

NAVIGATE

Issue #11

Eunoia Junior College
English Department
2022 General Paper

Contents

Navigate User Guide	4
Message from the 2022 GP Team	5
List of Essays and AQs	6
Essays: 2022 JC1 MYE Paper 1	9
2 'The sciences are needed more than the arts today.' To what extent is this true?	9
2 'The sciences are needed more than the arts today.' To what extent is this true?	11
2 'The sciences are needed more than the arts today.' To what extent is this true?	13
5 Is complete self-sufficiency a realistic aim for your society?	17
7 How far should the State interfere in the personal decisions of its people?	19
8 How far can schools prepare one for the real world?	20
8 How far can schools prepare one for the real world?	22
10 'War can never be justified.' Discuss.	24
AQs: 2022 JC1 MYE Paper 2	26
Response 1	26
Response 2	27
Response 3	27
Response 4	28
Response 5	30
Essays: 2022 JC2 MYE Paper 1	31
1 To what extent can governments be held accountable for the failure of their nations?	31
2 Assess the importance of the humanities in a technology-dominated world.	33
3 'Ignorance is no longer an excuse for inaction.' Discuss.	35
3 'Ignorance is no longer an excuse for inaction.' Discuss.	37
4 To what extent has your society embraced environmental sustainability?	39
4 To what extent has your society embraced environmental sustainability?	42
4 To what extent has your society embraced environmental sustainability?	44
4 To what extent has your society embraced environmental sustainability?	47
4 To what extent has your society embraced environmental sustainability?	49
6 Examine the claim that the media confuses more than it informs.	51
6 Examine the claim that the media confuses more than it informs.	53
6 Examine the claim that the media confuses more than it informs.	54
6 Examine the claim that the media confuses more than it informs.	56
7 Is it fair to expect corporations to be socially responsible?	59
8 To what extent is your society a desirable place to live in?	61
8 To what extent is your society a desirable place to live in?	62
8 To what extent is your society a desirable place to live in?	64
8 To what extent is your society a desirable place to live in?	67

9 'Governments should prioritise the economy above other concerns.' Comment.	69
9 'Governments should prioritise the economy above other concerns.' Comment.	71
9 'Governments should prioritise the economy above other concerns.' Comment.	75
9 'Governments should prioritise the economy above other concerns.' Comment.	77
9 'Governments should prioritise the economy above other concerns.' Comment.	79
11 'Small states have no influence over large states.' Do you agree?	81
11 'Small states have no influence over large states.' Do you agree	84
11 'Small states have no influence over large states.' Do you agree	87
12 Discuss the value of memory in your society.	88
12 Discuss the value of memory in your society.	91
12 Discuss the value of memory in your society.	93
12 Discuss the value of memory in your society.	95
AQs: 2022 JC2 MYE Paper 2	98
Response 1	98
Response 2	100
AQs: J2 Term 3 Timed Assignment	102
Response 1	102
Response 2	104
Response 3	105
Response 4	106

Navigate User Guide

What is Navigate?

Navigate is a curated collection of essays and responses to the Application Question written by Eunoians like yourselves. In most cases, these pieces have been written under timed conditions, and except for a smidgen of grammatical polishing, they are left as they come. It is our hope that their raw edges, as much as their skilfully crafted facets, will serve as authentic and empowering learning resources. To help you discover these, the Navigate Team provides a preamble containing a broad overview of the strengths and flaws of each piece, as well as annotations to direct you to key features. What we hope you will take away from Navigate is not mere mimicry, but a deeper understanding of how good writing is crafted, and that you will make these skills your own.

How do I use Navigate?

While your tutors may use some of these resources in class or direct you to them, much can also be gained from reading them independently. To get the most out of your independent reading, consider the guiding points below.

What to read

- Not everything! Save time for reading your other packages, the news and opinion articles.
- Often it is a good idea to read the essays for the questions which you have attempted or would potentially attempt.
- Scan the preambles for features or parts of writing that you struggle with or wish to strengthen your understanding of.
- The ones which look interesting!

How to read

- Read the preamble before you read any text, because it will point out key strengths and areas for improvement that you should keep in mind as you read.
- Be aware of both macro and micro features of the text. You can read closely to notice the details, but you can also read to make sense of the bigger picture. Toggle between these different levels to recognise how the details fit together to make the argument effectively.
- Read actively and make annotations of your own. These can be of:
 - Writing strategies
 - Good ideas and examples
 - Argument development strategies
 - Structure and organisation

Message from the 2022 GP Team

Dear Eunoians,

“Asking a question is the simplest way of focusing thinking...
asking the right question may be the most important part of thinking.”

- Edward de Bono

In the study of General Paper, you encounter many questions which invite deeper consideration of the many issues of significance in the world we live in. They are indeed a way of focusing thinking - springboards for young people like yourselves to encounter the complexities of the world we inhabit and to engage with relevant perspectives. They offer the opportunity to put your views on trial and thus sharpen them.

Do not, however, be a mere recipient of questions posed to you. Good writing is a product of good thinking, and good thinking requires active questioning, both in the process of acquiring and making sense of knowledge, and in the productive process of expressing what you know. The discipline to ask questions as you work is what focuses writing, and pushes it to be more than just a passing thought. Despite the fact that writing is often an individual endeavour, the art of questioning - of both cognition and metacognition - gives you a voice with which to check on your own thinking.

Building on the last issue in which we suggested questions to uncover the way your peers have written good responses, we turn our attention to the inner process of self-monitoring and questioning while you write. As you read the responses in this issue, compare the writers' decisions against the questions you asked and the decisions you have made in your own attempts:

- Which of my ideas best answers the question? In what order do they make the most sense?
- What does my reader know about this issue, and what do I have to tell them?
- What will someone who thinks differently from me have to say about my ideas? Why will they think so?
- Which details and ideas do I highlight in my illustration to ensure it supports my point?
- How do I convey my thoughts most effectively, compellingly and memorably?

Such reflection and self-monitoring is unquestionably challenging, but making a habit of them will develop in you an internal guide for independent thought. Beyond the task of argumentation, we hope the questions you encounter in the subject give you reason to look more deeply into your experiences, and that the issues that matter stay with you.

