

NAVIGATE: All Write Now

2020 2ND EDITION

Message from the GP Team	3
Essays and Paragraphs	4
JC1 June Common Test Paper 1	7
1 Is religion still relevant in modern society?	7
2 Consider the view that success, rather than happiness, is what we should pursue.	9
3 Is artificial intelligence to be feared or welcomed today?	10
3 Is artificial intelligence to be feared or welcomed today?	13
3 Is artificial intelligence to be feared or welcomed today?	15
3 Is artificial intelligence to be feared or welcomed today?	17
4 To what extent do traditional beliefs hinder gender equality?	22
4 To what extent do traditional beliefs hinder gender equality?	24
4 To what extent do traditional beliefs hinder gender equality?	26
6 'Medicine is given far more credit than it deserves.' Discuss.	28
7 Assess the importance of language in Singaporean society.	30
8 To what extent should the government have access to its people's personal data?	33
11 'Globalisation has created a more divided world.' How far do you agree?	35
11 'Globalisation has created a more divided world.' How far do you agree?	37
12 'Wealthy countries should take more responsibility for the world's problems than poor countries.' Discuss.	39
JC1 June Common Test Paper 2	42
Response 1	42
Response 2	43
JC2 June Common Test Paper 1	45
1 'Luck, rather than effort, determines success.' To what extent is this true?	45
2 Assess the view that the media reinforces gender stereotypes.	47
2 Assess the view that the media reinforces gender stereotypes.	48
2 Assess the view that the media reinforces gender stereotypes.	50
2 Assess the view that the media reinforces gender stereotypes.	53
3 Are we protecting the environment for all the wrong reasons?	56
4 'The needs of children are sufficiently provided for.' Is this a fair assessment of your society?	58
4 'The needs of children are sufficiently provided for.' Is this a fair assessment of your society?	61
4 'The needs of children are sufficiently provided for.' Is this a fair assessment of your society?	64
5 How far is the regulation of corporations desirable?	66
5 How far is the regulation of corporations desirable?	68
5 How far is the regulation of corporations desirable?	71
6 Given the possibilities offered by modern technology, are schools still relevant?	73
6 Given the possibilities offered by modern technology, are schools still relevant?	76
6 Given the possibilities offered by modern technology, are schools still relevant?	77

Navigate 2020 2nd Edition

6 Given the possibilities offered by modern technology, are schools still relevant?	80
7 How far do you agree that disaster relief is best handled by countries on their own?	83
8 'All art is political.' Do you agree with this statement?	85
9 Consider the view that your society has placed too much faith in meritocracy.	88
9 Consider the view that your society has placed too much faith in meritocracy.	91
9 Consider the view that your society has placed too much faith in meritocracy.	93
10 'Banning vice is the most effective way to solve social problems.' Discuss.	95
12 To what extent is keeping pets still justifiable?	97
JC2 June Common Test Paper 2	100
Response 1	100
Response 2	102
Response 3	103
Response 4	105

Message from the GP Team

Dear Eunoians,

“To steady myself, I wrote, I wrote, and I wrote.”

This quote above, from the titular character in Therese Anne Fowler’s bestselling *Z: A novel of Zelda Fitzgerald* speaks of the grounding power of writing. For many like her who enjoy writing, this act of distilling ideas, emotions and experience into words can be therapeutic, a means of finding solace through a ruminative process of creation. Its message however is not only for those pre-enamoured with writing, but also those of us who approach it with more apprehension: to find steady footing in the skill, one must write, and write, and write.

The power of practice is certain, but we certainly gain more from each iteration when the practice is attempted thoughtfully. This is where Navigate comes in. By this point in the year, the JC1s have had a taste of essay writing and its demands, while the JC2s have written more than a handful of essays, thought about many more, and will be ramping up their efforts for the upcoming preliminary examinations, and beyond that, their A levels. Navigate seeks to provide all of you with samples of good writing, as guides for you to imagine what can be in your own practice. In this issue are the works of both your J1 and J2 peers who, like you, sat their June Common Tests amidst this year’s undeniable upheaval and uncertainty, and have risen above the challenges to produce sound writing. Whether you write for comfort or against discomfort, we hope that you’ll find their pieces inspiring and educational.

All the best,

Your GP Teachers ♥♥

Essays and Paragraphs

JC1 June Common Test P1

- 1 Is religion still relevant in modern society?
 - Joshua Khoo Jun Xian (20-E3), full essay
- 2 Consider the view that success, rather than happiness, is what we should pursue.
 - Lim Pei Han, Amanda (20-O1), full essay
- 3 Is artificial intelligence to be feared or welcomed today?
 - Chow Zi Yue (20-E3), full essay
 - Amanda Tan (20-I1), full essay
 - Chang Kok Peng, Ryan (20-O5), full essay
 - Amelia Chua (20-E2), full essay
- 4 To what extent do traditional beliefs hinder gender equality?
 - Celine Sin Mun Yee (20-O3), full essay
 - Ang Jo Wee (20-O5), full essay
 - Chionh Ning (20-I1), full essay
- 5 “The costs of compassion are too high to bear in today’s world.” Do you agree?
 - Not represented
- 6 Medicine is given far more credit than it deserves. Discuss.
 - Nyx Tan (20-O1), full essay
- 7 Assess the importance of language in Singaporean society.
 - Lim Hsing Yi, Nicole (20-O1), full essay
- 8 To what extent should the government have access to its people’s personal data?
 - Tan Jia Hui Jennifer (20-O4), full essay
- 9 “Meritocracy has caused more harm than good.” Consider whether this is true in your society.
 - Not represented
- 10 Should economic prosperity be the ultimate goal of every nation?
 - Not represented
- 11 “Globalisation has created a more divided world.” How far do you agree?
 - Clarice Pui Mun Sian (20-O3), full essay
 - Lin Xi, Dawn (20-O1), full essay
- 12 Wealthy countries should take more responsibility for the world’s problems than poorer countries. Discuss.
 - Lim Jing Xuan (20-I1), full essay

JC1 June Common Test Application Question

10 Application Question

- Lim Pei Han, Amanda (20-O1)
- Ong Shan Mei, Steffi (20-U1)

JC2 June Common Test P1

- 1 'Luck, rather than effort, determines success.' To what extent is this true?
 - Kelly Hooy (19-O1), full essay
- 2 Assess the view that the media reinforces gender stereotypes.
 - Sarah Teo (19-A6), 1 paragraph
 - Liew Shaw Jun (19-I4), full essay
 - Lum Wan Tong (19-U1), full essay
 - Anastasia Lin (19-U4), full essay
- 3 Are we protecting the environment for all the wrong reasons?
 - Natasha Tan (19-O1), full essay
- 4 'The needs of children are sufficiently provided for.' Is this a fair assessment of your society?
 - Alayna Yap (19-I4), full essay
 - Delaney Lim (19-O1), full essay
 - Tan Yu Shuang (19-U1), full essay
- 5 How far is the regulation of corporations desirable?
 - Glenda Ho (19-A1), full essay
 - Lucas Loh (19-A4), full essay
 - Chong Tze Wyne (19-E3), full essay
- 6 Given the possibilities offered by modern technology, are schools still relevant?
 - Pang Xin Hua (19-E2), full essay
 - Teo Jia Yi (19-E3), 2 paragraphs
 - Chloe Kho (19-O1), full essay
 - Asher Tan (19-O3), full essay
- 7 How far do you agree that disaster relief is best handled by countries on their own?
 - Ho Yu Hao (19-O1), full essay
- 8 'All art is political.' Do you agree with this statement?
 - Christabel Yuen (19-U2), full essay
- 9 Consider the view that your society has placed too much faith in meritocracy.
 - Gracia Chua (19-U1), full essay
 - Irving Tan (19-U5), full essay

- Jack Gin (19-U5), full essay
- 10 'Banning vice is the most effective way to solve social problems.' Discuss.
 - Leslie Yip (19-I4), full essay
- 11 Does nostalgia no longer have a role in your society?
 - Not represented
- 12 To what extent is keeping pets still justifiable?
 - Chloe Wong (19-O2), full essay

JC2 June Common Test Application Question

- 10 Application Question
 - Sit Jie Ren (19-A6)
 - Grace Wee (19-O1)
 - Marie Leo (19-O1)
 - Nicole Lim (19-O2)

JC1 June Common Test Paper 1

1 Is religion still relevant in modern society?

A generally well-written and thoughtful response that shows good understanding of the different functions of religion. However, most of its ideas could be phrased more clearly to address the point of contention more consistently. The word “still” in the question suggests that religion was relevant at some point in history, so a more holistic approach to this question would address how religion was relevant then, and whether this is still true today. Some links in the paragraphs are tenuous and could be further refined. The organisation of ideas is also clear and well signposted.

Do you believe in God, or even Gods? Who is God? Should you ask the latter question to different people, you would most probably receive a variety of vastly different answers. The world is indeed a melting pot of religions. Having a religion means having a belief that there is indeed, a higher entity, larger than life, watching over us. It is the faith towards this divine being even though He or She is usually intangible. In a modern society, where people have access to scientific facts and knowledge at their fingertips, how can religion, something that totally goes against basic scientific facts and theories stay relevant in modern society? The truth is, that religion is timeless and boundless, and due to the fact that humans are intellectual creatures and the fact that religions provide emotional and moral support to people, religion is indeed still relevant in modern society.

Provides a clear definition of what religion is to him

Student has introduced the tension and context

Links to the issues raised in the question

We have come extremely far as a human race. Over decades, centuries and millenniums, we have made countless scientific breakthroughs that shaped the world we live in today. This is due to the fact that humans are curious and intellectual creatures that always strive to make sense of the world we live in. The urge to comprehend the world we live in is innate for humans. Way before our time, several thousands of years ago, during the age of the mighty Egyptian Pharaohs and the Mayans, the concept of a God or Gods already existed. Due to a lack of scientific knowledge, humans living then conjured up stories and tales of divine beings in a bid to comprehend several phenomena in our world. For example, the ancient Egyptians believed in Tefnut, the God of rain to explain the formation of rain which we now know is due to the water cycle, something which even a Primary 3 child in Singapore would know. This simply demonstrates that humans have an insatiable need to understand everything about the world we live in, even if it means using an intangible, divine being to help explain several phenomena. This insatiable need to understand our world has led to the progression of the human race as a whole, and is a survival instinct that was passed down to us from our ancestors. However, in our modern society, science and religion are always at war and can never agree on a common ground. The [bases] for science and religion are mostly completely different and contradictory. For example, Charles Darwin proposes that humans today are a result of evolution and natural selection, while Christians believe that humans today are a result of God’s creation and this has sparked numerous heated debates between church leaders and scientists. The fact that there is a need for debate shows that religion is still relevant in modern society as this indicates that there are still a significant number of people that believe in the Christian faith.

Though relevant, links to question requirements seem tenuous in the first half of the paragraph

Rather insightful way of linking this idea to the question

One common assumption that people make is that due to scientific facts, religion and its seemingly outlandish claims are simply too old-fashioned and hence not relevant in modern society. While I believe that [if a person should] recover from a flu after taking medicine, the reason for his or her recovery is due to the medication and not solely because of a divine being stepping in, miraculously curing the person of the flu, there are still many things science cannot fully explain. One such question is, “What happens after death?” Is there really a heaven? Science simply cannot debunk the fact that there might be a heaven. Since humans living on earth do not have an idea of what happens after death, they turn to religion for answers as religion answers questions that science simply has no answer to, and once again this is due to humans’ insatiable need to comprehend the world we live in, or even beyond that. For example, Christians believe that they live eternally in heaven after death. Science and religion are both ways of understanding our world, but religion provides answers to several questions that science has no answers to as it is based on faith, not facts. The fact that only about 10% of people are atheist in today’s world, further solidifies the fact that religion is still relevant in modern society and will always continue to be as humans will have a never-ending urge to seek for answers to questions that science cannot answer.	As compared to the previous body paragraph, this first line demonstrates awareness of question requirements from the get go An interesting premise for the claim
Our modern world is competitive and stressful as increased access to information has led to increased competitiveness. Our modern world has been described as a VUCA world, with VUCA standing for volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous. The future is full of surprises and nobody really knows what it holds for us. Thus, many people turn to a divine being for security and certainty. Many people turn to a God to seek spiritual and emotional refuge, knowing that there is a spiritual power that cares for them. It is a common sight to see students praying right before a test or major examination, or when they fall ill. They see their God as larger than life beings that can change the outcome of a situation for the better and this gives them a sense of security. Also, a study has shown that religious people tend to be healthier and happier than those unaffiliated with a religion. A common assumption that people have is that religion has no effect on the outcome of a situation, as after all, it is just simply a theory. While I believe that this might be true as there is a lack of evidence to prove the existence of God, believing in an omnipotent and omnipresent being provides significant emotional support for a person, boosting their confidence in themselves. The human mind is truly powerful and the power of religion simply cannot be underestimated or undermined. There is a saying, “Faith can move mountains”. If a person has a strong enough belief, anything is possible.	It would be advisable to use more transition phrases to link the sentences smoothly This example does not clearly address the premise raised This paragraph is not as successful as the previous 2, in answering the question directly
In conclusion, even though there is no common God or Gods, all religions serve a similar purpose. It is an avenue and a means to understand the world we live in, or possibly beyond that and also provides spiritual support for believers. Due to its important roles, religion is simply indispensable and is still relevant in modern society. <i>(Joshua Khoo Jun Xian, 20-E3)</i>	Conclusion reiterates the points addressed in the essay--a structured, yet overused way of ending

2 Consider the view that success, rather than happiness, is what we should pursue.

A thoughtful contemplation of the relationship between success and happiness, with a consistent overall argument put forth and sustained throughout the essay. The clarity of the transitions and the logical expression of the ideas make this essay a comfortable read. However, further development can be achieved by providing a range of concrete examples to substantiate the arguments.

The word 'success' always brings a certain image to one's mind. It makes one think of glory and of achievement. Meanwhile, the word 'happiness' brings seemingly similar yet intricately different images of fulfilment and satisfaction. Some may subscribe to the opinion that success should be the ultimate goal one should pursue. After all, it means not only the achievement of one's goals but also the recognition [one gains from] others. However, this fails to take into account how unique each individual's version of their ideal life is and how some pursue fulfilment in life that involves happiness, but not success. It then becomes important to reconsider the thought of success being a competitor of happiness when it could actually be a type of happiness.

The question's key contention is addressed in the outline of possible arguments from different perspectives

Some argue that success should be prioritised and pursued over happiness because it is what earns one recognition, while happiness is not rewarded. Indeed, as a personal and private feeling, happiness sometimes literally cannot be recognised; we are unable to truly perceive each other's feelings and thoughts, let alone explicitly recognise them to be of value. Thus, happiness is never really rewarded. On the other hand, success is a great attractor of recognition. Many well-known figures are well-known precisely for their successes, such as Steve Jobs for his outstanding achievements in the technological industry, or the late Lee Kuan Yew for his efficient grooming of Singapore into a prosperous country. It is clear that success is far better than happiness at earning one recognition of their life and should thus be pursued fervently. However, though valid, this idea stands irrelevant to the question at hand – what we, as individuals, should pursue. What each person chooses to pursue or thinks they should pursue is entirely subjective. Recognition could be vital to some to consider their life well-lived while entirely irrelevant to others' who prefer to gain other things such as love and friendship from their own private circles. The very nature of human beings to be unique makes it impossible to define any one characteristic to be the true ultimate goal of human life. It would thus be inaccurate to say success, having the ability to bring recognition, should be our greatest goal when it is safer to say that happiness, something inherently subjective and thus more accurate [to the individual], should be pursued.

A clear comparison is established right from the start of this paragraph, with the relationship between reward and recognition established and subsequently developed

Clear signposting of a concession + rebuttal of the opposing argument

Furthermore, happiness is more likely to bring fulfilment to one's life simply because one can define it on their own, while success can be defined by others. The idea of success has many connotations to it, especially ones related to society's expectations. However, happiness is wholly subjective; free for one to define on their own. An illustration of this concept can be found in Singapore. In Singapore, the conventional ideas of success are mostly related to educational success and getting a prestigious occupation, such as being a doctor or a lawyer. This mindset has been cultivated by the pragmatic nature of Singapore's society, which has been trained to value survival over all else since our independence. However, this success is not guaranteed to bring one satisfaction in their life. In fact, it can even bring discontentment. The pursuit of success strictly defined by how one does at school or at work

Inter-paragraph coherence: this paragraph builds upon the ending point from the previous paragraph

Individual vs Societal expectations
#AgencyvsStructure

has resulted in many Singaporeans becoming burnt out. For example, the level of stress in children related to school in Singapore is extremely high compared to the rest of the world. This shows how success is often unaligned with one's own idea of a fulfilling life because it carries with it the connotations of societal expectations. Contrastingly, if one chooses to focus on their own happiness, they are free to decide what causes that feeling in them and thus what kind of life they want to live for themselves and themselves only.	
Most importantly, it must be considered that success is not even a competitor of happiness in the first place and is rather a [] way of reaching happiness. Success has a more objective and specific definition compared to happiness. It is susceptible to society's expectations and has specific relation to ideas of glory and achievement. However, happiness is more subjective and has a broader definition. One is free to realise what one truly wants when considering their happiness instead of success. In this sense, success can be seen as a type of happiness. Some may view success, a more materialistic and concrete kind of fulfilment, to be what makes them happy and thus something they should pursue. Others, valuing spiritual and a more abstract kind of fulfilment, choose to just plainly pursue happiness. Either way, the end goal and destination are still happiness. Therefore, claiming that happiness is what we should pursue is simply more accurate, and takes into account that success can be a part of that happiness, instead of a competitor.	Addressing one of the question's assumptions: that success and happiness are sharply distinct and mutually exclusive The relationship between success and happiness is redefined This paragraph could be strengthened with concrete evidence
Glory and achievement do indeed sound desirable, but in the end, they are just types of fulfilment and satisfaction. The term 'happiness', allowing room for individual fulfilment and choice of what life we want compared to the restrictive nature of the term 'success', is thus simply the better choice of word to define what we should pursue as unique individuals who just want to get through life with smiles on our faces. (Lim Pei Han, Amanda, 20-01)	A succinct conclusion that sums up the arguments by pinning them to the connotations of the words 'success' and 'happiness'

3 Is artificial intelligence to be feared or welcomed today?

<i>The range of examples used here is quite impressive and the explanations effectively pinpointed the characteristics and nature of AI, showing a considerable awareness of the subject. The evaluations of whether fear or anticipation is the appropriate response are also quite well-established, making the argument relevant and at times rather insightful. To improve, the signposting of the arguments could be clearer, especially in the delivery of the topic sentences. The evaluation, especially towards the end of the essay, could also be developed more thoroughly so as to present a more well-balanced essay.</i>	
Artificial intelligence(AI), "machine intelligence" is the new form of intelligence created by humanity ourselves. Surprisingly despite our limitations as the creator, the capability of artificial intelligence far exceeds what mankind's natural intelligence can accomplish. With advancements in science and technology, the field of artificial intelligence continues to develop and expand its capabilities as well as its usefulness to humanity. However, mankind is divided regarding their views on artificial intelligence. As much as AI is welcomed by the masses for improving our society, there are many who are against the increasingly intelligent AI as they fear that products with such intelligence can bring harm to society. However, in my opinion, AI should be more welcomed than feared for the improvements it can bring to our	The possible arguments are outlined in a

society and our civilisation. Artificial intelligence with current developments has the potential to allow humanity to flourish like never before, with its multifaceted ability in tasks that natural intelligence cannot compete with, artificial intelligence helps humanity surpass obstacles we cannot agilely surpass on our own. However, the prevalence of AI in the labour work force is also a reasonable cause of worry for the middle working class.	reasonably clear manner here, but a thesis statement which sets the argumentative direction explicitly is required
Firstly, the capabilities of AI surpass natural intelligence and can result in products developed to benefit our society and hence allowing the society to flourish. Such capability of AI, including its ability to analyse large amounts of data in an instant [...] This ability of the AI cannot be replicated by natural intelligence of mankind, as a human may take about ten times the time of an AI to sort through similar amounts of data. Such an ability can be harnessed to produce multi-user apps such as Google Maps or Waze, which allows drivers to find their way to their intended destination in the shortest period of time available. The AI is able to sort through the data of the needs of many users and correctly provide the shortest route to their intended destination. This ability of the AI can also be harnessed in more interpersonal apps such as “Siri” or ‘Google Assistant’. These home/technology assistants help to meet the end of the users through manipulating technological products after receiving voice commands from the web. These are examples of how AI can improve the quality of life of mankind, cutting down the inefficiencies in one’s life and hence allowing our lives to become more efficient. The AI can also help safety flourish by improving the methods of the police force in catching criminals far and wide. The ability of the AI to analyse large amounts of data can be used in sophisticated face-face recognition devices which are able to create large data-bases of appearance of criminals, hence allowing easier arrest. Moreover, AI can also be used to track down criminals by acting as a lure. Such is the example of ‘Sweetie’, a Filipino “young girl” at the age of 4 who was used to lure out and capture the personal data of cybersex pedophiles. ‘Sweetie’ is an AI created virtual persona which is able to capture the data of cyber predators that approached her in online chat rooms. The impressive ability of the AI brings about advancements in society by improving the maintenance of justice and order.	The paragraph covers two rather distinct aspects of society’s improvements. These could each be developed in a separate paragraph for greater clarity and depth of evaluation Link this to the question by evaluating whether AI should be welcomed or feared for this ability
Secondly, AI can also bring about new perspectives in how mankind appreciates beauty. Despite the fact that artificial intelligence is modified to resemble natural intelligence, there are several things that AI is unable to achieve, contrary to the popular beliefs. Such is an ability to gain an independent consciousness of itself. The notion that an AI can turn evil is downright impossible as currently, AI does not have the ability to attain an independent consciousness, (they probably never will)! Hence, unlike human beings with our own consciousness and emotions, the AI perceives things very differently from us. Hence, in the field of the arts, AI can offer fresh new perspectives for us in How we define art. Such is the example of “Ai-da” the world's first female robot painter. Named after Ada Lovelace, a famous Pioneer British mathematician, Aida is the first AI of her kind that is able to draw through a special Cartesian-based image deciphering program. The results of such programs are interpretations of images never seen before. Despite being programmed by human researchers, Ai-da’s interpretation of images is not controlled by their machinations but rather her own programmed consciousness. Hence, this results in unexpected interpretations of images around the robot, fashioned by her own consciousness. For her efforts, Ai-da has	Rather than simply listing another ability of AI, link it to whether AI should be welcomed or feared so as to address the question directly How is the perception of beauty linked to the lack of an evil intention or an independent consciousness? Also, link this to how AI is perceived and whether such perceptions are justified Link to perceptions of AI and whether

been praised in opening a new door in the world of modern arts. In places where AI such as Ai-da are concerned, the benefits of the AI surpasses the technical field [...]	they are justified.
However, some may argue that the prevalence of AI in modern society will eventually result in AI replacing humans in the workforce, and hence end up displacing many. The automation [of] the workforce especially in the field of labour is something that is currently taking place. This can be attributed to the property of the AI being able to be efficiently programmed to complete low intelligence tasks of manual labour without the possibility of human error. Moreover artificial intelligence has been proven to be more efficient and accurate, than a normal human being. Workers in charge of menial tasks in the workforce such as factory warehouse workers often find themselves replaced by AI as the cost of AI drops over the years. This has led to fears amongst the working class about the automation of the labour force which may leave millions displaced from their labour jobs. However this fear should be assuaged as it is impossible for the AI to completely replace humans or for the workforce to be completely automated. Such are the nature of jobs which deal with matters of the human consciousness. Jobs such as therapists or call-center workers both of which require responsiveness and a personal touch of a human individual [...] For example, a therapist requires empathy when dealing with patients. However, AI is unable to provide the necessary emotions due to [the] lack of consciousness. As a call center worker, a human worker can do their best to cater towards the customers, out-of-the-blue demands over the phones, but an AI automated phone call can only be programmed with a limited number of responses which may not be sufficient in fulfilling the needs of the customers. Hence it is not necessary for one to be afraid of AI taking over the jobs of many in the society. Moreover, I believe that as the field of AI opens up due to the demands for automation, new jobs will also be created in that aspect.	The link to the question is explicitly established here This segment of the paragraph is rather descriptive and could benefit more from conveying the argument more specifically Further elaboration can develop the evaluation in this paragraph: are the new jobs created significant enough to replace the jobs rendered obsolete?
Ultimately, the advancements in the field of AI can bring about many benefits for the humankind allowing society to flourish both in efficiency and in our pursuits for arts. Hence the advancement of AI should be welcomed and not feared. As long as we utilise AI morally and correctly, there is nothing to fear. <i>(Chow Zi Yue, 20-E3)</i>	How AI can be utilised morally and correctly is an issue which could have been further analysed before this conclusion

3 Is artificial intelligence to be feared or welcomed today?

This essay is reasonably well-argued and provides a clear contextualisation both of the subject matter and the contention surrounding it within the introduction paragraph. However, the subsequent body paragraphs could be more consistent in establishing the link back to the question's contention ('to be feared or welcomed'). The paragraph on pop culture's influence on society's perceptions of AI demonstrates good evaluation by looking at the underlying causes of such responses to AI and evaluating whether such perceptions are justified.

In the words of the 21st century technological visionary, Elon Musk, "Artificial intelligence will be the greatest threat mankind would have ever faced". A warning is sounded about the dangers that come with the uncertainty and threat brought about by mankind's latest endeavour [with] the modern Pandora's box. While Artificial Intelligence (AI) is commonly used to describe anything related to computers, machines and their capabilities, I understand it as the computer's emulation of the human brain, where the theory and development of these systems are able to perform tasks normally requiring human intelligence, such as visual perception, speech recognition, decision-making etc, independently. The contention and controversy behind AI after all boils down to its ability to replace us eventually and result in numerous threats to the survival of the human species. However, it could also bring about more economic benefits [and] allow new innovations or even a revolution to happen. Hence, I believe that since AI is inevitable in today's society, we should welcome it as long as we use it cautiously and ensure the threats it poses are kept to a minimum.

An effective opening linking the quote to the sense of apprehension in the question

Defining the subject matter

The thesis statement recognises the context of 'today' and the inevitability of AI and establishes the conditions for it to be welcomed.

From an economic perspective, AI poses a huge opportunity for mankind to rapidly expand the economy due to its efficiency and productivity, making us more prosperous, accomplished, and successful. First of all, they can work tirelessly round the clock without any threat of unionising against companies as they do not complain about unfair work hours or incomes, unlike humans. For simple and straightforward tasks such as factory jobs; which are menial tasks, computers can be programmed to complete them easily. The efficiency AI brings is unprecedented, unrivalled and unparalleled and reduces human labour with such tasks, enabling companies to redeploy their workers to focus on innovation ideally. Furthermore, with the betterment of AI and its expansion to other areas of expertise such as virtual assistants and language, the value that it can add to the economy is tremendous. A study conducted by Mckinsey Global Institute showed that AI has the potential to incrementally add 16% or around USD\$3 trillion by 2030, with a yearly growth rate of about 1.2% between 2018 and 2030. This is beneficial for countries facing a manpower crunch, like Japan and Singapore which have low birth rates coupled with an ageing population as their labour forces can be supplemented by AI to bring about huge-- no, colossal or even revolutionary-- economic and efficiency gains. Hence, it should be welcomed.

So it should be welcomed or feared? A clear reference to the question should be established in the topic sentence

Concrete example to substantiate the evaluation of AI's economic potential

Nowadays, as AI has undoubtedly become an efficient agent at performing tasks such as processing large amounts of data in a short time, [with] more accuracy in doing repetitive tasks, it has caused fear among humans that AI could potentially “take their jobs”. In recent years, AI has led to major disruptions in the world of work, causing such concerns to arise. For instance, in the automotive industry, AI traders are making higher capital gains on the stock market as compared to their human colleagues, and in the healthcare industry, AI is able to read X-ray images and identify early signs of cancer, and even perform major surgeries with more precision. Hence, it is unsurprising why humans would be fearful of the threat it brings to their careers. It is estimated by researchers at Oxford that nearly 50% of all occupations in the USA could be at risk because of computerisation within the next two decades. Therefore, taking into account the looming threats, Singapore has chosen to adopt AI technology into the citizens’ everyday life instead, coming up with the ‘National AI Strategy’ in 2019 to harness the technology to tackle problems in the government and other national priorities. By addressing the elephant in the room and easing individuals into welcoming AI, it reduces the fear and contention that people may have as they get familiarised with it. This then allows the government to use it to boost the work industry and enable change in the future, such as by creating more jobs ideally. Hence, through relevant usage and forward thinking plans, AI can be used to maximise opportunities and start industrial revolutions, and hence should be welcomed.	Again, the argumentative element here could be strengthened with a clear reference back to the question’s contention: to be welcomed or feared? Is computerisation quite the same as AI? A deeper evaluation of the underlying causes of such fear would improve this argument The ending of this paragraph repeats that of the earlier paragraph
Besides, the changes AI brings [are] both gradual and inevitable. As time progresses, many occupations such as waiters, cashiers, accountants can be replaced by AI. However, companies need time to invest and implement new processes and tools that can embody AI. Therefore, ample time is provided for individuals to learn new skills or learn how to work alongside AI and increase work welfare. Moreover, jobs are not as depleted as people think they are. Instead, AI has been creating new jobs. A recent World Economic Forum (WEF) report estimated that AI could create 58 million net new jobs in the next few years despite causing some jobs to be displaced as well. As a pragmatic government, such as Singapore which aims to anticipate change and stay relevant, plans and schemes have been laid out to encourage people to learn new skills suited for the new economy and future society. This includes the SkillsFuture package, which incentivises people to learn and then take up jobs which would ideally thrive in the future global economy. Although some may see it as inefficient currently, in the long term, it will catapult most of the working class to the frontline of the economy, increasing profits in the country. Hence, it should be welcomed as not only the society gains more societal and economical welfare, individuals get to enjoy higher incomes and work leisure as menial tasks are done by AI.	Link this to how AI should be perceived Apt application of the SWM to evaluate the benefits of AI justifying its being perceived as something to be welcomed

Some are against AI due to the common fear in pop culture that AI will be weaponised and used against humans, to either kill or enslave them. From a philosophical perspective, developing AI can be seen as apotheosis, as it can be used maliciously against many if it lands in the wrong hands, for instance, criminal organisations and rogue countries. As Issac Asimov has warned in his book <i>The Rise of Machines</i>, a trend of seeking to better the human race in pursuit of technological advances can lead to disastrous and unexpected outcomes. Yet another outcome is explored in the <i>Terminator</i> movie series where AI takes over the human race. These ideals have caused people to make mountains out of molehills and take excessive actions to safeguard themselves against AI. While it is true AI is capable of causing devastating attacks, for as long as it has existed, there has not been any robot or AI uprisings. Moreover, it is not new that today's robots are incapable [of] learn[ing] and us[ing] knowledge to undertake actions beyond a specific context. Besides, these actions and contexts are programmed by humans, hence it is humans that make it possible for AI to be feared and misused. Such an example is the [Russian Army's] development of FEDOR, which is an ex-rescue robot now programmed to shoot firearms accurately instead. Hence, AI is only detrimental to humans if poorly designed as they are just goal-oriented machines made by humans. Thus, the fear resulting from AI itself is irrational because it is harmless naturally, unless programmed otherwise.	Insightful examination of the influence on perceptions Questionable word choice ('apotheosis') A sound counterargument dismantling the misconceived notions of AI perpetuated by fiction
In conclusion, I believe AI should be welcomed in today's society as it is not only inevitable, but at the same time, it could also be cautiously used to bring massive benefits to the society and economy in the long run. Despite fears that it may pose a threat to careers and even human existence, these are variables that can be controlled by man -- its inventor. Furthermore, with advancement in technology, it is practical for AI to be explored and developed too. (Amanda Tan, 20-11)	

3 Is artificial intelligence to be feared or welcomed today?

<i>A wide range of concrete examples is evident here, along with reasonably clear understanding of the issues related to the topic of AI. While the ideas are conveyed in quite an organised fashion, the arguments could be further nuanced as there is a tendency to conclude that AI should be feared because of certain threats it poses, when it is perhaps more accurate to assert that the vulnerability of AI to misuse or exploitation is the cause of such threats. Balance can be discerned with the provision of examples of AI's useful or beneficial functions, and this could likewise be strengthened with clearer evaluation.</i>	
Artificial intelligence or AI refers to the simulation of human intelligence that is programmed to think and mimic the actions of an actual human or machines that exhibit human-like traits like learning or problem solving. In our current day and age, AI is continuously evolving to benefit many different industries across the world and the applications for it are endless. From Apple's SIRI function to self-driving cars, AI is progressing rapidly. However, AI does have its limitations and drawbacks like high costs, inability to possess creativity or emotions like a regular human or the terrifying possibility that AI takes over the human race. Despite the crucial role that AI plays in improving our lives in countless ways, it also brings about a	Clear definition of the subject matter How these limitations and potential threats of AI outweigh its benefits and render

myriad of issues that could set society back. Thus, artificial intelligence should be feared rather than welcomed to a large extent today.	it something to be feared needs to be more clearly established
Nonetheless, artificial intelligence (AI) has indeed benefited society in many different ways. AI is being tested in fields from healthcare for treatment of patients or surgical procedures, to finance industries where it provides crucial help to banks' fraud departments to even machines with AI like self-driving cars, all of which serve to greatly improve our daily lives and standards of living. Computer scientists have made several successful breakthroughs in the fields of AI and given rise to computers and smart devices possessing the ability to comprehend speech and language. A very prominent example of this would be smart assistants like Apple's SIRI or Amazon's Alexa. These functions serve as an extension of ourselves and help us to complete simple but useful tasks faster and easier like setting an alarm or a reminder, making a call or sending texts or helping us solve a simple math problem. It then analyses our daily routines and learns from the patterns and then anticipates what we might need to help us get by each day seamlessly. These machines with AI can also, unlike humans, work 24/7 without taking breaks or getting bored, making them extremely efficient as they are ready to complete their assigned tasks whenever and wherever they are needed to.	This paragraph, while providing many concrete examples of AI's application in different domains, is not addressing the question's contention regarding whether AI should be feared or welcomed
However, although artificial intelligence (AI) has basically revolutionized our lives as we know it, it harbours countless potential pitfalls that accompanied its progress. When it comes to creating machines capable of functioning like a regular human being, it brings about a variety of ethical issues for society. If AI had the potential of making its own set of decisions and were to somehow violate human laws due to its decision making abilities, it begs the question of who would ultimately be responsible for the consequences that follow the actions of the autonomous machine. Regular humans possess the emotional and cognitive abilities to make split-second decisions but AI is not the case as it is merely a program that someone has to input for it to function. The extent of a machine being allowed to make decisions that can greatly affect the outcome of a dire situation would be a problem that would not be resolved in the near future and hence is still a pressing and uncertain issue that brings about potential complications to humans. Thus, artificial intelligence should be feared due to its conflicts with possible human morals and ethics.	This depends on the type of AI This point could be evaluated in greater detail by elaborating on the notions of accountability and culpability
Moreover, artificial intelligence (AI) poses a potential threat to humanity. It is predicted that AI can be motivated intrinsically or even possess certain human cognitive functions in the near future. This would prove to be a problem as we humans could be wiped out by some AI that has gone rogue and all of humanity could be purged similar to what was depicted in the science-fiction film, <i>The Terminator</i>. As mentioned by Stephen Hawking, renowned theoretical physicist, "artificial intelligence could surpass human knowledge at a point, to then destroy humans". However, a more pressing and current issue that we face due to the advancement of artificial intelligence would be unemployment. Ever since AI was discovered and improved on, many believe that it will one day take over many sectors of the workforce and bring mass unemployment to the society. As AI progresses day after day, many of our current jobs may become obsolete or become automated faster than we expect. Jobs like	Interesting how this paragraph provides a different perspective on such predictions compared to the previous essay This is an abrupt shift away from the danger of species extinction to the much lesser threat of unemployment

factory workers, telemarketers or even cashiers are being replaced by AI. Recent reports also state that up to five million people in the US could lose their jobs due to the advancements in AI taking over their jobs and this could lead to social unrest. Thus, artificial intelligence could bring about varying degrees of threats to humanity and hence should be feared today.	While this statement is reasonable, the argument here could be more nuanced
Lastly, artificial intelligence (AI) can trigger a whole set of security problems if it falls into the hands of exploitative parties or if the AI develops an alternate but catastrophic procedure to attain the goals it was set to achieve. With such advanced developments in AI, it is no surprise that countries have adopted this technology in their military scene. Autonomous weapons are artificial intelligence systems that are programmed to kill and weapons of mass destruction like nuclear weapons or guided missiles also use AI in their systems and they can cause monumental amounts of damage if they fall into unscrupulous hands. AI is also susceptible to online hacks and intrusion which all the more makes it even easier for unwanted parties to access and utilise these weapons for their own uses. An Intercontinental Ballistic Missile or ICBM, which is a guided nuclear missile with a minimum range of 5,500 kilometres, has a blast radius of about eight kilometres and can also cause radiation poisoning and thermal radiation to humans, which is more than enough to take out entire cities and rendering the blast zone uninhabitable for many years to come if the radiation persists. In the event that these fall into the wrong hands, we are essentially letting them make use of our own technology against us, which leads to detrimental ramifications. Also, if the AI were to develop an unideal and destructive method for achieving the goals it was programmed to achieve, it could lead to serious consequences as well. This can easily happen in the event that we fail to fully align our goals with the AI's goals and it also turns out that aligning both sides is painstakingly difficult and very prone to errors and mistakes. For example, if a superintelligent AI was tasked with an ambitious geoengineering project like building a large dam for hydroelectricity, it might completely disregard the surrounding wildlife and ecosystem and cause irreversible damage to it just so as to complete the task it was set out to do and to an even more extreme extent, view human intervention to stop its destructive tendency as a threat. Therefore, AI can greatly compromise mankind's safety and should be feared today.	Greater nuance can be added to this evaluation by recognising that it is the misuse of AI and not AI itself which is a threat to safety and security
In conclusion, even though artificial intelligence can help solve some of the world's biggest problems, from improving communication to resolving issues related to energy, climate, healthcare and more, the significant drawbacks and pitfalls that it brings greatly overshadows the benefits that it has provided us with. As shown above, artificial intelligence has plenty if not more problems that can lead to greater complications in the future. Thus, artificial intelligence can truly be profoundly transformational for humans and humanity and be finally welcomed fully if the bigger issues pertaining its existence and usage are accounted for. <i>(Chang Kok Peng, Ryan, 20-05)</i>	

