise that 65  
 these are stagnant inner monologues which should be discarded and substituted with  
 fresh ones. Of course, some enthralling inner narratives can damage mental horizons.  
 The success of Adolf Hitler's oratory bid to dominate 1930s Germany should convince us  
 that a narrative's surface persuasiveness is not, in itself, a virtue.
- 7 And sensibly enough, many artists bristle at the idea that they tell stories to get people to  
 think or act in any particular way. In fact, they never write toward a purpose or moral. 70  
 They just hope that readers take whatever they need. When stories are at their best, the  
 effect is expansive rather than nakedly persuasive. Narratives that tell us point-blank who  
 we should be, how we should behave, are better described as dictates or propaganda.  
 The most enduring stories, by contrast, broaden our mental and moral outlook without  
 demanding that we hew to a certain standard. Whether they describe a meek older 75  
 woman who shows grit and selflessness after a surprising tragedy (*Alison Lurie's Foreign  
 Affairs*), or a hotel manager who shelters refugees marked out for death (*Terry  
 George's Hotel Rwanda*), they present us with an arresting alternative to the way we see  
 the world.
- 8 It is always up to us whether to turn our backs on a story's landscape or to step into the 80  
 fresh possibilities it offers. But when we do decide to venture into an unfamiliar story, we  
 emerge as revised, perhaps unexpected, versions of ourselves. Stories allow us to travel,  
 time and again, outside the circumscribed spaces of what we believe and what we think  
 possible. It is these journeys – sometimes tenuous, sometimes exhilarating – that inspire  
 and steel us to navigate uncharted territories in real life. 85

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# JC 2 Preliminary Examination 2016

CANDIDATE'S NAME

GP TUTOR'S NAME  CLASS

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## General Certificate of Education

### GENERAL PAPER

8807/02

Paper 2

24 August 2016

Candidates answer on the Question Paper.

1 hour 30 minutes

Additional Materials: 1 Insert

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### READ THESE INSTRUCTIONS FIRST

Write your name, civics class and GP tutor's name on all the work you hand in.

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

Do not use 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.

### EXAMINER'S USE

Content	/ 35	Comments:
Language	/ 15	
Total	/ 50	

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 What do the words “inextricable part of our DNA” (lines 3 – 4) suggest about our story-telling ability?

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

2 According to paragraph 2, how did the story about the Garden of Eden help to make the ancient Hebrews become “people devoted to God and his commands” (line 15)? **Use your own words as far as possible.**

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....[3]

3 **Using your own words as far as possible**, explain why it is “still natural” (line 20) for people to identify with heroes in epic stories.

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

4 How does the author illustrate the “staying power” (line 23) of the epics? **Use your own words as far as possible.**

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

5 Explain the author’s use of the word “even” in line 51.

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

6 Explain what “bristle” (line 69) tells you about the artists’ attitude towards “the idea that they tell stories to get people to think or act in any particular way” (lines 69 -70).

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

7 Why does the author make references to the examples of *Foreign Affairs* and *Hotel Rwanda* in paragraph 7? **Use your own words as far as possible.**

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....[3]

8 Explain what the author means by “It is always up to us whether to turn our backs on a story’s landscape or to step into the fresh possibilities it offers” (lines 80 – 81). **Use your own words as far as possible.**

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

9 What is the author implying about the impact of stories on people who “decide to venture into an unfamiliar story” (line 81) by her use of the word “revised” in line 82?

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







Dotted lines for writing.

[10]

# JC 2 Preliminary Examination 2016

CANDIDATE'S NAME

GP TUTOR'S NAME

CLASS

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## General Certificate of Education

**GENERAL PAPER**

**8807/02**

Paper 2

24 August 2016

INSERT

1 hour 30 minutes

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### READ THESE INSTRUCTIONS FIRST

This insert contains the passage for Paper 2.

Elizabeth Svoboda writes about the power of stories.