All the best,
Your GP Teachers ♥♥

List of Essays and AQs

2022 JC1 Mid-Year Examinations Paper 1

- 1 In today's world, can the young still learn from the old?
 - Not represented
- 2 'The sciences are needed more than the arts today.' To what extent is this true?
 - Caitlyn Marie Tey, 22-E2
 - Lim En Jia, Chloe, 22-U2
 - Benedict Keng, 22-U3
- 3 'The government's decisions should always be based on the needs of the majority.' Discuss.
 - Not represented
- 4 To what extent can small countries influence world affairs?
 - Not represented
- 5 Is complete self-sufficiency a realistic aim for your society?
 - Michelle Yap Mae Lyn, 22-A2
- 6 In the digital age, how important are real-world interactions?
 - Not represented
- 7 How far should the State interfere in the personal decisions of its people?
 - Nicole Chua Ying Zi, 22-E3
- 8 How far can schools prepare one for the real world?
 - Cheong Kai Xin, 22-O2
 - Ethan Foo, 22-O2
- 9 To what extent should sports in your society focus on local rather than foreign talent?
 - Not represented
- 10 'War can never be justified.' Discuss.
 - Zhang Ruijie, 22-I5
- 11 In a globalised world, how important is national identity?
 - Not represented
- 12 To what extent do appearances matter in today's world?
 - Not represented

2022 JC1 Mid-Year Examinations Paper 2 AQ

Response 1 Caitlyn Marie Tey, 22-E2

- Response 2 Howra Manasawala, 22-O1
Response 3 Elsa Wong, 22-O2
Response 4 Ng Tian Xin Keana, 22-O5
Response 5 Benedict Keng, 22-U3

2022 JC2 Mid-Year Examinations Paper 1

- 1 To what extent can governments be held accountable for the failure of their nations?
 - Davey Loka, 21-A1

- 2 Assess the importance of the humanities in a technology-dominated world.
 - Chan Ning, 21-I3

- 3 ‘Ignorance is no longer an excuse for inaction.’ Discuss.
 - Im Sing Lu, 21-O4
 - Kaylee Chang, 21-O4

- 4 To what extent has your society embraced environmental sustainability?
 - Tiffany Lim, 21-E3
 - Nicole Won, 21-I3
 - Jacynthe Liew, 21-O3
 - Joey Chia, 21-O4
 - Tan Jay Han, 21-O4

- 5 Is national identity still necessary in today’s world?
 - Not represented

- 6 Examine the claim that the media confuses more than it informs.
 - Avril Lim, 21-A1
 - Ashley Koh, 21-A1 (2 paragraphs)
 - Clarice Tan, 21-O6
 - Kaw Chu Ting, 21-U1

- 7 Is it fair to expect corporations to be socially responsible?
 - Cheang Hui Xin, 21-A1

- 8 To what extent is your society a desirable place to live in?
 - Ong En Yee, 21-O3 (2 paragraphs)
 - Ariel Oh, 21-O3
 - Charmaine Chua, 21-O6
 - Jerome Foo, 21-U1

- 9 ‘Governments should prioritise the economy above other concerns.’ Comment.
 - Sim Khok Yin, 21-I2
 - S Sanjana Rajan, 21-O1
 - Tivya Nhing Balasubramaniam, 21-O3

- Wah Tee Liat, 21-O4
- Lau QingRui, 21-U1

10 Should volunteering always be encouraged?

- Not represented

11 'Small states have no influence over large states.' Do you agree?

- Guillermo Caryl Kristine Co, 21-E6
- Joann Kwek, 21-I2
- Justin Ho, 21-O6

12 Discuss the value of memory in your society.

- Harel Tan, 21-I2
- Kyran Narayanan, 21-I2
- Yap Kah Him, 21-I3
- Kundala Vineeta Shankar, 21-O2

2022 JC2 Mid-Year Examinations Paper 2 AQ

Response 1 Koh Cheng Xiang, 21-O4

Response 2 Im Sing Lu, 21-O4

2022 JC2 Term 3 Timed Assignment AQ

Response 1 Cameron Setiadi, 21-A2

Response 2 Tay Wei Lin, 21-E6

Response 3 Ang Shao Xu, 21-E6

Response 4 Hong Chu Yun, 21-I3

Essays: 2022 JC1 MYE Paper 1

2 'The sciences are needed more than the arts today.' To what extent is this true?

This essay was clearly reasoned with apt examples. While there was an attempt to compare the need for the sciences vs. the arts for most paragraphs, it was not done consistently throughout the response, with the comparison appearing rather superficial at times. This lack of explicit comparison resulted in the point of contention ('needed more') not always being addressed directly.

'Science provides an understanding of the universal experience, but the arts provide a universal understanding of the personal experience.' This quote by Mae C. Jemison, an astronaut, aptly describes how science and the arts play rather different roles, but not necessarily conflicting and in fact can complement each other. In actuality, however, the importance of science and that of the arts remains a divisive topic that is hotly debated by many in today's society. Contenders of the argument that science is immeasurably more imperative than the arts today postulate that science is absolutely essential in countering the multitude of threats we face today, while those who take the opposite stand reason that the arts play an equally irreplaceable role in ensuring our psychological well-being, nurturing creativity and acting as a counter to the unfeeling nature of science. In my opinion, I concur with the latter as I believe to a large extent that the sciences are not needed more than the arts today, in fact they both play equally essential roles.

Effective introduction that unpacks the underlying issue and point of contention.