3 Is artificial intelligence to be feared or welcomed today?

This unusually long essay is exceptionally extensive in its range of examples and its scope of argumentative perspectives. Considering the time constraints of the examination setting, this is outstanding indeed. While the

<i>display of content knowledge regarding AI is impressive here, the tendency to list examples in place of developing the evaluation weakens the argument in some parts of the essay, and it could be more focused and succinct. Nevertheless, most of the many argumentative points raised demonstrate sound logic, insight and clear progression of ideas, making this essay rather comprehensive and balanced in analysis and substantiation.</i>	
Many artificial intelligence researchers roll their eyes when coming across headlines titled: "Stephen Hawking warns that rise of robots may be disastrous for mankind." Writing in The Independent, Hawking readily acknowledges the benefits that may come from such technological advancements. Recent artificial intelligence milestones such as self-driving cars, a computer winning at "Jeopardy!", and the digital personal assistants Siri, Google Now, Google Home and Cortana are merely symptoms of an Informational Technological arms race fuelled by unprecedented investments and building on an increasingly mature theoretical foundation. However, Hawking keeps the negatives close to mind writing that "such achievements will probably pale against what the coming decades will bring" One can imagine such technology outsmarting financial markets, out-inventing human researchers, out-manipulating human leaders, leaving human intellect far behind. Whereas the short-term impact of artificial intelligence depends on who controls it, the long-term impact depends on whether it can be controlled at all. From Siri to self-driving cars, artificial intelligence is progressing rapidly. Although science fiction often portrays artificial intelligence as robots with human-like characteristics, artificial intelligence can encompass anything from Google's search algorithms to IBM's Watson to autonomous weapons. While the momentous breakthroughs in artificial intelligence recently can be unsettling, it is pessimistic to conclude that we should fear rather than welcome them. I am of the opinion that mankind can harness these latest advances adroitly and continue to head off the most undesirable repercussions.	A comprehensive contextualisation that reveals a keen awareness and detailed attention paid to various opinions on the topic of AI Clear engagement of the question's contention
Artificial intelligence skeptics may fear the latest advances in artificial intelligence for nascent advances tend to trigger more questions and worries than answers, be it the ability of their creators to correct imperfections/ flaws, the commitment of legitimate users to use artificial intelligence properly, the will of regulators to ward off those who invent artificial intelligence for sinister purposes, or the possibility that we have overlooked or cannot neutralise negative implications. Whether self-driving cars can learn to make ethical and moral decisions that allow them to avert avoidable loss of human lives in traffic accidents; whether human reproductive cloning should ever be allowed and how the resulting clones will be treated; the way the artificial-intelligence-aided algorithms of the Deep Web and Bitcoin facilitate online sales of controlled substances and equipment and allow communication to bypass surveillance. Hence, [these concerns or potential dilemmas] lead[] the pessimist to question and reject, opting to fear the advances in artificial intelligence.	Insightful observation of the typical apprehension many have of the new and the unfamiliar, with detailed reasons provided for such a perception Along with the listing of such instances where the use of AI could raise concerns, the central elements of uncertainty and the lack of regulation can be stated more explicitly

Furthermore, people who lack expert knowledge of artificial intelligence may base their reactions on media reports or hearsay. Apocalyptic views that artificial intelligence, backed by movies such as <i>Transcendence</i>, will generate a technological singularity capable of overthrowing man [...] when in reality, we are nowhere near the creation of self-aware machines. Artificial intelligence today is properly known as narrow artificial intelligence, in that it is designed to perform a narrow task [:] only facial recognition or only internet searches or only driving a car. When people keep coming across gloomy views – a real possibility given the way viewpoints are copied, echoed and amplified across various online media platforms and aggregator websites – it is inevitable that their perspectives will be coloured. There is the way naysayers readily exercise their freedom of speech on social media today to worry about too. Unlike their predecessors who were hampered by their inability to harness traditional media, they can easily mount online campaigns and have become adept at packaging their views and can convince those who do not fact-check to accept their assessment. A techno-skeptic who only read about Bill Gates's position in a tabloid with quotes taken out-of-context may mistakenly think Gates believes superintelligence and therefore the doom of mankind to be imminent. After all, fear sells, and articles using out-of-context quotes to proclaim imminent doom can generate more clicks than nuanced and balanced ones. The media has made the artificial intelligence safety debate seem more controversial than it really is, leading to some people choosing to fear rather than welcome these latest advances in technology.	The evaluation of the media's influence on or even manipulation of the perceptions people have of AI draws a clear link to the context of 'today'
Clichéd though it may sound, science and technology are double-edged swords and mankind's history is indeed littered with many instances of foolishness, impulsiveness and barely averted ulterior motives. Given the immense power and irrevocability that can be unleashed by artificial intelligence, unease might not be totally unwarranted. Autonomous weapons are artificial intelligence systems that are programmed to kill. Remotely controlled unmanned aerial vehicles used in combat. In the hands of the wrong person, these weapons could easily cause mass casualties. The unsecured Internet of Things being vulnerable to hacking, expert and amateur hackers exploiting malware and zero-day vulnerabilities to carry out DDos and APT attacks, cyber-espionage and intellectual-property thefts. When all these artificial intelligence systems are linked to the control of cars, airplanes, pacemakers, automated trading systems or even a power grid, the repercussions are much more severe. Rather than to assume that everything will fall into place, it is good to raise concerns so that safeguards, control and even curtailment can be put in place where necessary. This is important because we live in an age of heavy reliance on artificial intelligence and our lives and safety can be jeopardised if the fears do come true. While not every possibility can be brought under control – those with ulterior motives can be very persistent and inventive – it is possible to pre-empt and constrain a lot of unwanted developments and utilisation.	The shift in argumentative perspective is signposted here Incomplete sentences here Good reference to the context of today's world A measured call for caution rather than a leap to fear

However, there will always be knee-jerk reactions and far-fetched imaginings; and we must not allow these to colour our perception of other breakthroughs in artificial intelligence or throw the baby out of the bathwater. Moreover, if artificial intelligence in question is still being developed, it is premature to denigrate them or mistake nascence for defectiveness. Shortcomings can be addressed or protective measures put in place. Reports of robots setting in motion a fourth industrial revolution that will cause widespread joblessness should be seen as forewarnings to governments and individuals to take precautions to avert such a future. Fears that an artificial intelligence system could potentially undergo recursive self-improvement, triggering an intelligence explosion, leaving human intellect far behind should simply be taken as a forewarning, ensuring precautions are put in place as we move forward.	This paragraph is a little repetitive and could be combined with one of the earlier paragraphs
Hence, while critics and pessimists may be fearful of artificial intelligence, such worries are overstated or even unfounded. We should instead be celebrating these latest advances in technology and how and where their benefits are manifested.	This statement marks the transition to the student's actual stance in response to the question. Note that in a very long essay such as this one, a mini paragraph like this can help signpost transitions more effectively
Firstly, the scientific and technological discoveries, centred around artificial intelligence systems, made by our predecessors have enabled them to lead much better lives and serve as the foundations on which we erect better scaffolds to reach even more momentous progress for all and bring hope to those whom fate has dealt a hard hand. Artificial intelligence systems in proactive healthcare management such as rehabilitation engineering, bionics, prosthetics, are already giving the disabled not just a new lease of life but also the means for the exceptional to outshine the able bodied. Artificial intelligence-aided research has led to advances in the understanding of tumours paired with precision medicine, personalised cancer therapy, enabling drug treatments that target specific mutations. Three-dimensional (3D) printing being trialled in various fields, including the creation of artificial organs. All of which has risen due to advances in artificial intelligence.	Again, the tendency to enumerate examples in incomplete sentences resurfaces
Moreover, not only do developments in artificial intelligence propel mankind into excitingly uncharted territory, they also open up new vistas of opportunities for people who wish to better their lot in life or fulfil cherished dreams and even shape the next generation's destiny. Twelve emerging artificial intelligence technologies identified by the Mckinsey Global Institute as possessing the potential to reshape the world, solving problems such as war and poverty [...] The on-demand/ gig economy aided by artificial intelligence algorithms giving people new ways to repurpose their resources and labour. Pre-implantation genetic diagnosis made possible through artificial-intelligence-aided inventions, allowing would-be parents to select an embryo that does not carry a dreaded inherited condition.	Same pattern of listing examples in incomplete sentences The argument here can be strengthened with the evaluation of AI's value as the enabler of such new possibilities

Like it or not, many of the problems in the world today are too immense, urgent or complex to be solved without increasingly powerful scientific knowledge or technological tools. Essential resources are also being stretched too thin and need to be augmented with the latest tools. This is where artificial intelligence comes in, carrying the potential and capability to outperform humans at nearly every cognitive task, they are able to come up with equally complex solutions for our world's complicated problems. Large-scale water desalination to enable countries to ensure their water security despite scarcity and climate change. Alternative energy generation to alleviate the reliance on fast-dwindling fossil fuels and allow countries not to draw into foreign policy conundrums just to safeguard their energy security. Space exploration in search of habitable exoplanets for future migration and to confirm the existence of extraterrestrial life. Robot-assisted laparoscopic surgery such as the Davinci system [offers] surgeons carrying out complex urological surgery better vision for tissue dissection, while offering patients the alternative to "open" surgery. Patients suffer less blood loss and spend a shorter time in the hospital. Therefore, when there are new and enhanced solutions, we should rejoice and seek to create even better ones.	A sound reason for welcoming AI; this reason also takes into account the context of 'today' However, the link between these examples and AI is unclear. What is provided is a list of problems and solutions which could or could not be generated by AI. This makes the argument less convincing
We are an innately curious and inventive species and artificial intelligence grants us the means to amass knowledge, explore and create. Experiments in digital art and electronic music can be carried out by anyone with talent and equipment due to artificial intelligence systems and shared with like-minded enthusiasts over the internet powered by artificial intelligence algorithms. From Google Art Project making art masterpieces accessible to Google Arts and culture showcasing much more, the augmented reality in Pokémon Go to reality projects such as RecoVR Mosui to mixed reality. Rather than condemn ourselves as driving promethean ambitions, we should be proud of our achievements and relish the continued explication of phenomena that has eluded us for a long time, celebrating the debunking of unsound suppositions and enjoying the freedom to transfer ambitious ideas into tangible form with the help of artificial intelligence.	An enthusiastic appeal to the reader to embrace AI, with a well-substantiated albeit short argument
I sympathise with Rodney Brooks and other artificial intelligence pioneers who feel unfairly demonised by scaremongering tabloids, because some journalists seem obsessively fixated on artificial intelligence and adorn many of their articles with evil-looking mental monsters with red shiny eyes. Artificial intelligence has been and is one of mankind's greatest accomplishments, and should be welcomed rather than feared. In fact, the main concern of the beneficial-artificial-intelligence movement is not with the artificial – robots – as many media and naysayers would have you believe but rather with intelligence itself, specifically, intelligence whose goals are misaligned with ours. Our civilisation will flourish and not flounder, as long as we win the race between the growing power of technology and the wisdom with which we manage it. In the case of artificial intelligence technology, the best way to win that race is not to impede the former, but to accelerate the latter by supporting artificial intelligence safety research. <i>(Amelia Chua, 20-E2)</i>	A clear and effective conclusion to an extensive essay with many points raised

4 To what extent do traditional beliefs hinder gender equality?

This essay dissects effectively the power dynamics involved in traditional beliefs' influence on how gender equality is perceived. An incisive analysis of societal factors is presented along with an insightful evaluation of other conflicts entangled in the struggle for gender equality and the tensions created between different beliefs regarding gender. The use of language demonstrates clarity of thought and conveys the arguments in a convincing manner. Further improvement can be achieved in terms of developing arguments from other relevant perspectives and refining some of the inter-paragraph transitions.

Achieving gender equality can be seen as a Herculean task and such a perception is not unwarranted. The fight for gender equality is largely undermined by traditionalist ideals of how males and females should behave, as some people contend with the idea that men and women are created equal. Furthermore, societal constructs, in [societies where] gender equality has yet to be achieved, are often adumbrated by traditional beliefs, hindering the process of reaching gender equality. Additionally, by making gender equality uncommon, traditional beliefs have made achieving gender equality a difficult task. While traditional beliefs do hinder gender equality to a large extent, other causes such as internal friction in the principle of gender equality have also stalled its progress.

Further elaboration on what such traditional beliefs comprise, their origins and their means of influence in the issue of gender equality can help contextualise the arguments better

In Victorian literature, a common saying about women was that they should be 'the angel in the house' instead of the 'madwoman in the attic', emphasising women's role in society. These are examples of traditional beliefs about gender that have pervaded our society. Often, these narratives espoused include how women are not as good as men and hence should be left to more menial tasks. The power of traditional beliefs comes from their ability to shape a person's perspective by integrating beliefs and values into their personal sense of self. These traditional beliefs, often taught from young, are internalised by people and form the basis of their understanding of how society should be like. For example, the 'angel in the house' narrative that Victorian society believed in, in which women are expected to be domestic and stay at home, is at odds with notions of gender equality, where a woman should be able to choose to go out and work. When people buy into such traditional beliefs, they become less likely to support gender equality as it contradicts their own perception of what society should be like, [and] hence also compromises their personal wishes. This means that garnering any support to move towards more gender-equal practices such as the inclusion of more women in the workforce in developing countries, where traditional beliefs are largely adhered to [...]. Hence, traditional beliefs do hinder gender equality.

#B&V is well applied here in conjunction with #P&I to explain the impact on #identity

Sound logic

Another way that traditional beliefs have hindered gender equality is through the influence it has on societal constructs and established institutions such as the military. In status quo, overtly patriarchal narratives forwarded by law enforcement authorities in developing countries like India and Latin America mean that crimes against women are taken less seriously and victims who approach authorities such as the police for domestic abuse or rape are often told that it is their fault or that they should endure it. The much higher number of women killed in Latin America by their partners as compared to the rest of the developed world is testament to how gender equality has been hindered by societal establishments undergirded by traditional beliefs. This is also how traditional beliefs make the fight for gender equality much more difficult as achieving gender equality would also mean going

Natural development of ideas from the impact of #B&V on societal norms in the previous paragraph to how traditional beliefs are manifest in #systems. The signposting language at the start of this paragraph could be refined to convey this progression more smoothly

against and potentially destabilising important societal establishments and institutions, which hold far more power and authority in society. Hence, traditional beliefs may contribute to a new false dichotomy of pitting gender equality against government establishments like the police and the military, making any push for gender equality more controversial, thus hindering gender equality by slowing down the process.	Insightful awareness of the power imbalance further complicating and hindering the fight for gender equality
However, it is also worthy to note that achieving gender equality in itself is also a very multifaceted issue. One major point of contention with gender equality is the internal tensions in the way women perceive gender equality. Some women attribute traditional ideas of femininity and motherhood to themselves and that has been an important characteristic to their sense of self. However, in the fight for gender equality, the common narrative would be to destroy such notions of femininity that are seen as constricting to other women. This means that while gender equality supporters do agree on changing the differentiated treatment of people based on gender, they do not agree on what the final outcome should be. In the bigger picture of things, this unfortunately means that when dealing with issues regarding gender equality, it is often difficult for different stakeholders such as the government or companies to come up with an acceptable policy to reach this notion of gender equality because of differing views as to what gender equality entails. This is further supported by feminist writer Simone de Beauvoir, who commented that women often lacked the galvanising force to stand up to such traditional narratives. In this case, proper action is hindered due to internal conflicts and a lack of reconciliation of what it means to be a feminist and a woman in the modern age and not just traditional beliefs alone.	This also demonstrates traditional beliefs' hold over the psyche This paragraph can be more nuanced by considering other perspectives involved in considering gender equality. Besides women, there are other stakeholders as well
To take concrete action towards gender equality, something that needs to be resolved would be people's willingness to accept more women in power and authority positions as a norm. Traditional beliefs have shaped the way power in society interacts with gender, meaning that having women presidents or women prime ministers is uncommon and rare. The lack of precedents of women being in power emphasises the problem of a lack of representation. Lack of representation is a crucial issue because representation is how people create linkages in their brains between different concepts. By having fewer women represented, people are more used to associating males with power and hence there is a normalisation of the idea that males should be in power. For example, this means that people become more uncertain [about] electing a female president or female authority head as they do not have a precedent in which they can convince themselves. In many countries, there is a trend of males holding onto the highest positions of power. Female leaders, like Jacinda Ardern and Theresa May, are ultimately the minority in a political world filled with Donald Trump, Boris Johnson, Vladimir Putin and Xi Jinping. This continuous lack of proper representation means that people may be less willing to put women leaders in power, resulting in gender equality being touted more as an ideal with little action taken towards achieving that.	While the relationship between traditional beliefs and the lack of representation can be described as mutually reinforcing, the reasoning comes across as circular here What about traditional beliefs then? (the focus of the question)

Due to the large role that traditional beliefs play in shaping the world we live in, it is ultimately also a major hindrance to achieving gender equality. Even as modern society faces a paradigm shift, societal establishments systemically put women at a disadvantage and these are remnants of the powerful influence of traditional beliefs as the process is made much harder and slower for any change to be enacted. (Celine Sin Mun Yee, 20-03)	
--	--

4 To what extent do traditional beliefs hinder gender equality?

<i>Concrete examples are well-applied to support most argumentative points established, showing a confident grasp of content knowledge for this particular topic. The focus on the question's topic and contention is maintained rather consistently throughout the essay, with clear topic sentences examining the tensions within the arguments put forth. In terms of organisation, this essay could be further refined in terms of the progression of ideas across paragraphs. Overall, there is thought given to the issue in a balanced manner.</i>	
In today's globalised and fast-paced world, women worldwide are now holding more influential positions compared to the past, and the gender inequality gap seems to be narrowing in recent years. However, traditional beliefs and values are perceived to be a stumbling block as we seek to narrow the inequality gap, as they are discriminatory in nature, cruel and harmful and cause women to be inferior to men. Despite others arguing that international pressure and global awareness have resulted in the closing of the gender inequality gap, I strongly believe that traditional beliefs pose as a hindrance to gender equality to a large extent.	Good contextualisation which addresses tensions relevant to the question Stand is clearly laid out. The reasons for this stand could be outlined here to define the essay's argumentative direction
Deep-seated discriminatory traditional beliefs and practices globally are ingrained in people and [are] difficult to eliminate, rendering gender equality a Herculean task. Since time immemorial, beliefs steeped in superstitious and traditional values have been embedded and passed on from generation to generation, [and have] grown into something part of a culture that is difficult to eradicate. This has resulted in stereotypes about women, who are seen as subservient to men in many cultures and traditions worldwide. For example, deeply misogynistic societies like South Korea and Japan have women seen as the housewives, while men are the breadwinners of the household. This has been the norm since these stereotypes are formed from the belief that women should be gentle while men are seen as strong. Even as time progressed and more women started entering the workforce, the harsh reality is that women will somehow be subjected to prejudice and discrimination due to the deep seated mindsets ingrained in society. This can still be seen in Japan, where women only earn 73% of what men earn for the same job being done and same amount of effort put in. Hence, while it seems that gender equality might be reduced with more women working and earning income, the truth is that the entrenched mindsets and values are still inherent in people, resulting in gender equality being an elusive dream as women are still subjected to some sort of prejudice.	Choice of words helps to shed light on the writer's stance Good use of concrete examples to illustrate the point The evaluation here makes the link between the argument and the question clear

Furthermore, traditional beliefs that are cruel in nature and objectify women pose a significant threat to society's progress [towards] egalitarianism between the two genders. Traditional beliefs and values sometimes view women as objects to bear children so that the male's family surname can be continued. In certain cultures, women are expected to bear more males, if they fail, they will be subjected to unimaginable tortures and beatings by the husband's family, sometimes even being called vulgar names. The objectification of women stemming from these traditional beliefs can also be seen in Nepal and India. In the rural parts of these countries, menstruating women are sent out to menstrual huts where they are exposed to the wild and harsh living conditions, just because they are deemed "impure" and "unclean" due to their blood. In severe cases, they can be eaten up by wild boars or even be sexually assaulted. These inclement conditions that women are subjected to while the men are working or playing around drives home the point that traditional beliefs and mindsets are a stumbling block to achieve gender equality. Another example will be that in the Chinese tradition and beliefs that women should bind their feet such that they look small and pretty to satiate the desire of the males. The binding effect can cause severe repercussions and bleedings and cuts on the women's foot, inflicting psychological damage. Even though such foot binding practices are obsolete now, women are still prone to harsh treatment by society as a result of these long standing beliefs and values which belittle women and treat them as objects, resulting in them holding the losing end in the progress for gender equality.	Clear topic sentence The link between the cruelty of such traditional beliefs driving these practices and the hindrance posed to gender equality could be strengthened by examining the significance which such cruelty in traditional beliefs has in terms of influencing mindsets about gender equality Even worse, many women themselves accept it and believe that they are inferior
In addition, incumbent governments have put in place legislation and restrictions that dictate what women should or should not do based on traditional beliefs, resulting in low women representation and high power held by males. In patriarchal societies, laws have been drawn up to put a limit on the actions of a woman as compared to a male who has more rights and power, rendering gender equality an impossible task. For example, in Afghanistan and Pakistan, women have no voting rights while men take up positions of power and influence easily due to the mindset that men are born into the world naturally with more rights and influence compared to females. This results in a lack of representation of women in such societies. Even in countries like Singapore, the Asian Conservative mindsets have resulted in low representation of women in parliament of 23%. The mindsets entrenched in society makes it difficult for women to gain equal rights with their male counterparts, coupled with government policies that makes it ever difficult for women to level the playing field.	How the discriminatory legislation and the lack of female representation amongst the authorities hinder the achievement of gender equality needs to be clarified
Some may posit that with an increasingly educated populace worldwide, more pressure has been pushed to eradicate traditional beliefs and practices, placing countries in a tight spot to grant women equal rights, shedding rays of hope in the pursuit of gender equality. With increased awareness of the discrimination and cruelty that women are subjected to worldwide, more have [taken] to social media to champion for more rights for women, shaming the traditional beliefs and governments who have been inefficient enacting change. Some examples of campaigns are the #MeToo movement, which exposes high-paying men committing sexual assaults against vulnerable women. Harvey Weinstein, a billionaire film maker have been exposed of committing several sexual acts and thus, lost his whole fortune while shedding light on the violences that women have to endure. Governments are thus pressured to enact a form of change to grant women more equal rights while denouncing males who have exploited the stereotypes to further their vested interests. An example of a	The link between such traditional beliefs and the ineffective governments could be established What implications does this have on the influence of traditional beliefs as

country who have successfully done so is Saudi Arabia, who recently lifted her ban on women driving cars in 2018. Previously, it was illegal for women to drive in a vehicle without a males' consent, but international pressure has enabled the incumbent government to lift the ban and take a step closer to gender equality. Despite these pressures, I still believe that traditional beliefs, due to its long standing nature, will be hard to eradicate and will still pose threats to gender equality despite small changes being seen and done. Gender equality is still unachievable in most societies today even though we might have seen improvements in the welfare of women throughout the centuries. This will not be achieved anytime soon as traditional beliefs are so deeply entrenched in one's roots that small steps towards gender equality are essentially useless.	a hindrance to gender equality? Further substantiation (evidence and reasoning) is required to develop this assertion that traditional beliefs will still pose an obstacle to achieving gender equality
In conclusion, traditional beliefs and practices can hinder gender equality due to [their] discriminatory and cruel actions as well as laws put in place. Despite small steps towards gender equality, traditional beliefs and mindsets do serve as a big block that is hard to overcome. Therefore, gender equality still remains an elusive dream and egalitarianism may not be achievable in the short term. However, if all countries and societies are willing to take small steps forward and put these traditional beliefs at a backseat, gender equality might be achievable then. (Ang Jo Wee, 20-05)	

4 To what extent do traditional beliefs hinder gender equality?

<i>Astute arguments and insightful observations are raised in this essay, along with original and apt examples that substantiate and lend impact to the points being made. However, while the arguments are mostly well-developed and engage different perspectives, the essay lacks breadth. Adding more points of argument, along with elaborating on some of the assertions can help to improve this essay. The use of metaphors and allusions makes for an interesting read, but a few instances of such use could be refined or more closely tied to an argument.</i>	
“We cannot all succeed when half of us are held back.” Malala Yousofzai made this statement in 2013, addressing not only the United Nations Youth Assembly she was speaking at, but also the years of extreme gender inequality she witnessed and experienced. This issue of inequality dates far back into humankind's history – these archaic ideologies of gender inequality were written centuries ago. This traditional mindset remains unchanged, staying firm throughout the years that humanity saw its greatest progressions and developments. In the modern-day 21st Century, these ideologies can be likened to Medusa – they are ugly monsters with many poisonous heads that affect countless areas of modern life, resulting in insurmountable damage that prevents the gender inequality gap from closing.	A lively mythical allusion conveying the damage such ideologies are capable of wreaking ‘To what extent’ is not engaged in this introduction A clearer outline of the arguments supporting the thesis could also be established

“Women are the largest untapped reservoir of talent in the world.” Hillary Clinton, the former United States Secretary of State, made this statement that rings true even in modern day society. Women are penalised for society’s outdated beliefs that assign them disproportionate responsibility in caregiving – of children, elderly, [the] disabled [...] This belief manifests itself into systemic discrimination against women within the workforce, and is a textbook example of traditional ideology transcending time and hindering gender equality. In Singapore, maternity leave exceeds paternity leave. This is a result of the government’s belief that women will undoubtedly take on the role of the primary caregiver within the household, and this assumption has a consequent repercussions that women have to bear the burden of. Due to this unequal allocation of leave, employers may prefer to hire and promote a man over a woman to maximise perceived labour productivity in their companies. This biasness is also in play when males decidedly receive greater opportunities in career development, therefore earning relatively higher than the female counterparts. The significant pay gap between women and men subsequently results in a woman surrendering her income to take on the role of a caregiver, further reinforcing gender income inequality and hence [exacerbating] gender inequality. Society’s traditional belief that delegates the role of the primary caregiver to the female contributes to gender inequality not just in the local context of Singapore, but also on a larger scale – that of Asia. This pertinent problem is illustrated by the shocking statistics as supplied by the World Employment and Social Outlook (WESO) report released by the International Labour Organisation (ILO) in 2017: the ILO reported that Southern Asia saw a significant reduction in a percentage of working women over the past decade, with the labour force participation from women dropping from 34.3% in 1997 to 26.8% in 2017, a phenomenon that was most likely brought on by archaic beliefs that chains women to the household. Furthermore, of the small group of women that score jobs, an approximate 74% of women are trapped in vulnerable employment with no social protection, as reported by Asia Development Bank. This is a result of society’s belief that women are only functional and effective as caregivers, therefore leading them to assume a lower level of the labour productivity from working women, and henceforth providing less social protection. These stereotypes and long-established cultural norms are evident in various workplaces, cultivating repugnant civilisations that undermine the value of women. Age-old beliefs of inferiority do not merely hinder gender equality, but rather are roadblocks scattered along the road to gender equality.	Slightly repetitive The argument is well-developed here in progressive waves, from the #B&V to the resulting practices and their exacerbation of the inequality Content knowledge is demonstrated with the reference to examples from a larger context (SWM is applied too). Interesting metaphor, but how does a roadblock go beyond being a hindrance?
Obsolete beliefs in the 21st-century have not only resulted in the unequal treatment of women, but also the biased treatment of men. The Confucian principle of women being completely subjugated to the man in the family is a concept reiterated Vietnamese saying, “As a woman, what makes you stand higher than other women is your husband.” This belief places unbearable pressure on the male figure to uphold a certain image and reveals the standards that males are expected to live up to. While traditional ideologies tie women to the house, it also imposes unspoken rules upon men that expect them to be the picture-perfect image of strength and stoicism. Society has condemned males to becoming unfeeling creatures, with children being reprimanded for “crying like a girl” and men told to “man up” when they express discomfort in doing something. During the first world war of 1915, soldiers exposed to loud noises of grenades and gunfire experienced hypersensitivity to	Insightful observations about how gender inequality and traditional beliefs affect not only women Yikes. Shocking

noise. In alignment with the archaic belief that men should be strong, 309 soldiers were executed for exhibiting cowardice. This is a clear example of how the problems men face are often downplayed to fulfil the narrative of a strong and unaffected male figure. The beliefs that undermine the troubles of males and expect them to be strong are seen in a 2011 report produced by the Centres of Disease and Control Prevention (CDC), which stated that men and women had a similar prevalence of nonconsensual sex with in the past 12 months. However, the general public is oftentimes quick to dismiss the plight of men, believing the men are impervious to getting raped. Even when the court of law rules them as a victim of sexual assault, the court of public opinion decides otherwise. These bigoted beliefs that men are figures of strength have resulted in societal biases that wedge [themselves] in the cracks of gender equality, driving the inequality gap further and further apart.	statistic
It is undeniable that archaic beliefs exist in the seemingly modern world we live in. These beliefs that impose certain rules upon certain genders do not just hinder gender equality, but are the root cause of such biased and bigoted treatment of human beings in modern society. Inequality is an uncivilised ideology that deserves no place in society – it wreaks havoc and is the key ingredient in a recipe for continual inequality and unfairness, a trait not in harmony with the characteristics of a developed society. <i>(Chionh Ning, 20-11)</i>	How inequality is an uncivilised ideology needs to be established

6 'Medicine is given far more credit than it deserves.' Discuss.

<i>This essay demonstrates an awareness of how society views the medical field, though it could have taken one step further to clearly delineate what society gives medicine credit for, and evaluate if this credit is deserving. This essay attempts to look at other more holistic ways to a healthy lifestyle, which can be considered insightful. However, that particular paragraph did not directly link back to question requirements, which is always important. The introduction and conclusion worked together quite nicely.</i>	
Hippocrates once said, “The greatest medicine of all is teaching people how not to need it.” Medicine has been celebrated by science as one of the greatest inventions, constantly evolving and developing to save lives and heal sickness. Medicine is ubiquitous in many people’s daily lives, an immediate solution when a cold or fever is experienced. However, some posit that with the evolution of medicine comes an overdependence on it, a mindset that medicine can be used to solve any health problem. I strongly believe that medicine has been overly hyped as a panacea to every existing health problem and hence has indeed been celebrated disproportionately in modern society.	Great quote Addresses key terms in the question

Admittedly, the overwhelming success of medicine is a fact which cannot be denied and this attests to the claim that medicine is rightfully credited in our world today. Indeed, without medicinal inventions such as penicillin, the first used antibiotics to treat infections and diseases, many people would have succumbed to their illnesses. The invention of vaccines is another invention that has saved the lives of millions, directly eradicating the threat of deadly diseases such as polio. Hence, medical inventions play a critical role in securing better immunities for people globally, and have become a necessity in today's world. Therefore, it is inaccurate to completely discredit medicine as medicine has indeed become an unavoidable reality in our lives, a useful tool that we utilise for our protection and well-being, albeit sparingly.	Convoluted sentence that does not actually address the question directly
Despite medicine proving to be a crucial facet of our lives, it can still be argued that medicine has brought greater cons than pros into modern society and thus should not be disproportionately celebrated. Medicine is a short-term solution, acting efficiently to treat symptoms of an illness. The efficiency of medicine contributes to its wide success, especially in today's world where the pace of life is suffocating and quick remedies are worshipped as they reduce the amount of precious time lost to sickness. However, the gradual drop in the effectiveness of such medicines are often not discussed. Tachyphylaxis is a phenomenon where immune systems rapidly gain resistance to successive doses of medication, eventually rendering it useless. For example, constantly consuming one dosage of a painkiller such as Panadol will gradually become ineffective in stemming pain and this can only be eradicated via consuming higher dosages or a stronger painkiller. This phenomenon can often lead to an overdependence on extremely potent painkillers that will threaten one's health in the long run. An estimated 100,000 people in the United States die from the side effects of medicine annually. While seeking a shortcut remedy to one's pain, the use of medicine can often result in exacerbated consequences and hence, the egregious long-term connotations of overdependence on medicine seek to reduce the true value of medicine in society.	Nuancing required Explains what kind of credit medicine is given today Link to question needs to be clearer
Medicine should be given less credit and greater emphasis should be placed on maintaining a healthy lifestyle because medicine should not be the main solution to our health problems. Imagine medicine and healthy lifestyles as two gardeners. Medicine is similar to spraying pesticides on plants, preventing insects attacking and ruining the plants. Pesticides have to be applied regularly and without it, plants remain even more vulnerable to insects and dying. Meanwhile, maintaining a healthy lifestyle is similar to gardening conscientiously, making sure plants receive adequate nutrients and are healthy, able to resist insects. Medicine is often highly acclaimed because it removes symptoms quickly, yet medicine often does not completely remove the underlying causation of the illness, leaving the immune system weak and unable to fend for itself. One example is diabetes. There are a myriad of prescribed medications aimed to reduce the effects of diabetes -- fatigue, muscle aches and numbness of limbs. While effective in helping patients feel better, these solutions are lacking in addressing the root cause of diabetes -- an overconsumption of sugar and related lifestyle choices. Choosing to prevent symptoms instead of curing the disease itself engenders a never-ending cycle of finding suitable prescriptions to remove symptoms developing. This is the flawed mechanism of medicine: an efficient prevention method, not a cure. Meanwhile, adjusting lifestyle choices can instead directly reverse the effects of certain diseases and impede them forever, effectively removing the need for constant medication and building a	This doesn't actually address the question. The question isn't if we should give medicine more or less credit. It is whether we are giving medicine more credit than it currently deserves. Be clear to highlight what medicine is getting credit for, before evaluating whether this is deserving

stronger, more independent immune system for oneself. Therefore, the value of medicine should be revoked and greatly reduced, with further light being shed on the importance of healthy lifestyles.	
In retrospect, there is a fine line to tread that determines precisely how much credit medicine should be awarded. It is to a certain degree that medicine has value such as in the case of vaccinations, making this aspect of medicine indispensable. Despite this, I still unequivocally believe that society has imposed an unsuitable amount of credit on medicine and this notion should be discussed. The underlying reservoir of unintended negative consequences of placing too much emphasis on medicine in one's life, such as the over-reliance and subsequent abuse of medicine, makes it imperative for society to review the true value of medicine in our world. We should remain cautious when using medicine and instead of seeking medication as a dependable solution to every problem, we should regard medicine as a last resort, instead placing heavier emphasis on lifestyle choices, sufficient to sustain our immune systems more reliably in the long run. I concur with Hippocrates and strongly believe that rather than depending on medicine, society should contemplate the realistic value of medicine. Only when society learns not to depend on medicine, letting it be less relevant, will the appropriate credit be given to medicine. (Nyx Tan, 20-01)	This conclusion cleverly ties the essay back to the question requirements and introduction (Hippocrates' quote)

7 Assess the importance of language in Singaporean society.

<i>This essay discusses how various people in Singaporean society view languages and does well to address not just English or Singlish, but dialects as well. Despite a rather shaky start that does not necessarily engage the question requirements head-on, the essay managed to redeem itself through fitting examples and evaluation of the importance of language as the writing progressed. This essay could be further improved by identifying features of Singaporean society, drawing direct links to the question and using more evaluative strategies to assess the importance of language in Singaporean society.</i>	
Language forms the base of communication in any and all societies. Written and spoken, there is a diverse range of the languages all around the world used to different levels. In Singapore, English and our colloquial English language, Singlish, mix with a variety of other mother tongues and dialects to reflect our multicultural society. However, I would find that language is not very important in my society, seeing the growing number that have been forsaken for the sake of progress. Language is not appreciated, and only used.	Does importance stem only from appreciation? Isn't "used" a form of importance?