- 1 Our storytelling ability, a uniquely human trait, has been with us nearly as long as we have been able to speak. Whether it evolved for a particular purpose or was simply an outgrowth of our explosion in cognitive development, stories are an inextricable part of our DNA. Across time and across cultures, stories have proved their worth not just as works of art or entertaining asides, but as agents of personal transformation. 5
- 2 One of the earliest narratives to wield such influence was the Old Testament. When we think of this first section of the Bible, we tend to recall its long sequences of 'thou shalt nots', but many of the most gripping Old Testament stories do not contain an overtly stated moral. While the Old Testament certainly reflected the values and priorities of the culture from which it emerged, those values came embedded in powerful tales that invited readers and listeners to draw their own conclusions. When Eve ate the fruit from the Garden of Eden's tree of knowledge, bringing God's punishment upon herself and Adam, the image powerfully illustrated the fate that may await anyone who ignores a divine order. It was no coincidence that, steeped in stories like these, the ancient Hebrews emerged as a unified society of people devoted to God and his commands. 10  
15
- 3 Meanwhile, in ancient Greece, a formidable oral storytelling tradition was taking hold – one in which epic stories such as Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey* were passed from generation to generation, each storyteller adding tweaks as he saw fit. Though the characters in these epics were larger-than-life figures, often possessed of superhuman abilities, it was still natural for people to identify with them. Epic heroes rarely conquered their foes with ease. Like Homer's Odysseus, who endured a painful and protracted journey to return to his homeland, they faced hardship head-on and persevered against great odds. One reason the epics had such staying power was that they instilled values like grit, sacrifice, and selflessness, especially when young people were exposed to them as a matter of course. In their quest to lead a good life, generations of Greeks looked to the epics for inspiration. The historian J E Lendon points out that the Homeric emphasis on conquering cities by trickery is mirrored in later Greek battle strategy, underscoring the tales' impact not just on minds, but on cultural norms and behaviours. 20  
25
- 4 For thousands of years, we have known intuitively that stories alter our thinking and, in turn, the way we engage with the world. But only recently has research begun to shed light on how this transformation takes place from inside. Using modern technology like functional MRI (fMRI) scanning, scientists are tackling age-old questions: What kind of effect do powerful narratives really have on our brains? And how might a story-inspired perspective translate into behavioural change? Our mental response to stories begins, as many learning processes do, with mimicry. In certain essential ways, stories help our brains map that of the storyteller, and imagine other people's thoughts and emotions. What is more, the stories we absorb seem to shape our thought processes in much the same way lived experience does. When research subjects are told moving true stories, their brains revealed that they identified with the stories and characters on a visceral level. The fMRI data showed that emotion-driven responses to stories started in the brain stem, which governs basic physical functions. So when we read about a character facing a heart-wrenching situation, it is perfectly natural for our own hearts to pound. 30  
35  
40
- 5 It is this kind of gut-level empathetic story response that can inspire people to behave differently in the real world. Of course, many story messages do not translate into action as neatly as controlled studies might suggest. We respond to *The Diary of Anne Frank* differently at age 42 than we do at 12, in part because of all the *other* stories that have changed our perception in the interim. We argue with stories, internally or out loud. We talk back. We praise. We denounce. Every story is the beginning of a conversation, with ourselves as well as with others. Those kinds of conversations, internal and external, 45

**2016 Preliminary Examination  
Paper 2 Answer Scheme (25/8/16)**

1. What do the words "inextricable part of our DNA" (lines 3 – 4) suggest about our story-telling ability? [1m]
- Innate/inherent / natural OR
  - Fundamentally important / essential
  - Do not accept inseparable
2. According to paragraph 2, how did the story about the Garden of Eden help to make the ancient Hebrews become "people devoted to God and his commands"? **Use your own words as far as possible.** [3 m]