Detractors of the argument that the arts are not needed more than the sciences assert that in an increasingly volatile world that faces greater physical threats of natural disasters, the sciences are strongly relied upon to come up with solutions to mitigate the impact of such disasters, something the arts are incapable of. Natural hazards such as typhoons or tsunamis have undoubtedly plagued the world in higher frequency due to the worsening climate situation, while a burgeoning world population has closed the distance between humans and wildlife so much so that certain areas become ripe grounds for the mingling of human and animal diseases, giving birth to unprecedented diseases such as COVID-19 that could spiral into a global pandemic. In such situations, the power of science is leveraged upon to solve or at least lessen such problems - scientific methods developed to predict and monitor weather patterns can warn against the beginning of typhoons, while deep-sea sensors can alert people as to when a tsunami is imminent, reducing casualties. In the case of emerging diseases, vaccines - developed via scientific research - are an essential part of the counter-response. At the start of 2020, with the COVID-19 virus extending its unforgiving tentacles to numerous regions of the world, there was a scramble to develop a vaccine against this dangerous menace. A multitude of vaccines started emerging not long after, with Pfizer, Moderna and Novavax just a few among the producers that exported vaccines worldwide to curb the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic. The success of science in this case is apparent today, with countries with high vaccination rates such as Singapore reporting lower incidences of deaths and severe cases. In contrast, the arts have largely taken a backseat during the COVID-19 pandemic - aside from providing entertainment, they do not hold much value as seen in a survey done in Singapore ranking artists as the least important occupation. As seen, the sciences are an invaluable part of the defence many countries have against the ever-evolving dangers of today's world, something the arts can provide no help with.

Why? Might want to EX further why the arts are unable to contribute in this aspect. Comparison is rather superficial otherwise.

Avoid absolute claims.

While I acknowledge that this argument holds a modicum of truth, I posit that the arts are equally as invaluable as they protect people from the psychological dangers faced today. I'm a highly stressful and competitive world, the arts provide an avenue for one to relieve the worries and stresses of everyday life. Through admiration of or participation in the arts, one can temporarily leave behind the struggles of the real world and indulge in a fictitious world of their own making, whether it be through painting, music or dance. This provides people with opportunities to recuperate mentally and emotionally, something that is desperately needed in light of the trend in declining mental health many people face. The mental benefits of engaging in the arts have been supported by a plethora of evidence, one of which is a comprehensive survey of more than 3000 research studies done by the World Health Organisation, which concluded that the arts bring about many mental and psychological benefits. The arts thus play a valuable role in ensuring the mental and psychological well-being of a population, something equally as important as protection against physical threats for sustainable progress. Therefore, through acting as a source of catharsis, the arts are a much needed escape from the anxieties of daily life - a role just as important as the aforementioned role that science plays.	How so? Where's the comparison?
Moreover, in a world where the dominion of science is growing deep and automated processes are replacing many tasks previously completed by humans, the arts through nurturing creativity in people, especially youths, greatly aid people in staying relevant to today's society. Robots and Artificial Intelligence (A.I.) developed through advancements in science have indisputably outperform humans in many areas, particularly in repetitive tasks like data sorting and processing. According to a 2019 Oxford Economics report, as many as 2 billion jobs will be replaced by robots or A.I. in the new age of work. The skills that employers are and will be looking for are thus those that cannot be replicated by robots or A.I. - namely, creativity. Creativity is essential in almost all sectors of the economy - from formulating innovative business plans to designing a product, it is needed for the success of many ventures. Through stimulating reflective and critical thinking, the arts such as creative writing, drama and drawing thus provide a prime opportunity for people to develop their innovation. This is corroborated by a study done by the University of California, which concluded that the arts have great potential for growing critical and inventive thinking among students. By inculcating creativity in people, the arts enable them to be more well-equipped to do jobs which require creative skills aside from manual or repetitive work, allowing them to remain useful and competitive even among the rise of automation that will render many jobs obsolete. Therefore, the arts are key in maintaining their economic competitiveness and relevance in today's rapidly advancing society.	Relevant is not the same as 'needed' Good reasoning that weighs the need for the arts against that of the sciences. Lacking direct comparison to science to address the contention of 'needed more'
Furthermore, the arts through emphasis on the sanctity of human nature and life can instil values of empathy and a sense of right and wrong in people, acting as a moral compass amidst the disregard for ethics or the dehumanisation that may accompany scientific progress. Humans have been breaking frontiers in many areas of science, with one of the most notable being gene technology. CRISPR technology, though still in its nascent stage, has been utilised to edit the genome sequences of living humans, giving rise to worries about the hidden consequences of such acts that are akin to 'playing God', or about of possible dehumanisation of test subjects who may be seen as simply machines to be 'programmed'. This is where the arts comes in, where the study of art forms, particularly the humanities provide a moral framework through allowing people insight into the painfully human experiences that people faced in the past as well as today. Literature, in its detailing of current	

societal issues and the deeper meaning of human life encourages people to reflect upon more ethical, spiritual issues, while history through the retelling of wars and the trials and tribulations of past generations can teach people the importance of peace as well as mutual respect. All this undoubtedly stimulates a more empathetic, compassionate way of thinking, something that the cold and unfeeling domain of science sorely lacks. The study of the arts can thus bestow upon people - especially those that work in the domain of science - the ability to navigate the murky, morally-grey areas of scientific developments with their moral principles etched firmly in their minds, helping them to make the morally-correct decisions despite the lack of regard for such matters that may be present. Such consideration of the ethical side of scientific progress is imperative, else society will degenerate into a cut-throat place where each person only seeks what benefits him or her. Therefore, through the human touch and moral compass that the arts grant to people, the arts play an irreplaceable role in guiding us through this world fraught with moral issues.	Good reasoning that weighs the need for the arts against that of the sciences. Lacking direct comparison to science to address the contention of 'needed more'
All in all, the arts are invaluable to the functioning and progress of society, enhancing psychological well-being and helping us to keep abreast of technological advancements, while guarding against the increasing prevalence of ethical issues in science today. The arts have this proven themselves to be equally needed as the sciences in today's world. It is disheartening, therefore, to see the value of the arts going unnoticed by many who are enthusiastic proponents of the benefits science brings, as ultimately it is how the sciences and arts complement each other that allow a prosperous, thriving world to exist. (Caitlyn Marie Tey, 22-E2)	

2 'The sciences are needed more than the arts today.' To what extent is this true?