The pedestal that English as a language is placed upon in Singapore demonstrates a utilitarian view of language. It is true that a wide variety of languages are spoken here, by citizens and foreigners alike, but the ultimate choice language is English. English is seen as of utmost here for practical and logical reasons. In our cultural context, British colonization in 1819 led to large scale reforms in how the people of the island lived. English was the language of the elite in the past, and even after independence, English became the more common medium in teaching in government institutions. On the more pragmatic side, English is the lingua franca. As a small nation, not placing importance on citizens speaking English would only jeopardise our position, being a move that essentially alienates ourselves in a highly volatile and uncertain world. English is seen as the basis of education, with satisfactory grades in the language being required to attend tertiary institutions, as compared to mother tongues. With this language being the most commonly used and emphasized on, language could be said to be important in Singapore. Yet, English is simply a case of pure practicality. Language's primary use is indeed to communicate, but its secondary uses are as important. Language is a means of culture and identity. The medium one speaks to communicate is a form of self-expression of beliefs and identity. English in Singapore is an introduced concept. It has no roots until colonisation took place and globalization occurred. Hence, it is difficult to link English to my society as anything more than an edict or a plan for our economy's sake. Even when emphasizing its importance, it all links back to school or work. These points are valid, but shows how shallowly our society values language, as nothing more than an avenue towards personal and national wealth.	A meaningful discussion highlighting the awareness of perceptions and factors affecting perceptions of language, but requires clearer argumentation that addresses the question requirements in a more direct manner
This is further proven in the loss of our dialects. Our dialects that truly connect us with our ancestors and cultural roots, have been largely abandoned more with each generation. Through government initiated campaigns to stop dialects being spoken, the lack of care towards language as a cultural asset is clear. Then Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew helmed the campaign in the 1980's, as part of a movement to unify the Chinese people in Singapore under Standard Mandarin. His scheme was effective, and dialect remains only as a fast-fading figment of the older, pre-millennial generations, as the rest of the nation speak purely in Standard Mandarin if needed. However, the cost of the scheme, I would say, has outweighed the results. To stop dialect usage was also to stop the valuable assets of communication and culture between the older and younger generations. Many youths have stated this language barrier as a chief obstacle in interacting with their older family members, in turn becoming an obstacle in understanding their own culture. This can pose an even greater threat in the midst of our aging population where, more than ever before, the older generation need to be reached out towards. It would be a shame if, because of the lack of a common language, youth only become more and more apathetic of the elderly's plights. Hence, in Singaporean society, language as a form of cultural connection and cross-generational communication is largely underestimated, as seen by the campaign to remove dialect and its lasting effects.	Clever introduction of the use of dialects in the discussion There is a need to address the requirements of the question

Of course, there is still the debacle over Singlish and its acceptability in Singapore. In Singaporean society, languages outside of what is deemed relevant to our national image are largely considered unimportant. This has been illustrated in the antagonization and later revival of Singlish, and the rigidity of our Chinese, Malay, Indian, Other (CMIO) structure. Singlish, as declared by then Prime Minister Goh Chok Tong[,] was a ‘handicap’ [in] our society, when then-showing series like Phua Chu Kang glamorized its standard usage. The ‘Speak Good English’ campaign launched to target the improper usage of English in Singlish contexts. With these artilleries aimed at eliminating the language then, its sudden introduction as a key part of national identity seems almost hypocritical. It has been assimilated into ministers’ speeches, shoehorned into campaigns and names (PayLah), and pushed as a symbol of our Singaporean society. This only tells me that language, in the scheme of Singapore, serves only to bolster our collective national identity and push a specific image. Reinforced by similar symbols of Singapore like the multi-language ‘Danger - Keep Out’ sign, they serve to show off our CMIO structure and their representative languages. The importance of language in Singapore is not within its ability to connect individuals, neither is it a part of culture – instead, language in Singapore is simply for the collective practicality, for an image that hides issues like dialect loss and declining bilingualism rates out of school.	Fitting example for this question Clarify how these address the question (idea of importance) Rather nuanced link to the question
Others may state that the implementation of the Special Assistance Program (SAP) and Bi-cultural programmes in schools are ways the government is trying to place greater importance on language and culture. However, many, including alumna, still only acknowledge these schools as being perfunctorily cultural, because having tea appreciation sessions occasionally and taking a mother tongue at a higher level does not necessarily equate to a greater understanding. These schools are also highly restrictive, with their student populations being a percentage of those who excelled in the Primary School Leaving Examinations (PSLE), boiling down to a minute proportion of society. They also only apply to the Chinese population. This does not help the increasing proportion of students who lose their bilingualism after schooling, as the language does not play a part in daily life, nor does it relate to their further schooling or work. Ironically, these schemes like SAP may only serve to double down on implying the key importance of language as being an academic subject. Students take the language at higher levels not for passion or ability, but for the bonus academic points before they ditch it altogether; this situation only highlight[s] the superficial matter society has made language out to be.	Rebuttal is clear and direct Why is this the case? This paragraph is well-expressed and addresses the question much better than the previous paragraph
In conclusion, Singaporean society has had a superficial view of language and its importance. However, this is not a definite judgement. There has been a resurgence in dialect classes and programmes that aim to reteach mother tongues. In this way, through languages, more people can discover their culture; and languages can form not just bridges between countries or companies but form a bridge between one and their individual identity. Singapore can then strive towards progress – in becoming a society cultured and rich with many different languages. <i>(Lim Hsing Yi, Nicole, 20-01)</i>	Ending off on a hopeful note

8 To what extent should the government have access to its people's personal data?

A well-written piece which engages in a consistent attempt to acknowledge both sides of the contention by skillfully negotiating the tensions between opposing views, thus presenting a rather well-balanced argument overall. Evaluation was also executed with flair and a confident personal voice -- strategies included providing clear criterion for evaluation, using theories (e.g. utilitarianism) to support your arguments, and identifying fallacies in opposing arguments. That being said, there were certain parts where the evaluation felt rushed and could be further developed before proceeding to the next argument.

Like Hansel and Gretel, we leave a trail of breadcrumbs behind us wherever we go. From giveaways for free tickets to Facebook, and registration forms to Reddit—these figurative crumbs are nuggets of our personal data. Privacy concerns have been perennial issues, never truly disappearing but simply fading into the background. Greedy corporations, vicious hackers, evil scammers—these are just a few groups of people many are afraid to divulge personal information to. However, much of the current debate has zeroed in on one mighty opponent: the government. Critics argue that the government should not have access to its citizens' personal data, lest those in power make use of it illicitly. While there are certainly valid arguments on both sides of the coin, I believe that in most relevant situations, especially in crisis situations, governments are justified [in having] access to their citizens' personal data to better the society.

Attention-grabbing introduction with a vivid reference to a fairytale as an apt analogy

Clear thesis statement outlining the condition for the justification of governments' access to the people's personal data

Firstly, governments need personal data to target policies to its citizens. With no information specific to those it is elected to serve, a government cannot be reasonably expected to enact societal changes that will benefit its people. At the extreme, suggesting governments should not have access to its citizens' personal data while maintaining that the government's duty should be to serve the people is akin to expecting the best chef in the world to concoct a dish tailored to the tastes and dietary requirements of a customer that has not ordered yet. The government uses personal data collected about individuals to paint the larger picture of a certain community or of society as a whole. Knowing data like household income or educational status of its citizens can help it identify gaps in already implemented policies, and then [refine] them. A case in point would be Singapore's Self-Employed Person (SEP) Income Relief Scheme. This policy aims to broaden support for SEPs affected by Covid-19 and tide them through this period of economic uncertainty. SEPs in need of aid are automatically identified based on criteria that is characteristic of those usually requiring financial assistance, including monthly household income and property type. Aid in the form of monetary payouts allow these citizens to live better lives, without the need to deal with stacks of lengthy paperwork. If the government did not have the insight of data specific to each citizen, it would not be able to allocate resources equitably. While it is to be conceded that there is certainly a line that governments should not cross in collecting or utilising personal data, to simply rule that governments should not be denied any access to its people's personal data is an overgeneralisation that blatantly ignores the legitimate merits that access to personal data could bring for both the government and its citizens.

Interesting analogy highlighting the condition necessary for the government to fulfil its duty

Balanced evaluation combining a concession and a rebuttal. This could be further enhanced with some mention of where this line that should not be crossed lies

Especially in a period of national or even global crisis, governments are even more justified in having access to personal data of its people. The insight that citizens' personal data affords governments allows them to make more effective solutions that can better address citizens' immediate needs. In a time where globally there are discussions on the ethics of governments tracking the movement of citizens to visualise the potential spread of the coronavirus, concerned individuals with a myopic focus may contend that any access is prone to misuse. However, a glance at early coronavirus cases in the United States of America and Singapore will point to the good that access to residents' daily movement has accorded. Singapore's TraceTogether mobile app—which transmits locational data and identifies potential close contacts by proximity—along with extensive contact tracing efforts, have allowed the city state to keep tabs on clusters and take proactive measures. On the other hand, the United States' laissez-faire approach chiefly lacks in this respect, making it hard for authorities to trace the spread of infection. It cannot be denied that blind trust in the government has fatal flaws, but surrendering personal data does not equate to the removal of culpability and responsibility of the government with respect to its people. Citizens hold governments accountable for their actions, decreasing the chances for abuse of power. Individual-level sacrifices can aid governments in crafting timely solutions that benefit the society on a more macro-scale. While utilitarianism, as described here as sacrificing some to benefit many, may be a philosophy a select few are fervently against, I believe the general consensus will recognise to some extent [that] the tangible benefits reaped will bolster the case that justifie[s] a government's access to its people's personal data.	Clear statement of the condition which lends justification to the governments' access to the personal data of its people Apt illustration with an insightful comparison of the two case studies sustained through this paragraph A nuanced statement that combines a concession with an incisive comment addressing the assumption that giving personal data to the government grants them unlimited and unquestionable authority
Unsurprisingly, critics, who are overwhelmingly Westerners with deeply ingrained ideals of freedom and individual liberty, will seek to disagree. They claim that divulging such personal data would weaken the people, turning societies into Big Brother, a surveillance state that encroaches on all facets of citizens' lives. Real-world examples cited include China's stringent social credit system, where low points could spell the end to any dreams to travel overseas. These views certainly hold some water, as the most extreme cases of governments accessing citizens' personal data show. However, this argument has gravely conflated personal data with private information. While there is some overlap in the two terms, personal data does not necessarily cover information as specific as the latter category. The logical fallacy of affirming the consequent also wrongly posits that since surveillance states collect high amounts of personal data from its citizens, the converse - that all states collecting some level of personal data from its citizens are under a form of totalitarian regime - is necessarily true as well. With appropriate checks and balances, government access to its people's personal data is largely beneficial and usually doesn't immediately lead to oppressive encroachment of privacy. The false dichotomy of either privacy or unregulated intrusion into [the] lives of citizens is unrealistic. Instead, privacy and intrusion lie on two ends of a non-binary spectrum, on which, somewhere between those two, lies the answer to how much access to personal data governments should be granted.	An appropriate example The distinction between personal data and private information could have been made clearer The introduction of this second logical fallacy felt rushed and did not quite cohere with what came before

The question of to what extent the government should have access to its people's personal data is not straightforward. While differing philosophical beliefs may lead to differing perspectives on the issue, the evidence that strongly points to the virtues of allowing governments access is compelling. It will always have to be conceded that there is a limit to every trend and an exception to every statement. However, this should not be used as fodder to deny the legitimate and tangible benefits that access to personal data can bring to governments. Armed with the belief that some sacrifices for the greater good are necessary, I maintain that governments are justified access to their citizens' personal data. (Tan Jia Hui Jennifer, 20-04)	Could have provided a summary of the specific key points discussed rather than giving broad statements about how there are many different views
--	--

11 'Globalisation has created a more divided world.' How far do you agree?

<i>This essay presents well-substantiated arguments for the greater degree of unity that globalisation has brought about. Most of the points make consistent references to the features of globalisation and compare astutely the past vs present states of the world. However, the element of balance is lacking as the limitations of and exceptions to the arguments in this essay are dismissed or neglected. Taking these aspects into account and generating more points of argument can help to craft a more nuanced essay. The use of language is mostly appropriate in expressing the arguments, with clear signposting/ discourse markers deployed.</i>	
Globalisation is an inexorable phenomenon that continually surfaces the age-old tension between unity and division. With its far-reaching power in nearly every facet of our lives, is it fair to say that globalisation has created a divided world? I believe that while globalisation has indeed lent a hand in creating new divisions between societies, it is still mainly a uniting force, highlighting old divisions and providing the means to close these divisions and unite the world. Thus I disagree to a large extent that globalisation has created a more divided world.	There is an assumption that the extensive reach of globalisation's influence necessarily equates to a unifying force. This is not true While the stand is stated, there is no indication of the arguments that will be engaged in this essay
When one observes the effects of globalisation on the worldwide economy, it is undeniable that globalisation has enabled the greater integration of economies on an international scale. It has dismantled many barriers hindering the quicker and more efficient flow of goods around the world, paving the way for free trade agreements, advanced shipping technology and raising awareness for the economic disparities dividing the world. For example, the North American Free Trade Agreement between the United States, Canada and Mexico has integrated these major markets, encouraging lower tariffs and quotas and encouraging interdependence among nations to boost economic prosperity. Greater unity can be observed amongst the free markets of all nations, with many previously regionally based companies agreeing to FairTrade terms and conditions, unifying numerous franchises in helping previously exploited workers receive a sufficient portion of the earnings by sourcing products more ethically. Thus, globalisation has not only integrated economies, increasing trade in intensity and scale, but also raised awareness [of] the income disparity between the workers and the top officials of companies, even alleviating it through means of FairTrade	How globalisation has raised such awareness of exploitation needs to be explained here. What is the link between globalisation and this trend of increasing social awareness?

agreements. It would be unfair to say that globalisation created a more divided worldwide economy, when in fact, it has constructed a more integrated economy, unifying many in the pursuit of greater economic prosperity and equality for all.	The degree 'more' needs to be evaluated and substantiated clearly in this paragraph.
It is also hard to challenge the potential of globalisation to pave the way for developing more peaceful and inclusive societies, unifying previously divided societies. As communities find commonality and resonance with neighbouring countries in their culture and beliefs, transnational groups can form with ease with the help of globalisation. A prominent example would be the 28-member EU. Tearing down past differences and grievances, the formation of the EU was a cultural adaptation that reaffirmed the strong presence of a regional identity, leading to greater cooperation and efficiency benefitting all communities. Only with the improvement of transportation, communication and technology brought along by globalisation could the EU have progressed so quickly. Previously rivalling countries, divided by frequent and bloody wars, were united by common goals to maintain peace and prosperity, thus emerging as an economic powerhouse with a stable political landscape, made possible by globalisation.	Note: the 'potential' of globalisation is not the same as what globalisation <i>has created</i> How is it a cultural adaptation? This seems to overlap with the previous paragraph's focus on economic interdependence. The element of inclusivity and the fostering of a collective identity, which should be the focus here, are not as strongly explained What about exceptions: how might Brexit affect this picture of unity presented here?
However, pessimists may be quick to point out the negative effects globalisation has had on the internet. While the innovations of communications technology has created a global online network capable of forming positive communities with an international reach, it has also created many new divisions within society. In this globalised world, terrorism is rife and the alarming ease with which even young children can access sites that spread and promote harmful ideologies has undoubtedly contributed to that. Large terrorist groups like ISIS frequently use social media platforms to spread their ideologies and communicate with members worldwide. This has increased the strength of those organisations exponentially, creating extensive networks of members even top law enforcement agencies have trouble tracking down. Consequently, the negative effects of terrorism have proliferated beyond mere regions, causing strife in countries on the other side of the world, threatening to divide multi-ethnic and religious societies like USA and Singapore. However, many have ignored the unifying aspect these divisions cause. With every person unwittingly converted to subscribe to a nefarious cause, another would be made aware of the injustices these terrorist groups performed through the extensive reach of the internet. Thus, news of terrorism and other evil deeds spread like wildfire through social media, allowing many to form campaigns and petitions to express their concern and demands for justice, unifying thousands, if not millions with a single goal of exposing the wrongdoings of people acting in the shadows. For example, the murder of George Floyd incited protests and petitions with 12 million signatures, reigniting the Black Lives Matter movement with greater vigour and internet presence, made	Slightly abrupt transition here to the topic of the Internet. The use of 'however' is unnecessary here While the internet itself is a product of globalisation, it is not the only aspect of globalisation that has contributed to the effects mentioned here Although this paragraph recognised the co-existence of both

possible with the far reach of globalisation. While some may focus on the racial division this movement has brought to light, this division has been a prevailing problem since the formation of the United States. The internet has simply joined forces to solve it and close the divide. Thus globalisation has not created a more divided world, but only enabled more people to recognise the effects of a divided nation and provide the means for the creation of a mass campaign to rectify the problem.	divisive and unifying effects of globalisation, it ends with a hasty dismissal of the divisive effects of globalisation which compromises the balance of the argumentation
In conclusion, while it is true that globalisation has led to the formation of some divides in the world, there are always two sides to a coin. Globalisation has made it possible for economic and social integration, allowing causes to transcend boundaries and unify many, closing divides rather than creating them. (Clarice Pui Mun Sian, 20-03)	A token recognition of globalisation's divisive and unifying effects A more nuanced conclusion alluding to the tension between the divisive and unifying tendencies of globalisation might work better

11 'Globalisation has created a more divided world.' How far do you agree?

<i>The conceptual tension between division and unity is well-engaged in this essay. Most of this essay is relevant to the topical focus and context of the question, with clear substantiation provided in the form of logical analysis and concrete examples of globalisation's features and effects. However, the third paragraph could be strengthened with a more thorough exploration of the characteristics of globalisation. While the factors engaged in this essay are presented systematically, more nuanced connections as well as a greater depth of evaluation can be achieved.</i>	
Since the Industrial Revolution that revolutionised the world in the 19 th Century, the advent of science and technology has inundated our lives like a dam-breaking flood. Globalisation has facilitated the easier movement of people across geographical boundaries through the increased ease of air travel, as well as the trade and exchange of ideologies. While globalisation can be lambasted for widening the income disparity in the world between developing and developed nations, I believe that globalisation has the ability to unify like-minded individuals in championing for social causes, to increase the network of international support in times of crisis as well as the formation of international organisations. Therefore, the statement that globalisation has created a more divided world is too sweeping a statement, hence I agree to a small extent.	A clear outline of arguments here Why the statement is 'too sweeping' is not exactly evident from the arguments listed earlier

Detractors may opine that globalisation has widened the income disparity between developing and developed nations in the world, thus creating a more divided world. The advent of globalisation has enabled developed nations who have the availability of resources to ride on this runway of economic growth. For example, the United States of America (USA), having experienced the Industrial Revolution back in the 19th Century, immediately puts herself at the forefront of economic development. This has allowed the USA to ride on the wave of globalisation to continue expanding its economy into a knowledge-based and open economy, with the establishment of the Silicon Valley in California well-known to be the home ground of Research and Development centres for many of the most sought after companies in the world, capable of generating lucrative sources of revenue. However, many of the developing nations instead bear the shorter end of the stick and continue to remain impoverished with the limited and scarce resources they have. Take South Sudan for example, whose poverty rate is one of the highest at 82%. This highlights the stark contrast between the economic situation in developing and developed nations, whereby globalisation has only served to widen the income disparity between developing and developed nations. It has helped developed nations in their pursuit of economic growth, resulting in the uneven concentration of wealth in the hands of a few countries. Therefore, it can be said that globalisation has created a more divided world due to the widening income disparity between developing and developed nations.	Besides the unequal starting line, are there other factors relevant to globalisation which exacerbates such unequal outcomes?
However, it can be rebutted that globalisation has actually created more job opportunities to many developing nations, thus helping individuals break out of the vicious cycle of poverty and bridging the income disparity between developing and developed nations. Globalisation has facilitated the ease of networking and travel, which has led to the increase in Transnational Corporations (TNCs) that outsource and subcontract to various parts of the world, especially developing countries. With more foreign direct investments in these countries, it has led to the multiplier effect, with more job opportunities which in turn boost economic growth. This is evident from one of the emerging BRICs economies, China. Apple TNC Corporation subcontracts the production of its Apple products to a Chinese company Foxconn, which employs and provides job opportunities for individuals in rural areas, ultimately boosting economic growth in China. In this light, globalisation has instead been shown to alleviate the income disparity among developing and developed nations, thus it dispels the fallacy that globalisation has created a more divided world, through [narrowing] income disparity among nations	Together with the previous paragraph, this paragraph provides different perspectives about income disparity and links back to the question's contention consistently Further evaluation can be established by considering the nature of the jobs created and who they are accessible to
In our globalised and interconnected world today, globalisation has received accolades for its pivotal role in unifying like-minded individuals to champion for social causes, thus creating a less divided world. The advent of globalisation has resulted in the rise of social media due to improvements in science and technology. This has allowed individuals to be interconnected with one another without spatial or temporal constraints. As compared to the past where one was not able to connect with others that quickly and easily from other parts of the world, social media has allowed individuals to find a sense of community and unify to fight for social causes. A case in point can be seen from the #MeToo Movement. Women who were subjected to sexual harassment and abuse harnessed Instagram, a social media platform, and hashtagged #MeToo as they shared their experiences being mistreated by their male counterparts. This has helped provide an umbrella of solidarity for women from all walks of	How such a unifying effect arises from globalisation could be more clearly established

life, allowing them to find a sense of community and not to feel alone []. This eventually resulted in legal actions such as the imprisonment of Harvey Weinstein who was accused of raping many Hollywood actresses, eventually seeking justice. In this light, globalisation has enabled individuals who are sexually abused to come forward to share their plight, as well as to connect with other women who share similar experiences, thus making the world a less divided one, but rather a more united one.	How does such solidarity amongst a community lead to a more united world?
Outside of championing for social causes, globalisation has been lauded for the increased ease with which information can be spread and the ease of air travel, thus facilitating the provision of aid by nations to countries in the face of unprecedented natural disasters. In the past, when information technology was not as advanced, it would take a while to be informed of the latest happenings in the world. However, with the advent of globalisation, it has facilitated the trade of information at a speed faster than ever before, and simultaneously allowing for countries to send foreign aid in the event of natural disasters. For example, during the Australian Bushfires earlier this year, news coverage of it was high and information spread quickly. This has allowed the prompt response from many countries to send in foreign aid through increased ease of air travel to help alleviate the bushfire conditions. Another case in point would be the Indonesian forest fires in 2015 that contributed to widespread haze. Singapore was able to send in prompt foreign aid to assist Indonesia. Therefore, globalisation has instead created a more interconnected world whereby countries are able to deploy prompt foreign aid in the face of natural disasters, hence it has created a less divided world.	This paragraph is somewhat example-driven. The evaluation can be strengthened by considering the forces which drive such a unifying effect of globalisation #interdependence is especially relevant here
In essence, I believe that globalisation has created a more divided world to a small extent. Apart from unifying like-minded individuals to aid them in finding a sense of community, it also serves to increase the network of international support, ultimately unifying the world more than before, which is arguably a cause for celebration. (Lin Xi, Dawn, 20-01)	

12 'Wealthy countries should take more responsibility for the world's problems than poor countries.' Discuss.

<i>This essay demonstrates rich content knowledge through the skillful use of a wide range of examples to substantiate the arguments put forth. The effective weaving of theories into the paragraphs also show a keen understanding of the content and awareness of the context. Overall, this essay displays a strong personal voice through combining a commentary on current affairs with a coherent overarching argument addressing the question.</i>	
As the problems of our world rear [their] ugly head[s], debates have sparked with regards to who exactly should bear greater responsibility in issues such as climate change, the refugee crisis and healthcare woes. Many have taken the stand that the onus of solving such problems should lie on wealthy nations, and I am inclined to agree since such nations have a humanitarian, historical, and utilitarian stake. Nevertheless, definitionally speaking, world issues will never be resolved with only a portion of the world. Hence, global problems can	A concise introduction establishing the evaluative criteria clearly

only be resolved through the efforts of both developed and less developed nations through multilateral cooperation.	
A hot topic in the world arena would be the issue of a global refugee crisis. Refugees from war-torn nations such as Syria and Afghanistan are often faced with rejection when applying for asylum, and it is strange that the top hosts are not the wealthier nations but the poorer ones. Aspects such as population size, natural resources, unemployment rates and economic development affect how equipped a country is to receive refugees. It is both ironic and puzzling that Japan, an economic tiger in Asia, only received a whopping number of 3 refugees in 2017 despite thousands of applications while poorer countries such as Turkey, Sudan and Bangladesh has stepped up to hoist this humanitarian responsibility on their shoulders. While refugees continue to risk their lives to migrate to developed nations in Europe, more must be done to relieve the burden on poorer nations who should not be left to do so much simply because they are neighbours to crisis zones. Although many wealthy nations have offered aid in terms of finance, it is hardly an act of humanitarian kindness to pay to keep refugees far away from wealthy borders. As the golden rule of reciprocity states, wealthy nations should do to refugees what they wish would be done to them. Hence, wealthy nations should step up and show global leadership that has been lacking and show solidarity in this world problem.	Insightful evaluation showing an understanding of why poorer nations are taking on more responsibility despite lacking the ability to sustain such efforts The link to ability could be reinforced here to strengthen the case for wealthy nations stepping up
It would be useful to acknowledge the elephant [in] the room -- climate change -- and why wealthy nations have the historical responsibility to tackle this issue. From the nineteenth century, developed nations have built their prosperity upon industrialisation, giving rise to carbon emissions and environmental pollution. Although their actions have been cautioned against most notably by eminent scientist, Fourier, who warned of the dangers of excessive carbon emissions[,] such advice was blatantly ignored by profit-driven industrialists. Such evidence suggests that the wealthy nations of today would be the main culprits of environmental degradation. The various climate talks that have been held over the years include the Kyoto Protocol, Copenhagen Conference and the Paris Agreement. These world talks may seem like an ideal imperative. Yet, all of the talks ultimately failed in practical execution. This failure may be attributed to how conditions were not legally binding, and a lack of cooperation from wealthy superpowers. This is most notable from the US, the second largest emitter of greenhouse gases who is stated to withdraw from the Paris agreement in an extremely irresponsible and controversial move. As the harm principle states, actions of people should be limited if they cause harm to others. The lack of responsibility taken by wealthy nations to correct past wrongs has resulted in the harm of poor nations who will suffer more from the effects of climate change. An example would be Bangladesh which could lose 10% of its territory to rising sea levels. A basic tenet of liberal ethics would indicate that the guilty wealthy nations must compensate poorer nations in stepping up to conserve the environment.	Clear progression of ideas, with evidence to substantiate the evaluation of wealthy nations' culpability Apt reference to relevant theories to reinforce the argument

However, it would be prudent to consider the view that poor countries clearly have a part to play in the global problem of climate change as they too are potential polluters and should not pass the full burden to developed nations. To do so is as good as passing a mandate to allow developing nations to pollute the environment as they please, which may lead to a Pandora's box of dire consequences. Currently, developing nations are already polluting the environment severely. In Brazil, the world's largest carbon sink is subjected to illegal deforestation, transforming the Amazon from carbon sink to source. It must also be noted that climate agreements such as the Kyoto Protocol met with successes as policies such as the Clean Development Mechanism and Joint Implementation facilitated the giving of financial and technological aid from wealthy to poor countries. As seen from Brazil, such international assistance is futile if poor countries do not take responsibility. Indeed, Hardin's tragedy of the commons which illustrated that shared resources are depleted very quickly if one party is allowed to be irresponsible is highly applicable. Since developing nations are culpable for the genesis of this global issue, it can be argued that both wealthy and poor nations have an equal amount of responsibility.	The discourse markers used here and at the start of the previous paragraph create a measured tone Insightful evaluation showing how the culpability argument is also applicable to poor nations given the current situation
In recent months, the world has seen the devastating impacts of a pandemic, Covid-19. This pandemic, amongst others of the past such as the Black Death and the Spanish Flu, illustrates how vulnerable the world is to healthcare issues. In the globalised modern world we live in, pandemics are unlikely to care about borders or political gambits. Hence, in dealing with healthcare issues, wealthy countries with financial and technological advantages as well as the benefits of high skilled labour populations should extend aid to poorer nations. Less developed countries such as Mali have three ventilators per million people and it is thus unsurprising that such poorer nations may be hotspots for disease outbreaks, and are also much more vulnerable to its impacts. In examining the geographies of illness, it is simply utilitarian for wealthy nations to take more responsibilities in global healthcare aid to safeguard their own interests, killing two birds with one stone. However, this is not seen in the US where Trump has threatened to halt 500 million of funding to the World Health Organization in a counter-intuitive move. Given that providing healthcare aid to poor nations can serve both their own people and minimise imported infections to wealthy nations, it may be the ethical choice for wealthy nations to take more responsibility.	Nuanced argument showing how ethics and utilitarianism are intertwined, and how a country's global responsibility is tied to its national interests
In conclusion, the many problems that our world faces are not exclusive to wealthy or poor nations. Since the dichotomy is false, nations with the ability to act towards resolving issues should do so, and this can be done more often than not by ensuring efficient multilateral cooperation. <i>(Lim Jing Xuan, 20-11)</i>	Succinct conclusion crystallising the common thread through the case studies in the body paragraphs -- that the world's problems affect both wealthy and poor nations

JC1 June Common Test Paper 2

Response 1

A systematic approach to unpacking the author's arguments and addressing them with clear reference to the societal context of Singapore. The first paragraph shows more detailed evaluation, supported by examples and observations, compared to the second paragraph. Both paragraphs maintain a clear focus on evaluating the perceptions of work's significance in Singapore society.

Beckett argues that work is too highly valued in society because 'an obsession with employability runs through education'. He argues that work has become so pervasive in our societies today that it has become an ultimate priority, with even students still in school becom[ing] focused not on gaining knowledge, but on gaining qualifications to be eligible for work. He assumes that the significance of work has become so large that work has become something to obsess over in our lives and evaluates this [as] an excessive obsession. Indeed, in Singapore, an obsession with employability throughout our education can be found. University degrees or diplomas have become so associated with just being a qualification for a job that most students go through their education journey with the mindset of getting a job as their final goal. It is emphasised to them that they must go to university to get a degree so they can get a job – it becomes a very logical and natural flow of thought to them. This could be a result of the pragmatic nature of our society, which has been cultivated into prioritising survival ever since our independence, the result of a rocky separation with Malaysia that necessitated [a] focus on practical survival and nothing else. Thus, an emphasis on employment for economic stability and pragmatic reasons has emerged. Meanwhile, the highly competitive nature of our education system has also nurtured the mindset of believing educational success to be essential in students. The combined effect of the two has resulted in students becoming obsessed with getting good grades to secure a job. However, in recent years it is important to note that some people are increasingly disregarding university degrees as essential components to getting a job. Ironically, the abundance of students with degrees has commodified the achievement of getting one, instead raising the importance of other qualifications like work experience. Nevertheless, the mindset of going through education just to get a job is still very much ingrained in Singaporean students' minds, proving how work is very highly valued in Singapore for pragmatic reasons.