Lifted	Paraphrased
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• When Eve ate the fruit from the Garden of Eden's tree of knowledge, bringing God's punishment upon herself and Adam,</li> <li>• <b>the image powerfully</b> illustrated the <b>fate</b> that may await anyone who <b>ignores a divine order.</b> OR Old Testament stories do not contain an <b>overtly stated</b> moral. ... values came <b>embedded</b> in <b>powerful</b> tales that <b>invited</b> readers and listeners to <b>draw their own conclusions.</b></li> <li>• It was no coincidence that, steeped in stories like these, the ancient Hebrews emerged as a unified society of people devoted to God and his commands</li> </ul>	<p>a) (context) When Eve consumed the fruit, she incurred God's wrath and suffered severe consequences</p> <p>b) The Hebrews realise they may face the same consequences if they disobey God OR The story allows the Hebrews to come up with their own interpretations</p> <p>c) [inferred] This makes them fearful of doing so / makes them blindly obey God.</p>

1 mark each

3. **Using your own words as far as possible, explain** why it is "still natural" (line 20) for people to identify with heroes in epic stories? [2m]

Lifted	Paraphrased
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Though the characters in these epics were <b>larger-than-life</b> figures, often possessed of <b>superhuman</b> abilities,</li> <li>• Epic heroes rarely conquered their foes with ease. OR One reason the epics had such staying power was that they instilled values like grit, sacrifice, and selflessness</li> </ul>	<p>a) <b>Even though</b> these heroes may seem to be godlike / invincible / more capable than ordinary people,</p> <p>b) they <b>actually</b> face <u>similar</u> difficulties / challenges as the rest of us (in achieving success) OR they <b>actually</b> display qualities that we <u>resonate</u> with</p> <p><i>*Note: Contrast must be captured</i></p>

1= 1m, 2=2m

4. How does the author illustrate the “staying power” (line 23) of the epics? **Use your own words as far as possible.** [1m]

Lifted	Paraphrased
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Generations of Greeks looked to the epics for inspiration</li> <li>OR</li> <li>Homeric emphasis on conquering cities by trickery is mirrored in <b>later</b> Greek battle strategy</li> </ul>	<p>She points out how the Greeks <b>continued</b> to seek guidance from the epics for their lives</p> <p>OR</p> <p>looked to the epics in how they wage wars even though the epics were written <b>a long time ago</b>.</p> <p><i>*Note: Focus is on the time element</i>  <i>Accept any logical interpretation of either point.</i></p>

5. Explain the author’s use of the word “even” in line 51. [2m]

Lifted	Paraphrased
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The biggest transformations happen when children <b>actively engage</b> – even <b>empathise</b> – with a particular narrative, recognising how it matters to <i>them</i>.</li> </ul>	<p>She is suggesting that</p> <p>a) the ability to feel for the characters in a story / put oneself in the shoes of a character in a story is</p> <p>b) (inferred) a higher level / less expected / less common response</p> <p>OR</p> <p>to the extent/so much so that</p> <p>c) as compared to mere / basic understanding of the story.</p> <p><i>*Must refer to children/people: Subject of the sentence is not the power of stories</i>  <i>0 marks if (b) is absent from the answer.</i></p>

1 – 2 = 1m, 3 = 2m

6. Explain what “bristle” (line 69) tells you about the artists’ attitude towards “the idea that they tell stories to get people to think or act in any particular way”. (2m)

Lifted	Paraphrased
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Bristle</li> <li>In fact, they never <b>write toward</b> a purpose or a moral. / They just hope that readers take whatever they need.</li> <li>(inferred) Narratives that tell us point-blank who we should be, how we should behave, are better described as <b>dictates</b> or <b>propaganda</b>.</li> </ul>	<p>The artists are</p> <p>a) Offended / critical / defensive / angered as</p> <p><i>*Award BOD for ‘very unhappy’ and ‘indignant’.</i>  <i>*Do not accept ‘disagree’.</i></p> <p>b) they do not set out to deliberately / explicitly instruct people on what to do / the correct / acceptable behaviour/conduct / mindset,</p> <p>OR</p> <p>they do not want to be seen as having an agenda</p> <p>OR</p> <p>they want the readers to draw their own conclusions/think for themselves</p>