<i>A well-argued essay that clearly addressed the requirements of this question with an effective use of language. There was consistent comparison throughout the essay and a good range of examples was used to support the arguments present. A greater number of examples from the Arts would have further strengthened the response.</i>	
In this increasingly fast-paced, competitive, profit-driven and globalised world, people's needs and wants have evolved to meet the ever-changing requirements and goals of society. The sciences have garnered more spotlight with numerous breakthroughs in various fields such as technological advancements, or even medical advancements which has greatly improved our quality of life and brought much ease. The arts, on the other hand, has seen a decreasing trend in terms of its participation and creation due to the increasing emphasis on knowledge and commercialisation in our society, which can also be seen from different aspects such as the science and technology news articles dominating the headlines of newspapers more often than the arts. Taking into careful consideration the nature of our society today, I shall attempt to expound on why I agree to a large extent that the sciences are required more than the arts today.	Clear understanding of the tension of the issue. Clear introduction.
Firstly, the sciences are needed more than the arts today because in our increasingly pragmatic and competitive society with the dominance of knowledge-based economies, there is a larger emphasis placed on the sciences due to the sheer nature of our society in general. In our pursuit for knowledge and education to come up with solutions to solve the problems humanity faces, research and development has inevitably undermined the emphasis on	Clear Topic Sentence that addresses the comparison and the context of 'today' as well.

observation and expression. With the goals of our current society being to gain more knowledge and soft power in order to achieve a political or economical advantage, and to improve our quality of life through inventions and innovation, it is no surprise that the balance of necessity between the science and the arts has been lost due to the sheer nature and goals of our society aligning more with the sciences which requires more critical thinking compared to the arts. An archetypal example would be how billions of dollars and a gargantuan amount of resources and time was invested by numerous countries around the world to develop vaccines such as the Pfizer vaccine and Sinovac vaccine created by the United States and China respectively. Millions of dollars were lost and resources were wasted in the process of tests and retrials, and while there were already effective and proven vaccines in the market made available to the world, numerous countries such as Korea and Japan have continued to conduct research and trials in order to develop their own vaccine. As seen, numerous countries still decided to research and innovate despite the fact that vaccines from other countries were just one call away, and also despite the knowledge that the funds and resources lost in the process could have been diverted and put to use in other aspects of society such as the arts, like investing in independent artists or for the upgrading of national art museums. This evidently accentuates that a larger emphasis and need is placed on the sciences compared to the arts as the sciences aligns more with the goals of our extremely-commercialised and knowledge-driven economy, and the macroeconomic and societal goals of the majority of countries which is to pursue research, education and innovation instead of focusing on observations, expressions and uncertainty that could be brought about by the Arts.	Good comparison made here. Well argued and consistently addressed the tension
Secondly, the sciences are needed more than the arts today as the sciences help to solve large-scale, globally pressing issues while the arts mostly bring about personal, smaller-scale, secondary benefits to individuals. One such global issue is poverty, as billions of people all around the world suffer from extreme hunger due to the lack of or accessibility to food. With the advances in science and technology, there have been numerous solutions to solve global hunger. For example, Genetically Modified Organisms (GMO) research and innovation has brought about the creation of genetically modified crops such as Wonder Rice- which is a high-yielding type of rice which requires less water and a shorter harvesting period. This means that such rice can have more harvests per year and hence increasing crop yield, increasing the supply of rice which is a staple food for many countries to meet the demand for rice, solving the issue of hunger due to shortage of food in certain countries such as Thailand and certain areas of Uganda in Africa where farmers have been provided with seeds of Wonder Rice and other GMO high-yielding varieties such as BT corn which is pest-resistant by the World Food Bank Organisation. As seen, research in the sciences brings about advancements in technology, which has brought about innovations which are effective in solving the large-scale, global problems that mankind faces such as poverty by providing higher quality alternatives which are more effective in solving global problems to meet our primary needs. In contrast, the arts mostly aim to elevate our quality of life such as through music, literature or paintings to provide us with comfort, hope, peace and joy which improves our mental well-being. Howbeit, while the arts do help to meet our secondary needs, the sciences play a larger role in fulfilling the primary, basic needs of more people around the world, hence it is needed more than the arts today because of its larger extent and quality of impact to people, since the arts is unable to improve the quality of life of people should their most basic and fundamental needs not be met.	Clear topic sentence Clear analysis of why the sciences are needed today Good use of connectors and signposts Good comparison of primary vs secondary needs. Could consider anchoring argument on Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

Lastly, detractors of my argument argue that the arts are needed more than the sciences today because the arts can help to solve personal issues of individuals on a more personal level as compared to the sciences through its influence on people's mental well-being. For instance, Logic, who is a rapper and song-writer from the United States, collaborated with artists Alessia Cara and Khalid to produce the song "1-800-273-8255", with the lyrics and music video aiming to raise awareness on suicide prevention and providing hope to people in distress. The song's title is the National Suicide Prevention Hotline of America, and people were so moved and encouraged by the song's lyrics that according to Billboard, on the day that the song dropped, the suicide hotline received the second highest call volume of over 4,000 calls. This proves the effectiveness of music as a universal language, and its ability to convey messages to people to bring joy, life, hope and comfort to people who need it. The arts can be seen as a larger necessity to society as although it might not bring about large-scale, materialistic benefits to society, it provides rescue and humanitarian aid in the most touching ways to other people to bring them out of their distress, bringing out the emotional side of us which needs the arts more to address such mental issues and convey encouraging messages in a more impactful and widespread manner.	While there isn't a direct comparison to the sciences, a good analysis of the great need for the arts today.
However, while these naysayers are not completely wrong, it is important to note that while the arts is more capable in expressing and conveying messages to move the hearts of people and provide relief, the pivotal ingredient to solving such mental issues is what comes after the awareness is raised – which is the medical support required for these people. While the arts can provide hope and comfort to people, this is most likely short-term, and long-term assistance in the form of psychiatric help for severe psychiatric illnesses in the form of counselling etcetera is needed to solve mental illnesses such as suicide and depression. In extreme cases, prescribed drugs such as anti-depressants are required to work in tandem with counselling treatment. This accentuates that the sciences – such as in the field of medical science, are needed more than the arts today as the sciences can provide more sustainable and long-term solutions while the nature of the arts mostly provides short-term relief which is not as sustainable without the use of the sciences concomitantly.	Effective concession of the opposing argument by evaluating short-term vs. long-term needs.
In essence, while the sciences are not the panacea to all of our problems and is not the be-all and end-all solution to humanity's wants and needs, our overly pragmatic, knowledge-based, competitive, profit-driven and fast-paced society requires the sciences to solve our problems more than the arts as the sciences provide more long-term, more sustainable, and more large-scale solutions to solve our problems compared to the arts, rendering the sciences an advantage over the arts in these facets. Whilst we should avoid close-minded bigotry that the arts are of less importance than the sciences today, it is no doubt that the sciences are needed more than the arts by society due to their shared common goals. <i>(Lim En Jia, Chloe, 22-U2)</i>	

2 'The sciences are needed more than the arts today.' To what extent is this true?