The author's claim, reason and assumption are clearly outlined, showing a detailed engagement with the text

The evaluation of the attitudes to work in Singapore is deepened with the explanation that delves into the origins and underlying factors of such attitudes

Beckett also argues that work is socially detrimental, reducing its value, as overwhelming work schedules have resulted in 'vital human activities' becoming 'increasingly neglected'. He argues that work takes up too much of our time, with work schedules becoming too hectic, causing workers to be unable to carry out crucial human activities like taking care of their loved ones. He assumes that work is such a significant constant in our lives that it is the main reason for this neglect. In Singapore, this is fairly true. Working parents entrusting their children to the care of domestic helpers or childcare centres is extremely common in Singapore. In fact, the government has acknowledged the need for childcare centres and of parents to subscribe to such services through subsidies. This proves how the government,

Similar to the previous paragraph, this paragraph also starts off with a detailed identification of the components of the author's argument: claim, reason, assumption

Logical inferences drawn from the

too, acknowledges how work is such an important and huge part of Singaporeans' lives that some human activities such as caring for one's own child must be compromised. However, concerns have indeed been raised over this, with narratives of children in such situations regarding their domestic workers as their parents instead of their real parents being brought to light. Thus, an awareness of how work takes up too much of our time is definitely present, but a sense of urgency of the issue sufficient enough to truly rouse anti-work sentiments has not been reached. Thus, the prioritisation of work despite its detrimental effects in Singapore can be seen, serving as a testimony for how vital and valuable work is to us. (Lim Pei Han, Amanda, 20-01)	observations stated This idea of sufficiency could be more developed with a deeper investigation of the causal factors leading to the mindsets that do not view the issue of overworking with urgency
--	---

Response 2

<i>The inter-paragraph coherence in this AQ response makes it outstanding as clarity of thought and expression is demonstrated. The author's claims are woven into the evaluation of how work is perceived in Singapore effectively, with the progression of ideas clear across the paragraphs. The conclusion delivers a measured value judgement of the author's overall argument with an assertive personal voice.</i>	
Beckett's claim that 'work is the master of the modern world' is certainly applicable to Singapore's society. To our small nation, economic prosperity is of utmost importance and is often characterised by hard work and high levels of productivity. Yet, our fixation on the pursuit of economic development has resulted in a rat-race, which has only proved detrimental to society, similar to Beckett's suggestion. This has warranted changes in government policies in an attempt to improve our work ethic, as Beckett highlights as necessary in his closing argument, with which I agree.	Although an introduction paragraph is not necessary in an AQ response, this introduction aptly addresses the general claim which the author begins with. The evaluation is sound here, albeit brief and awaiting development in the subsequent body paragraphs
Firstly, Singapore's rapid economic growth from a fishing village to a leading Asian economy is proof that hard work is important to development. Our government's fixation on building a strong economy since independence is often associated with the idea of hard work and efficiency or productivity, values which have become ingrained in society. As Beckett argues, the notion of work infiltrates almost every aspect of life in Singapore; success is measured by one's wage; one's [social] standing is dictated by his job and our main purpose of education is to find good work or a respectable job in the future. We carry with us these mindsets all our lives, driving ourselves to work the longest hours, work the hardest or achieve the highest efficiency, which has manifested in a rat-race of an economy. Singaporeans are known to have one of the worst work-life balances in the world, often placing work above all else. Similar to Beckett's criticism, our fixation on work has led to a society filled with stressed, unhappy workers who derive little fulfillment from work. Thus, while society does place great value on emphasis on work, it ironically is destroying the people in this society.	This paragraph addresses the opening claim selected in the previous paragraph The evaluation applies the SPERM framework to consider the domains in which work holds importance to Singapore #B&V is applied to evaluate the underlying cause as well as the resulting implication of this emphasis on work

Hence, the Singapore government has been attempting to change how society views work and its role in our lives. Beckett states that an ‘anti-work movement has taken shape’ as more people become more aware of its detriment[al] [impact]. In Singapore, the government has been advocating the importance of work-life balance, encouraging workers and employees to leave work at the workplace and fully enjoy other aspects of life fully when out of the office. This goes against the already widely-ingrained concept of productivity as of utmost importance, and the view of work as the most important facet of life. [Our] society is increasingly aware that work is not our sole purpose in life and is hence taking steps to correct our unhealthy work ethic, which is often stifling.	A good sense of continuity is created here as the response picks up from the previous paragraph and builds upon it by responding to a second selected claim from the passage
In his closing argument, Beckett argues that while changing our mindset towards work is difficult, it is not impossible and is necessary. I agree with this stance and applaud the shifts that Singapore society has made with regard to how it values work. While I do see the value of work, stemming from its ability to advance our country economically and its success in measuring success, I feel that the trade-offs are too great to bear. Losing the human side of society for a mechanical, hyper-productive economy of workers is far more detrimental to society. Beckett’s criticisms of the modern work ethic are valid and I hence believe in the need to change how society values work. It should not take over our entire lives, but remain a mere part of it. <i>(Ong Shan Mei, Steffi, 20-U1)</i>	The author’s claim is effectively paraphrased here and presented in a succinct sentence

JC2 June Common Test Paper 1

1 'Luck, rather than effort, determines success.' To what extent is this true?

This response fully engages with the comparison of how luck and effort each lead to success throughout, addressing the question consistently. While the arguments are coherent in addressing individual success, the concept of what constitutes "success" could be more fully unpacked for greater clarity. The points are quite richly exemplified, but they are limited to the individual level, when the question invites a discussion about the success of different levels of society (e.g. societies, states and communities). The focus of the essay is also skewed towards the discussion of luck, and balance could have been improved through more closely examining the importance of effort as a determinant of success. A clear personal voice is present throughout the essay, and the writer employs complex and varied sentence structures, but more concision would be desirable at some points.

The determinants of success [have] always been a moot point. On [the] one hand, success can be perceived as the fruit of one's labour, such that only through blood, sweat and tears will a person be guaranteed to reach his end goal. An oft-cited example would be how Thomas Edison only invented the light bulb after a whopping 999 failed attempts - proving that his eventual triumph was not a blessing that simply fell onto his lap. However, the world has also seen numerous instances of success being owed to luck - the favour that fate seemingly shows to some who may not have needed to toil as hard as others for the same degree of success. [Nonetheless], given the random nature of life and the unpredictable circumstances that are often allocated to us, it can only be fair to argue that luck often manifests as a crucial determinant of success, tantamount to effort, and [luck might prove] to be a factor of success that bears even greater weight than effort.

Introduction does show a clear understanding of the relevant issues, although it is somewhat abstract and the provision of a real-world example of how luck is the main determinant of success would balance out the earlier example

Thesis statement is generally clear, but it could incorporate the opposing perspective

Opponents of determinism argue that one should not attribute success solely to luck, as they speak of the dangers of submitting to the arbitrary notion of 'fate' that has the power to discourage agency and the role of free will. It cannot be denied that a fair amount of effort, in terms of sheer determination and hard work, are key to achieving one's goal. Certain tasks are indisputably more demanding than others, and hence naturally require a larger input of time and unbridled tenacity to be fulfilled. In other cases, mere effort proves futile unless one adopts the right strategies to maneuver their circumstances. For instance, Joanne Rowling, the author of the popular Harry Potter book series, undeniably poured hours of her time and energy into crafting a manuscript for her publishers. However, despite how hard she had worked to produce the book, she was turned down by dozens of publishing firms as they doubted the potential of female writers to achieve any form of success in the modern literary world. Only when Rowling adopted a gender-neutral pen name, 'J. K. Rowling' did she see some success in terms of publishing deals. Hence, the argument that success necessitates effort is one that is unfounded if it fails to consider the importance of strategy and adapting to one's situation. In the case of Rowling, the success of having four hundred million copies of her once inadequate book only befell her when she put thought into her actions, and

An eloquent topic sentence, but the rest of the paragraph does not really focus on developing this argument

There are factual accuracy issues in the example - check out her actual name and pseudonyms

While the point brought up about the importance of strategy and adaptability is valid, the argument laid out here is based on

examined with a critical eye, the factors of her failure that she needed to [address]. [Although] effort was, and had to be shown in her endeavours, but ultimately, it is not the golden solution to all failures, and requires the equal contribution of clever and appropriate tactics to rise above one's circumstances. Therefore, the argument that effort alone determines success is fallacious.	a narrow definition of 'effort', because strategy, cleverness and tactics are also examples of 'effort' (as opposed to 'luck')
Since it is established that effort alone is insufficient to guarantee success, the most prominent argument for the greater necessity [of] luck in achieving one's goals points towards the idea of moral luck and the luck ascribed to one's conditions at birth. Philosophers have argued for the case of moral luck, such that if two individuals were to put in an equal amount of effort into their pursuits, the one who possesses moral luck will [always] triumph over the other. For instance, two people can bet on the exact same number at a gambling station. However, if one does so a week after the other and wins while the other loses, assuming the algorithmic fairness of the lottery machine, the winning individual can be said to have moral luck - such that his success (winning the lottery) and the other's failure were completely contingent on circumstances that either could determine or predict. Therefore, in this case, luck plays an overwhelmingly important role in determining success, more so than effort. Beyond this hypothetical situation, another instance in which this idea of luck plays out in real life is that of one's circumstances at birth. It can be argued that the societal, cultural and geographical contexts that one is born into have massive influence [on] the direction that one's life takes. These circumstances such as one's social class, financial situation, cultural roots and geographical position [are] predetermined at birth, [and] they set the parameters [for] one's formative years. They are pivotal to shaping one's perceptions, and determining the amount of effort that one has to put in to achieve the same success as others. A striking example would be to think about the success of the Fandi siblings in comparison to an ordinary soccer player. The Fandi siblings, children of the famous football athlete [Fandi Ahmad], followed in their father's footsteps to become celebrated athletes themselves. Ikhsan Fandi and Irfan Fandi had the privilege of being trained overseas, and receiving tips from their own father. One could also argue that they have the luck of being born with their father's good [athletic] genes. Undeniably, they had to clock hours of hard work into their practice sessions, but ultimately, they had greater financial and circumstantial means to achieve the success they enjoy today, as compared to a regular schoolboy who may have been born into a less financially privileged family, unable to afford basic gear or proper training sessions. The ordinary boy may spend hours on the field to enhance his skills too, but without the same luck as the Fandi siblings, it becomes close to impossible, if not [extremely] hard, for him to reach the same level of mastery as the Fandi siblings. Therefore, this example clearly illustrates how the arbitrary nature of one's birth conditions, be it external factors such as one's family income, location, or internal factors such as the composition of one's DNA, [is so important] that [it could] eclipse [the role of effort in achieving success].	An extremely long paragraph that lacks control. Could be more concise in presenting the point The discussion on moral luck is quite confusing, even with the hypothetical example. It is unclear what the writer is referring to and why this distinction is necessary for the purposes of the question The Fandi siblings is a relevant and appropriate example, but discussion could be developed further to deepen insight - would the regular schoolboy be held to the same standards of success as the Fandi siblings?

Despite the dominating influence of luck on one's starting point, proponents of hard work justify its importance in terms of effort as a virtue and a testament to the tenacity of one's character. Indeed, this is true. Even the most genetically gifted, or the most cognitively agile individual needs to channel a fair amount of effort into the pursuit of one's goals as well. However, the mere laudable essence of hard work is never enough to prove a causal relationship between effort and success. The admirable trait of determination may be supplemented by luck in order to emerge victorious. For example, Alan Turing, a mathematician in the 20th century, was [employed] by the M16 in the United Kingdom during World War II to decode the telecommunication technology of the Germans. He toiled for years, [adjusting and fine-tuning] cogs in his prototype machine and studying the patterns of German war tactics. However, he achieved no success in cracking the supposedly invincible German enigmatic code. Just as he was about to give up, he was lucky enough to [spot] a loophole in the system. As the Germans made the fatal mistake of ending every telegram message with 'Hail Hitler', Turing exploited this crack in their machinations and decoded their [messages], ultimately elevating Great Britain's position in the war and later on, [enabled them to emerge] as victors. Turing's success, while partially contingent on his own efforts, only arrived due to his fortune of being able to capitalise on the mistakes of the Germans. In this case, it was the lack of luck on the side of his opponents that ultimately conferred upon him the luck he needed to achieve his goal. If effort alone had a causal relationship with success, Turing would have succeeded even without the follies of the Germans. Hence, luck is a more critical determinant of success, as its endowment can lead to great results. Conversely, a deficit or lack of luck can lead to one's downfall, and in turn, the triumph of one's opponent.	The topic sentence is expressed very competently and eloquently Good use of a relevant and interesting example, although the context could be better explained (e.g. who is the M16) Apt placement of the concession, but it could be further developed to show the relationship between luck, effort and success. Also, it is unclear if it is the lack of luck on the side of his opponents rather than a lack of effort (i.e. the mistake they made) that led to their downfall
In conclusion, the contributing factors of success remain indeterminate as it can often be seen as an interplay of both luck and effort. While some endeavours arguably require more effort in terms of manual labour, long hours or sheer commitment, luck often predetermines many bases on which one operates, and dictates the type and amount of effort demanded of an individual. Luck can therefore be seen to have a greater degree of correlation to success than effort, as it often escapes human control, determination or alteration, unlike effort. (Kelly Hooy, 19-01)	Competent conclusion that does highlight the importance of luck in achieving success, as was consistently argued throughout the essay

2 Assess the view that the media reinforces gender stereotypes.

This paragraph demonstrates some potential in its consideration of how the format of participation in social media can be a means of allowing users to challenge existing gender stereotypes. The question is open to discussion of the varying effects of different forms of media, such as new media in comparison to traditional media, and the differences in the roles taken by producers and consumers in the two types of media could have been an area for productive discussion of forces which reinforce stereotypes against forces which challenge them. Though this paragraph hints at some of this understanding, it is not completely focused in its argument, and threatens at some points to diverge from answering the question into discussion of issues of gender identity. While no doubt a related topic, gender identity should not be confused with gender stereotypes, and the paragraph could have been written with much closer reference to and illustration of specific gender stereotypes that are addressed by such use of social media, to more closely answer the question.

The media also gives people the space [and] opportunity [to] understand and form their own [gender] identity and educate others on gender stereotypes. Those struggling with their gender identity may find it extremely difficult to conform to gender stereotypes [and] often fall prey to oppression, discrimination and isolation. However, the media, or more specifically social media has become a prominent platform especially in recent times [that provides] a safe space for people to ‘come out of the closet’ and to even find a community. Social media gives affected individuals the ability to express themselves for who they are online and allows for followers to ‘like’ and comment [with] words of encouragement. Furthermore, it also allows people to post more information regarding [Lesbian, Gay, Bi-, Transsexual and Queer] (LGBTQ+) issues online. This collection and daily posting of information on [] regularly used platforms has the power to change people’s perspectives on gender stereotypes, and at the same time provides them [with] more knowledge on the topic so that they can be well informed. For example[,] on Instagram, there are many such pages, with accounts such as @femminists or @riseofactivism just to name a [couple]. These accounts pose daily information [on] non-gender conforming quotes, how to address the topic sensitively, [and] why [one should] support someone who may be struggling with [their] gender identity. Not only does this make readers more informed, the constant exposure to such information may change their perspectives [and] alter preconceived notions of gender stereotypes. Furthermore, it is desirable as victims struggling with such issues may be able to confide in others who share the same struggles. As the saying goes, there [is] strength in the pack. As such[,] the media has the ability to change [people’s] mindset[s] on gender stereotypes and provide people struggling with their gender identity solace. (Sarah Teo, 19-A6)	This is a relevant argument that draws on some awareness of how social media enables users to be more than just passive consumers, though this is not well articulated. The specific gender stereotypes being challenged could also be clarified, and this is a weakness that is present throughout the paragraph Concrete examples of how this works would have more effectively illustrated the effects on gender stereotypes Some straying from the issue of gender stereotypes in the media
--	--

2 Assess the view that the media reinforces gender stereotypes.

This essay presents a range of valid and insightful observations but the limited scope and the range of examples worked against the writer. Drawing from the same basket of examples across two body paragraphs should be avoided as it demonstrates a lack of broad and comprehensive knowledge of the subject matter, and a wider range of examples will provide not only variety, but also veracity to the argument. As you read, notice how the presentation of stereotypes could be more explicit throughout the essay, both in the explanations of the stereotypes as well as in the explanations of the examples used to support the arguments, to effectively answer the question and drive the point home. While the response is generally competent, a more strategic and organised approach would have helped: considering the common media types - traditional and new media - and how their mode of content production and consumption is vastly different will have implications on the question.

In today's world, the media plays a significant role in shaping the beliefs, values and perceptions that people hold. With the increased accessibility and convenience that technology brings, media content can be and is constantly consumed in various forms, such as entertainment or sources of information. Social media, television, streaming networks and news outlets consume our lives. As the world begins to evolve and perceptions start to shift, gender stereotypes are being challenged. Is the media keeping up with these shifts or is it reinforcing gender stereotypes and inhibiting [budding social change]? Although media portrayals can [pigeonhole each gender into a certain mould], [in light of how] the media is [inevitably] a reflection of society, as societal perceptions shift, media content will change accordingly. The media of today also brings a wide range of characters and perspectives to the table due to the increased accessibility media consumers [have to it] and its capacity for new content. [In addition], the media [could also champion] social change movements that [expose] people to the emotions and suppression that some experience due to gender stereotypes. Hence, while the media does [help] shape perceptions about genders, with the modern day shift in perceptions, it largely does not reinforce gender stereotypes.	Be careful about the logical sequencing of ideas in the context-setting: it would be more effective to begin with the accessibility of the media and then how that affects whether it reinforces gender stereotypes Introduction presents relevant ideas, good insight and a clear thesis statement
When the role of media in reinforcing gender stereotypes is brought into question, many will agree that it plays a significant role due to its ability to shape the standards that people hold a person of a certain gender to. It is true that the content offered by the media [imposes] and strengthens certain beliefs as it is constantly consumed and often matches the perception that we already have. There is often a sense of admiration and desire to emulate the portrayals on [the media]. The media also gives us the content to form certain expectations, not only on how we should act but also on how others should act. When people observe gender stereotypes in [the] media, it can reinforce their perceptions. [For instance], the Korean dramas that have [gained in popularity] internationally often portray Cinderella-like stories of a poor, clumsy and naive woman meeting a capable and rich man, turning her life from rags-to-riches. When we are consuming such media, not much thought might be put into what the content implies as it is easy to get caught up in the dreamy and exciting storyline. However, the repetition of such plotlines and similar media content [paint] an idea of what a man should be like and what a woman should be like, therefore reinforcing the gender stereotypes that society holds.	Clear topic sentence Good attempt at explaining the nature of the media and why it is especially relevant in the creation of stereotypes, but it should be coupled with close illustration to make the discussion less abstract Insightful observations on how the media subtly influences people, but could be more explicit in explaining clearly the kinds of stereotypes perpetuated by these K-dramas
However, there has been a gradual but progressive shift in the content the media offers due to the [changing views] of gender stereotypes in today's world. As the content [that] the media offers [often] mirrors the views of society, the evolution of societal views on gender has pushed the media towards producing content that breaks and challenges gender stereotypes instead. Ultimately, media content is produced and consumed by members of society. The content and views that [the] media [represents] [depend] on the perceptions of the creators and the demands of the consumers. As the world edges towards greater gender equality, the media [has also] pulled out content that [offer] new perspectives too. There has been a wave of Korean dramas that portray strong female characters that are capable and street smart, such as in the 'Weightlifting Fairy, Kim Bok Joo' and 'The Encounter'. Similarly, male characters are portrayed with more dimension[:] beyond being rich and smart, they can	Limited range of examples: instead of K-dramas, using an example from a different context or area of media would expand the scope of the discussion. Pointing out that these traits are stereotypes would make more explicit links to the question and address it better

be hardworking, sensitive and sweet. This shows that while the media can help to shape our perceptions and reinforce them, it is also impacted by the changing tastes and views of society. Hence, as societal perceptions begin to challenge gender stereotypes, the media does so too instead of reinforcing them.	
Additionally, the media of today exposes people to a large, extensive range of content coming from different people with varying backgrounds and experiences. With the increased ease of creating and viewing content, people are able to hear many different voices that can offer different perspectives to each gender. When people who appear in these [shows that the media presents] [do not] fit into the gender molds that society has created for them, people will begin to question and challenge the gender stereotypes held in society. In the past, [the] media had a limited range of both media content producers and consumers. Only people who could afford television [sets] had access to televised content and only [corporations] that had [these resources] could publish content. Today, with the rise of the Internet and the convenience of mobile devices, media material such as [television shows] can be created by anyone who is willing to. It can also be consumed by a wide range of audience not only within a nation or a country, but globally as well. Voices and personalities from different cultures and different parts of the society and the world can be heard. For example, there are YouTube channels and Instagram account starring people of the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer (LGBTQ+) community that demonstrate different personalities and qualities. The wider and diversified makeup of [the] media challenges the gender stereotypes that people hold as more perspectives are brought to their attention. Through consuming this wide range of media content, people realise that genders do not and should not fit in molds, hence [the] media does not reinforce gender stereotypes.	Valid topic sentence, but the explanation for it could be strengthened, and there could be more alignment between the topic sentence and the development of the paragraph, which seems to be about how certain types of media now allow ordinary people to create media content and speak about gender stereotypes Explanation can be clearer - What implications does such new media have on reinforcing or challenging gender stereotypes? And which stereotypes?
Last but not least, the media covers [the] gender social change movements extensively and provides a platform for people who feel suppressed and suffocated by gender stereotypes to voice their thoughts and [advocate] for change. Take for instance, the #Whatismyname campaign that was held using Twitter [featuring] Afghan women [being treated as] inferior to men, a common stereotype that appears in many cultures. Their given names are never used in public and not even on their gravestones. These women who are only referred to as 'daughter of ...' or 'wife of ...' took to Twitter to campaign for respect and dignity. The media platforms [allowed] their voices to be heard, not only in Afghanistan but internationally. Hence, the media does not reinforce gender stereotypes <i>Note: no conclusion</i> <i>(Liew Shaw Jun, 19-14)</i>	Valid and interesting idea, but organisationally this should feature with the ideas in the previous body paragraph An interesting example, but it needs to be clearer in stating the explicit stereotype being challenged, and specifically on which media platforms

2 Assess the view that the media reinforces gender stereotypes.

A competent response that considers the different functions and roles of the media beyond just providing entertainment to the public, this essay raises sophisticated and insightful arguments about the motivations of the media and what factors might affect their willingness to challenge or perpetuate existing stereotypes. However,

<i>there are some concerns about the way examples are cherry-picked to support the arguments - the response would benefit from presenting a more holistic assessment of how the media industry is representing gender roles beyond just using one well-selected example to support the argument made. Presenting a wider range of examples that illustrate the point, especially examples that lend themselves to making finer distinctions on the argument, is a good way to achieve this balance. On the whole the piece is coherent and confidently written, demonstrating a clear and controlled use of language, with complex vocabulary and strong links between lines of arguments. However, it does need to be careful about register lapses, to preserve the academic tone of writing that is expected in the case of the Paper 1 essay.</i>	
"Someday ... my prince will come ..." Snow White sang as she looked mournfully into the well. This image of female pliancy, the archetype of the damsel in distress narrative, has been lambasted and criticised [recently] by new age feminists as a perpetuation of gender stereotypes in the media. And yet, one must acknowledge that Snow White was released decades ago. Since then, the media's portrayal and understanding of gender, be it through films, newspapers [or] advertisements of magazines, [have] evolved with the rise of new waves of feminism, which advocate for fairer representations of both males and females. However, despite this, I find that gender stereotypes are still a large part of how we understand and perceive ourselves and others, and as such, while the media has diversified its portrayal of gender, it still inevitably plays into our own notions of gender roles and behaviour in society.	Interesting hook with clear links to the issues raised in the question Nuanced and sophisticated thesis statement that addresses the question directly and incorporates balance in a skillful way without creating contradictions
The most prominent argument as to how the media plays into gender stereotypes can be derived from its desire to appeal to societal norms to gain the most attention. After all, at the end of the day, the success of any media-oriented company is not seen from how diversified and accurate its representations of gender (amongst other aspects such as race) are, but how well it has fared in terms of its viewership and ratings. In film, both Western and Asian, females have historically been cast in a sexualised manner through the evocation of the male gaze. The Transformers movies, for example, which was directed by Michael Bay, was one of the highest grossing series of all time, [and] is notoriously known for its hypersexualisation of the female lead, glorifying her as the pinnacle of male desire, as well as [the damsel in distress that needs to be rescued] by the male lead. In Chinese martial arts films, it is almost expected that the male hero will always rescue the female heroine from a group of thugs, criminals, henchmen [or the like]. The immense success of these movies, amongst many others, which lean into a society's internalised concepts of gender not only allude to how these portrayals appeal to the larger collective but enable them to be reinforced too. Indeed, [to the extent that] the media is still dominated by men, the convenience accorded to the media companies to simply resort to our entrenched beliefs of female submissiveness and male dominance without much opposition highlights how such gender stereotypes have pervaded media and seeped into our cultural norms as well. Significantly, the portrayal of unbalanced power dynamics between the two genders can be interpreted as a desire to further diminish and subjugate females, reflecting the society we live in. Indeed, the familiarity of such gender stereotypes to the extent in which we normalise and even glorify them in the media, enables them to continue illustrating the stereotypes, creating a vicious cycle that we can scarcely escape from.	Such signposting is effective in giving the marker the confidence that the most obvious or fundamental issues are being addressed first, which is a mark of good essay planning Good range of examples, showing how this trend is common among films in different contexts, although it could go beyond films to address different forms of entertainment (e.g. television programmes) Good insight and analysis about how the male gaze is being perpetuated by media companies because of the power structures that exist within media companies, going beyond describing what media companies are

	doing to explain why they function the way they do
Even if we look into other aspects of the media, such as that of its role as a check-and-balance against the government, the media has often conflated these political aspects with that of gender as well, creating a pernicious effect on how we characterise both genders. A quick look at newspapers reporting on the 2016 American Presidential Elections is clear evidence for the double standards imposed on Hillary Clinton, the nominee for the Democratic Party. While Donald Trump, her rival, was being reported [on] about his actions, social media activity and campaign plans, copious publications such as US Weekly spent far more time judging and evaluating Clinton's fashion sense [...]. Even if we look past the political leanings of media companies, it is still ludicrous that the media chose to impose onto Clinton such arbitrary beauty standards that have nothing to do with her abilities as a [presidential candidate]. Again, the gender stereotype that women are less deserving and capable of leadership positions, was amplified by the media when they actively chose to ignore Clinton's advocacy, nitpicking instead on superficial aspects such as her choice of pantsuits, sending the message to its viewers that her abilities were confined to her physical appearance instead. With the large power the media holds as the Fourth Estate [of Democracy], it brings about and inexplicably pervades gender stereotypes in how we view every aspect of society, further internalising our bias towards such gender norms. Hence, this alludes to how the media reinforces not just our superficial misconceptions of gender for entertainment purposes, but even in the political aspect as well.	This topic sentence is not as well-executed as the previous - it needs to be framed to address the question directly An interesting and insightful argument that shows awareness of the different roles of the media, although it is somewhat exaggerated and not particularly fair to argue that the media did not at all cover the substantial aspects of her campaign beyond just her appearance
On the other hand, with the wave of new-age feminism which advocates a progressive form of media in portraying gender, it must be [acknowledged] that there has been a shift and improvement in how some media companies subvert these gender stereotypes to cater to more liberal audiences. In South Korea, which has traditionally adopted a paternalistic, masculine-focused approach to gender, a significant tell-tale sign of how the media is adapting to more enlightened gender associations can be seen in relation to cosmetics advertisements. Given the burgeoning health and beauty industry in South Korea, more companies such as InnisFree and Nature Republic have taken to hiring male pop idols and celebrities to endorse their products through advertisements that are played on screens throughout the country. The wild success of these campaigns as seen in how products are easily wiped out by starry-eye consumers, as well as the growth of the Korean male beauty industry to be one of the largest in the world helped not only in [subverting] the stereotype of the masculine male in society, but helped to spark conversation on male body image as well, normalising and softening otherwise rigid attitudes towards how gender is performed in the typically traditional society. [Hence], the media's awareness of cultural critiques of gender, as well as the conscious understanding of how it has a role to play in shaping the perceptions of its consumers, can be a powerful tool that enables it to challenge such norms and appeal to younger and more diversified clients.	A very skillful topic sentence that transitions seamlessly from the supporting argument to the counter-argument An interesting example that acknowledges how gender stereotypes are not just restricted to the experience of women. However, the example could be explained in a more nuanced way - does it challenge the pre-existing gender stereotype that men must be masculine, or perpetuate a new gender stereotype of the new age, sensitive man who typically has a softer appearance?

Ultimately, these instances are far more rare than we hope they should be. Stereotypes, be [they of] gender, race or class, are still a crucial and untenable aspect as to how we understand ourselves and the rest of our society. In a way, the human desire to understand the complexity of human nature has caused us to resort to comfortable classifications of each person based on such various aspects. Thus, it might be argued that even if the media tries to oppose [this by] highlighting gender norms, it often not only reinforces other aspects of the stereotypes, but might not be received well by audiences as well. Take the release of Disney's Captain Marvel, for example, who is one of the first female superheros to have an entire film dedicated to her story and her legacy. Despite this, the movie received less favourable ratings than movies with male leads, and critics and audiences alike criticised her character for being too "masculine", too "stubborn", traits which are undecidedly feminine. In this aspect, while the intention behind the movie was no doubt to empower [women] in depicting Captain Marvel's independence and strength, the backlash from [the audience] points out how we as a society are ultimately still largely unable and unwilling to confront internalised forms of misogyny, and the media's portrayal of such subversions might even result in a collective, more overt reinforcement of such stereotypes instead.	Good insight raised right at the start of the paragraph, but a topic sentence that addresses the question is missing An insightful argument that points out the interactions of different stakeholders The explanation of the example seems somewhat sweeping - could go further to evaluate why these comments were made despite the supposed progressiveness of the modern audience
[In conclusion], there are far more gender stereotypes that underpin how we represent each other, how we understand each other. Insofar as the media acts to portray our beliefs and values in its different mediums, there will always be a natural tendency to revert to comfortable, unassuming normalisations to engender a larger collective and not disrupt commonly accepted narratives. However, I am still hopeful, that as we progress together as a society, we will be enlightened enough to hold such challenging conversations to understand how our internal bias and the media both play a part in our own thoughts and perceptions of not only gender, but the many aspects of how we understand society as a whole. (Lum Wan Tong, 19-U1)	A thoughtful conclusion that reiterates the heart of the essay, and looks forward to a future marked by change, demonstrating a strong personal voice. However, it could be clearer in reiterating all the lines of argument to provide a tighter sense of closure.

2 Assess the view that the media reinforces gender stereotypes.

Although this response does present some good insights about the role of the media in reinforcing gender stereotypes, to go deeper in discussing the underlying issues there needs to be clearer argument separation so that each body paragraph deals with a distinct, different and properly articulated argument. It is advisable to deeply consider what new information each subsequent paragraph is centred on making in response to the question. The essay relies on examples from pop-culture, limiting the scope of the arguments made. In a similar vein, two of the body paragraphs were essentially about one set of stereotypes - those tied for men and women about aesthetic ideals and looks, when there are so many other gender stereotypes in other domains that can be engaged beyond just looks. The response would also benefit from being more explicit in fronting and clarifying the nature of the media type being referenced and the gender stereotype being challenged/reinforced.

‘Hot Looks for the Summer!’, ‘How to get that Bikini Body in Three Easy Steps!’, ‘Date Night Looks to make the girls swoon!’ These headlines scream out at us everyday as we walk by a magazine stand or scroll through Instagram feeds. Little do we know that the compulsion we feel to pick up that magazine or click on that blogpost has been carefully [curated] for us from exposure to the media in our everyday [lives]. [There] is no doubt that the media’s influence on our lives is astronomical. However, what many do not realise is the media’s ability to perpetuate gender stereotypes, actively reinforcing what we hear from friends and family, resulting in an endless vicious cycle of expectations. While some may argue that the media, especially in modern times, has allowed us to break out of such traditional stereotypes, they fail to realise that [the media] continues to this day due to the profit they make of it as well as the way they can sensationalise [the news]. Hence I am inclined to believe that the media does reinforce gender stereotypes.	Good attempt at an engaging hook and providing examples of different examples of media Fairly competent introduction, but needs to incorporate balance into the thesis statement
Although gender stereotypes have perpetuated through the media [from its] conception, some may argue that with the rise of feminism, modern day media is beginning to break through such stereotypes, exposing their [audience] to new narratives that do not conform to traditional gender stereotypes. This is due to the overall increase in the Internet penetration levels in most societies, allowing a much larger [number] of people to access various forms of media. This has allowed those who do not conform to ‘traditional’ gender stereotypes the ability to share their stories online, or even for those who recognise the detrimental effects of these stereotypes to work in [or via] the media to actively change that. For example, many celebrities, such as Harry Styles, Timothee Chalanet and Ezra Miller are known for their comfort with expressing their femininity by dressing in traditionally ‘feminine’ outfits for photoshoots. By doing so, they are perpetuating the idea that men can wear feminine dresses instead of masculine suits and [they can] still be considered ‘fashionable’. Furthermore, TV shows, such as Queer Eye, also [challenge] the gender norm that only women can dress fashionably and have skincare routines. In the show, the hosts do a makeover of their guest, who is often a man who does not care [about] his outward appearance, which is something that is considered an expectation for women, rather than men. By giving their guest a makeover, the show teaches them and the audience members that everyone, whether male or female, can partake in the traditionally feminine act of self-care. Hence, through modern media, some may argue that we are starting to see a shift from perpetuating gender stereotypes regarding beauty to challenging such expectations placed on either gender.	The link between Internet penetration levels and access to various forms of media needs to be made clearer Valid ideas, but needs to briefly illustrate the previous explanation of the effect of new forms of media to make ideas less vague and abstract Explanation of examples need to be more consistent in laying out explicitly which gender stereotypes are being challenged, and in what way

However, to believe that the media has completely stopped perpetuating and reinforcing gender stereotypes is to be myopic and quite naive. Although steps may have been taken to challenge these stereotypes, we cannot deny that many corporations still continue to perpetuate such stereotypes for their own economic gain. For example, it is common to find magazines and news articles with headlines such as ‘Adele lets herself go’ with a picture of a “not-so-skinny” Adele in a bikini at the beach. This perpetuates the [stereotype] that women have to have a certain model-like body in order to be suitable to be seen in a bikini, which is a dangerous standard of beauty for women. Furthermore, we often see news articles praising celebrity fathers who seem to be taking care of [their] children that day, while a celebrity mother seen in a similar situation will get little to no media coverage. This perpetuates the idea that men do not traditionally have to ‘babysit’ or care for their children, it perpetuates the idea that them doing so is normal and expected of them. By playing on such gender stereotypes to sensationalise news, [the media] continues to perpetuate these stereotypes to their audiences. Hence, [there] is no doubt that the media perpetuates these stereotypes and [this] can often be credited to their desire to churn out news articles that would otherwise [not attract viewers].	While there is attempt to provide range in examples, these example are in fact drawn from the same bracket (i.e. pop culture) More concrete examples are needed to support the claim that these women do not get media coverage when caring for their children
Moreover, another big reason why the media continues to reinforce gender stereotypes is for large corporations to profit off such stereotypes. Many gender stereotypes influence society’s view on beauty and this is often why the beauty industry is more often than not, reliant on these stereotypes to sell their products and ensure there is a continued demand for such products. For example, make-up companies reinforce the stereotype that females, from a young age, have to live up to a certain standard of beauty, that can only be achieved by spending thousands of dollars on make-up and clothes, or they will be deemed as ‘unlady-like’ or ‘not girly enough’. These standards have dated back to the 1900s, where the narrative was, admittedly, more archaic in the sense that a girl [was] to fulfill this standard of beauty and that [she had to present herself] in such a way to please the male gaze are still all too common in today’s media. However, some may argue that with the rise of beauty gurus such as James Charles and Jeffrey Star, the stereotype that men are not allowed to wear makeup is no longer being perpetuated. In this case, gender stereotypes are being challenged by the media. Despite their fame, these influencers face their fair amount of hateful comments from those who buy into the gender stereotypes that men cannot wear makeup as [this] is a traditionally feminine [practice]. Either way, we cannot deny that the origin of these standards of beauty for women and men alike stem from a point of profit, where companies hope to leverage on these traditional gender stereotypes for economic gain.	The organisation of ideas could be improved: the issue of reinforcing gender stereotypes relating to beauty was already mentioned in the previous body paragraph This paragraph seems to be digressing and losing focus on the media. The focus seems to be on corporations and gender stereotypes. Also, it is not very convincingly argued that profit is always the root of the problem

Lastly, the media reinforces gender stereotypes simply because of [their] nature and how [they are] so tightly interwoven into our lives. Due to the repeated image of how females and males present themselves in the media, the average consumer of such media is easily influenced by these images and portrayals of femininity and masculinity that they instinctively perpetuate these stereotypes in real life, contributing to the toxic cycle of gender stereotypes. For example, [even as young children], girls are taught from Disney movies that they were the ‘damsels in distress’, while boys were taught that they had to be their ‘princes’ [and] ‘knights in shining armour’. This perpetuates the gender stereotype of the helpless female who is entirely dependent on a man to save her. This inadvertently also perpetuates the culture of toxic masculinity in boys, where they are taught not to express their feelings and to always put on a strong front. These are repeatedly taught to children through the media and [are] a large contributor to the deeply entrenched gender stereotypes in our society today. [S]ome may argue that this narrative is less popular now, with the release of Disney’s ‘Moana’ and ‘Brave’, where women are portrayed to be much stronger, with no need for a ‘Prince Charming’. However, we cannot deny that the influence the media has had on our parents and grandparents is one that [has] perpetuated traditional gender stereotypes, so much so that [such gender stereotypes] [have] invariably been ingrained in our culture. It will take more than a few new Disney movies to change that. Hence, due to its influence and its long history of doing so, we cannot deny that the media has had a significant role to play in perpetuating gender stereotypes, especially from a young age.	This paragraph is again discussing the same gender stereotypes about beauty, suggesting a limited scope of consideration, although the latter half does discuss some other gender stereotypes. A wider range of stereotypes should be considered over the course of the essay There are valid ideas, but they need to be better explained - how does the media perpetuate these gender stereotypes? Why it would be difficult to bring about change could be developed further
As the author, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie once said, “The single story creates stereotypes, and the problem with stereotypes is not that they are not true, but [that] they are incomplete. The single story becomes the only story.” The media seems to continuously perpetuate this ‘single story’ of how women and men should behave respectively. Hence, without a significant change in the media’s narrative, and the telling of other stories, the media will continue to tell a single story. This story is one that us, the audience, is familiar with, and it may be the one we have been perpetuating ourselves in our daily lives. However, if the media recognises its influence on us, and puts aside its greed for profit, we will no longer be presented a single story that perpetuates gender stereotypes, but [instead] will be shown the multitude of dimensions of what a female and a male can be. (Anastasia Lin, 19-U4)	A very well-chosen quote to close the essay Some good insight, but could be more nuanced - Do the media really only tell a single story today? How plausible is this expectation of the media?