1= 1m, 2=2m

7. Why does the author make references to the examples of *Foreign Affairs* and *Hotel Rwanda* in paragraph 7? Use your own words as far as possible. [3m]

Lifted	Paraphrased
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The most <b>enduring</b> stories,</li> <li>broaden our mental and moral outlook without demanding that we hew to a certain standard.</li> <li>'...<b>arresting</b>...</li> <li>...<b>alternative</b> to the way we see the world' OR (inferred from examples) a meek older woman who shows grit and selflessness after a surprising tragedy .... or a hotel manager who shelters refugees marked out for death</li> </ul>	<p>a) It is to illustrate her argument that the stories with long-lasting impact</p> <p>b) are those that widen our worldview / change our worldview OR do not prescribe specific expectations</p> <p>c) by presenting us with engaging/captivating/ gripping stories</p> <p>d) of <u>characters who behave differently from what is normally expected.</u></p>

1 = 1m, 2-3 = 2m, 4 = 3m

8. Explain in your own words as far as possible what the author means by "It is always up to us whether to turn our backs on a story's landscape or to step into the fresh possibilities it offers" (lines 80 – 81). (2m)

Lifted	Paraphrased
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>It is always <b>up to us</b></li> <li>Whether to <b>turn our backs on</b> a story's landscape</li> <li>Or to <b>step into the fresh possibilities</b> it offers (context: link to previous paragraph: arresting alternative to the way we see the world)</li> </ul>	<p>He means that</p> <p>a) It is our choice/we are free to decide</p> <p>b) whether to not to immerse ourselves in a story, OR reject / ignore the meaning / takeaways of stories</p> <p><i>*Note: Do not accept 'do not want to read the stories'</i></p> <p>c) accept new interpretations/ideas/ ways of understanding the world</p>

1 -2 = 1m, 3=2m

9. What is the author implying about the impact of stories on people who "decide to venture into an unfamiliar story" (line 81) by her use of the word "revised" in line 82? [1m]

Lifted	Paraphrased
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>"revised"</li> </ul>	<p>It changes people for the better.</p> <p><i>*Note: do not accept 'acquire new values'.</i></p>

10. Using material from paragraphs 4-6 only, summarise how stories alter our thinking and the way we engage with the world.