This essay was well written and engaging with a range of clear arguments that are insightful and well developed. A good range of examples was utilised, with an attempt to link the examples back to the broader issue at hand. That said, signposting within the opposing argument could have been clearer to make it more evident that this was an opinion the writer did not necessarily agree with.

What is more important, the sciences or the arts? This has been a debate that has raged on endlessly. Throughout the years of mankind's history, there have been various advancements in both fields that have swayed people from one side to the other. One look at Leonardo Da Vinci's Mona Lisa, whose ephemeral beauty entrances all, and one may view the arts as more important as it creates and encapsulates beauty. Yet others may point to the discovery of famous theories such as 'The Big Bang' or the atom that have fundamentally changed how we understand the world and claim that the sciences are more important. While there are definitely valid points to both perspectives, I would argue that in today's day and age, the sciences are needed more than the arts to a large extent.	It is not necessary to repeat the question in the introduction. Simple yet effective use of examples to contextualise the value of science and art today.
Firstly, the sciences can help us to solve global problems, while the arts can merely inspire us to start tackling these issues. The people of today have inherited a world that is fundamentally broken. Tumultuous global issues such as poverty, world hunger and global warming remain ever present. In fact, most of these problems are worsening. Historically, the sciences have always been the field that have made breakthroughs in our never-ending attempt to resolve global issues. The invention of the catalytic converter has helped car engines to fully combust carbon, reducing the levels of carbon monoxide in the atmosphere. This has no doubt played a huge part in our fight against global warming and climate change. Similarly, the invention of the Haber process which allowed scientists the ability to produce nitrogen and therefore fertiliser, enabled countries to feed millions, preventing them from starvation and hunger in a time where there were fears of a global food shortage. As such, today, when these threats of global warming and global hunger have returned and loom ominously above our heads, it is not unthinkable that the next major step in mitigating or outright solving these problems will come from the sciences. However, this does not mean that the arts are useless with respect to these pertinent issues. Over the years, the arts have acted as a vessel to inspire and raise awareness of these issues. Racism has been tackled time and time again by the arts such as through Kendrick Lamar's hit single 'Alright', quickly adopted by the Black Lives Matter Movement. With regards to Global Warming and world hunger, pictures and paintings of youth environmentalist Greta Thunberg have helped inspire millions, with her picture in Times Magazine as 'person of the year' particularly influential to 'wanna-be' environmentalists across the globe. Pictures, paintings and even poems of the poor and hungry in less affluent regions such as Africa also tug at our heartstrings, persuading people to join the cause and fight against world hunger and poverty. With that being said, although the arts can help us rally together and fight against these issues, it is ultimately the sciences that will give us a 'fighting chance' in combating these issues. Thus, in modern society, filled to the brink with a myriad of global issues, the sciences that can provide direct solutions to problems are needed more than the arts which can merely inspire us to tackle these issues.	Clear attempt to compare in the topic sentence. If the sciences have indeed been so effective, why have these problems become worse? Not sure what you mean by this exactly. Well developed and exemplified paragraph with clear art-science comparisons
Additionally, while the arts enable us to document significant milestones in human history, it is the sciences that allow us to reach these milestones and achieve the impossible. In today's society, people tend to be dreamers and idealists. This may be due to them existing in an age where people are surrounded by information, skills and other achievements brought about by the interconnectivity of the internet and globalisation. This has inspired many to adopt a 'can-do' spirit with grandiose ambitions and goals. What is it that takes these starry-eyed dreamers and turns them into renowned athletes, pioneers, entrepreneurs and more? The answer is the sciences. 'One small step for man, one giant leap for mankind', this sentence will be etched into the hallmarks of human history forever, as the first time man set foot on	Well exemplified and structured paragraph that makes a similar if nuanced point that the arts play a secondary role to the sciences

the moon. What is it that put him on the moon? Science. More specifically, a supercomputer along with precise engine and fuel calculations enabling the astronaut suit and rocketship to be created. Elliot Kipchoge also recently broke the sub 2-hour marathon barrier, a feat once thought impossible to man. This was done via the help of Nike's newest model, the VaporFly, equipped with custom rubber soles that absorbed more impact, allowing him to lose less energy as he ran, yet another byproduct of science. Hence it seems as though the sciences have been able to allow mankind to reach new heights. However, the arts have also been there every step of the way to record the crucial moments in history. The story of the first moon landing is one that has been portrayed innumerable times in art, from paintings to documentaries and films. Recently, Netflix has created an interesting movie about the women behind the space landing, honouring yet another piece of this great achievement. There is also no doubt that there will be countless works of arts, from paintings to documentaries, about Elliot Kipchoge's great achievement, cementing him as the greatest marathon runner of all time. While the arts allow us to relive these great moments and capture them for future generations to appreciate, the sciences are still more important. In a world full of people with ambition, it is ultimately science that will get them to their destination, thus science is needed more. A great example encapsulating both the uses of the sciences and the arts in great human feats, and perhaps one closer to home, is the recent Covid pandemic. Amidst the backdrop of one of the greatest tragedies the world has experienced, with suffering and death aplenty, lies a significant achievement. By relying on new mRNA technology, the vaccine was produced in less than a year, a record breaking time for vaccine production. Such a fact would have been considered impossible a mere ten or twenty years ago where vaccine development could stretch on for decades. The arts have also been ever busy during the pandemic, perhaps one of the greatest pieces of art to emerge from said pandemic is 'Inside' by Bo Burnham. Shot, directed and produced entirely by Burnham in a single room, 'Inside', while disguised as a comedy show, was actually depicting the gradual mental decline of a man who is forced to spend his days stuck in a room. The comedy special resonated deeply with audiences and critics alike, poignantly capturing the feeling of depression, despair and a slight tinge of hope that the pandemic has brought to our lives. Although 'Inside' and the Covid vaccine are fundamentally different in nature, if forced to choose, many would probably list the Covid vaccine as more important. While 'Inside' brought solace and comfort to our strange new lives, documenting these abnormal times, it is the vaccine that will eventually help us regain our ordinary lives. Thus, in a world filled with idealistic dreamers like Elon Musk, proclaiming his goals to colonise Mars, it is science that will get him there, with the arts only able to capture his potential triumph. Thus today, the sciences are needed more than the arts.	
Some would argue that the arts help to keep us 'grounded' and 'human' allowing us to connect with others and achieve peace of mind. On the other hand, they claim science can be 'cold' and 'unfeeling' with the quest for more knowledge and breakthroughs often viewed as more important than human connections. Thus, today where the global pandemic has led to many losing their jobs and feeling more isolated than ever before, the arts are seemingly needed more than the sciences. The arts do indeed have a healing aspect to them as artworks can frequently be therapeutic for both the artist and their audience. A great example is Kendrick Lamar's latest album 'Mr Morale and the Big Steppers' which proves to be his most personal album yet, diving into themes of Covid, racism, abuse and much more. When listening to the album, the listener almost feels like Kendrick's therapist, listening to his most personal struggles and failures. While Kendrick himself is yet to speak about the album's	Need to signpost more clearly that this is still not your view.