3 Are we protecting the environment for all the wrong reasons?

This is a competent response that shows some good understanding of the subject matter in terms of the strategies employed to protect the environment and the different reasons why different stakeholders might be invested in protecting the environment. However, in much of the essay, there must be clear and more meaningful engagement with the question prompt, explaining why certain reasons are seen to be the ‘wrong’ reasons. Although there is some recognition of the potential for ‘right’ and ‘wrong’ reasons to overlap and align in their consequences, showing some sensitivity to the greater implication of the question - how there is no such thing as the ‘wrong’ reasons as long as it benefits the environment - this is more assumed than clearly fleshed out in the essay. By developing each paragraph more closely in relation to the demands of the question’s keywords, the essay could be improved.

Ever since the Earth Day movement gained momentum over 50 years ago, there has been increased environmental consciousness and concrete actions taken to protect the natural environment. Key legislative measures were enacted, such as the Clean Water Act in the US and a law requiring at least 70% of the land to remain forested in Bhutan. Many conservationists would thus posit that environmental protection should be acted upon in order to conserve nature and wildlife. However, those with a more pragmatic worldview may believe that there are a multitude of other reasons to protect the environment and that such reasons are not considered wrong. To [state] that individuals and the society at large is protecting the environment for all the wrong reasons implies that these reasons are not desired, socially unacceptable or even morally incorrect. Thus, this essay seeks to argue that we are not protecting the environment for all the wrong reasons, as motives such as economic gain or self-preservation should not be considered inherently wrong.	Good use of examples in the context-setting, but the link between the example and the focus of the question is unclear. It is advisable to be relevant to the question's point of contention from the very start Thesis statement is clear, but could incorporate balance
Firstly, we protect the environment in order to conserve nature and to minimize the impacts of human activities on wildlife. Considered one of the more common and socially accepted reasons, many countries preserve untouched, pristine ecosystems out of a sense of duty to be responsible for the wellbeing of non-human species. For example, protected areas were established in the grasslands of Eastern Africa, home to native species of cheetahs, wild beasts and zebras, after over 90% of their original prairies were urbanised and converted into land for agriculture. Not only does protection of the environment allow researchers to undertake research and gather data on animals in their natural habitats, marking out areas of land to be legally protected also signifies the importance governments and societies place on conserving nature. The Amazon rainforest is a widely-touted example to illustrate the assumption that conservation of nature is one of the 'correct' reasons to protect the environment. One of the world's most diverse biodiversity hotspots, the Amazon rainforest receives much attention for its wide range of plant and animal species and the possible medicinal benefits such as wildlife can bring to humans. Thus, there is sufficient evidence to show that we are protecting the environment for a moral reason, which is to conserve nature and wildlife.	A detailed example that could draw links to support the point about 'correct reasons', rather than describing details It should not be assumed that the reader understands whether this 'moral reason' is viewed as right or wrong for the purposes of this question, so clear links throughout this paragraph are necessary
Secondly, we are protecting the environment for pragmatic reasons such as for economic gain. In some instances, the protection of the environment has become commercialised as people seek to make profit out of it. This desire to gain benefits by protecting nature should not be considered a wrong reason as it is a win-win situation in which both humans and nature benefit. For example, the Yellowstone National Park in the United States of America charges visitor fees, which is then used in the upgrading of trails to minimize human interaction with the environment and facilities such as toilets and trash cans to ensure visitors do not litter and pollute the environment. This exemplifies how the desire for economic gain works hand-in-hand with protecting the environment. As societies develop, there are improved standards of living as individuals seek better lives through earning more money. The commercialisation of national parks, if monitored to a certain extent, will not necessarily become a negative impact of environmental protection. Another example is the building of a Great Green Wall in Africa, where governments plan to plant local trees in order to combat desertification, which would cause economic losses. Through this initiative, over a hundred jobs were created in Senegal, where women were hired to plant saplings. Fighting against desertification by planting trees brings economic benefits to locals, who now have a	The paragraph needs to be framed to address the question directly, and though the notion of multiple objectives overlapping and aligning is thoughtful, insight could be deepened - why might some argue that economic reasons are wrong? Are there instances where it could be the wrong reason? What is the result of the Great Green Wall on environmental protection? This example could be better explained.

more stable income. Thus, one can argue that we are protecting the environment for economic gain, which would ultimately benefit nature as organisations and governments channel these monetary resources back into greater environmental protection.	The end of the paragraph needs to go back to address the demands of the question - Is it right or wrong?
Some may argue that we are protecting the environment out of our own selfishness and sense of [self-preservation]. Using climate change as a justification, this reason can be conceded to be socially unacceptable as humans are choosing to protect the environment out of their desire to continue leading their modern lifestyles. For example, reports by the Intergovernmental Panel of Climate Change (IPCC) have stated that global sea levels are likely to rise by up to 6 feet by 2100. However, with the increasing awareness of situations where the effects of climate change are likely to affect human lives and the way of living, more countries are starting to take action to protect the environment. Cities such as Copenhagen in Denmark have outlined plans to be carbon-neutral by 2025 while countries such as Bhutan are actively managing efforts to remain carbon-negative. Hence, [others less concerned with morals also rebut that despite] selfishly-motivated reasons, the goal of environmental protection is the most important aim and as long as countries are actively working to protect the environment, the moral grounds behind their reasons for doing so should not be judged and deemed as 'wrong'. Thus, I believe that we are not protecting the environment for all the wrong reasons. Instead, governments as well as individuals are protecting the environment for various reasons, some of which may be considered selfish but not morally wrong.	The chain of reasoning and the example provided could be reviewed to clarify how self-preservation features in this paragraph, as it is currently under-developed This part seems to be concluding the essay, rather than developing the argument raised in this paragraph. The organisation of ideas could be improved by completing the argument before moving on
In conclusion, environmental protection is a pressing issue that still needs to be addressed and acknowledged universally. Despite some die-hard conservationists or cynics who point out that we are protecting the environment for all the wrong reasons, reasons such as conservation of nature, economic gain and self-preservation are all logical and generally [seen as legitimate] by the larger population. Although the level of support for Earth Day has gradually decreased over the years, the legislations implemented for various reasons that should not be labelled inherently wrong or right, will protect the environment for years to come. (Natasha Tan, 19-01)	Conclusion is generally clear in reiterating the arguments made, and sorting them according to people's perspectives The reference back to Earth Day is not as meaningful because it is unclear why it was raised in the introduction at all

4 'The needs of children are sufficiently provided for.' Is this a fair assessment of your society?

This is a competent response that shows evidence of planning in the execution of the essay. It covers quite a good range of children's needs, and demonstrates strong engagement with the value judgment of 'sufficient', showing keen sensitivity that 'sufficiency' could entail (a) the adequacy of existing measures for a certain group of children (b) the fact that sufficiency could only be achieved if the needs of all children are met. To deepen insight, the response needs to show greater awareness of the policies that seek to address these problems and evaluate whether they are sufficient, as some aspects of the essay could come across as descriptive.

With a world-renowned education system, a [city] filled with play structures and a trustworthy defence force, Singapore has been ranked one of the best places for children to grow up in. Indeed, on the surface, it appears that Singapore has successfully provided for the needs of most, if not all its children. [Behind] this rosy image, however, hides the issues of inequality that proves [how] not all children are sufficiently provided for. Additionally, the lack of resources and conversation around issues like mental health also show that current efforts are inadequate. While I believe Singapore does have its merits in providing for children, to fully agree with the assessment that the needs of children are sufficiently provided for is to ignore all the ways in which we as a country have let our children down.	Some good discussion about SG characteristics, but how that links to the sufficiency of current measures in meeting the needs of children needs to be clearer So in what ways have we let children down? The thesis statement is eloquently expressed, but could be more specific
Singapore's top education system has been revered around the globe. With a large portion of our annual budget feeding into education and the constant improvements the Ministry of Education makes to the system, it appears that children's needs are more than sufficiently provided for. Singapore's policies like mandatory primary school education and bilingual studies ensure that schooling is accessible to all, fulfilling children's learning needs. Moreover, wealth inequalities that may impede a student's progress in school are also acknowledged. For example, many organisations like ReadAble and intra-school programmes provide free tutoring initiatives to give academic support [for students from less privileged backgrounds]. Many argue that the existence of such programmes show that students across the income spectrum are sufficiently provided for, and while wealth may give one child more opportunities, the fundamental need for additional academic assistance is sufficiently met. Others may also point to the funding of specialised schools, like Pathlight school, for special needs children, showing that the tailored curriculum and experiential learning provided to the children help in overcoming their learning disabilities.	Good discussion about the different aspects of the education system, and how the educational needs of different children are met by initiatives from different stakeholders, thus demonstrating strong content knowledge
While I concede that the Ministry of Education has taken large strides in overcoming those aforementioned inequalities, I disagree [that] their needs are sufficiently met. For many [children from] low-income families, beyond mandatory primary school education, the chances of these students performing poorly in school or dropping out entirely is much higher than their peers from higher income benefits. Current policies are unable to target the main impediment to the child's schooling journey: familial commitments. Some children take on caregiving roles while others work, their needs taking a backseat to that of their family. Additionally, [the] tutoring initiatives mentioned above cannot compare to the competitive and costly tuition centres that provide help to more affluent children. Hence, while these structures exist, whether they provide for the targeted children in an adequate way remains a point of doubt. Furthermore, the world-class education system for all students in Singapore does have its flaws. The high-stress environment has been a point of heavy discussion in recent years, where children are pushed to absurdly high levels of anxiety and stress over grades. When their mental capacities are exhausted, and their timetables are packed, the reality is that many children's need for mental wellbeing and playtime is compromised. As such, I believe that [the sufficiency of crucial resources] in the field of education only hides the harsh truth that many [children's] needs are overlooked in the process.	Nuanced and insightful navigation of the problems/factors that limit the efficacy of current measures in meeting the educational needs of children Relevant discussion about how existing educational structures could be damaging to the mental/emotional well-being of children, but ideas need to be better substantiated by concrete examples

On the topic of mental health, the needs of many children remain inadequately provided for in my society. Youth suicide rates are still high, with new studies showing that children as young as twelve who are taking their Primary School Leaving Examination display depressive and suicidal tendencies. While non-profit welfare organisations like AWARE have long provided care and resources to troubled children, there remains a stigma around the conversation of mental health. This is especially amplified for children in our conservative, traditionally Asian society, where the parents' opinions often override the child's. There is a common perception that at such a tender age, the child cannot fully comprehend the emotions he/she feels and misrepresents it as depression. However, this dismissal and reduction of children's feelings show that some parents who still hold this view are consciously ignorant of the child's needs. Moreover, as a nation, the void of mental health in our national conversations in both the past and present has fed into the deterioration of children's mental health. In this case, it is not what parents and the government have provided, but what they have not, that has proven insufficient. More needs to be done in acknowledging that we have failed to provide for the psychological needs of our nation's children, before it is exacerbated further.	Paragraph presents a relevant observation, but it could be more balanced - it is not necessarily fair to argue that absolutely nothing is being done about this issue Examples need to be better developed to flesh out the argument (e.g. why is PSLE bad for their mental/emotional well-being?) Some good insight about how societal values affect whether children's need are sufficiently met
Children also need safety to be assured in the environment and country they live in. In Singapore, the ability to reside in a neighbourhood and home that is safe is not a privilege shared by all children, and thus it is [inaccurate] to say that this need is adequately provided for when there are a significant number of children [for] whom these needs are not met. While I do not doubt Singapore's safety as a country, due to our strong defence forces and strategic diplomatic ties, I am more interested to discuss intra-state safety, in the neighbourhoods and homes that form the immediate environment [that children live in]. In her book, 'This is What Inequality Looks Like', Teo You Yenn [discussed] Singapore's financial inequality manifesting in the living spaces of people. Low-income neighbourhoods feature rental flats and some of the nation's smallest, cheapest spaces are more prone to police patrol and warning notices on community signboards and lift doors. Children who live in these areas are constantly reminded of the fact that crime rates are higher in their neighbourhood than in other estates in the country. Additionally, children in abusive households experience much higher levels of instability and vulnerability, since the welfare and safety within their households thread a tenuous line. In this case, parents of these children have not sufficiently provided for their child. Subjecting the child to prolonged physical, mental and sexual abuse is in no way fulfilling the needs of the child. Hence, a [qualification] must be made when saying that all children are provided for - it is only partially true. In terms of fulfilling children's need for safety, some children will not be provided with [an environment] that [is] sufficient [or safe] for them to live in.	Safety is a need that everyone has, not just children. To engage the question better, the paragraph should thus flesh out why safety might be particularly important to children (e.g. as an especially vulnerable segment of society) Relevant reference, but the context of the example needs to be explained for readers who are less familiar with her work (e.g. who is she, what studies did she engage with, what is the significance of her studies etc.). This boosts clarity and also strengthens the value of the example

In conclusion, it is largely unfair to say that the needs of children are sufficiently provided for. One must consider the inequality of the type of provision as well as the [assumptious] nature of this umbrella statement [about] all children. As a nation, children are undoubtedly a vulnerable group that the state, society at large, and their individual families around strive to provide for. They are indeed the future of our country. Until we can commit to doing better for our children, we should acknowledge that current realities are mostly insufficient and we owe it to them to provide for a better tomorrow. <i>(Alayna Yap, 19-14)</i>	Conclusion does reiterate the overall stand, but needs to be more specific in reiterating all the lines of arguments beyond just making broad statements about the importance of children to Singapore
---	---

4 ‘The needs of children are sufficiently provided for.’ Is this a fair assessment of your society?

<i>A very competent response with a clear running thread throughout the essay, with each point hinging on the discussion of affluence. This has led to a clear assessment of needs in a holistic rather than piecemeal fashion, showing excellent understanding of Singapore society and the demands of the question. A large range of needs is also covered, giving the essay good scope. What needs work is the nuancing of balance within paragraphs - instead of referring awkwardly to ‘optimists’ and ‘pessimists’, the statements could be reframed to accurately reflect the writer’s view, be it a concession or a rebuttal. To deepen insight, the response could also provide for further evaluation of the provisions/measures put in place as to the degree that they are “sufficient” or not, though there is already some of this present in the essay. The essay is written in convincing language, with apt expressions and a good range of both vocabulary and sentence structure.</i>	
The recent international success of the film “Crazy Rich Asians” has portrayed my society - Singapore - as a land of wealth, luxury and excess. This status is built upon the tacit assumption that the basic needs of each Singaporean, and by extension child, has been sufficiently provided for as a precursor to the accumulation and flaunting of excess material wealth. However, the film adopts an extremely rose tinted lens that is largely unrepresentative of a deeply unhappy and unfulfilled society. While my society is considered relatively affluent and has sufficiently provided [for] the basic material needs of most children, it is regrettable that the higher levels of needs such as one’s emotional and physical well being have not been sufficiently provided for. Be it provision by the family or the State, it is an unfair assessment to assert that the needs of children in Singapore are sufficiently provided for.	A strong introduction that begins with an interesting and relevant hook The overall thesis statement is clear and sophisticated in its incorporation of balance

At first glance, Singapore's affluence and position as a developed country has allowed for most basic needs of most children to be sufficiently provided for. The economic prosperity of my society has allowed for most families to sufficiently provide for their children's needs. Most families are able to afford the basic necessities on Maslow's hierarchy of needs, such as being able to put food on the table, afford a house for shelter and access clean and potable water at the switch of the tap. This is supported [by] the success of the Singapore government, [where] Singapore is [among the top] of international charts of GDP per capita, with the highest home ownership rate of over 90% and an impressive year-on-year average of around 160 days free of petty crime such as shoplifting and theft. All these point to an environment in Singapore where the basic needs of food, water, shelter and safety have either been sufficiently provided for by the government or [where] the majority of families have the ability to provide for the needs of their children. This fortunate blessing is further extended to the near universal enrolment in a world-class education system, where primary school [education] is made compulsory and the rates for secondary and tertiary education hover above 97%. All of these are testament to the sufficient provision of basic needs for the vast majority of children in my society. Pessimists may point to the struggling and less affluent to argue that not every child is privileged to grow up in a family where the parents are able to sufficiently provide for their basic needs. While this may be true, the State acts as a last line of defence with organisations such as Mendaki, Sinda, CDAC and ComCare to provide for their basic necessities. However, it is important to concede that there are a slim minority of children who do slip through the cracks and do not have their basic needs sufficiently provided for. That being said, it would be fair to argue that the basic needs of food, water, shelter and safety are sufficiently met for the vast majority of children in Singapore.	This paragraph demonstrates good scope in covering a wide range of needs that are material in nature. It demonstrates a good understanding of the Singapore context, although it could go deeper to draw links between the provision and how the Singapore government has the ability to provide for such needs It is possible to reframe and reorganise the ideas here to incorporate them as part of the stand taken, rather than going back-and-forth in the rebuttal-argument format, which can sometimes be artificial
It would be easy, but fallacious, to extrapolate that every other need of a child would be sufficiently provided for seeing as how their basic needs have by and large been sufficiently met. However, it is the exact same characteristics of affluence and prosperity that give rise to the failure of provision for most children's emotional and physical well-being.	Odd paragraph that seems to present a point, yet serves as a transition; it should be merged with the next paragraph
In a cut-throat society, the need for emotional and mental well-being have largely been undermined by a culture so driven [by] success even if it comes at the expense of our happiness. As cliché as the timeless adage "money does not buy happiness" is, it unfortunately holds true in my society. My society has time and time again been referred to as a "[pressure] cooker". This stems from a suffocating culture of hyper competitiveness where parents often pressure their children to prioritise their emotional well-being. In Singapore, it is extremely common for parents to fill their children's timetables with extra-curricular activities such as piano and violin or academic enrichment such as tuition classes - as seen by the billion-dollar tuition industry in Singapore - all in hopes of their children achieving all-round excellence. This is further worsened by an education system that unfortunately encourages toxic competition between students trying to push to marginally lower their L1R5 or chase that additional few rank points. The stifling of individual passion and severe reduction in leisure time for most children in Singapore has since led to many children feeling inadequate for not meeting their own or their parents' expectations of them and stressed by the pressure to constantly perform at their peak. It is regrettable that this is evidenced by a recent international study revealing that Singapore is one of the unhappiest	A clear argument that is convincing and eloquently presented Good explanation of the different factors in the Singapore context that affect why these needs are not well-met, particularly in explaining the interaction between different reasons 'L1R5' and 'rank points' will be alienating concepts to the Cambridge examiners. The

countries in the world. This is supported by another study that showed that Singapore's suicide statistics are predominantly teenagers with suicide rates nearing the top of international charts, just behind countries like South Korea and Japan. While it is heartening to see the Ministry of Education promote a healthier school-life balance and provide schools with counselling services in an attempt to provide for the emotional and mental needs of children, it is simply not enough. These efforts pale in comparison to the deep-rooted system-wide culture of pressure and the stigma against seeking help for being seen as weak or inadequate. Because one suicide death is one death too many, it is clear that the emotional and mental needs of Singapore's children [are] far from sufficiently being provided for.	context needs to be better explained In citing surveys and studies, the source needs to be made clear to give the evidence credibility Very good explanation of different factors at work, but ideas could be developed further (e.g. Why is there such a stigma?)
Moreover, [though counter-intuitive], the sufficient provision for basic needs would lead to the insufficient provision of physical needs. Singapore is a society characterised by excess. It is common for parents to rather feed their children excess food than to let them go hungry. This is further supported by the Asian values of prosperity that see the provision of food as a status symbol of wealth. Thus, it is common to see many children leading more and more sedentary lifestyles. While the excess provision of basic necessities like food may seem like a good thing at first glance, it is detrimental to the long-term health of these children as they are more prone to conditions like cardiovascular diseases and diabetes later on in life. Children in Singapore are [among] the unhealthiest in the world, where one in three children are overweight or obese. Moreover, the neglect of one's health in pursuit of success has resulted in Singaporean children having one of the highest rates of myopia and sleep deprivation in the world. It is thus ironic that the provision of basic necessities may come at a compromise to the need of overall physical well-being of children. Optimists would point to the government's Health Promotion Board education campaigns and the Ministry of Education's active attempt to provide for and encourage a healthier lifestyle to meet the children's physical needs. However, these attempts are often met with indifference or even backlash, as seen when the government [made it compulsory for school meals to be accompanied by a fruit item in a bid to encourage healthy eating]. Thus, the needs for physical well-being [are] unfortunately not being sufficiently met.	An interesting and insightful argument that shows very good understanding of the Singapore context and how provision in one area could affect another The link between prosperity and sedentary lifestyles is not logically drawn Strong navigation of the keyword 'sufficiency', going beyond the simplistic claim that because the government has certain policies, these needs would always be sufficiently met to evaluate how they are insufficient
In conclusion, as [Singapore is] a developed country, it is easy to assume that the needs of each child are adequately provided for. While this may be true for the basic necessities, it is unfortunate that it stops there. My society is a deeply unhappy and unhealthy society where the needs of our mental and physical well-being are insufficiently provided for. After all, does economic prosperity and affluence mean much if my society is unable to truly enjoy it? <i>(Delaney Lim, 19-01)</i>	Competent use of a rhetorical question to provoke thought. Could go further to venture thoughts about whether Singapore would ever be able to provide for these needs well

4 'The needs of children are sufficiently provided for.' Is this a fair assessment of your society?

This competent and thoughtful response meaningfully explores how and whether the various needs of different kinds of children are sufficiently addressed in the Singapore context, covering a decent scope of the needs of children. It demonstrates good nuanced discussion that presents insights about how shifting trends would affect the adequacy of current measures, showing keen sensitivity to the fact that society is not stagnant but ever-evolving. However, its arguments could be better balanced and nuanced to achieve deeper insight. It is written in a clear argumentative tone, and makes good use of varied sentence structures which help achieve fluency.

Children are universally acknowledged to be one of the most vulnerable segments of societies, due to their inability to fend for themselves at their tender age and the fact that they are still developing various cognitive functions and are thus still fumbling to figure out the inner workings of the world. Throughout history, their importance as the future generation can be [seen] through the setting up of various non-profit organisations that actively seek to eradicate various issues such as child abuse and child marriages. In Singapore, the government has taken active steps to ensure that all children, regardless of background, are able to enjoy substantial welfare and protection [under] the law. Thus, this essay argues that the needs of children are sufficiently provided for in my society.

Shows a good understanding of the demographic group, but context-setting in the introduction could better unpack the needs of children to address the question.

Reasons for overall stand could be presented

To start off my argument, the educational needs of Singaporean children are adequately addressed. As the children of today will form the next generation of leaders and mould the world according to their visions, it is no surprise that educating children should be one of the most significant needs of children that cannot be neglected. In Singapore, children's education [is] heavily prioritised compared to other countries. [As] a country with limited natural resources, Singapore's comparative advantage to compete globally with other big nations would therefore largely fall on the aptitude of its population. For example, it is compulsory for all children to attend primary school and school fees are also heavily subsidised for Singaporean citizens. To ensure that children who hail from low-income families are also on a level playing field with their peers despite their families' reduced abilities to afford their education and [disincentivise] them [from dropping] out, the Financial Assistance Scheme also covers additional financial support for such children, such as free textbooks and reduced fees for school meals. Thus, the above examples demonstrate how the Singapore government has considered various potential hurdles that might prevent children from receiving proper education and has implemented various effective policies that aim to remove such barriers to entry for them, allowing all children in Singapore to attain some form of academic foundations.

Some relevant discussion about the bigger picture of the education landscape in Singapore, but could be clearer in framing the discussion about the needs of the future economy as giving powerful motivation to the State to meet children's educational needs

Discussion could also be more nuanced: beyond describing the different policies, does the problem of income inequality still have any effect on whether the educational needs of all children are cared for sufficiently?

In addition, children who are disabled are also able to obtain generous help and opportunities that make their more challenging lives slightly easier to cope with. The government and non-profit organisations for children with physical disabilities have often championed and pushed for lesser stigmatisation [of] such children and have often portrayed them in media alongside their able-bodied counterparts without demeaning them or tacitly implying that they are lesser beings than other children simply because of their disabilities. One notable example would be the various charity shows broadcasted on television that aim to raise funds for such underrepresented sectors of [society], such as the President's Star Charity, that always featured performances from children with disabilities. Not only are the children with disabilities able to perform, [the] often heart wrenching details of the daily arduous medical procedures that they are forced to endure in order to live to see another day [are] also shown to the public, elevating their performances not just as acts meant to provide temporary entertainment for viewers, but adds an additional emotional layer and gravity towards their plight, casting a spotlight on the importance of showing greater concern and empathy towards their needs and allowing the public to take actionable steps, usually through generous donations, to alleviate some of their financial burdens and demonstrate their support that needs of children with disabilities are equally valid, that they should not be treated poorly or dehumanised purely based on their disabilities, which was not something they could control when they were born into this world.	Quite interesting and insightful in explaining how such charity programmes could achieve deceptively more - simultaneously helping to meet physical needs by getting financial support through donations, and reducing stigma towards children with special needs Instead of focusing only on these charity programmes (which have limited significance and cannot be the main measures), what other needs might children with special needs have, and also what other measures are in place to help meet these needs?
However, skeptics might argue that while the academic needs of children are well accounted for, it is largely [] this huge fixation on report cards and grades that has caused [the system to overlook] the mental health of children. It is [greatly] ironic that because children's education has always been on the forefront of the minds of policymakers in Singapore, [this] has unintentionally resulted in greater pressure and anxiety in Singaporean children to perform well in their studies, exacerbated by the increasingly competitive educational landscape globally, with a greater portion of the world pursuing education more than ever before. I concede that much more can be done in terms of bringing the discussion of children's mental well-being to the table. However, the disheartening reality is that there is still some form of social stigma and taboo when it comes to addressing mental health issues in Singapore due to our Asian culture that has traditionally shunned [] such controversial topics. Despite the fact that the mental health needs of children still leaves much more to be desired in terms of providing sufficient care, I [am] still be optimistic that more will be done in [the] future to address the mental well-being of our children, especially because the government also seems to have realised the burdensome and taxing nature of our education system has reared its ugly head and has led to a rise in depression and suicide cases [among] Singaporean children and youths. There have been measures put in place to reform the streaming process in schools and [abolish] the T-score [computation] in the Primary School	Topic sentence needs to be clearer in explaining exactly what needs are not well met and why, and the paragraph would have followed the earlier one on education better Some insightful discussion about the Singapore context, but the discussion could be more nuanced and balanced - it is not very convincing to argue that absolutely nothing has been done to care for the socio-emotional needs of children

Leaving Examination to reduce comparison and competitiveness among students. [These] are all prominent structural changes to the education system in recent years to cater to the mental health of children. Therefore, [though] it will definitely take years to shift the paradigm[atic] view of Singaporeans from being overly focused on high-stake examinations to becoming more willing to engage in healthy discourse with [children] on their mental health, I believe it is still a possible future to aspire towards, especially since the government seems to have taken a genuine initiative of lessening the mental stress of children due to academics.	Good insight here, acknowledging that changes have been made and how this might affect the socio-emotional needs of children. But there is still a need to also acknowledge how there are measures purposefully put in place to directly address the issue
In conclusion, I believe that it is a fair assessment of Singapore to say that the needs of our children are well provided for. In comparison to other less-developed countries, Singaporean children are able to enjoy the benefits of schooling, which is still considered a privilege in some countries. Children who may also require special assistance in their daily lives are also not marginalised to a heavy extent. While more could be done in terms of addressing the mental health of children in our society, the policies enacted by the government recently [have] provided some hope that such needs will receive greater attention in the future. (Tan Yu Shuang, 19-U1)	Clear and effective conclusion that succinctly reiterates all the lines of argument

5 How far is the regulation of corporations desirable?

<i>The evaluation of desirability of such regulation is constantly negotiated throughout the essay. However, the response is somewhat lacking in balance and scope - more attention needs to be devoted towards addressing why the regulation of corporations might not be desirable, and the desirability of such regulation might actually go beyond just protecting the consumers, which was the crux of this essay. The explanation of the examples could also be more specific and explicit in addressing the different kinds of regulations that States can employ, instead of largely treating regulation as an abstract concept. Good signposting in the writing contributed to a coherent flow of ideas by connecting each paragraph within the frame of the entire argument.</i>	
As the world develops, the relationship between business corporations and the State has become increasingly complex. Fundamentally, a society cannot exist without corporations - businesses help drive the economy and [consequently] create the foundation of societal living. However, the importance of corporations is a double-edged sword. Corporations come into play at every juncture of our lives, and this means that they hold significant power over individual consumers, who passively purchase their products. The disparity in power thus necessitates some form of intervention from the State in the form of regulation to prevent business corporations from abusing their power and information. This is so that the rights of consumers are protected. Ultimately, the extent of the regulation of corporations must be carefully handled. Extreme regulation is unhealthy for competition, yet a lack of regulation allows corporations to abuse their power. Thus, the regulation of corporations is most desirable when this control is moderated, to even the power disparity between corporations and consumers.	A clear introduction that explains the role of corporations in society and subsequently their power, and how that might necessitate some form of regulation, providing a good backdrop of the complex interactions between stakeholders for this response Thesis statement is very clear and quite nuanced

Some may feel that the regulation of corporations is undesirable because the State may overstep their boundaries and stifle competition, creating an unfair playing field for businesses. [This is the most] prominent in [the trade war between the United States and China], [where] the US has accused China of mixing politics with the economy, claiming that the visible hand of the government has given Chinese businesses an unfair advantage over that of the US. Additionally, through the World Trade Organisation (WTO), the US has also accused China of stealing technology by requiring that foreign companies trade their technology for entry into the Chinese market. Some may thus feel that Chinese regulation - in the form of barriers to entry to their market, is discriminatory and results in unfair competition. Indeed, tighter forms of regulation, like in the case of China, may not be entirely desirable. The wariness of the US is not unfounded, and does stem from valid concerns of being disadvantaged from the get-go. Yet, critics of this argument have retaliated with the right of the Chinese government to create barriers to entry, for the [benefit] of its own economy. Nonetheless, it remains that such regulation may not be desirable if one considers that the economy should be a fair playing ground for all corporations. They argue that regulation prevents competition and violates free market forces.	The paragraph presents a relevant argument but ideas need to be better explained to address the question directly instead of diving into the examples - why is stifling competition undesirable? A relevant example is provided, but it could be better explained - how is this practice discriminatory, and again, why might such regulation be undesirable? What are the benefits of the free market? The perspectives of various stakeholders could be considered
However, this is not to say that all forms of regulation are undesirable. The regulation of corporations is still desirable insofar as it prevents corporations from abusing their power over consumers. Corporations hold a large amount of consumer information, and laws may be required to ensure they do not misuse consumer data. In the Cambridge Analytica scandal, Facebook sold consumer data to multiple businesses in return for profit. Most consumers were unaware that their data had been used in such a manner and their privacy [was] violated. As a result, the government stepped in to enforce [more stringent] laws that required businesses to explicitly inform consumers of the way in which their data would be used, and Facebook was scrutinised for their actions. In a case like this, governmental regulation of businesses may be desirable to balance the power dynamics between consumers and businesses, so consumers are not kept in the dark about the way businesses are run. The regulation of corporations may then be desirable to prevent the corporations from misusing consumer information and profiting from consumers without their knowledge or explicit consent. Thus, to safeguard the privacy of consumers and [to] prevent corporations from exploiting consumers, regulation is desirable.	This presents a valid argument, but is not necessarily a direct rebuttal to the previous argument because it does not address the issue of barriers to entry The example is relevant and appropriate, but it needs to be better explained - what are the potential consequences that could emerge which make such regulation desirable?
Furthermore, in some cases, regulation may not only be desirable, but necessary. In the realm of food safety and medicine, government regulation in the form of quality checks and industry requirements are essential in ensuring consumer safety. In some sectors, government controls are desirable and necessary as a basic standard of quality so harmful products that threaten the health of consumers are not sold. In China's infamous baby powder incident, baby powder made from harmful substances like plastic was sold in the market, causing babies to unknowingly be poisoned. In another instance, humidifiers [were widely sold] in South Korea, yet it was later uncovered that the product was unable to truly convert tap water into mist as marketed, and the continued usage of [the] product would lead to respiratory problems. The result was a generation of children developing health complications - ones that would last a lifetime. In both cases, such tragedies could have been avoided with more stringent testing before these products were allowed to be marketed.	Although the argument is valid, note that desirability and necessity are different value judgments, and care must be taken to address desirability by drawing the link between the two instead of only stopping at necessity Relevant examples,

Governmental regulation would have been very much desirable and in fact, critical in protecting consumers and ensuring public safety. Regulation serves the purpose of protecting consumers, and quality controls have a vital role in providing safe products for consumption. Therefore, it would be both desirable and necessary for there to be regulation for the benefits of public health.	but could be better explained - what exactly would such regulation entail, and how might this ensure product safety?
In conclusion, it is imperative to understand that regulation itself is neutral, and but a means to an end. Extreme regulation can stifle competition and disrupt these market laws, harming the economy. On the flipside, regulation may also bring about benefits for consumers, and help level the unequal scale of power between consumers and corporations. At its core, regulation must be carefully handled, and is most desirable when it protects the rights of consumers, without interfering with market forces. (Glenda Ho, 19-A1)	A nuanced conclusion that ties together the arguments in each body paragraph and addresses the validity of regulation in terms of its desirability