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.**

*Modern technology has revealed that stories alter our thinking by...*

- Para 4: theoretical impact
- Paras 5 and 6: real-world impact

	<b>Lifted</b>	<b>Paraphrased</b>
1	(lines 34-35) begins, as many <b>learning</b> processes do, with <b>mimicry</b>	helping us to <u>imitate</u> others' thoughts and feelings
2	(lines 35-36) stories help our brains <b>map</b> that of the storyteller	helping us to sync with / mirror / follow the storyteller's train of thought
3	(line 36) <b>imagine</b> other people's thoughts and emotions.	enabling us to <u>visualise</u> what others experience  <i>*This point can be about storytellers or story characters / others in general.</i>
4	(lines 37-38) the stories we absorb seem to <b>shape</b> our thought processes in much the <b>same way lived experience</b> does	in a <u>genuine / authentic</u> manner. OR Stories influence us, just like <u>real-life</u> situations do.
5	(line 38) When research subjects are told <b>moving true</b> stories,	When people hear stories about events <u>in real life</u> which are <u>touching/poignant/heart-warming/ disturbing</u>  <i>*Award only if 6 is present *Should not be about stories being told</i>
6	(line 39) ... <b>identified</b> with the stories and characters...	we <u>connect / feel</u>
7	(line 39) ...on a <b>visceral</b> level OR (line 40) The fMRI data showed that <b>emotion-driven</b> responses to stories... OR (line 43) <b>gut-level</b> empathetic response	<u>Instinctively / intuitively</u> for the stories/ characters,  <i>*Do not accept 'deeply' and 'strongly'.</i>
8	(lines 40-41) ...started in the brain stem, which <b>governs</b> basic physical <b>functions</b> OR (lines 41-42) (inferred) when we read about a character facing a heart-wrenching situation, it's perfectly <b>natural for our own hearts to pound</b>	which <u>triggers/elicits physical reactions</u> .
9	(lines 43-44) <b>inspire</b> people to <b>behave differently</b> in the real world	This <u>drives / motivates / influences</u> us to <u>change</u> our actions
10	(lines 46-47) (inferred) all the <i>other</i> stories that have changed our perception in the interim	This effect is <u>gradual</u> as other stories <u>alter</u> our worldview in the process OR This effect is <u>cumulative</u>
11	(lines 48-49) Every story is the <b>beginning</b> of a conversation, with ourselves	Stories <u>trigger / spark / generate/ are catalysts</u> for
12	(lines 48-49) a <b>conversation</b> ...with others	debates/dialogue/discussion (with others),
13	(lines 47-48) (inferred) We <b>argue</b> with stories... We <b>talk back</b> .	<u>critical thinking</u> / making us <u>question</u> ideas,



		<p><i>*This point is about the intellect.</i></p> <p><i>*Do not accept literal paraphrasing e.g. 'we chat/exchange ideas with stories'</i></p>
14	(line 48) (inferred) We <b>praise</b> .	training us to know what is <u>desirable</u> .
15	(line 48) (inferred) We <b>denounce</b> .	<p>or <u>objectionable</u></p> <p>OR</p> <p>or should be <u>criticised / condemned</u>.</p> <p><i>*Context for 13-15 must be about stories' impact, not just our actions in general (e.g. 'We applaud other people')</i></p>
16	(line 50) (inferred) exactly what educators are counting on to <b>unleash</b> stories' <b>change-creating potential</b>	<p>Stories are thus <u>powerful</u> teaching / classroom tools.</p> <p><i>*The context of education must be given.</i></p>
17	(line 51.) when children <b>actively engage</b>	<p>When students / children <u>understand a story</u>,</p> <p><i>*Award only if 19 is present</i></p>
18	(lines 51-52) – even <b>empathise</b> – with a particular narrative,	<p>and <u>feel for / put themselves in the shoes of</u> the characters,</p> <p><i>*Award only if 19 is present</i></p>
19	(line 52) <b>recognising</b> how it matters <u>to them</u> OR (lines 57-58) they are also thinking about <b>similar</b> matters closer to home	<p>they gain insights that are <u>relevant / can be applied to their own experience</u>.</p> <p>OR</p> <p>They realise the story characters are <u>just like them/not that different</u></p>
20	(lines 59-60) their thoughts and choices <b>shift measurably</b>	<p>They <u>change</u> their actions <u>significantly / greatly / noticeably</u>.</p> <p><i>*Award only if the <b>degree</b> of change is captured.</i></p>
21	(line 60) show more <b>empathy</b> and <b>concern</b> for others	<p><u>Compassion increases</u> / They <u>care more</u> about people around them</p> <p><i>*Must capture increase</i></p> <p><i>*Award BOD for 'they become better people'</i></p>
22	(lines 60-61) more likely to <b>intervene</b> when other students are bullied	and there is a higher chance that they would <u>protect / stand up for others</u>
23	(lines 62-64) (inferred) Depressed people often <b>cling to long-established</b> internal narratives with <b>refrains</b> like 'I'm not good enough to achieve much.'	<p>Some stories which we tell ourselves <u>reinforce undesirable / negative mindsets</u></p> <p>OR</p> <p><u>do not help us to change for the better</u></p>
24	(line 66) some <b>enthralling</b> inner narratives can <b>damage</b> mental <b>horizons</b>	<p>Some <u>captivating</u> stories can actually <u>destroy</u> our worldview / paradigm / way of looking at the world.</p> <p>OR</p> <p><u>brainwash us / be counterproductive</u>.</p>
25	(line 65) these are stagnant inner monologues which should be <b>discarded</b>	so they need to be <u>replaced / thrown out</u>
26	(lines 65-66) and <b>substituted</b> with <b>fresh ones</b>	<p>with more <u>helpful / beneficial</u> self-beliefs / thought patterns</p> <p><i>*'Fresh ones' must be contextualised.</i></p> <p><i>*Award one point if 23-26 are collapsed as 'Stories influence us in a good or bad way'.</i></p>