impact on himself, the audience reception has been massive with many heralding the project as therapeutic and ‘soothing for the soul’. Songs like ‘We Cry Together’ detailing broken relationships or ‘Mother I Sober’ about abuse help show people with similar experiences that they are not alone, allowing the healing process to begin. In stark contrast, the sciences seem to lack the warmth provided by the arts. Although advancements in artificial intelligence or transport such as the Hyperloop may be impressive, humans are simply unable to connect to these achievements as well as they would with works of art. This is understandable, as these creations were made for functionality and utility while the arts are often made to connect , empathise and inspire. Thus, it can be said that in a society of increasing mental health issues, trauma and pessimism, arts can act as a window to shine light onto one’s soul, dispelling the darkness. Thus, arts may be said to be needed more than the sciences today.	Again, need to signpost more clearly that this is still not your view.
Although I concede that the arts may be able to provide warmth and human connection, something the sciences solely lacks, the sciences act as a foundation on which great works of art can be created. The reason many great works of art exist in the first place is due to scientific and technological advancements in that field. Looking back at the example of Kendrick Lamar’s “Mr Morale and The Big Steppers”, such an album would have been impossible to produce during a pandemic. With strict travel regulations, it would seemingly be impossible for Kendrick to invite features over to his studio to record their verses for songs. However, because of breakthroughs in science, artists are able to record and edit songs from anywhere - even their own homes. The internet has also progressed to such a stage where recorded songs can be sent via emails without any diminishing audio quality. Without the sciences which led to the internet and advancements in recording technology, “Mr Morale and The Big Steppers” may never have been created. This stands for many other pieces of great art that exist today, from digital art to games, movies and more. Thus it is apparent that great art stands on the shoulders of the sciences. Although science may never reach the level of emotional resonance that the arts possess, without the sciences, these works of art may not even be present. Thus, the sciences are still needed more than the arts today.	Well put! A strong and well-explored argument with good examples
So what is more important, the sciences or the arts? While this answer may change over time, today it would seem the sciences are needed more than the arts. However, perhaps the answer to this question is irrelevant. Although the sciences can help solve global issues and achieve the impossible, the arts allow us to be inspired and commemorate our achievements making the experience that much more worthwhile. The arts can also bring a level of intimacy and warmth that the sciences lack. Hence, perhaps there is room for the integration of both in society. Art therapy is a great example combining the arts with scientific research and findings to allow those with mental health issues to express themselves and overcome their issues. There is space in society for both the arts and the sciences and when used in tandem, may result in a beautiful fusion. After all, in today's world, a world stricken with problems, a world filled with wide-eyed idealists and people burdened with trauma and suffering, we need all the help we can get! <i>(Benedict Keng, 22-U3)</i>	

5 Is complete self-sufficiency a realistic aim for your society?

This essay was generally well-contextualised in the Singapore context, although there were some inaccuracies regarding Singapore's level of self sufficiency in terms of defence. Topic sentences of each body paragraph could have addressed the question more directly. Lastly, the absolute term 'complete' could have been better evaluated to elevate this response.

"The Little Red Dot" is a nickname initially conferred to Singapore with mocking intent. However, over the years, my society has grown to embrace this namesake. When Singapore gained independence in 1965, many ridiculed us, betting that Singapore was too small to survive on her own. However, through years of hard work, my society has evolved to become one of the strongest countries with a highly competitive global economy. Despite all the success gained over the past half a century, it does not change the fact that Singapore is a country lacking in natural resources and relies heavily upon our relevance on a global stage in order to survive. Although continuous efforts have been made to reduce our reliance on other countries in terms of food, defence and labour, unfortunately, it is highly unlikely that my society will be able to fully provide for ourselves without the help of other countries. Hence, I disagree to a large extent that complete self sufficiency is a realistic aim for my society.

Context-setting reflects an accurate understanding of Singapore's constraints and strategies to address said constraints.

Clear thesis statement, although the reasons for the stand could have been briefly mentioned in the introduction

While my society may never be able to achieve complete self sufficiency in all sectors, Singapore is aware that without strong and intimidating defences, we would easily be taken over by stronger and larger countries due to our contrastingly small size and importance in the global market. Hence, the government has placed the utmost importance on ensuring that Singapore is able to fend for herself on the global stage, and that we do not need to rely on allies to administer military aid in our times of need. Being able to defend our own shores has always been a priority for Singapore ever since the cruel betrayal and surrender of the British in 1942, leading to the colonisation of Singapore by the Japanese. Singapore's lack of manpower in the army has led to mandatory National Service enlistment for all Singaporean males aged 18 and 19, and reserving every few years until they are 60. This policy has greatly improved Singapore's defences by ensuring we have defences that are formidable enough to ward off any potential enemies who may look down on us. The Singapore military is holistic in defending our land, seas and skies, hence ensuring that Singapore is sufficiently protected and defended. Through the enlistment of Singaporean males, this effectively ensures that Singapore is able to fight for herself and is self sufficient in terms of National Defence.