5 How far is the regulation of corporations desirable?

<i>The response shows consistent engagement with the question requirements, and the examples demonstrate the arguments put forth in a clear manner, exhibiting good content knowledge. Furthermore, the relationships between the different stakeholders in the picture are well developed, providing a means through which to evaluate desirability. However, there seems to be an overbearing emphasis on moral behaviour rather than opening up to different types of economic behaviour that would also necessitate such State regulation, thus limiting the scope of the response. It is written in a clear and fluent manner, and the introduction and conclusion in particular are very well-handled. While signposting is generally clear, it could be used to greater effect, especially in longer sentences, to achieve greater clarity in writing.</i>	
In the context of an increasingly globalised world experiencing a new wave of entrepreneurship today, corporations large and small have been expanding at an ever increasing rate, diversifying into various sectors that once used to be public-owned, such as space exploration and healthcare. However, these profit-driven corporations are often faced with dilemmas forcing them to balance between profits and social welfare of their employees and consumers, with the former usually being [prioritised] far too often. Hence, this essay seeks to prove that regulation of these corporations [is] highly desirable, even necessary, in areas where profits and social welfare interests intersect and conflict.	Context-setting is clear in framing the rise of corporations and how regulation may help corporations negotiate between profit and social welfare Thesis statement is clear
Regulations are the most desirable in sectors of the economy that focus on providing public goods, goods that are excludable by their material nature, but should not be excluded by any moral standards, such as water and healthcare. If these goods are only provided to the highest bidder or payer, social welfare is not maximised as the poorest of our societies will be left behind and denied these essential services. However, at the same time, [corporations as] providers of these services are economically incentivised to raise the selling price of their products as much as possible, to [maximise their profits]. Hence, it falls upon the government to regulate these corporations, to strike a balance between social welfare and the profitability of public goods provision. One example of these sectors is water, a basic human right as outlined by the UN Declaration of Human Rights. In many countries especially in the	Clear definition of public goods provided A valid argument that is supported by relevant examples, but the first example needs to be rethought. Cancelling a contract is more of

developing world, governments have delegated the role of providing access to clean and safe drinking water to private corporations, often from other countries. These private corporations stand at the intersection between social welfare and profit, as water infrastructure is extremely costly and technically challenging to maintain, [and they need to] ensure profitability while keeping water provided safe. These companies hence need to be regulated heavily, from ensuring affordable pricing to preventing selective coverage of richer communities. In India, the government enlisted the help of a French water company to provide greater access to water [in] its urban centers. However, it was found that not only was water priced unrealistically, but that water infrastructure coverage was only targeted at richer communities that were able to pay for the water, effectively shutting out the poor. This widens social inequality as the rich are able to gain access to water, while the poor rely on unclean and contaminated sources, plaguing them with illnesses such as cholera and E.coli infections. Eventually, supply targets were not met by the French company and its contract was terminated, allowing regulations to protect the social interests of people. In addition, those issues of provision of public goods [are] not exclusive to less developed countries, as seen in [Michigan, US], where the government allowed its providers to save 133 dollars a day by removing corrosion inhibitors, leading to poisoning and exposure of the local communities to lead and other heavy metals [that took] the lives of two children. In this case, the lack of regulation led to unethical cost-saving practices, showing that regulations not only account for the money at stake, which corporations are very good at [protecting], but also the lives [affected by the provision of these public goods].	commercial practice rather than a form of regulation The explanation of the example needs to be clearer in explaining what kind of regulations are employed and why they are desirable
The next set of corporations where regulations are highly desirable are also [in] the private sectors where the profit incentive often leads to the consumption of public resources, be it the environment or human labour, [so as to] ensure that corporations compensate these countries and social groups adequately. While they are different from the aforementioned corporations that provide public goods in that their products do not necessarily pose public health and social hazards, they require some degree of regulation to ensure sustainable economic development, to prevent these corporations from profiting off resources that should be left for our children. One example is the coal mines in the US, with these corporations involved in the production of [fossil fuel]. These [companies] are profit-driven to minimise miner pensions, maximise production and minimise cost to remain competitive in the cut-throat extractive industry. Regulations such as environmental standards and safety standards have been put in place, such as quotas on output of coal and taxes to limit the country's carbon footprint and slow [down] global warming. [In addition], strict mine construction standards [ensure] miners are protected from immediate hazards such as mine collapses to long-term hazards such as [respiratory problems]. In addition, [regulation of these corporations is also desirable to ensure] fair and equal remuneration, such as providing pensions and compensation to miners when they come of age or when they are injured. Dissenters to my argument may posit that these [different] regulations that need to apply to almost all corporations will lead to the stifling of the economy and discourage investors of corporations. However, they should consider carefully [whether] this economic growth of these new jobs created by foreign corporations are truly in the interests of a country, or [whether] these corporations [are polluting] and [threatening] the well-being of [] people. Admittedly, economic benefits may need to be sacrificed to ensure that a country develops	Topic sentence is very clear and easy to follow Good use of a relevant example which is well-explained in a way that supports the topic sentence (e.g. environmental costs and labour costs that make such regulation desirable) Desirability is well-negotiated in terms of whether there is a 'right' way for the economy to grow and if regulation allows for that to take place

its economy in the right way, that is, not build [its] economy on people's lives, but rather for people's lives.	
Finally, even if a corporation does not directly provide public goods or consume public resources, which most corporations do, they still need to be economically regulated as economically active players in a deeply capitalised society. "Money makes the world go round" is an iconic quote when referring to the importance of money in our society. It holds significant power directly, in the form of market controls, to indirectly, in the form of political action campaigns and lobbying money. Since this money is power, the corporations that control this power must be held accountable and regulated to enforce fair taxation policies in the interest of [the] nation. In the 2011 Panama Papers leak, many corporations were shown to have used shell companies as offshore accounts to evade corporate taxes. It was later found that a lack of regulation in the technological and financial sectors were to blame, implicating huge financial institutions such as JP Morgan Chase. Monopolies of [these] firms are also often highly detrimental products of the capitalist system, with seemingly free markets often functioning in actuality as captive markets with only two or three competitors colluding to fix prices. TransDigm, a US military contractor, was found to have charged the US military a 4473% profit margin on a \$34 part. This was only made possible, as noted by Congresswoman Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, through price fixing between the supposedly competing military contractors, resulting in a waste of public money. Evidently, price controls and tax regulations need to be placed on companies to ensure that these large corporations, a product of the capitalist system, return to the government a small portion of their profits to fund social welfare schemes that aid those who have been hurt by the very same capitalist system.	Good use of apt and relevant examples to support the argument about public accountability This part needs to be explained more simply; this is not an Economics essay, and you should write it for a general reader Why is this desirable? Ideas could be developed further to deepen insight
It can be seen that regulation of corporations [is] highly desirable whether or not they have a direct social responsibility to a country. Regulations are most desirable when profit interests clash with [the] people's welfare, and are still highly desirable due to the corporate entity being an economic entity. It is the moral obligation to able, well-endowed and financed companies to give back to the poor on humanitarian grounds to allow them to escape the poverty cycle. Some may argue that these regulations make it hard and expensive for new enterprises, which is why while regulations are desirable, they need to be paired with concessions for small and medium enterprises to foster a healthy entrepreneurship environment. These companies will also ultimately benefit from government [provisions] such as tax breaks and economic bailouts funded by taxpayers' money, hence in the larger picture regulations are part of the implicit social contract where governments restrict corporations in exchange for helping to protect their business environment.	This paragraph is confusing because it does not present a clear argument - almost like a conclusion Why do corporations have such a moral obligation? SMEs are not strictly corporations The implicit social contract, albeit ambitious, is not very clear or convincing
Overall, regulations are highly necessary in today's interconnected economy where private interests and public interests intersect. While no regulations are perfect, they are much like the bones of an economy, in some cases needed as hard inflexible protections for basic human rights, but in others needed as softer, flexible approaches that are economically sensitive to the needs of the corporation. However, one thing for certain is that they cannot be completely removed, and thus by extension are desirable.	An interesting analogy, although 'bones of an economy' is awkward since the argument goes on to be about flexibility Conclusion is clear in repeating the negotiation of

(Lucas Loh, 19-A4)

desirability
attempted
throughout the essay

5 How far is the regulation of corporations desirable?

This essay demonstrates an awareness of the heavy influence of corporations on authorities and society in general, though it could have taken this a step further by using it to directly support the significance of this particular discussion. Despite a rather shaky start with an overreliance on economic concepts and jargon, the essay covers a good breadth of ideas through looking at some forms of corporations in different contexts and exploring impacts in different aspects. Desirability is evaluated with a level of detail, with varied, specific and quite numerous illustrations, which have the effect of demonstrating that the arguments are grounded in concrete, real-world evidence. This essay could be further improved by using more evaluative strategies, and achieving greater consistency and personal voice in the argumentation.

Corporations are big businesses that tend to [have high profit margins] and are a symbol of prosperity in many nations. However, these corporations face many different economic [structures] in different countries, ranging from socialist ones to capitalist ones. The degree of regulation in these different economies differs vastly from one another, however, what is consistent among such economies is that there is still some form of regulation and there is no free reign of corporations. Therefore, regulation of corporations [is] largely desirable.

Shows an awareness of how differences in context affect the outcome, but more clarity can be achieved by introducing the point of contention at the outset - why is the desirability of such regulations in question?

The regulation of corporations is essential due to their high supernatural profits which can make them inefficient. Inefficiencies arise when firms do not have the incentive to continuously improve the goods and services or to constantly innovate to develop lower costs of production. Given their huge market share and high revenues, it is unlikely that corporations are incentivised to become more efficient since their current practices seem sufficient enough for them to sustain profits. In Economics, this [means] that a firm is not producing at its lowest possible cost. [Therefore,] the firm is allocatively inefficient. In terms of energy usage, Korean technology giant[,] Samsung[,] is said to only have 1% of its energy resources come from renewable sources, in stark contrast to rival firm[,] Apple[,] where 96% of their energy sources are renewable ones. Thus, if firms like Samsung do not take the initiative to source for renewable energy resources, this will result in inefficiency in energy usage. Given the sheer size of corporations, the detrimental impacts they have on the environment [are] further amplified. Thus[,] regulation is necessary to prevent such huge firms from adapting inefficient and unsustainable practices that ultimately hurt the country's well-being in the long run. However[,] it is crucial to note the type of economy that Samsung operates in Korea, where their economy is dominated by huge conglomerates, known as chaebols, which control more than half of the economy. [Hence,] government regulation may still be ineffective given the sheer control they have over the economy. Thus, (fuel company that adopts unsustainable and unregulated oil rigging in Ogoniland, [Nigeria], resulting in water sources being heavily polluted and hydrocarbon levels in the drinking water have reached highly toxic levels). Thus[,] we see that regulation is paramount as inefficient practices could exploit and harm consumers or third parties not

This paragraph draws on economic knowledge, but gets carried away with the concept of 'inefficiency', rather than developing why regulation is desirable, which in this paragraph is largely tied to environmental effects of unchecked production. The writer must clarify the relationship between inefficiency and unethical/ irresponsible methods of production, or even consider omitting the concept of inefficiency entirely to focus on how regulation is desirable to reduce such harmful production methods, as achieving allocative efficiency is not assumed to be a goal in itself in GP.

even involved in the production processes of these firms. [Thus,] regulation of corporations is desirable.	
In addition, the regulation of corporations is desirable in order to achieve equity in a country, or even [on a] worldwide [scale]. Equity refers to a state where everyone in an economy is able to consume goods and services, especially essential goods, at affordable prices or costs. Without regulation, the cost of essential goods would skyrocket due to the high degree of necessity of these items, which would prompt profit-oriented firms to raise prices in order to reap even greater revenues. Healthcare company[,] Gilead Science[,] once held monopoly power over the [cure for Hepatitis C] and charged \$54,000 per dose of the treatment. This practice is highly inequitable as it exploits consumers who are in dire need [of] healthcare and medication. Regulation on the part of the government [and] international bodies like the World Health Organisation (WHO) is crucial to ensure that all consumers have equal access to medication and affordable healthcare and to prevent the [heartless] exploitation of these consumers. Equity could also come in the form of [equity across] race[s]. Equitable corporations should strive to ensure that their products are equally accessible to everyone, regardless of race. In the past, the sale of cigarettes in the US was limited to white people and was not sold to the blacks. This highly controversial practice was eventually abolished with regulations that champion[ed] racial equality and denounced discrimination. [Thus,] equal access to all was finally achieved. Therefore[,] the regulation of corporations is desirable as it has been proven to bring about greater equity in society.	This topic sentence addresses the question more directly This is not a particularly good example because the desirability of cigarettes is questionable
However, over-regulation of corporations could prove to be counterproductive to the growth of economies. Over-regulation could take the form of excessive protectionism and high tariffs on imports, which is commonly observed in socialist economies. These stifle economic growth and discourage expansion of firms as they greatly lack the financial capital and technological [know-how] which could have been gained through foreign exchanges and investments. In the 1960s where many Southeast Asian [countries] [had just] gained independence, countries like Burma and Vietnam adapted socialist economies in a bid to protect themselves from foreign influence and exploitation they had [experienced] from their colonial masters. In Burma, under a military government, their [heavy-handed] rule and over-regulation of corporations in the form of nationalising and monopolising all essential services came at a huge economic cost. Military men were not savvy businessmen afterall[.] The once flourishing economy and the largest exporter of rice in the world soon experienced food shortages and was even awarded the 'Least Developed Country' status by the United Nations. In Vietnam, the government engaged in collectivisation and ownership of all firms and corporations. The ideology-driven Communist government actively discriminated [against] the ethnic Chinese population of the Hoa which controlled more than 60% of the economy in the 1970s. Government regulation and policies pushed the Hoa out of Vietnam in a bid to protect the indigenous share of the economy, but ended up [creating] a highly inefficient and weak economy as the shrewd Chinese businessmen [had] been eradicated from the country. Thus[,] the over-regulation of corporations is highly undesirable as it has proven to bring about inefficient and weak economies as governments tend to lack the savviness and skill of businessmen. In addition to the examples raised, these economies eventually opened up in the late 1980s due to the [openness] policy being	This consideration of the effect of regulation in different contexts is a very effective way to achieve balance The problems with over-regulation are addressed with several detailed examples

adopted (Doi Moi) that instead, encouraged the privatisation of firms and conglomerates, that was a strategic move which rejuvenated the economies. This goes further to prove that too much regulation is detrimental to firms and some freedom and autonomy should be awarded to them to trust that they will make the best decisions.	Links to question requirements are clear and direct
Yet having said that, regulation of corporations is crucial in preventing the spread of false data and advertising. Corporations have massive influence, and they can extend their reach into what we deem to be the most trustworthy sources of information - the research and development industry. Many turn to science when in doubt as it is commonly understood that science goes through systemic tests and investigation, and should produce trustworthy results to answer our queries. However, that trust is being eroded as these industries have shifted their goals from the pursuit of truth and knowledge, to the pursuit of profit. Corporations manipulate the selfish profit-oriented nature of these industries and pour in funding to support themselves. In the field of environmental sustainability, ExxonMobil has funded scientists to sustain their research to deny global warming. In the field of health, the Coca Cola company funds research to prove that obesity is caused by one's level of physical activity as opposed to what one ingests. Cigarette company Phillip Moms funds research into proving that lung cancer is not a result of smoking [but rather] the burning of the cigarette (hence the shift in producing e-cigarettes that remove the need to light a spark). Thus, big conglomerates actively go against and attempt to challenge scientific norms in order to sustain the demand for their products in an increasingly health-conscious and environment-conscious world. These companies use money to seduce researchers and sources of trustworthy information, in turn tricking the public that relies so heavily on these sources of information to make informed decisions. Hence, regulation to prevent the manipulation of facts and the dissemination of uncredible sources of research is highly desirable as this involves the distortion of the truth, clouded by [the] revenue-hungry objective of researchers and corporations alike.	Effective signposting Strong argument for the regulation of corporations, backed up with relevant examples
In conclusion, the regulation of corporations is highly desirable given the profit-maximising nature of these firms, and their immense financial capabilities to exploit or restrict fair and high-quality goods and services. However, the over-regulation practiced by socialist economies proves to be detrimental to both consumers and producers in the long-run, thus regulating bodies such as governments or international organisations should strike a balance between exerting too much control and regulating firms sufficiently to prevent them from engaging in exploitative behaviours. (Chong Tze Wyne, 19-E3)	A better conclusion could add a touch of personal voice, instead of simply stopping at summarising the points mentioned

6 Given the possibilities offered by modern technology, are schools still relevant?

This response is distinct from the following responses in its relatively extensive scope: it looks at a range of contexts of both countries and aspects of school, and examines the effect of some less commonly considered possibilities of modern technology. These demonstrate a thoughtfulness about the complex ways in which technology affects schools, though the scope of the essay could be widened even further by focusing on the possibilities, which are raised in the first body paragraph, but take a backseat in the others. The logic of the essay

<i>is clear, with a line of argument that is very easy to follow. This is partially contributed by a decent use of language, though it is not completely mastered, showing a mix of simple and sophisticated language and some awkward use of the language of argumentation.</i>	
In the world today, modern technology has advanced rapidly to offer many possibilities in terms of accessibility of information, the developments in artificial intelligence as well as greater connectivity. Thus, the perennial debate beckons[:] are schools still relevant? This debate questions the necessity of schools and whether they are well caught up to the world today. Admittedly, schools may be lacking in some ways to modern technology. However, it is undeniable that schools are still relevant as they provide structure to learning. This idea is backed up [by] the fact that schools are constantly updating and improving their systems, [how they also] provide a human touch to learning and [how they] are absolutely necessary due to the nature of learning []. Hence, despite the possibilities offered by modern technology, schools are still relevant.	Introduction is very clear and helped to structure what the reader can expect from the essay. It unpacks the point of contention of the question well, laying out a good scope of the possibilities offered by tech, as well as how schools have responded to stay relevant to arrive at a clear and properly reasoned thesis statement
Firstly, to preface the context of the argument, we must understand the context of today's world. It is said that we are currently undergoing the Fourth Industrial Revolution. Digitalisation has become part of our daily lives[,] from the Internet becoming more accessible to gadgets quite literally always being at our fingertips. Understandably, modern technology has given rise to many possibilities from increasing accessibility to information to the creation of Artificial Intelligence. This is evident from the hundreds of search engines made available such as Google, Yahoo, Firefox and Ecosia. Long gone are the days where students have to reserve books from libraries and wait for the arrival of newspapers. With information at our fingertips it is clear for all to see that resources are widely available for learning and that learning of skills and knowledge can happen outside of schools. Additionally, with the creation of artificial intelligence, many question the need for teachers, arguing that such sophisticated robots can do the job instead. Indeed, artificial intelligence technology has improved rapidly and even has its own artificial neural network to boast. A [mathematics] bot [has] recently been developed by developers at Google and has proven to be able to solve math questions at elementary levels. Another A.I. robot[,] AlphaGO[,] has also proved its worth, beating a renowned GO (a chess game) champion. Admittedly the progress of artificial intelligence may be extremely advanced[;] however[,] it still does not compare to a teacher[.] [T]he Google [mathematics] bot[,] when tasked with a high school math paper had failed terribly, highlighting that there is still a long way to go before A.I. can even compare to teachers who have accumulated years of knowledge and possess comprehension skills far more sophisticated than any machines, thus highlighting the need for schools.	This effectively frames the context of modern tech and the possibilities it might hold This raises certain advantages technology has over education in schools, clarifying the threat the pose to the relevance of schools Interesting point about how A.I. poses a challenge to the relevance of teachers Could consider further if the role of a teacher is simply about disseminating knowledge (or solving mathematical questions)

Thus comes the second argument[:] schools are still highly relevant as they also undergo constant growth and change. Schools have come a long way from chalkboards and paper textbooks. Along with the increasing digitalisation and improvements of modern technology, schools have also been revamped and have made progress and changes to [their] systems in accordance with changes in the world. Today, many schools are decked out with gadgets such as projectors, computers and even online systems. This goes to show that the possibilities offered by modern technology simply enhance schools[,] making [them] more relevant rather than replacing [them]. When the Covid-19 pandemic hit the world a few months [ago], schools all around the world took to online platforms such as Zoom, Skype as well as school managed platforms to ensure that their learning would not be hindered by the unfortunate circumstances. This proved to be extremely effective as lessons could happen as usual with real-time interactions and resources could be easily shared. Additionally, modern technology has also enhanced learning in schools as schools have mirrored their curriculums to match the situation today. Hence, many schools today have some form of lesson aimed at equipping their students with the relevant skills required to tackle modern technology. These lessons include coding, basic skills [of using] Microsoft [programs] as well as the math[ematics] and algorithms behind artificial intelligence. This goes to show that schools are definitely still largely relevant as the nature of such an institution is to adapt and cater to the needs and changes of the progressing world.	Rather awkward expression Good awareness that schools are not static and are able to adapt to changing circumstances, thereby altering the relationship set out between tech and schools in the question to one in which modern tech can complement schools A well constructed paragraph that effectively recognises that schools can adapt to not only survive but thrive
Thirdly, the possibilities of modern technology cannot replace the role of schools in teaching civics and morals as well as imparting the joy of learning. Whilst modern technology has provided many opportunities and resources, none of these advancements come close to replacing the human touch necessary in imparting civics and morals as well as the joy of learning. In many schools such as [those in] Singapore, there are mandatory lessons which strive to teach civics and morals. From a young age students are taught to discern right from wrong and to develop traits like empathy, responsibility and many more. This is often done through teachers actively engaging these students and by being [good role models]. This is especially important as the social learning model reflects the idea that people learn from observing others and through the results of one's actions. This was tested out by Bandura (Bobo doll test) a [well] known psychologist whose experiments reflected that children exposed to adults acting aggressively to a Bobo doll are significantly more likely to do so themselves. This highlights the importance of schools and their curricula and teachers in imparting good civics and morals so that children and youths grow up in an environment that nurtures them to be capable and morally upright people of society. Additionally, teachers and curriculum crafted by schools impart the joy of learning. Through engaging and well-crafted lessons, students are exposed to different schools of thought, different subjects and can thus develop an interest for learning and improving one's self. By exposing students to an engaging and rewarding education system, [schools ensure that] students can truly understand the joy of learning and consequently actively seek out knowledge. Although some may argue that resources in the form of articles and videos may have similar intentions of imparting the joy of learning as well as character education, they are not comparable to the learning that [students] can receive in a school's context. This is because [] school makes it mandatory for students to undergo such lessons and articles and videos online cannot compare to the learning imparted from face-to-face interactions available in schools. Hence,	There could be more elaboration of what exactly this 'human touch' that tech cannot replace is, and how it is necessary in these areas of education, instead of this vague explanation While this is quite comprehensive, there needs to be a more concise tackling of the condition of modern technology - how is it that technology is unable to replicate such teaching? This evaluation of the value of videos compared to the value of teaching in schools could be clearer: it currently suggests that the videos are not able to evoke joy, or that the joy comes from being mandatorily

it is evident that schools are still absolutely necessary and hence relevant.	educated
Additionally, despite the possibilities offered by modern technology, many parts of the world are still unable to have access to it and hence schools are relevant and necessary. Despite the growth in advancements in modern technology, it has yet to be made widely available. This is especially so for third world nations like Cambodia, Yemen, Africa and many more. Many of these countries are not wealthy and as technologically advanced as their counterparts around the world, hence even the simplest and most basic technology like a computer or a [tablet] may be hard to come by. In countries heavily reliant on agriculture like Cambodia, such resources are simply not available, thus highlighting the need and relevance of schools today. Without schools, Cambodians will have no access to knowledge and skills other than those that can be taught by [their] parents. The structure and curriculum in schools ensure that these children have access to knowledge and skills that will improve their lives and enable them to find jobs in this ever-changing world. Although it may be true that modern technology may offer many possibilities, it is still a luxury many cannot afford[.] [H]ow then will these groups of people gain access to information and knowledge if not for schools? The assumption that the possibilities of modern technology can impact everyone is not reflective of the world we live in today where inequity and large disparities still persist between and even within countries. Hence, schools are still relevant.	Clear topic sentence Africa is a continent, not a country What does a reliance on agriculture have to do with the level of technological advancement or access to it? Good recognition of the fundamental role of schools in providing access to basic knowledge and skills, especially in far-flung or underprivileged communities which still exist today. It could be further considered how the modern context may even intensify the need for schooling in such places.
In conclusion, the possibilities offered by modern technology do indeed enhance schools and [have] the potential to replace certain aspects of schools[;] however, schools are still largely relevant as [they] provide structure to learning and allow education to be accessible to all. After all, without schools, the possibilities of modern technology may not even be available to us today would it! (Pang Xin Hua, 19-E2)	The conclusion seems rushed, having not rehashed the key arguments made Ends on a rather informal tone

6 Given the possibilities offered by modern technology, are schools still relevant?

These 2 paragraphs demonstrate clear engagement with the possibilities of modern technology, and how that affects the relevance of schools. Both provide some detailed evaluation of the effects of modern technology, utilising this to consider how schools stand up in comparison. However, the examples used could be developed in a more in-depth manner to achieve greater clarity and insight.

When it comes to the possibilities and opportunities provided by modern technology and schools, an obvious argument critics would push for is that schools will and have become increasingly obsolete as the main tool for education. This is attributed to the fact that schools seem to mainly serve as a physical [institution] for [imparting] knowledge, although much of it can be done at one's own free time and discretion with the help of modern technology. With the advent of the Internet since the 1960s, it has been made much easier for one to access information online, which may include more knowledge than what is presented to students in school. Furthermore, many schools operate under the "Banking model of education", a term coined by Brazilian educator Paule Freire, which describe[s] the situation where students receive information passively while teachers "deposit" the knowledge [in] students in a transactional manner. Hence, as compared to schools, modern technology [seems] to provide infinite opportunities and avenues to learn beyond the school's syllabus. This includes the plethora of resources online such as Klan Academy or Coursera, which provides online university courses. Thus, modern technology [does to some extent] eradicate the relevance of schools.	Interesting argument that negotiates the pedagogy of schools in depositing knowledge instead of providing new forms of education, which modern technology can also do. However, the comparison between the two modes of learning could be developed at greater depth, to fully flesh out the point that the self-directed learning opportunities afforded by modern tech are better
[...]	
Even for those who are able to access technology, schools have in fact become more relevant in this digitised era as [they serve] as [a check] for the information and knowledge that students have [learnt]. While modern technology does provide avenues for self-directed learning and acquiring of knowledge, technology may also pose a danger as not all resources and information are accurate and reliable. This issue is exacerbated by the rise of fake news and misinformation on the Internet where unverified news and "facts" spread through platforms like wildfire. As such, schools which provide information that are mostly reliable can serve as a guide for students to verify and solidify their knowledge. For example, recent debates regarding the possible health detriments of vaccinations may pique a Biology student's interest and the information presented in the media could be discussed with educators in schools and act as a cross-reference [to ascertain the accuracy of the information]. Hence, schools still retain their relevance in guiding one's learning. Additionally, modern technology and schools can co-exist and complement each other to maximise one's learning and growth. (Teo Jia Yi, 19-E3)	Relevant argument that questions the validity of the very possibilities offered by modern technology itself. However, the example is given is anecdotal, and the argument would be more convincing if supported by a more substantial example

6 Given the possibilities offered by modern technology, are schools still relevant?

This is a well-written and thoughtful response that shows a good understanding of the different aims of the education system, and the extent to which modern technology has replaced or will go on to replace these functions, with a clear attempt to support arguments with relevant examples. However, most of its ideas could be phrased more clearly to address the point of contention more consistently, and be developed to their logical conclusions to deepen insight, and further possibilities offered by technology can be considered for a wider scope. The use of language is very competent, with good vocabulary and complex sentence structures seen throughout the essay. The organisation of ideas is also clear, effective, and well signposted, with a strong and confident argumentative tone conveyed throughout.

With the advent of modern technology, educators, students and their parents alike have witnessed how online learning platforms such as Coursera and SkillsShare have revolutionised the ways in which knowledge is imparted [to] students. To the more progressive, the possibilities offered by modern technology have meant that schools no longer seem relevant to them. Why attend school when one can take charge of their own studies right? While such a mindset of independent learning is indeed commendable, the more traditional would argue that although technology has made troves of knowledge easily accessible at one's fingertips, schools are still relevant because the role of schools extends beyond merely the [impartation] of subject-specific knowledge. Schools provide students with a conducive learning environment, with dedicated teachers to mentor them and guide them to develop critical thinking skills and interpersonal skills as well as build character by encouraging traits such as grit, empathy, resilience and discipline. Hence I believe that although the possibilities offered by modern technology do present an enticing alternative to schools, schools are still relevant today.	Context-setting could go into greater detail - beyond just name-dropping these different examples, the writer could go further to explain how they have revolutionised education Overly casual Introduction shows a good understanding of the relevant issues, with a clear overall thesis statement
Admittedly, the more progressive parents of today may perceive schools to be no longer relevant as they believe modern technology can offer a more engaging form of learning that is tailored to the needs of their children. Those who [hold] this view may argue that schools have to cater to the learning preferences of the majority, which may compromise on the quality of learning that students may receive, especially so for students with special needs such as having difficulty hearing. In this instance, online learning through courses that offer subtitles in the quiet of one's home, rather than in the noisy environment of a classroom, may be more conducive to the student's learning. In addition, parents may argue that given the possibilities offered by modern technology, the rote learning that schools traditionally employ to prepare students for their future careers [is outdated], especially in creative industries such as the music industry. This is the rationale behind the decision of many parents in the United States to homeschool their children instead. Indeed, the internationally acclaimed pop singer Billie Eilish and her brother, renowned musical producer Finneas O'Connell believe that their success in the music industry at such a young age is owed to their parents homeschooling them. This is because such unconventional methods [do not] compromise on their learning, yet free up their time to develop their musical talents, especially since they could operate specialised software for mixing music and recording [music] in their own time. Evidently, to the more progressive, schools may no longer be relevant because they can pursue paths of using self-development tailored to their personal preferences using the possibilities offered by modern technology.	The idea about viewing videos with subtitles is quite trivial and not particularly convincing (this can be done within the classroom too) An interesting and relevant example, but somewhat trivial as this is an exceptional circumstance. Examples should be more broad and cover what is experienced by large segments of society, rather than just unique individuals. Also homeschooling need not always involve technology, so the benefits of each should be more clearly delineated
However, it must be acknowledged that the ability to harness the possibilities offered by modern technology is predicated on the financial background of one's family. For many less privileged students who hail from less well-off families, schools are still relevant despite the technological advancements today. This is because many less privileged students lack Internet access at home, or perhaps may not even own a laptop of their own. Furthermore, they may live in a small, crowded home that may not provide a conducive environment to study in. For these students, the possibilities offered by modern technology are not a viable alternative to schools. This is why the recent COVID-19 pandemic that has swept across the world has shown to disproportionately disadvantage these students when numerous governments worldwide implemented school closures. International news coverage shocked	A relevant argument, but it could draw clearer links to how this is addressing the role of the education system in imparting knowledge. This paragraph seems to be more focused on describing different examples The link drawn to the COVID-19

the world with tales of woe, such as when an Indian girl who lived in a rural village in India committed suicide the day before schools were set to reopen because she had not been able to access the televised school lessons due to the lack of such technology in her village. Consequently, she was afraid she would be unable to catch up to the rest of her peers. Similarly, the New York Times depicted the story of a mother and her young daughter who lacked Internet access [at] the homeless shelter they lived in, and consequently had to trudge to a nearby park in the freezing cold to access the online learning materials provided. These tales have shown that the possibilities of modern technology remain inaccessible to the less privileged, rendering schools still as relevant as before.	pandemic is well-executed and quite insightful and not awkward or forced Good examples about the experience of the less privileged in both developed and developed countries
Furthermore, [some] may [also] argue that schools are still relevant because the possibilities offered by modern technology do not encompass all that schools have to offer children. This is because [they] view the role of schools as being indispensable to the personal growth and character development of students. Undoubtedly, the possibilities offered by modern technology today are unable to mirror the collaborative classroom environment, nor the complex interconnected web of social relationships cultivated between students in school. Beyond merely imparting knowledge, schools act as a microcosm of the real world, providing a safe space for students to learn, but more importantly, to [hone] interpersonal skills and critical thinking skills. These skills are best imparted through the specialised programmes schools have conceptualised for students such as tasks that require group work or inter-class and intra-class debates. For instance, many secondary schools and junior colleges [in Singapore] emphasise the importance of teamwork through [the subject] Project Work where students embark on research [projects] together with their peers, as well as encourage discussions on real-world issues by facilitating Socratic Seminars. These programmes develop interpersonal skills in students, a factor that modern technology will be hard pressed to replicate.	Good discussion of what the education system offers beyond academic knowledge, but again ideas could be more clearly framed to point out that this is not just one of the main offerings of the education system, but it is in fact one of its key roles/obligations and thus significant Relevant example, but quite narrow to only talk about the Singapore experience when the question is not restricted to the Singapore context
Furthermore, the possibilities offered by modern technology need not eclipse the relevance of schools, as they are not mutually exclusive. Rather, schools can capitalise on the possibilities offered by modern technology to better engage students in learning, thereby making schools even more relevant today. For instance, schools such as Minerva University emphasise their unconventional integration of technology into their learning experience as their selling point to prospective students. Minerva University encourages students to study abroad in different countries from Italy to Japan on a rotational basis to immerse themselves in the unique cultural experiences accorded by these countries. To facilitate this, the university utilises online Skype calls for lectures and tutorials with professors in various specialised fields instead of having a physical campus. Such innovative technology has arguably ensured schools are still relevant today and will continue to be relevant in the future, especially given the transformative power technology can have on shaping schools today.	An insightful argument, but could be clearer in drawing a distinction between whether modern technology can replace brick-and-mortar schools, or schools as an institution A very appropriate and interesting example that shows good content understanding and supports the argument made

In conclusion, I believe that despite the possibilities offered by modern technology, schools are still relevant today. This is because I personally [believe] that no matter how revolutionary technology can be, it will never render schools obsolete. Rather, schools will continue expanding their [...] (Chloe Kho, 19-01)	Conclusion is off to a good start in reiterating the main lines of arguments, but it is unfortunately incomplete
--	---

6 Given the possibilities offered by modern technology, are schools still relevant?

<i>This response shows some good understanding of the different functions of the education system and whether that is being threatened by the possibilities offered by modern technology. The writer is skillful in employing a variety of types of examples and in-depth evaluation of technology to support his argument, though not all the arguments are supported with concrete examples. To tighten the logic and persuasiveness of the overall response, it could anticipate possible opposing arguments to the supporting arguments raised, which would also help to prevent the possibility of the examiner poking holes in the arguments raised. Deeper evaluation and critical thinking would make the claims more considered, qualified and cogent. There was also some over-emphasis on home-based learning, when the question allows students to explore other types of modern technology that could serve to educate one in place of schools.</i>	
The ongoing coronavirus situation has caused many to re-evaluate the importance of many structures in our lives, [the most interesting of these re-examinations being the conversation about] the importance and necessity of schools. Many see this situation as one to take advantage of to test a new theory that schools are no longer relevant with the possibilities offered by modern technology. If schools are seen as a place for learning solely academic knowledge, then one might argue that modern technology can [indeed] replace schools and make them irrelevant. However, if we see schools to be more than just the transference of academic knowledge, then schools [are] not just relevant, but [in fact] essential. Schools [provide] many students with [a place] to develop their social skills, and teachers play a vital role in nurturing a relationship with students to aid in their [development]. [In addition], only some schools have the necessary resources to teach students [specialised skills], such as in the case of vocational schools. Overall, it depends on what we as a society see the role of schools to be. If it is purely for teaching and learning of academic knowledge, then schools are no longer relevant. However, if schools are expected to bring even more benefits, then schools are still relevant and may remain this way even with the ever-expanding list of technological advancements.	The reference to the COVID-19 pandemic needs to be explained further to make sense - the idea that it has forced many operations, including schools, to move online, is relevant here. How these possibilities offered by tech play out in the real-world context could also be more specific A nuanced and well-considered thesis statement
Firstly, if we see schools [merely] as a place for [gaining knowledge], it could be argued that modern technology has made schools obsolete. Lessons are replaced by virtual ones and homework is shifting towards being submitted online instead of physically. Because if schools' sole purpose is to transfer knowledge from the teacher and students, this could be facilitated by technology such as [online video] conferencing and online tools such as Google Classroom. In fact, technology does such a good job of facilitating this transfer that one might [argue] that methods such as online video conferencing are more effective than their physical counterparts like lectures and lessons. In recent years an organisation called the Open University has been established to allow everyone to take online lessons regardless of age,	The argument is logical, but could be more precise. There is a difference between schools (as a physical institution) being replaced because technology allows schools to carry out lessons online, or schools being replaced because education

gender or current education level. They are authorised by the government of the host country to issue diplomas after one has completed the modules. These qualifications issued are recognised by many reputable universities worldwide, showing their credibility as an education institute. There are over 100 000 students enrolled in their courses and they do not have a brick-and-mortar building where they teach. Instead, everything is done through the web portal. This shows [that] at the tertiary level of education, modern technology can completely replace schools [as] places for teaching and learning. If such methods can be done for tertiary education, it is not unthinkable [that] such methods can be [implemented] at a secondary or even primary school level education. The Internet was [created] for information transfer. In fact, it was conceived as a network for researchers at CERN to access information in real time. With advancements in images and videos, the role of schools in teaching and learning is easily dwarfed by the endless possibilities that modern technology can bring.	can now be pursued in independent ways This point about how such technological advancements are effective in replacing schools in the area of learning needs to be fleshed out in more detail and developed further to make sense
But this only stands if schools are only for teaching and learning academic knowledge. Schools are seen as a microcosm, a portion of the adult business world shrunk down to a level that students can try, fail and learn from their mistakes in a protected environment. In the previous examples, the education mentioned is plain and sterile, devoid of any interaction. Teaching and learning in school is different. This is where students are able to meet and make friends with other students. A recent study showed that for students aged under 18, over half of who they would call friends were people they met in an educational institute. There is no doubt that schools play an important role in allowing students to make friends. In fact, it not just allows them to make friends but also develops their social skills, skills that will serve them well in their adult life. Schools are the [places] where these students pick up societal norms [that prevent] them from being the ‘odd one out’. Many television shows and movies portray schools as having a toxic and competitive culture, and while it may be dramatised for the audience, the show producers are right in the sense that schools are a shrunk down version of the adult world, featuring elements of school politics instead of office politics. This prepares students for the real world where office politics and gossip, among other things, run rife in the office. Schools allow students to experiment with how to deal with such actions in a safe and controlled environment. This is a period where students grow the most in terms of their interpersonal skills. In another recent survey [conducted on working professionals], it was found that over 70% of respondents found that school taught them the most in terms of interpersonal skills. Even though [the] negative aspects of school culture like gossiping and bullying should be stopped, they still have the potential to allow all those involved to discover their individuality and other character traits such as courage and resilience, especially if the victims pick themselves up. Modern technology has no way of [replacing] this aspect of school. Students are unlikely to experience these interactions that will lead them to [grow] and [mature]. The idea of schools as a contained area for students to [learn] from the mini-business world is something that is [difficult for technological alternatives to replace]. As such, schools are still relevant in teaching students about the adult world and how to survive in it.	An interesting (albeit somewhat cynical) argument about how schools are helpful in teaching students lessons about the real world. The argument could be better established by first acknowledging how schools are where students spend the bulk of their time and are formative in their particular stage of life, possibly even making a reference to the primary and secondary stages of schooling mentioned earlier Some good use of statistics to support the argument, although the source of the survey should be mentioned. The argument could also be better supported by concrete examples in real countries, rather than just engaging in a pure hypothetical discussion