Points	Marks
15+	8
13-14	7
11-12	6
9-10	5
7-8	4
5-6	3
3-4	2
1-2	1

*Modern technology has revealed that stories alter our thinking by (1) allowing us to imitate others' thoughts and feelings (2) through following the storyteller's train of thought. (6) We connect with stories and characters and feel for them (4) instinctively, (5) especially when the stories are touching and real. (9) This motivates us to change our actions. (10) This effect is gradual as other stories alter our worldview. (11) Stories generate (12) discussion and (13) critical thinking, (14) and train us to discern what is desirable (15) or objectionable. (16) Stories are powerful teaching tools. (17) When children are immersed in stories, (19) they gain insights that are relevant to them, (20) which changes them significantly. (21) Compassion increases, (22) and more will stand up for others. (23) Some stories which we tell ourselves reinforce undesirable mindsets, (24) so they need to be replaced (25) with more helpful thought patterns.*

119 words, 21 points

11. Svoboda makes a number of observations about the power of stories. How applicable do you find her observations to you and your society?

	References	Brainstorm/Considerations
1	<p>While the Old Testament certainly reflected the values and priorities of the culture from which it emerged, those values came embedded in powerful tales that invited readers and listeners to draw their own conclusions.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are we really drawing our own conclusions? Isn't laid bare for all to see, natural inference/deduction</li> <li>• Is it really possible to present different interpretations? Is there ambiguity?</li> <li>• We have been institutionalised/socialised since young. Parents will tell us the "moral of the story". Will children question/challenge and believe otherwise?</li> <li>• Just do not like to be told outright/instructed; we prefer to have a choice, or at least the illusion of choice.</li> <li>• We prefer to be persuaded rather than coerced into believing;</li> </ul>
2	<p>It was no coincidence that, steeped in stories like these, the ancient Hebrews emerged as a unified society of people devoted to God and his commands.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are religious teachings embedded in stories still relevant in society?</li> <li>• Refer to the religious books</li> <li>• And include new stories</li> </ul>
3	<p>Though the characters in these epics were larger-than-life figures, often possessed of superhuman abilities, it was still natural for people to identify with them. Epic heroes rarely conquered their foes with ease.</p> <p>One reason the epics had such staying power was that they instilled values like grit, sacrifice, and selflessness, especially when young people were exposed to them as a matter of course. In their quest to lead a good life, generations of Greeks looked to the epics for inspiration.</p> <p>...underscoring the tales' impact not just on minds, but on cultural norms and behaviours.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Similarly, do Singaporeans still identify with these epic characters?</li> <li>• Or do we look up to and are more influenced by contemporary real-life heroes instead of larger-than-life figures in epics? TED Talks?</li> <li>• Or is it a case of both?</li> <li>• Which is more relatable?</li> <li>• Application of lessons learnt from tales in our everyday lives</li> <li>• Badang. Why do some people not identify with the story? Is it because they are not familiar with the story?</li> </ul>
4	<p>Our mental response to stories begins, as many learning processes do, with mimicry. In certain essential ways, stories help our brains map that of the storyteller, and imagine other people's thoughts and emotions. What is more, the stories we absorb seem to shape our thought processes in much the same way lived experience does.</p> <p>It is this kind of gut-level empathetic story response that can inspire people to behave differently in the real world</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Media: bring our attention to certain issues; might highlight/sensationalise news through "story-telling"</li> <li>• Do we empathise? Are we influenced? Do we see through their tricks to invoke deep emotional feelings in us? Are we desensitised?</li> <li>• Businesses: building brand and culture through stories</li> </ul>
5	<p>Of course, many story messages do not translate into action as neatly as controlled studies might suggest. We respond to The Diary of Anne Frank differently at age 42 than we do at 12, in part because of all the other stories that have changed our perception in the interim. We argue with stories, internally or out loud. We talk back. We praise. We denounce. Every story is the beginning of a conversation, with ourselves as well as with others.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pose questions, find solutions, explore possibilities: Soeculation and hypothetical</li> <li>• In a safe environment</li> <li>• Do words translate into feelings and actions? Or they remain lessons in the classroom</li> <li>• Stories connect us to one another? Even though we know they are fiction, stories elicit powerful emotional responses in us. While we are immersed in a story, we can see the world through someone else's eyes. We can know what it's like to be a poor boy in Delhi or a</li> </ul>