Opposing argument could better address the absolute term of 'complete' - this paragraph simply seems to state that we are self-sufficient when it comes to defence, but that does not directly deal with the requirements of the question.

More examples could have been furnished to further substantiate this point.

However, defence is just one of many components that it takes in order for a society to be considered "self sufficient". Ensuring self sufficiency in National Defence already taps upon all Singaporean males due to our limited human resources. Singapore relies heavily upon foreign labour to help complete the more "menial" tasks in our society, and are unable to build our nation on our own without foreign help, hence diminishing our self sufficiency. Singaporeans are largely unwilling to pursue careers in construction, domestic help and many other physically demanding sectors, depending upon foreign labour to help accomplish these tasks. Without the constant inflow of foreign labour, Singapore is unable to build buildings and critical infrastructure required for our growth. We are wholly reliant on foreign labour to pursue these seemingly inferior tasks which are in actual fact the cornerstone of our society's development. This dependency on foreign labour was clearly illustrated in 2020 amidst COVID-19 lockdown restrictions in Singapore. Many construction companies experienced a shortfall of workers due to air travel and entry restrictions caused by the pandemic. Hundreds

Why is this so? Explain specifically with reference to SG society (i.e., characteristics of SG)

of projects were put on hold, and this critical shortage made front page news and was critically debated about in the following weeks. This highlights the sheer importance of foreign labour to my society, and that self sufficiency by Singaporeans is not feasible due to the integral role and need for foreign labour.	
Singapore's dependence on other countries goes beyond foreign labour. On an even more critical note, Singapore's limited natural resources are another key reason as to why self-sufficiency is an unattainable aim for my society. Singapore is just a speck of dust in comparison to the rest of the world, with dangerously little land for a 6 million, and still growing population. This precious land to be allocated among different integral sectors of society, namely housing, public infrastructure, nature reserves and parks, leaving little room for agriculture. Indeed, Singapore's local farms do aid in giving local produce, however, Singapore imports 90% of her food from more than 100 countries, showing that Singapore is almost completely dependent on other countries for our food. Although recent efforts have been made to decrease our reliance on other countries and increase self sustainability in our food production, it is near impossible to only rely on ourselves for the production of food. Under the Singapore Green Plan 2030, the Singapore Food Agency has planned out 3 main food baskets for Singapore: Diversify imports, produce locally and grow overseas. out of our 3 main food baskets, 2 of which rely on other countries in order to obtain our food. This accentuates how insufficient our local product currently is, and shows that Singapore is unable to sustain herself agriculturally. This issue is made worse by the recent chicken shortage from Malaysia, which brought to light the fact that one third of Singapore's chickens are imported from Malaysia. This shortage has greatly distrusted Singapore's Chue Jen supply chain and proves that Singapore is unable to achieve self-sufficiency due to our inability to support ourselves agriculturally by limited natural resources.	The question is on 'complete' self-sufficiency, not just self-sufficiency in general.
Although Singapore's lack of natural resources is troubling, she makes up for it by having a strong global presence due to her economic prowess. However, Singapore's competitive edge is driven by her relevance in the global market, which relies heavily upon global patronage, and is unlikely to survive should she shut herself out from the world. Singapore is a global trade and financial centre, an integral port in the Southeast Asian region. She relies heavily upon trading and tourism to generate capital and drive her economy. Should Singapore choose to shut her doors to global tourism and trade, we would be unable to survive. The local economy suffered great blows throughout the course of the global COVID-19 pandemic. Many countries closed their doors to tourists in fear that the virus would spread to their society. The Singapore government was heavily criticised for not closing Singapore's doors quicker, but this decision was justified due to the importance of global tourism to the Singapore economy. This shows just how vital other countries are in ensuring the survival of Singapore, such that the government would take such a big risk to ensure our economy is able to stay afloat despite the increasing global restrictions during March 2020. Singapore's survival in the global economy hinges upon our relevance to others, global trade and tourism as our domestic trade and tourism is far too small and insignificant in comparison to that of the rest of the world, hence it is unrealistic for Singapore to aim for self sufficiency due to the integral role of the patronage of other countries in our survival.	Topic sentence could address the question more directly - what does this have to do with whether complete self-sufficiency is a realistic aim or not?
No matter how grand it is to aim for self-sufficiency, a small, resource deficient country like Singapore must know her strengths and limitations before considering such lofty aims. It is nearly impossible for Singapore to achieve complete self-sufficiency due to our irreplaceable	

reliance on foreign labour, imported resources and need for global patronage, however, it is more important that Singapore is able to stand on her own two feet and stand up for herself rather than to be fully self sufficient, and to stay relevant globally, come what may.

(Michelle Yap Mae Lyn, 22-A2)

7 How far should the State interfere in the personal decisions of its people?

This pair of body paragraphs demonstrates the tension between government regulation and personal liberties, and briefly explores the limitations of majority rule and the potential issues with utilitarian arguments. There was also a conscious effort made to develop the examples in relation to the point being made (as opposed to leaving it up to the reader to make the necessary connections). While these two paragraphs are quite detailed in their understanding, more could have been to unpack the term “personal decisions”.

Do note that global examples were used in the paragraphs that were omitted, as is required by the question as it is not scoped in a way that only invites an analysis of the local context.