Thirdly, teachers play a vital role in nurturing students, [which again] cannot be easily replaced by modern technology. Schools are where teachers get to meet students daily. For many students who are living in troubled households, schools act as the safe haven for them, a home away from home. In households where there are many disagreements, especially between parents, shouting, screaming and threats of violence may be commonplace for a child. To students, school is a safe place. School is where they can rest. Even in households [that are relatively peaceful], many parents [may] have to work long hours to provide for the family [...], [such that they] may not be able to provide the care or support expected of them and this is where teachers play the parental role in a child's life. But all this depends on having a place for the student and teacher to meet to establish a relationship so that the teacher can support the student. It is unlikely that a similar, caring nurturing relationship can be formed outside of school, or even through modern technology. As such, schools are important in providing a setting in which students can approach their teachers for help or advice, but this comes through a relationship that can only be built in schools.	A relevant argument, but as with the previous paragraph, there is a lack of concrete examples to support your point, as the discussion is somewhat anecdotal Quite extreme to argue that such close bonds can never be formed outside of schools and through the use of modern technology. This is an assertion that needs to be backed up and further developed
Lastly, some schools, especially for those technologically specialised crafts or skills, may have the equipment and resources necessary to teach students. Vocational schools such as polytechnics or institutes of technology may have specialised equipment. For example, students in culinary school are required to be trained in [the use of] certain equipment. Such equipment like those found in restaurants, may cost up to hundreds of thousands [of dollars] and it is simply not feasible for students to own one each. Instead, the school buys a few of these equipment and lets students use it during their lesson period. In this case, the operation and the resources of this must be in the school. There is no way that modern technology can come close [to providing such affordances]. For other equipment such as schools for animation artists, it may require computer labs full of high-end, high-powered computer equipment in order for students to do their job efficiently. This is true for most of the schools that teach a specialised craft or skill that require certain expensive equipment. This is especially true for schools for the handicapped. Teachers there are [specially] trained to deal with the disability of their students, whether their students are blind, deaf or mentally handicapped. Again, modern technology is simply unable to match the benefits of schools. Having resources in these schools ensures that these schools are very much still relevant. Although it can be argued that perhaps in the future the relevance of schools will be diminished by modern technology, the specialised schools will likely be the least affected. As such, these schools remain relevant for the foreseeable future.	Instead of being descriptive like this, the topic sentence should address the question directly Although there is some good discussion of various educational institutions and how their respective roles cannot be replaced by the possibilities afforded through modern technology, much of it centers around the same idea about cost. To deepen evaluation, other factors like space constraints, or even legal constraints (e.g. not all equipment can be privately owned by individuals) can be discussed
In conclusion, during the trying time of the coronavirus, maybe it is not the time to think about the relevance of schools, but rather the role of schools. Once we as a society have decided on what roles schools should play, only then can the idea of the relevance of schools and whether they can be replaced by modern technology be contemplated. However, currently, if schools are more places for teaching and learning academic knowledge, there is little relevance of schools, [given how these roles] can be easily replaced by modern technology. However, if schools play a larger, more holistic developmental role in the growth of a student, then schools are as relevant as ever, and will likely [remain relevant] for a long time to come.	Some interesting insight, although the distinction that is drawn between the relevance and the role of schools could be better explained. Overall, the conclusion is effective in reiterating the main lines of the arguments made

(Asher Tan, 19-03)

7 How far do you agree that disaster relief is best handled by countries on their own?

This is a well-controlled response with a methodical focus on disaster relief and the strategies of different stakeholders, moving from internal handling of the situation to external intervention to a compromise of the two. This last point is particularly insightful in presenting how a collaborative effort between domestic and international efforts could be carried out, showing a good understanding of the subtleties in the question. However, a little more effort could be made to explicitly negotiate the issue of 'best handled', rather than letting the reader decide how they should read the issue in the essay. The essay is fluently written, with a clear personal voice, and the introduction and conclusion are well constructed to help provide structure and coherence.

With the rise of international organisations (IOs) such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund [that] provide assistance to countries in times of need, international aid has become a prevalent disaster relief strategy. During natural disasters such as cyclones and earthquakes, international aid, through international organisations, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and even other countries [have] played a significant role in providing resources to those suffering from the dire aftermath of these events. Their essentiality has seemingly been amplified with the current volatile and dangerous climate. However, many seem to argue against international interference in light of the numerous failures of these efforts in effectively curbing and mitigating the impact of the natural disasters. These failures often stem from the lack of contextual knowledge and understanding international agents have on the suffering State, imposing strategies based on existing assumptions or strategies that have worked in other countries. Yet, international assistance still plays a crucial role in disaster relief, supporting countries which struggled to recover financially during crucial times. Hence, while it should be acknowledged that international interference can harm the effectiveness of disaster relief, instead of adopting a purely domestic-based strategy to disaster relief, cooperation can be engendered between the State and external forms of assistance.

Introduction is effective in setting up the different stakeholders that participate in disaster relief.

Although comprehensive in its acknowledgement of concerns surrounding international aid, the introduction does not really address the issue of 'best handled' in the question and mostly states that IOs and NGOs are important sources of aid as well

Many argue that disaster relief efforts should be enacted by local bodies as they have more knowledge on the context and characteristics of their region. Undoubtedly, local governments and other organisations understand their own unique characteristics more than any other external bodies. Geographical and cultural aspects of a region determine which disaster management strategy will be the most effective during times of need. This is due to the fact that most disaster relief strategies are contingent on the predicted response or level of preparedness of the people which allow the disaster relief strategies to target the most crucial and vulnerable groups [in] these times of crisis. In Japan, during earthquakes, the government officials are able to focus on those who are in more vulnerable circumstances, such as toppling buildings, [as they trust] that their citizens have a certain level of preparedness. Since all citizens go through a simulated earthquake disaster response annually, there is a certain degree of trust engendered between the State and the people during these critical times which allow them to focus on those truly in need of assistance without fearing for a widespread panic. Japan's casualties have now fallen greatly from

Clear topic sentence that explains why local management for disaster relief could be ideal

Relevant example, but could be further explained - how does the State develop trust between itself and citizens in preparing for disaster relief (in a way that external parties do not)?

Is an effective option the same as 'best

thousands of deaths in the 1980s to less than 20 in the recent earthquakes. Thus, understanding of the local context makes local strategies an effective option in dealing with disasters.	handled'? The question could be addressed more clearly
This level of understanding seemingly cannot be met by international bodies as they tend to impose strategies which have worked in other contexts. They tend to base their strategies and assumptions of the pressing needs of the vulnerable due to a lack of detailed knowledge on the region. Oxfam, an international NGO, has had numerous failures in implementing community strategies to empower and assist people, especially with the poverty experienced in the aftermath of disasters like droughts. Their attempts to provide cattle as a way to make citizens in countries like Cambodia self-sufficient have often failed due to the cattle consuming the agricultural crops and trampling the soil which reduces the fertility of the agricultural soil. Hence, the poor level of understanding often leaves local disaster relief efforts as the much more attractive and effective option as they are able to target the needs of the people in ways which suit the local conditions. Therefore, many feel that disaster relief should be enacted solely from within with no external influence.	Good comparison with the previous paragraph, clearly executed in the topic sentence A relevant and pertinent example, but could be further explained to show how understanding of local conditions is such that the local government might have tried a different and better approach
However, international interference still plays a significant and important role in assisting countries [that] struggle financially with responding to these disasters. Hence, we cannot [be]entirely assure[d] that local efforts are sufficient in dealing with disasters on their own. Many poor disaster relief responses often occur in less developed countries due to their pre-existing financial struggles. This is further exacerbated by the destruction caused by these disasters which further reduce the government's budget and infrastructure which can deal with the resulting impact. Countries stricken with poverty such as China and Yemen struggle to overcome the droughts experienced within their arid regions, leading to cyclical effects where scarce government funds are depleted even further, leading to the worsening of social welfare of the country. Thus, local efforts, in isolation, may be insufficient in dealing with the aftermath of these responses. International efforts may then be the way to success in these occurrences, providing financial backing and support to these struggling countries. IOs such as the IMF and [the] World Bank have been seen to be effective in providing resources to elevate countries like Mexico out of their struggles from the resulting effects of droughts and flooding. They can also further provide assistance by acting as an advisory body to the State, evaluating existing local efforts to ensure that they are feasible and effective. Therefore, while local efforts seem to provide effective disaster response strategies, international efforts are able to provide an essential supporting role, especially when countries are already struggling to deal with existing issues within national [borders].	'Interference' carries a negative connotation. Using 'intervention' instead would be more suitable for the point that is being made Good in setting up the context of why less developed countries may be hit harder by disasters and may struggle more with disaster relief The point about IOs and NGOs providing financial backing and advice needs to be better supported by a fully fleshed-out example

Ultimately, the most effective disaster relief strategies are unlikely to be from solely local efforts. Instead, the best responses are through the collaborative effort of international assistance and local planning where local bodies [make use of] the international help provided and [craft] effective and feasible local strategies which cater to the national context. While the national approach may seem attractive, the assistance [that] international efforts provide do help elevate these relief responses quite substantially. This does not imply that States should compromise their sovereignty but instead utilise resources provided in order to further enhance existing strategies or change them to what works best in the local context. A prime example would be China, who provided masks and other medical resources to other countries such as the United States during the COVID-19 pandemic. Instead of enforcing how these resources were going to be distributed, they simply handed them to State officials who could provide a more contextualised lens to [give] help to more vulnerable communities like the elderly. Hence, this can overcome the limitations faced by excessively relying on a one-sided approach to disaster relief, proving to be the most effective strategy.	Nuanced discussion about how the goals of the international efforts must be considered within the feasibility of the local context An interesting example and strategy of giving autonomy to the home country to figure out what to do with the resources themselves, although note that not all resources are as basic and straightforward as masks
While disaster relief is seen by many to be the most effective [when done] by the local bodies, they are unlikely to be effective across the various conditions of different countries. Instead of taking the cookie-cutter approach, countries can adopt varying degrees of international help on top of existing local strategies to further enhance or uplift their own strategies. This therefore proves that disaster relief [is] not best handled by local bodies in isolation, but should [instead] be a result of collaborative efforts across various stakeholders. This view could serve to enhance the beautiful and healthy culture of global collaboration, leaving a much more peaceful and supporting environment for our future generations. (Ho Yu Hao, 19-01)	Signposting is missing Conclusion is well constructed and clearly consolidates the points put forward in the body paragraph, while offering an insightful extension to the issues raised

8 'All art is political.' Do you agree with this statement?

This response is competent in taking an interesting approach by looking at the political values of the arts through the perspectives of different stakeholders, though the way these perspectives are organised can be better done to avoid the repetition that is sometimes apparent, such as in the recurring idea that art is not always political because it is sometimes created for other purposes. It exhibits very good content understanding of different art forms, and exemplification is clear, varied and easy to follow. However, the response at times lacks clarity about what imbuing art work with political meaning truly entails, and the negotiation of these ideas needs to be more precise. At a few points, it seems to cross the line into trying to prove that art is only political, rather than addressing the question of whether all art is political. Though it covers a range of ideas, the response does not show complete awareness of the context in which the question is raised, such as missing out on considering how the way meaning is constructed in art affects whether all art is political. The writing is fluent and easy to follow, while a concise and effective introduction and conclusion help to frame the arguments. However, signposting is somewhat basic and could be used more deliberately and thoughtfully to guide the reader along.

You turn on the radio in Changbai, a region in China just metres away from North Korea. Given your current proximity to North Korea, you receive radio signals from North Korea, and all you hear is patriotic songs glorifying the regime's leader, Kim Jong Un. This is a pertinent example of how a State has utilised the arts for political ends, to maintain a [State's sovereignty]. As such, one must acknowledge that art has indeed been politicised. However, I disagree with the statement that all art is political, as art continues to function as a medium for creative expression, an outlet for relaxation as well as to convey other non-political meanings, despite it being used for political ends and to demonstrate one's displeasure at political issues.	Context-setting is clear in presenting the scope of discussion by using the example of patriotic songs to Kim Jong Un Thesis statement is clear
Firstly, I believe that not all art is political, as art continues to be used as a medium for creative expression, an inherent characteristic of art. Such artworks are merely an avenue through which artists express their creativity and emotions, and have no intended message for [the audience]. Historically, these artworks existed, as seen from the music Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart composed as a child, such as his Piano Sonatas, which he regularly performed for [royalty] all around Europe. One can tell, from the light-hearted figurations and melodies he composed, that he was merely using his music as a medium through which he expressed his creativity and cheery emotions, with no hidden political intent whatsoever. This type of art-making continued through the ages, and even in the 20th and 21st century, the arts continue to serve the primary function as a medium for creative expression. For instance, Robert Ryman's all-white painting entitled "Bridge" demonstrates this. Despite seemingly somewhat simplistic and reproducible, one would observe intricate details such as lines and effects in the painting, showing the artist's creativity [that] went into the artwork, eventually allowing it to be sold at a staggering price of US \$20.5 million at Christie's Auction House. As such, [it is undoubtable] that not all art is political, since art still predominantly serves as a medium for creative expression.	Political uses and artistic expression are not mutually exclusive, and it should be noted that the question is not about whether art is only political Good explanation of the example of Mozart The example is well explained, but the point about how this work is about creative expression could be explicitly made, beyond just describing the example
Detractors of my argument may argue that historically, art has been used extensively by States for political ends. This was so due to the inherent nature of the arts, with its ability to evoke strong emotions in its audience. As such, many would assert that the arts has been used by states to gain the support and respect of their people, resulting in the production of political art which continues to be enjoyed today, making all art political. This is seen in how in Nazi Germany, the Third Reich used the music of German composers such as Beethoven and Wagner to foster in the people a heroic and mythic Germanic spirit, reinforcing their loyalty and allegiance to Germany. Since the Germanic tradition plays a vital role in classical music, it is no doubt that people continue to enjoy the music of these prolific composers, with Beethoven's Ninth Symphony being performed by symphonies and choruses all over the world up till today. Another case in point is China's historical folk music, which aimed to encapsulate the Chinese sentiment and was regulated to be in line with the Chinese Communist Party's values. This is seen in the solo repertoire composed for instruments such as the <i>dizi</i> and <i>erhu</i> after 1949, which was the year in which the Chinese Communist Party enacted a policy to allow the solo repertoire of these instruments to flourish [...]. As such, it is unsurprising that many could believe that all art is political, given the historical origins of many artworks which continue to attract large audiences in [the] present day, and the tendencies for governments to use art for political ends.	Very appropriate example that explains the perspective of States and how music can thus be used for political means To deepen insight, consider if these works still hold their political value in today's context, or whether they have changed because the context that they were originally used has changed

However, the above argument no longer holds water. One may realise that the examples cited above were both pertaining to States with communist or autocratic rulers, who needed to ensure that their unconventional political systems were accepted by their people. Furthermore, as people are becoming more literate and educated in today's world, the use of the Arts to brainwash a populace is no longer a concern, since people have become more discerning and are able to identify art which has an underlying political purpose, making them less susceptible to viewing and receiving such art with political intent.	Not necessarily true as a greater awareness of the political messages embedded in the Arts might make the artwork more political, not less This assertion needs to be supported by concrete examples
Proponents of the idea that all art is political may also argue that increasingly, artists are using their artwork as a means to express their political views or displeasure at political issues. In such cases, the artwork functions as social commentary, to point out social or political issues to the public, as well as the artists' views and perceptions of it. A case in point would be the film entitled "To Singapore, With Love" by Singaporean film-maker Tan Pin Pin. The film featured interviews with Singapore's political exiles, who were banished from the country due to their ideologies which ran opposite from that of the ruling party, the People's Action Party. This film thus showcases Tan's political views, and brings to light this political issue in Singapore. Another pertinent example is an artwork by Chinese dissident artist Ai Wei Wei, in which he draped the walls of the Berlin Konzerthaus with 14,000 lifejackets woven by refugees who traveled from Turkey to the Greek Island of Lesbos. Not only did he draw attention to the global refugee crisis, but he also called for more governments to, like Germany, accept more refugees into their countries. This shows that with the increasingly volatile political landscape, artists are using their art to express their political opinions, and to shed light on political issues, therefore causing some to believe that all art is political.	Good use of appropriate examples from different art forms to show how artists put forward a political agenda in their artworks To deepen insight, there could be more explanation of why the Arts lends itself to such political expression
However, one must recognise that many of such artworks are censored in certain societies, to prevent the people from being brainwashed by such artworks and to maintain the sovereignty of the State. "To Singapore, With Love" was banned in Singapore, and "Apprentice", a film by Singaporean film-maker Boo Junfeng, faced this as well. The film portrayed the death penalty, which Singapore's justice system continues to employ, in a different light, questioning it. As such, the film was banned partially in Singapore, to prevent the public from questioning the country's justice system and governance. Therefore, the [artwork] received by the public continues to be non-political.	The example of 'Apprentice' should be further explained to show why and how it is 'partially' banned. While an interesting point, this does not seem to render the artworks themselves apolitical
It is also vital for one to realise that many artworks, while conveying messages to the audience, convey non-political messages. Such artworks draw attention to non-political issues of concern, some of which include social issues. For instance, in Ai Wei Wei's artwork, which comprised an interactive exhibition with sensors, projectors, cameras and other sophisticated equipment brought to light the issue of privacy, by projecting one's every move on the gallery floor. This artwork conveyed the idea that in the age of social media, the issue of surveillance is widespread, bringing to light a non-political issue of concern. Another such artwork is Maurizio Cattelan's "Comedian", consisting of a banana duct-taped to a wall, which sold at the Art Basel Miami Beach for a whopping US \$120,000. This artwork was meant to ridicule the excessive commercialisation of the world of high art today, which has artworks selling for ridiculous prices, and the ultra-rich acquiring artworks merely for	This point would benefit from clearer articulation of what a 'non-political issue' is. Surveillance is often viewed as a political issue 'Comedian' is an appropriate example, as commercialisation does involve other stakeholders beside the government making it not just a

investment rather than for appreciation. As such, many artworks today [draw] attention to other non-political art, making some artworks non-political.	political issue, though that does not exclude possible political meanings
Furthermore, [the Arts] undoubtedly remains an outlet for one to unwind from the hustle and bustle of life, and people continue to engage with art for pure relaxation. As such, many artworks are laidback in nature, and do not contain heavy political themes, in order to allow [the] audience to escape from the highly pressurising connectivity and craze of the world momentarily. This has resulted in the proliferation of immersive art exhibitions, which allow [the] audience to step inside an alternative universe for some time, to forget about the stresses of life. Such an exhibition is the 2019 “Starry Starry Night” exhibition held in France’s Atelier des Lumieres, which allowed people to step into some of Vincent van Gogh’s most phenomenal paintings, with the use of state-of-the-art laser projectors and speakers to create a fully immersive and sensorial experience for visitors, allowing them to escape from the real world momentarily. Another case in point is Yayoi Kusama’s “Life is the Heart of a Rainbow” exhibition held in Singapore’s National Gallery, allowing visitors to immerse themselves in the surreal, Instagrammable backdrops of the exhibition. This immensely popular exhibition drew a staggering number of 235,000 tourists, hence proving the popularity of such immersive exhibitions which allow visitors an escape from the realities of life, to unwind and relax. Therefore, not all art is political, since [the Arts] continues to be treasured as an outlet for relaxation and enjoyment.	The argument is valid, but the explanation of the examples could be more precise to support the point - is relaxation simply defined as an immersive experience? What about the nature of the artwork? This paragraph comes closer to addressing the question than the previous as it suggests that the goals of relaxation and sending political messages are to an extent contradictory
All in all, the Arts have indeed been used extensively for political ends, especially in the past, since [the Arts] can arouse strong emotions in audiences. However, I believe that not all art is political, as [the Arts] continue to be produced for the creative expression of artists, for the conveyance of non-political messages on non-political issues of concern, and for the relaxation of audiences. Moving forward, it is impossible to discern whether or not the Arts scene will become more saturated with political art, given the increasingly [polarised] and unstable political landscape we are seeing today. Regardless, one thing remains certain - [the Arts] will continue to be enjoyed by the masses. (Christabel Yuen, 19-U2)	Conclusion is effective in tying together the main points of the essay into a coherent whole A good attempt at an insightful ending in terms of looking forward to the future of the Arts

9 Consider the view that your society has placed too much faith in meritocracy.

This response shows a good awareness of some key arguments in the discussion of meritocracy. While each paragraph raises valuable considerations, the argumentation could be more consistent in always seeking to respond clearly to the question. Some parts of the arguments approach thoughtfulness and it sounds the right bells, but there is space for more detail and depth when it comes to insight. This piece also offers a caution when it comes to citing popular texts or debates in the local context: the onus is on the writer to flesh out these examples and discussions instead of assuming that the reader/examiner is familiar with the context and able to fill the gaps on their own. It is largely clearly written, with some attempts at incorporating a personal voice, but this is not always sustained. The essay shows clear evidence of planning, with a clear central idea being the core of the argument throughout, and framed with the story of a poor Singaporean used to bookend the piece.

Amidst the [towering] skyscrapers of the busy global hub, Abdul bte Latif lives in relative squalor in a rental flat, along with her large extended family. She is one of the many examples [of people] who have been failed by our widely touted narrative of meritocracy, hence begging the question as to whether Singapore's unwavering conviction in meritocracy is excessive and uncalled for. Meritocracy refers to the distribution of [opportunities] based on an individual's hard work and effort, and it has been a core value of my society since independence. In this essay, I will argue that while meritocracy was initially successful, shifting national contexts necessitates a shift away from excessive faith in meritocracy.	Engaging hook, though there seems to be some confusion with the name, with 'Abdul' usually being a male name, while 'bte' or <i>binti</i> means 'daughter of' The definition of meritocracy can be more effective
Meritocracy is a [comfortable] narrative, which in theory is still highly relevant. Up until now, meritocracy has been a [value] that we fall back upon in order to justify our policies, claiming that this concept allows us to remain highly competitive and hardworking, especially since our [talented] labour force has been the [crux] of our success thus far. And indeed, the theory of distribution by merit is both fair and relevant. How else should the gains from societal progress be distributed, if not by giving it to those who contributed the most in building our nation? Furthermore, meritocracy is so attractive to Singapore because it aligns to our culture that prizes Asians values such as diligence and hard work. It prevents us from succumbing to the dangers of becoming a welfare state, which the government claims would limit our competitiveness and encourage workers to slack off. There is truth to this claim, where France, which provides generous unemployment benefits, has unfortunately seen a spike in unemployment and hence a decline in productivity. In contrast, Singapore's method of forced savings through the Central Provident Fund and Medisave not only reduce the financial burden on the government, but is predicated upon the hard work of its population, by which they will be rewarded in their retirement. While an unwavering relief in meritocracy may seem tempting, these tired narratives do not discount the change in Singapore's context, which necessitates a reconsideration of our core values. Hence, meritocracy may be an ideal concept but its execution warrants rethinking in light of our social context.	While the notion of the narrative is compelling, when the discussion moves to the concept of meritocracy more clarity about the distinction between theory and practice could be achieved This comparison with France serves to illustrate the point. However, the differences in context mean that it is not fully compelling support for the argument CPF/Medisave does not exemplify meritocracy

Unfortunately, too much faith in meritocracy has blinded society to the increasing inequality that threatens our future development. [Meritocracy] will always create winners and losers. Those who have the necessary skills and academic qualifications in the working world will undoubtedly get a larger slice of the pie, [while others are overlooked in the race to be the best fight over the crumbs]. This was a key concern highlighted in ‘This Is What Inequality Looks Like’, where Teo You Yenn [attributed] the divergence between her financially comfortable, socially respected lifestyle, with the uncomfortable and harsh lived-in realities of her respondents on meritocracy. Meritocracy rewards the best and most suitable candidate, and hence this leads to a rat race amongst affluent parents to send their children into elite schools and a barrage of extra-curricular activities to obtain the ‘ideal’ portfolio, sending their children on a fast track to success. But what about those who fall through the cracks, and lack the resources to provide their children with the same comfortable upbringing? This has led to an entrenched poverty cycle in Singapore, where the poor get poorer because they do not have the means to obtain the same level of support as their well-heeled peers. Beyond the social consequences of a poverty cycle, where the low income may resort to crime, indulge in vices as an alternative to a well-paid and cushy job, there are tremendous political implications as well. Deep-rooted poverty, if not addressed by the government, will undermine the People’s Action Party’s performance legitimacy, and may eventually result in discontent and disillusionment with their value of meritocracy. Blind faith in meritocracy without a reassessment of the broader societal context that it operates in is detrimental to the nation’s future development, and hence needs rethinking.	Who Teo You Yenn is and what significance her book has to the local understanding of inequality needs to be explained, as it cannot be assumed that the examiner will be familiar with the publication While the link between meritocracy and entrenched poverty is drawn, it is somewhat simple and not fully convincing Logical links are not always sensible: How does not getting a cushy job lead to a life of crime? The paragraph is well aligned to the question
However, our stubborn refusal to give up on meritocracy arises due to the incredible success that it has afforded to Singapore’s growth over the years. Singapore’s transition from a backward, Third World country into a prosperous global hub can be attributed to the twin pillars that guided our development, namely [pragmatism] and meritocracy. A consistent focus over the years has been to allow the best and the brightest to steer our country’s development. Indeed, meritocracy has allowed Chan Chun Sing to move from his lower income background [to] a widely respected position as Minister of Trade and Industry. This success story is one of many, where the dogged baby boomer generation toiled in the early years of independence to reap the rewards that a First World country can offer to them. Hence, it is understandable that we would want to continue our belief in meritocracy. Unfortunately, meritocracy was only able to enable the underclass to rise into positions of prosperity because everyone had a level playing field. This is not the case in our present day context, where there are different starting points for everyone, and those [whose] parents have initially prospered due to meritocracy will undoubtedly get a headstart in life, [as they] enjoy the financial resources that enable them to achieve in a society with a narrow focus on academics. Hence, while meritocracy has been highly successful in the past, it is an outdated concept that worked in a bygone era, and too much faith in it is dangerous.	The idea that meritocracy works if there is a level playing field and that this is no longer the case in today’s context is an insightful one This assertion could be backed up by more concrete evidence of how the shift in context has made meritocracy unfair
The [ultimate] problem with excessive faith in the outcome of meritocracy is that it blinds us to the suffering of others and entrenches stereotypes. Unfortunately, the Malay community in Singapore tends to be stigmatised and stereotyped as being ‘lazy’ and ‘poor’. This then gives way to the belief that their community as a whole is not hardworking and hence is unable to rise above [the] poverty cycle. In reality, they are unable to do so as they do not have the	This example of the Malay community is not immediately related to meritocracy,

necessary resources to transcend their limitations. Social stigmatisation only serves to create a self-fulfilling prophecy where children may be told to limit their ambitions solely on the basis of their race and background. This creation of a permanent underclass may give rise to racial tensions due to the wide economic disparity between races. Given Singapore's past history of racial riots and its delicate social fabric, such tensions are divisive and dangerous to the cohesion of society. Such problems are worsened by an extremely narrow definition of success in our meritocratic society, where academic achievement trumps all, and other creative or sporting talents are dismissed. This gives [rise] to [an] intolerant society which is unable to value the wide-ranging talents of its youth, and instead prefers to accuse those who fall through the cracks of not working hard enough. Evidently, this pessimistic outlook on our future is the consequence of placing too much faith in meritocracy, where we are unable to recognise the faults of the system, but instead prefer to accuse the individual of their own failings. Hence, it is clear that overt trust in meritocracy is both detrimental and divisive in the long run.	appearing to come out of nowhere. Links and clearer evidence are required Insight is achieved at the end but this needs to be foregrounded at the start of the paragraph to be immediately relevant and effective
Ultimately, the merits of meritocracy in pulling my society out of poverty into First World status cannot be denied. However, we must be wary of placing too much faith in meritocracy without acknowledging the problems that accompany it due to our rapidly changing societal context. Fortunately, the increasing debate that is surrounding the ills of meritocracy has spurred the government on towards creating policies that ensure a more inclusive society. Perhaps Abdul's children may be the ones to pull their family out of their poverty cycle. (Gracia Chua, 19-U1)	Coherent conclusion to tie the arguments made together with the central idea of a change in the context The return to the anecdote in the introduction quite effectively rounds up the essay

9 Consider the view that your society has placed too much faith in meritocracy.

<i>This is a promising essay that presents some good insights, and demonstrates a good grasp of the issues in the question, especially in the first two body paragraphs. However, supporting illustrations are often sorely missing from the essay, such that the arguments, albeit insightful, lack credibility. Some missing links in the elaborations of the points also diminish their clarity. There is general fluency across and within paragraphs, but the sentences could be more controlled and succinct.</i>	
In Singapore, meritocracy is the closest thing to a national identity that we can find. [Meritocracy is] the idea that people should be rewarded in terms of the amount of effort they put in. It is easy to see why such an idea is attractive - the notion that anyone will be able to succeed so long as they are willing to put in the effort, regardless of their race or religion, fits perfectly into our wish for a harmonious multi-ethnic State. The goal of meritocracy is to improve the efficiency and output of a society in order to benefit [large segments of society]. Many Singaporeans have faith in our meritocratic system, that it is a positive system for our society to [have]. However, I am of the view that my society has placed too much faith in meritocracy and fails to see the problematic nature of meritocracy in Singapore.	The definition needs to be clearer - meritocracy rewards competence, not effort How does meritocracy lead to efficiency? Stand is present, but reasons for it could be offered for clarity
Whilst meritocracy as an ideal might in theory be the best system, the way it is practiced in Singapore is highly problematic in my [view]. As such, I am of the [view] that my society has	This paragraph presents a clear and insightful line of argument, but it lacks

placed too much faith in it as in many cases, Singapore's implementation of meritocracy has actually caused more harm than good, due to the toxic nature of the overcompetition that it breeds. In Singapore's education system, many important [junctures] in a child's life are decided by their [academic performance]. This fosters an extreme sense of competition between students as they are vying for limited spaces in their dream schools. While some, particularly social Darwinists, might argue that such competitions spur people to work harder to achieve more, thus increasing overall efficiency, this is by and large false. It may be true that for top scorers this intense competitive nature of examinations will spur them on to achieve more, but for many others, it may actually result in a decrease in [the effort] put in, as people feel that they do not have a reasonable chance of success and give up, leading to an overall fall in efficiency [within] the cohort. Furthermore, due to the way meritocracy is implemented in Singapore, where students have to achieve more relative to their peers rather than just [competing against themselves in] working on self-improvement, an unintended consequence is the air of distrust and selfishness it breeds. As students need to score better [grades] relative to their peers, they have no incentive to help [each other in their studies]. [On the contrary], many students opt to keep tips and helpful insights to themselves. This is not a desirable outcome of the system of meritocracy, and as such I believe my society has placed too much faith in meritocracy, as many fail to acknowledge the adverse consequences of meritocracy in Singapore.	concrete examples to support the point, thus reducing the credibility of the argument Analysis of Singapore's version of meritocracy shows good engagement with the question
Additionally, Singaporeans also tend to believe that meritocracy is the ultimate tool in social mobility, the idea that regardless of their initial socio-economic status, one could rise to the top or fall to the bottom depending on the effort they put in. This is true to some extent in Singapore [as] one of the most common places with stories of rags to riches. However, what many fail to acknowledge is the growing issue of inequality of opportunity. Despite the fact that meritocracy is a principle based [on] the belief of allowing for equality of opportunity, the way it is carried out in Singapore actually worsens inequality due to its results-driven nature. The issue of unequal starting points [is such that] rich families in Singapore are more likely to have children who are successful [in the academic realm] as their wealth allows them to have better access to strategic resources in education such as quality [of teaching] or prestigious tuition teachers. Meanwhile, the converse is true - for those in poorer families, poverty is more likely be reproduced in the next generation as children from low-income families find it more difficult to excel in academics, due to a myriad of reasons such as their inability to compete for resources like better education, tuition and private [enrichment courses]. The growing failure of our meritocratic system to provide equality of opportunity makes me feel that my society has placed too much faith in meritocracy.	Note the flawed assumption: effort does not always lead to performance (which is what meritocracy rewards) Sound analysis that gets at the heart of the question This paragraph again lacks supporting illustration To link back to the point, the paragraph needs to explain how uneven access to resources means that effort does not always translate to performance and the attendant rewards
Next, I would argue that my society has placed too much faith in meritocracy as our government and political leaders are by and large chosen based on their [academic] success. While this might be desirable and beneficial in technical sectors like the Monetary Authority of Singapore (MAS), where there are clearer and more objective solutions, perfect for academics, in [less clear-cut] areas such as public-policy making, our meritocratic system of putting scholars on top might actually work against us. This is because of two related reasons. The first is that public policy requires a lot of [nuance]. There are very few clear cut 'right	Good ideas, but too ambitious to cover two broad ideas in the same paragraph, especially when both need more support Not very convincing because it is not true at all that MAS makes very straightforward

answers', which may not bode well for [those from a strong academic background], especially those from scientific or mathematical backgrounds. There are many intricate details that being an academic does not guarantee one will be able to fully realise. The next reason is that of elitism. A consequence of rewarding and putting the [most] successful and intelligent on a pedestal is the culture of elitism it breeds. Many people from top schools such as Raffles Institution and Hwa Chong [Institution], have a belief that they are superior to the 'common folk'. Granted, this is obviously not true for all the students attending such institutions, but such elitism is common enough that it seeps into the higher echelons of Singapore's leaders. This is extremely problematic because elitists tend to be extremely out of touch with [Singaporeans] and as such may not fully grasp [the intricacies required for good public policy]. As such, I believe that my society has placed too much faith in meritocracy. <i>Note: no conclusion</i> <i>(Irving Tan, 19-U5)</i>	decisions Needs greater clarity in establishing the distinction between an academic and an academically proficient individual Is public policy placing these people on a pedestal? The claim that public policy requires intricate considerations has not been illustrated by concrete examples
--	---