	<p>Those kinds of conversations, internal and external, are exactly what educators are counting on to unleash stories' change-creating potential.</p> <p>They show more empathy and concern for others, and they are more likely to intervene when other students are bullied.</p>	<p>slave girl in 1700s Virginia or the Queen of England. Sharing our subjective experiences through stories enable us to connect and empathize with one another. By sharing through stories, we are better able to live together.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Really?</i></li> </ul>
6	<p>The stories we tell ourselves are integral to our wellbeing.</p> <p>... recognise that these are stagnant inner monologues which should be discarded and substituted with fresh ones. Of course, some enthralling inner narratives can damage mental horizons.</p> <p>The most enduring stories, by contrast, broaden our mental and moral outlook without demanding that we hew to a certain standard... they present us with an arresting alternative to the way we see the world.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inspirational movies</li> <li>• Movies that portray/defy stereotypes</li> <li>• Beyond just speculation about what might happen, we use stories to answer the great unanswerable questions. Why am I here? What is the purpose of my life? What does it mean to be human? Stories bring order and meaning to the chaos and randomness of life. A story always has a beginning, middle and end, which is very satisfying to us, since we don't know how our own personal story will end. And our lives are really a search for our own story, aren't they?</li> <li>• Write our life story, see the possibilities for change</li> </ul>
7	<p>And sensibly enough, many artists bristle at the idea that they tell stories to get people to think or act in any particular way. In fact, they never write toward a purpose or moral. They just hope that readers take whatever they need. When stories are at their best, the effect is expansive rather than nakedly persuasive.</p> <p>... they present us with an arresting alternative to the way we see the world.</p> <p>The success of Adolf Hitler's oratory bid to dominate 1930s Germany should convince us that a narrative's surface persuasiveness is not, in itself, a virtue.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• They might write stories that challenge our minds/perceptions</li> <li>• But are they not bias or do they not write with an intention in mind?</li> <li>• Do they allow for multiple interpretations of their stories?</li> <li>• Stories that lead us to predesignated conclusions?</li> <li>• Double-edged sword? How? How to harness the benefits while keeping the disadvantages at bay?</li> </ul>
8	<p>But when we do decide to venture into an unfamiliar story, we emerge as revised, perhaps unexpected, versions of ourselves. Stories allow us to travel, time and again, outside the circumscribed spaces of what we believe and what we think possible. It is these journeys – sometimes tenuous, sometimes exhilarating – that inspire and steel us to navigate uncharted territories in real life.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Suppression of "stories"? Through censorship?</li> <li>• Are we willing to venture; experiment to discover different ways of looking at the same thing</li> </ul>