9 Consider the view that your society has placed too much faith in meritocracy.

<i>This essay possesses a good grasp of the issues in the question and raised a range of relevant points. Closer links to 'meritocracy' and consistent support for claims will benefit the strength of the essay. To move towards a higher band, the essay should shift towards a less descriptive and more argumentative and evaluative approach. The response demonstrates sound organisation of ideas across and within paragraphs with an effective introduction.</i>	
Meritocracy has been a core tenet of Singaporean society since independence. It outlines the aspirational ideal that anyone, regardless of their background, is able to succeed in life should they put in the hard work and demonstrate their competency. Yet, in recent years, many Singaporeans are becoming skeptical of the effectiveness of meritocracy considering its role in entrenching social inequality and preventing Singaporeans talented in less valued domains from excelling. My opinion is that while meritocracy is something to be desired as an ideal, the way it is practised in Singapore can only mean that we have indeed placed too much faith in meritocracy to deliver the most optimal outcomes in Singaporean society.	A good grasp of the issues in the question regarding the concerns about meritocracy and excess faith demonstrated Clear thesis statement
The Singaporean government would claim that our faith in meritocracy is justified, given the efforts that have been made to ensure a level playing field for all. The government has invested considerably in education over the years, and has repeatedly touted the mantra that 'every school is a good school'. This means that no matter where a student may live, the school that they attend will be of high quality. This avoids the problems that other countries such as the United States experience, where those living in low income neighbourhoods are generally more likely to attend schools with less funding and poorer quality education. Furthermore, supporters of meritocracy might also point to the admissions process in Singapore, where one's results in Singapore's various national examinations such as the [Primary School Leaving Examination, or] PSLE is the primary consideration in allocating students to schools. Hence, wealthier parents cannot simply make use of their status or money to help their children gain admission to what they perceive as a better school. One may thus come to the conclusion that	A promising start, but there is a need to link the importance of an even quality of schools to warranted faith in meritocracy Fair allocation of prized school spots: link to meritocracy is explained

we have not placed too much faith in meritocracy, since the processes and systems in Singapore appear to be sufficiently objective.	
However, those from lower income households might still argue that we have placed too much faith in meritocracy due to the fact that meritocracy in Singapore disproportionately benefits those who are wealthier and leads to a greater class divide in society. In East Asian societies like Singapore, the concept of face is a core element, where people are by and large driven to succeed and do well for fear of shame and embarrassment should the [opposite] occur. For Singaporean parents in particular, this has manifested in the form of a 'kiasu' mentality, where they are willing to do whatever it takes for their children to do well academically. The consequence is that the vast majority of Singaporean children attend some form of private tuition after school, with the industry being valued over a billion dollars. This is in the hopes that they would be able to gain an advantage over their peers, and do better academically. Unfortunately, this relentless race to the top has meant that children from low income households are often left behind, since their parents cannot afford to send them for private tuition (despite both putting in an equal amount of effort, and both starting off with the same talent/potential). The poorer student is thus unable to maximise their potential in life, going against the principle of meritocracy. This is bad for society in the long run. On the other hand, [others] might point to the many success stories in the media, such as Cabinet minister Chan Chung Sing, who famously grew up in a poor single parent household but was able to be awarded with a Public Service Commission Scholarship, eventually becoming an army general and later, a minister. They would say that such a story would prove that those from poorer backgrounds do indeed have the opportunity to do well in life and succeed. However, it is important to recognise that such stories are the exception and are a case of survivor bias. Most students from lower income households still face great barriers in succeeding in Singapore's education system. In particular, Chan Chun Sing grew up in an era where most people were relatively poorer, and the effects on wealth on meritocracy were not as pronounced as they are today. Therefore, we have placed too much faith in expecting meritocracy to promote social mobility.	Ability/talent should be included in the equation as that is what meritocracy here rewards, rather than effort alone Missing link: how does the inability to maximise potential go against the principle of meritocracy? What aspect of meritocracy, precisely, is in question? This is a very promising analytical angle about how there have been changes over time about the amount of faith placed in meritocracy being warranted A tighter link to why the disproportionate access to extra-curricular support distorts meritocracy will enhance the argument
Furthermore, we have also placed too much faith in meritocracy in Singapore as it is too fixated on academic merit which inhibits those talented in areas like the arts and sports [from excelling]. Back in the day, this may have been justified due to Singapore being a Third World country, when poverty and [unemployment] were pressing issues. It is no surprise that the state would want to focus on academic performance so that people would be able to find better-paying jobs and enjoy a greater standard of living. [In those days], the arts and sports were seen as inessential and those who wanted to pursue them would be mocked by many Singaporeans who felt that there was no future in these fields. However, Singapore today is a prosperous country, which can arguably afford to focus more on non-academic domains. Granted, the government has established schools such as the Singapore Sports School and School of The Arts to allow talented students to pursue their passions. The Direct Admissions Scheme also allows schools to admit students based on non-academic domains. Yet, societal mindsets and expectations still persist, and those who decide to pursue the arts or sports encounter an uphill battle to find jobs in their fields that offer salaries comparable to other industries and are underpaid as a result.	It might be beneficial to explore if these assumptions are, in fact, true. Consider Jek Yeun Thong and LKY, who, from independence, saw value in allocating resources to develop culture (music, dance, literature) and sport (both mass participation and elite) Time should be

<i>Note: no conclusion</i> <i>(Jack Gin, 19-U5)</i>	managed better to enable completion of the essay
---	---

10 'Banning vice is the most effective way to solve social problems.' Discuss.

<i>This response is competent in showing a good understanding of the subject matter, with some good insights raised about the limitations of banning vice and how it compares to other available measures to tackle social problems. However, a crucial problem to address is that the arguments are not well-exemplified by concrete examples, while the examples which are brought in cover only a narrow scope of drug usage. Blank assertions, no matter how insightful they are, will lack credibility, and this is the case with this interesting and confidently argued but poorly substantiated piece.</i>	
Vice is a reflection of a society's [most deeply rooted] problems. Crime rates are usually higher in poorer communities, which lead many to associate social problems with vice and the human propensity for sin. As such, many policymakers treat the banning of vice as the most effective solution to help lift communities out of poverty, and to restore law and order to impoverished neighbourhoods. This fails to address the systemic problems which give rise to vice, and leads me to believe that banning vice is ineffective on its own. I posit that a more community-driven approach, supported by government programmes are necessary, and more effective in alleviating social problems in the long run.	Context-setting does show an understanding of the relevant issues, but the first two sentences do not cohere Overall thesis statement is clear and nuanced
While vice and social problems are intrinsically linked, vice does not directly cause the rise of social problems, but is rather a symptom of them. When individuals are battered by continual hardship, and given little opportunity to succeed, they are much more likely to turn to vice. Once they feel that their end of the social contract has not been honoured, they have little incentive to abide by it. The rise of alcohol and drug abuse are a result of social struggles which have confounded individuals, and reflect the desire to escape. It is hence unfair to correlate vice [with] societal problems, as the truth is the reverse. Societal problems are rooted in the systems and structure which provide the foundation for society. It is no mere coincidence that rates of crime and substance abuse are higher in poorer neighbourhoods, as they are symptomatic of the inequality [within] that community. It is hence unrealistic to expect to eradicate entrenched societal problems by outlawing the vice that results from it. Such banning fails to address the root causes of the problems in the first place.	Topic sentence needs to be framed to address the question directly The point about social contract is an interesting idea, but it needs to be fleshed out further to make sense Paragraph lacks an example to illustrate the argument
Furthermore, bans prove to be ineffective without any type of mindset change. The United States declared a "war on drugs" in the 1980s, clamping down hard on drug abuse and smuggling. Despite countless arrests and incarcerations, drug use is still prevalent in the US today. As long as the demand for vice persists, black markets will always exist to fulfill that demand. Moreover, the war on drugs has further exacerbated the inequality and systemic racism in the US as blacks are more likely to get arrested for [possession] of drugs than whites. The inherent racial prejudice of the system disproportionately harmed the black community, widening the divide in America. That said, bans could still be useful, but only when there are concerted efforts to influence the mindsets of the people. Singapore's rate of drug use is incredibly low, and this is a result of the harsh punishments for its consumption and possession. Singaporeans are ingrained with the mindset that drugs are harmful at a	The argument is valid, but the explanation of the examples should mention mindset change For further consideration: what is the significance of such racial prejudice on existing social problems? Not clear that this is necessarily the reason why. The

young age, and influenced by their conservative Asian culture. The mindsets of Singaporeans allowed the ban to be effective, which may not be the case elsewhere. Even then, vice does not play an influential role in Singapore's social problems, so it is difficult to ascertain if the bans really were effective in alleviating social problems. Bans are thus ineffective in solving societal problems by themselves, as they require [a] mindset change to truly yield results.	effectiveness of bans might also be about effective legal enforcement, not just the beliefs of Singaporeans
To overcome the challenges of social inability, racial inequality, high rates of substance abuse, and other social problems, a community-centered approach is necessary. In the 1980s, Switzerland was also experiencing a drug crisis, with an exponential rise in heroin addiction. Instead of harshly clamping down on the problem, they opened up drug rehabilitation centres, with access to clean and safe heroin. This [drastically] reduced the mortality rate from infections [stemming from] unclean needles and assisted in the rehabilitation of addicts. Today, Switzerland's rate of substance abuse is barely noticeable due to such schemes, which were a result of feedback from the community. The Swiss took input at the grassroots level, which allowed them to engineer a more strategic response to addiction, rather than just locking them up. Simply putting an addict in jail does little to tackle their addiction beyond putting them into a state of withdrawal. Ultimately, a ground-up strategy is crucial, since the community understands its own needs best through their firsthand experiences. This does not just apply [to] drugs, as community input is vital in tackling any type of social problem. Any approach to [amending] social problems requires analysis of the community, and using blanket policies is idealistic at best. When it comes to deeply-rooted problems like racial profiling or the poverty in a community, the government needs to actively seek the advice from the community. These complex problems require nuance to effectively tackle, and outright banning the symptoms of this is ineffective. Therefore, a community-driven approach is more effective than a ban, since it targets the [root cause] of the issues more accurately.	Again, topic sentence needs to be framed to address the comparative element in the question A relevant example but it could be explained more clearly - why is it that they stopped abusing drugs once they got access to safe heroin? Some good insight, but could be more precise in explaining what a community approach would entail (e.g. education? rehabilitation?)
Lastly, education is essential for sustainable long-term change. It is essential to educate communities in order for them to work their way out of the quagmire of poverty. Education enables the next generation, helping them to access better paying jobs to lift themselves out [of poverty]. Education empowers people by giving them more perspectives, and [make them more aware] of the systemic problems which plague them. Having a more educated community allows campaigns for change to be much more potent, due to the support the movement can receive. Education also helps communities become more tolerant, and less racially biased. By shaping the mindsets of people, the society is better able to tackle social problems. While education takes time to effect meaningful change, it is vital in eradicating the social problems which shackle [these] people in society. Beyond the ground-up initiatives, the government also needs to step in to change problematic systems. They need to support programmes which build the community, such as building more schools, community centres, and other public infrastructure. The government's vast amount of resources can be used to invest in the people, so as to empower them and to give them the chance to overcome their social problems. All of this is only possible with education, to shift the mindsets of people from being disenfranchised to actively seeking to spark change and [eliminate] social problems. A simple ban cannot achieve the social momentum needed to alleviate pervasive social problems, which is why education is much more effective.	An insightful and thoughtful paragraph that shows clear comparison to bans, but again there is a lack of examples to support the argument Note that race is not the only divisive issue in societies

Ultimately, social problems are too broad and extensive for any single measure to eradicate. Banning vices only manages to cover up the problems on the surface level, but allow[s] them to continue perpetuating. Ground-up and top-down measures are necessary in order to truly get rid of the social problems that are inherent to the system. Banning vice is definitely not the most effective means of solving social problems. Rather, we need community-centric strategies that better cater to communities that are [receiving help]. (Leslie Yip, 19-14)	Conclusion is simple, though clear in reiterating arguments raised
---	---

12 To what extent is keeping pets still justifiable?

<i>A well-controlled response that presents a detailed analysis of the relevant issues in this question. Ideas are consistently well-supported by apt illustration, showing a uncommonly good and wide understanding of the subject matter. This is a fine example of choosing the right question for oneself and dealing with it well, though the argumentation can be sharpened with clearer topic sentences framed to address the question. With the exception of some clumsy sentences at the start of the essay in the introduction, the writing achieves fluency and clarity. There is also space for growth in the elements of organisation and style, where the ideas could be structured to do more than just follow each other in a numbered list, and tackle the incongruencies in the writing, which varies from having a confident argumentative tone at some points to stiff, formulaic writing in the conclusion.</i>	
Throughout the course of human history, animals and humans have shared a peculiar bond - tamed and bred to be livestock, farm animals or companions, the long standing relationship between humans and animals have led to centuries of domestication, giving rise to a very specific role many animals are born into: to be pets, [where] many animals [are] kept for the sole purpose of companionship. Yet, [there are] arguments against the keeping of animals as pets, as people posit that they should instead be allowed to grow up and roam free in the wild, rather than have their naturalistic instincts repressed in the homes of human families. Is keeping pets justifiable? I believe so [to a large extent].	Context-setting shows an understanding of the key issues, but clarity is compromised by long and convoluted sentences Providing the reasons for the stand will enable the reader to follow the arguments better
Firstly, the large majority of pets owned by people are of distinct species and breeds that have been the product of generations of selective breeding and domestication. This may be seen from the fact that dogs, which are the pets owned by the distinct majority of the world population, were [the result] of centuries of domestication of wolves; a long genetic project undertaken by humans since the age of the cavemen. As such, much of the wild instincts of [dogs'] ancestors have long since vanished from their domestic counterparts - it would therefore be fallible to argue for animal species that have long since been domesticated to be released and made to fend [for themselves] in the wild, when much of the instincts possessed by their wild ancestors, such as a tense alertness to their surroundings and specific characteristics like hardened hooves or unique, rougher and thicker coats to protect from nature's wild elements, have long since vanished from the pet. Arabian and Thoroughbred horses, for instance, cannot be expected to be able to survive and thrive in the wild as years of selective breeding [have] left their gleaming coats thin and unable to adequately protect against harsh winds, [while] their hooves [are] prone to infection and susceptible to injury and sprain against uneven ground. Hence, the keeping of pets is made justifiable owing to	Topic sentence needs to be framed to address the question directly Apt illustration using different animal species, showing very good understanding of the subject matter

the fact that due to years of domestication, these animals can no longer be said to be compatible to [survival] in the wild - casting them out of our hands and into the rapidly diminishing wilderness therefore serves more as a bane to the helpless, unadjusted pets, rather than as a [gift of] freedom for these animals.	Concluding sentence is clear and well-phrased
Secondly, the keeping of pets is justified as it has allowed for animals to fill an essential role of companionship and support that oftentimes fellow human beings fail to fit as well into. Pets who serve as service animals for people struggling with mental illnesses such as anxiety, or physical handicaps such as blindness, deafness or epilepsy are integral emotional and physical support. These animals oftentimes are depended on to help their owners live relatively independent lives, relieving the feelings of helplessness, inferiority and guilt one may experience should they have a human partner tend to them continuously, [especially] when human caregivers may grow resentful and impatient. Service animals are much less likely to resent, lose patience or abandon their owners. In return [for] the devotion of these animals, service animals receive loving attentive care by their owners, who they share a strong bond with. Keeping pets as essential service animals can therefore be justified, as it marks a human-animal relationship that benefits both parties and greatly aids those with disabilities. For example, there have been countless stories of service dogs saving the lives of their human owners, by alerting people around them of their owner's seizures, or of service animals providing irreplaceable emotional support that has rescued their owners from feelings of anxiety at their incapacitation.	Presents a valid argument that is well-explained and substantiated This paragraph ends quite clumsily with the explanation of an example, when it is important to draw links back to the argument presented in this paragraph
Some may argue that while animals can be kept as farm animals, bred to perform a specific function, keeping them as pets merely serve[s] to place these animals in a vulnerable position where they are subjected to the whims and fancies of irresponsible owners, who keep them only as long as these animals capture their attention, discarding and abandoning the pet once these animals fail to interest them. Goldfish, for instance, are often subjected to much cruelty at the hands of careless owners. Underestimated due to their small size, they are often kept in small, under-oxygenated tanks that serve as a hotbed for bacteria to grow and thrive in, as well as allowing for the rapid accumulation of toxic ammonia that is often not brought down due to a lack of water changes. As such, most goldfish live only a month in captivity, when they have the capacity to live for five to ten years. While goldfish have the potential to grow to the size of one's lifespan, most have stunted growth due to swimming in a small tank, or die before they reach adulthood. Additionally, animal shelters hold many dogs who have been bought by impulsive owners, only to be left abandoned at roadsides where these owners realise the extent of care a dog requires. Cases of animal abuse and abandonment run rampant, and as such the keeping of pets [is] discouraged and deemed unjustifiable, due to the poor treatment of pets at the hands of their owners.	Again, a valid argument that is well supported by relevant illustration, leading to a watertight paragraph

However, despite the unforgivable cruelty done by human hands to the lives of animals, the cases of pet abuse make up a small minority of the scores of pets kept throughout the world. To a larger extent, pets are loved and doted on by humans who regard them as part of the family. Furthermore, due to technological advancements and the rise in literacy rates globally, information on pet care is made readily available and accessed by most people who read up on pet care before deciding to buy a pet. Animal shelters also impose strict regulations on potential owners, requiring them to prove their ability and dedication to raising an animal before they are allowed to adopt, with home check-ins made even after the animal is adopted to ensure that the animal continues to [be treated well]. Pet shops are required to educate owners on care for their pets before sale, and various animal welfare organisations such as the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (SPCA) in the Singapore context conduct[s] frequent talks in schools to educate students on the responsibilities that come with keeping an animal. Hence, with various measures put in place on a national scale to ensure that the lives of pets are well taken care of, it remains that keeping pets is justifiable so long as these animals are well-cared for, as they provide support and teach pet owners lessons on responsibility, love and compassion for lives others may view as lesser and not of significance.	Clear rebuttal flowing from the previous argument (minority vs. majority), with the rebuttal point being well supported by concrete examples that illustrate how such abuse is really the exception rather than the norm given the safeguards put in place to prevent these problems
In conclusion, I believe that there are justifiable reasons [why] pets should be kept. Most pets are of animal species that have long since been domesticated, making them [unfit] for living in the natural environment that their ancestors had thrived in. Additionally, pets can be essential service animals that [alleviate] and aid the disabled, and are emotional support systems that humans lean [on] and learn from as well. That being said, keeping a pet is justifiable only as long as that animal is well-cared for and loved - pets should be taken away from abusive owners and relocated. <i>(Chloe Wong, 19-02)</i>	Conclusion is simple but clear in reiterating the lines of arguments, and could have been ended with something more impactful to close the essay

JC2 June Common Test Paper 2

In response to EJC 2020 JC2 JCT P2:

Ann T. Reed argues that libraries have lost their relevance while Lye Bee Lian believes that they are more valuable than ever in today's societies. How important are libraries for you and your society, and how far would you agree or disagree with opinions expressed in these two passages?

Response 1

This response is overall a fairly competent response, with some good insights about the modern Singapore context and how that affects the importance of libraries. However, opportunities for insights could be better and more consistently leveraged in fleshing out the whys and specific facts/trends that lend credence to why libraries remain essential in Singapore. The explanation of text references and how they frame each body paragraph could also be clearer so as to allow more ideas and examples to coalesce around a central argument made by the authors, creating a more coherent and complete response to the passages.

Libraries are [ubiquitous] around [my society, Singapore]. Almost every [public housing] town has one. Singapore is a highly digitalised [country], [where we are] able to access resources online with a simple touch of a button. However, libraries remain crucial for me personally and for my society. Being a student myself, and an avid reader, I have an unquenchable thirst for knowledge. However, much of that knowledge I desire is often found [in] books which are difficult to find in bookstores, or [] are prohibitively expensive. However, public libraries in Singapore have a wide array of books and as a result I often find myself turning to them to [satisfy] my reading needs. Libraries also serve an important role in my society, inculcating a love for reading in children from a young age, often through book reading sessions on weekends. This engenders a love [for] reading which is necessary to [grow] an informed nation, ready for the challenges of the 21st century. [The] elderly also find the library [to be] a welcoming place for them to read in their free time, and it [enables] them to access online government services such as social aid programmes and to find out about government payouts such as the Pioneer Generation package for the elderly in Singapore. This [supports the continued relevance] of libraries both to me and my society. [Hence], I am inclined to agree more with Lye's views than Reed's, [as] Lye's view that libraries remain critical to our societies resonates more with me as compared to Reed's attempt to assert that libraries have lost their relevance.

Some relevant contextualisation to the SG context

The comparison between libraries and bookstores could be clearer - the point is premised on the fact that libraries provide free access to these expensive and rare resources

Good use of a range of examples, from personal to societal, explaining how libraries are able to provide a meaningful space and meet the needs of different demographic groups, although the examples could be more concrete (e.g. what kind of reading sessions) to give the ideas more credibility

In line 10, Lye opines that libraries serve as an important hub of resources for all. I agree with this view. Libraries often have a vast [array] of books, all of which can be [borrowed] by local citizens without cost, enabling all to access the bank of knowledge that libraries contain. [In] my society, Singapore, public libraries enable citizens to [borrow] up to eight books per individual, with a vast collection of books available, ranging from fictional fairy tales to academic journals steeped in discussion of Aristotle's works. This enables all citizens, regardless of socio-economic position, to be able to access such information in spite of their inability to afford them. However, Reed, on the contrary, believes that the falling price of books would render the role of libraries in this regard [less relevant]. While this may be true for some, it would be unimaginable to expect students receiving subsidised food at a school canteen to afford books, no matter how low the cost, from bookshops in order to [complete] their reading. Although Singapore is a high-income nation, there do exist low-income families who would be hard-pressed to afford books from bookstores. In addition, it would be equally hard to expect liberal arts students in Singapore to fork out over a hundred dollars for academic books just to complete their syllabus, which they could currently find for free at public libraries. Hence, libraries serve a crucial role in enabling the public to access information without cost.	Incomplete TR - the idea of accessible and free resources is missing from the quote, even though it is addressed in the paragraph Discussion of the SG context could be developed further: what societal trends (e.g. inequality) do we observe that make libraries' role in providing these resources without cost doubly important? The discussion could be more explicit in stating how libraries are valuable in providing such resources given how some resources are very pricey
In addition, Lye also states that libraries serve an important role in upholding the truth in the face of increasing fake news. This, I agree with. With increasing content generation online, the issue lies in the ability of anyone to generate information and post it online rendering it a cesspool of half-truths and complete lies. These issues of fake news have plagued Singapore in recent years, with [the] Parliament forming a Select Committee on online falsehoods to tackle this issue. Contrast this with public libraries in Singapore, which carefully [screen] content [released] for public viewing in Singapore, ensuring a curated selection of information and filtering of any falsehoods or content which may be inflammatory. Singapore public libraries also hold workshops to further educate the public about online falsehoods, with posters put [up] to encourage the public to read information given to them critically, so that they [will] be equipped with the necessary skill sets to navigate the wealth of information they have access to. This contrasts with Reed's views that the online sphere can replace libraries [... incomplete response]. <i>(Sit Jie Ren, 19-A6)</i>	Some relevant discussion of the SG context in terms of how the government has sought to tackle the problem of fake news, and how public libraries do their part within this movement. However, the discussion could explain the place of libraries in this picture, as State institutions funded by the government that follow the State agenda Examples about how libraries educate the public in identifying fake news need to be more concrete

Response 2

This response presents some good insights and ideas about how libraries are ideal third places, where pathos is skilfully deployed in explaining the concerns of the Singapore context. It could benefit from more faithful attention to the selected text references, rather than just talking about the issues in abstraction - a more rigorously relevant response that addresses the selected text references will be one that is more closely engaged with the arguments made by the authors, and will be a more compelling application of the ideas raised in the passages. There are some good insights about the Singapore context, though they also need to be more fully developed to make the arguments more persuasive.

Reed argues that libraries are growing obsolete in society whereas Lye optimistically argues that they [are] becoming even more vital in the context of today. In relation to Singapore, I am of the belief that libraries continue to be of significance to my society, thus I am more inclined to agree with Lye.

Clear reasons for the stand taken could be provided. Could also deepen insight by drawing connections to relevant SG characteristics

Lye argues in paragraph 1 that ‘in increasingly fragmented societies, we need third places - places that are neither our homes nor our workplaces - like these to strengthen our communities.’ I believe that it is for the same reason that libraries are crucial for my society and am inclined to agree with her view. The image of a stratified society has a high degree of truth in Singapore, especially in our educational institutions. Singapore is of the paradigm that theoretical academic education is superior to [its] vocational counterparts, creating a hierarchy of schools and streams that students belong to. The Institute of Policy Studies [found] in 2017 [] that students from elite schools had the tendency to only make friends within that circle, contributing to educational enclaves. It is thus all the more imperative that libraries, [where] students form the majority of visitors, remain relevant in my society. During [the] examination season, I [frequently] patronise libraries for long hours each day, and [I] am just one of the many students from diverse backgrounds [who do the same]. Although interaction is rather minimal, the occasional sharing of charging cables and calculators with complete strangers does inspire kindness that transcends whatever academic affiliations one belongs to. Libraries are one of the rare ‘third places’ where a diversity of Singaporean students congregate together, [fostering] a sense of mutual understanding and respect as we quietly support one another, [heading] towards a common goal. Thus, I largely agree with Lye’s view.

Some good discussion of SG characteristics in response to the selected TR. Discussion is well-supported by relevant statistics, giving the arguments greater credibility

Use of a relevant, fluently expressed personal anecdote, with clear attempts to extrapolate this personal experience to what other Singaporean youths encounter. This provides personal insight while also accounting for its applicability beyond the writer’s experience.

On the other hand, Reed argues that libraries have lost their relevance as their ‘buildings fall into disrepair and are being left behind for the more colourful attractions of the digital age’. I [largely disagree with her stance], as Singapore’s libraries [are] actively going against this supposed trend, proving their sustained importance [in] my society. In an ingenious urban planning decision to tackle land scarcity, the Singapore government has integrated many libraries in the higher levels of shopping malls, ensuring that they are kept attractive to modern [Singaporeans]. Moreover, libraries in Singapore are equipped with many of the personalised services that Reed touts [in bookstores] such as cafes and colourful children’s corners with digital infographics. Admittedly, new alluring alternatives have emerged such as quaint cozy bookstores that dot certain districts such as Tiong Bahru. However, these cater to a different clientele of predominantly teenagers with an eye for aesthetics and a taste for urban exploration. For many heartlanders, these libraries nestled conveniently in shopping malls continue to [be] both an accessible and [economically] attractive destination for leisure time, especially for families with children. Thus, Reed’s argument does not cohere with my society’s [experience] as libraries continue to be of importance to the masses. (Grace Wee, 19-01)	Interesting observation about SG, although exactly why such a decision is ingenious could be further developed Good content understanding about how bookstores could be compelling alternatives to libraries. Insightful and balanced discussion about how they might appeal to different groups of people. However, this discussion lacks relevance to digital attractions, which was the TR selected, and this should be the focus instead
---	--

Response 3

<i>The overall response is well-developed and coherent on the macro level, presenting some good insights and observations about the changing context of Singapore and subsequently the changing role of libraries and how that affects their importance. While some ideas could be more consistently developed to fully flesh out the chain of reasoning, the overall trajectory of the response shows strengths in its understanding of the author's arguments in both passages, the AQ requirements (particularly the elements of time and currency), and meaningful engagement with the local context.</i>	
Reed believes that in this modern age, libraries are becoming obsolete and hence should not be preserved while Lye contends that the need for libraries in societies is more important than ever.	An ineffective introduction that merely paraphrases the preamble. The introduction should instead focus on fleshing out the specific issues to be discussed in the AQ response
Firstly, Reed argues that 'as we get more prosperous, we learn on public services less' (line 24). Reed firmly believes that as a society progresses and its community becomes more prosperous in terms of wealth accumulation, public services such as the library that were previously provided for the large masses who cannot afford it will face a decline in demand. Hence, libraries have lost their relevance and are no longer important in society. I agree with Reed's views to a small extent with regards to the declining importance of libraries. During Singapore's early years [in the post-independence period], the country was a small island-state that was severely lacking in natural resources. This led our founding fathers to invest in the only capital our nation had - its citizens. Our early leaders firmly believed in the need for literacy and education, to increase the potential of Singapore's human capital so as	Good context-setting - particularly insightful in drawing reflections from Singapore's historical experience, and how that shapes the national values and in turn the importance of libraries as a source of and center for knowledge

to survive in the global economy. One way to achieve it was through the provision of public library services to encourage more citizens to read and gain more informed perspectives through various books. Thus, libraries were extremely essential in the past as a tool for education. However, as Reed posits, as the Singapore society became more prosperous and advanced, the initial need for public libraries no longer [exists]. With an extremely highly educated population, there was no longer a need for the Singaporean government to provide and promote libraries as a space for reading. Many affluent households could easily purchase the books they were interested in rather than head down to the public library to borrow it, thus leaning on public services less. However, [because of] the declining importance of libraries in [Singapore], libraries are constantly evolving to keep up with our changing demands. Libraries now have library bus services where these mobile libraries will visit primary schools to share books with children, [teaching them] the importance of cultivating good reading habits. The novelty of a moving library bus will excite young children and thus encourage them to browse through books and read more. Hence, despite the larger mature population in Singapore experiencing a decline in the need for public library services, some aspects of the library, such as the mobile bus services, remain important in [the Singapore society]. Thus, I agree with Reed only to a small extent.	Good engagement with the TR, but the claim that many affluent households prefer to purchase books could be better supported by concrete examples Good insight in explaining how libraries have adapted their roles to remain relevant in different ways. While the example is a good example of libraries innovating, it does not make for the best rebuttal, since it does not address the idea of prosperity and how that affects reliance on public libraries. It would be better to also consider societal inequality and argue why libraries help provide resources for the underprivileged
Conversely, Lye argues that 'libraries' deliberately designed new literacy campaigns explicitly guide users to evaluate a source's reliability, bias and accuracy, creating a more informed community able to flourish in today's sometimes overwhelming online world'. I agree with Lye to a large extent as the world is heading towards a new digital age where online content can be [accessed] and contributed by any user and it is hard to ascertain the reliability of online information. Libraries hence play an important role in advocating for and teaching media literacy skills [to] teenagers and the elderly, the two most vulnerable groups in society. The Singapore National Library [Board] has designed the 'S.U.R.E' campaign and framework and conducted media literacy workshops across secondary schools and junior colleges to promote such media literacy skills. Rather than being obsolete, I strongly agree with Lye that libraries are more critical than ever in today's social landscape. The [National Library Board's ability] to adapt its role in society while remaining as a 'champion of truth' (line 30) represents the Singapore spirit on how to remain adaptable in the face of an ever changing global climate. Despite the media literacy courses by [NLB] being only available to a niche segment of society, the library is also increasingly working on connecting and reaching out to other segments of society to teach this new life skill required to navigate this digital age. Hence, libraries and their ever evolving roles help it reform its importance and value in Singapore society and I largely agree with Lye's views.	A specific example is used to support the point, although ideas could be better developed (e.g. why are teenagers and the elderly particularly vulnerable groups that are especially susceptible to fake news?) These are relevant observations built on an understanding of the changing context but they need to be better supported by concrete examples (e.g. what kinds of programmes?), and further evaluated to deepen analysis (e.g. why is such expansion seen?)

Overall, while traditional means of libraries might be losing its importance in society, the adaptability of Singapore libraries help [them] maintain [their] importance to me and my society. Hence, I agree with Lye's views to a greater degree. (Marie Leo, 19-01)	A succinct but rather abrupt summary of the main issues discussed in the response. It could incorporate aspects of the counter-perspective
---	--

Response 4

<i>An insightful and carefully argued response that demonstrates maturity of thought, nuance, insight and close attention to the requirements of both passages and the question. Both body paragraphs examined the role of the library in the context of various groups in contemporary Singapore society and recognised its differing value and importance to each of these groups. However, the arguments could be better signposted via discourse markers so that the reader can more effectively follow the train of reasoning and insight.</i>	
Considering Singapore's context, I find libraries extremely important in allowing people to gain information and [develop] new skills. Thus, I agree [with] Lye Bee Lian to a greater extent and disagree with Reed.	Introduction seems somewhat abrupt, providing a clear overall stand but no reasons for it
Reed claims that "when access to information is now widely available and compelling alternatives to the library have emerged, holding onto outdated institutions is unrealistic and we need to let libraries go", implying that there is little point in keeping the library if their alternatives can fulfill its function. [However], I do not believe that Singapore is ready to let go of the library in favour of bookstores and online resources yet. Unlike in the author's society where bookstores are commonplace and encourage customers to read the available books, bookstores in Singapore are at risk. Due to [the] pragmatic mindset of Singaporeans, many do not buy books if they can borrow for free at the library. As a result, prominent bookstores in Singapore such as Borders have since closed down due to a sheer lack of revenue from a population that seeks to obtain the same [resources] at [a] cheaper price, or in this case, completely free. Even for those who do buy books, they wish to get the utmost value from the book and are hesitant to buy books even if they are mildly damaged. Thus, bookstores rarely let customers have a coffee while reading these books within the store [for] fear of potential [damage] to their books. Thus, the 'compelling alternative' is not as compelling when considering the bookstores in Singapore. Others may claim that technology can serve as the alternative source of information and to a certain degree, I believe it to be [true] for the younger generation. Yet, our ageing population struggles with online information and have often been warned against such misinformation, thus they go to libraries to read the official newspapers. Public libraries in Singapore obtain newspapers in every national language daily, maintaining their relevance to the older generation who desire to keep up-to-date but may not be comfortable using online sources or [reading English sources online due to their unfamiliarity with the language]. Thus, as no strong alternatives to libraries have emerged, Singapore's libraries remain relevant.	Some good discussion about how bookstores are not truly compelling alternatives to libraries, drawing clear connections to the relevant Singapore context and supporting the arguments with concrete examples. However, there could be awareness of the evidence to the contrary: are there bookstores that sell an experience beyond just purchasing books? Broad scope, covering yet another function of libraries that is currently threatened. Some good discussion of the various experiences of different demographic groups

Additionally, while the [younger generation] may be the generation to shift to online sources of information, other features of the library [contribute to their continued importance]. Lye states, '(Libraries) enhance connections to communities by participating in programmes that libraries offer', revealing that the activities libraries organise can be important to community. Singapore's National Library Board organises regular events such as storytelling for children, English lessons for the elderly and other events to engage the community. Through volunteering at the library to help out at these events, I observed how families were visiting the libraries together. After all, these activities were designed to inculcate a love for learning and lifelong learning amongst the people. As a country that [places emphasis on] education and learning, much funding is given for these activities and parents sign their kids up for fun recreational activities where they get to learn more. While not everyone in the community joins these programmes, a significant amount of people do, and these programmes get increasingly popular.

(Nicole Lim, 19-02)

This paragraph is not as well-executed as the first. Although there is some reference to relevant SG characteristics, examples could be more concrete - naming specific events would help add authenticity

Some personal experience seems to be present, but it could have been utilised better to provide a perspective that is not immediately observable by the average visitor