Utilitarians may argue that interference is necessary for a country’s growth and development in an increasingly unpredictable and diverse world. As leaders of their nations, government officials have the most complete understanding of state resources and international affairs. With a better vantage point of political, economic and social developments in our world, they are better poised to make decisions that reap the greatest benefits for their nations. At times, their drive for the greater good may result in an intrusion of the personal decisions of its people. However, this is deemed morally just if it contributes to the overall well-being of a larger majority. In 2020, the Covid-19 pandemic struck nations all over the world. With a high transmission rate and death toll, global populations and healthcare sectors were dealt a strong blow. In an effort to curb the spread of the virus, Singapore’s government strongly encouraged the elderly and middle-aged groups to take the vaccine. Although vaccinations would not be made compulsory, subsequent measures like barring unvaccinated individuals from eateries and closed-air spaces presented themselves as restrictions for individuals whose choices did not align with state interests. While such measures do seem to overlook valid concerns that some may have regarding the safety of the vaccine, the decision was still necessary for the country to achieve herd immunity and safeguard the health of the majority. Therefore, some would argue that governments should be allowed to interfere with the personal decisions of their people in cases where the nation’s welfare and safety are threatened.

While this example certainly exemplifies how intervention safeguards the collective well-being of society at the expense of individual liberties, it does not quite cohere with the point being made in the topic sentence (regarding growth and development).

However, government interference in matters regarding personal relations may cause the marginalisation of a certain group of people within a society. Such matters include the rising debate on marriage and sexual contact between individuals of the same biological gender. In Singapore, laws have been implemented to ban legal marriage between individuals of the same gender, causing huge repercussions for people who align with the LGBTQ+ community. Without marriage, these individuals face greater difficulty in applying for housing as compared to others, due to their ineligibility for receiving housing incentives. They are also not allowed to adopt children, regardless of their capability in supporting a family. The Penal Code 377a which condemns sexual acts between male individuals further infringes their rights to make decisions regarding their own bodies and relationships. While

Could have made some reference to the tyranny of the majority (an inherent weakness of majority rule).

the impact of these laws may seem to affect only a small proportion of people and serve to appease those who hold more traditional beliefs, it encourages the establishment of social barriers between the LGBTQ+ community and the majority, penalising them for their personal choices. This runs counter to the State's value of freedom of expression and is antithetical to its aim to promote greater harmony amongst the people. As such interference by the government encourages discrimination and unjust treatment against minority groups, it should not be allowed.	A relevant example that is fully fleshed out and developed in relation to the point being made.
In conclusion, while governments often believe that putting pressure on the personal decisions of people can bring about substantial benefits to the larger population and achieve a greater good, it is imperative to consider the fact that such justification can be used as an excuse for unnecessary, discriminatory laws and for the government to impose their traditionalist views on the public. In a free and equal world, individuals should be allowed to make their own decisions, especially if such decisions are not a huge, tangible threat to community safety and international relations. Hence, it is logical to conclude that the State should only interfere in the personal decisions of its people to a small extent. (Nicole Chua Ying Zi, 22-E3)	A summary of the underlying tension of this debate, with an attempt at synthesising the ideas presented in the essay.

8 How far can schools prepare one for the real world?

<i>This is a strong response; clearly focused on the question with clear and well-developed body paragraphs, though greater reasoning could have been provided for some of the claims made in the body paragraphs with regard to why it is/is not able to prepare one for the 'real world'. Nonetheless, the use of examples is wide-ranging and of an appropriate scope for the nature of the essay.</i>	
In this Increasingly volatile world, in which the rate of digitalisation and automation has been soaring and the speed at which information is rendered obsolete is faster than ever, the relevance of schools is being questioned. Schools have long been tasked to deliver the necessary skills and knowledge required by the youth so that they can survive independently in the real world. However, many have started to argue that schools cannot really prepare one to tackle the harsh realities of the real world because the knowledge and skills instilled in the youth are insufficient for them to face future challenges. Despite this, I believe that schools of today can still teach one the skills and information they need and lead to more well-rounded individuals, allowing the youth to tackle real world problems and survive in this volatile global economy to a large extent.	Apt unpacking of context, though 'real world' could be defined more clearly. Point unclear - are knowledge or skills alone insufficient, or is the level of the knowledge and skills insufficient?
Some that question if schools are able to prepare one for the real world claim that schools are unable to adequately prepare one for the real world as they are unable to deliver the knowledge and skills that will be relevant in the real world. Even though the rate at which information is being put out and at which it is expiring is speeding up, schools still tend to focus on more basic, standardised curriculum and "teach to the test". This is reflected in much of the standardised testing in the world ranking from China's gaokao to South Korea's Suneung and Singapore's PSLE. These examinations may often depend on rote memorisation and learning, often punishing students for thinking out of the box. However, in reality, there are far fewer situations that require us to solve problems without the aid of technology and cooperation with others, especially in the workplace. Moreover, schools' system of "teaching	Would be good to explain what the limitations to this approach are. Signposting of the opposing argument

to the test” has limited students' creativity and ability to think of fresh genuine ideas to tackle challenges. In the real world, increasing digitisation and automation has taken over much of the information processing and storage and hence, workers need to retain their value and prevent themselves from being obsolete by being able to generate new ideas and solutions, something that automaton cannot replace. However, schools with their highly rigid and restrictive structure of education, may not be able instil in students the 21st century competencies they need for the real world.	could be more refined to highlight that this is not your own point of view.
Nevertheless, I would beg to differ. Whilst schools may still be lagging behind in aligning in the education system to what the labour market needs, they have begun to change what they teach students as the real world changes too. More and more countries are trying to teach students how to learn and instil in them thinking processes that will stay with them for life even as the world changes. For instance, Finland has started to include real-world application in its teaching, discussing issues and their solutions such as “sustainability”, “climate change” and and more global issues like wars and conflicts to familiarise students with the realities of the world and broaden their horizons. It also encourages critical thinking, problem solving and creativity which are all highly ranked in World Economic Forum’s 2025 ranking for highly desired skills by employers. Hence, schools have started making themselves more relevant, and are trying to increase flexibility in teaching such that students are equipped with the skills that they actually need in the ever changing real world.	What do you mean by this? Could explain further. Apt exemplification, though lacking a link back to the bigger picture beyond Finland.
Other than teaching students the thinking processes and skills they need to navigate the real world, schools also effectively lead to moral and social betterment of students to prepare them for the real world. Schools provide a wide range of subjects, enrichment and extracurricular classes to instil in students moral values. For instance, dotoku (moral education) in Japan was made into a fully fledged subject in Japan rather than the informal, unguarded subject it used to be. Students discuss ethical and moral issues in the world right now, ranging from human rights to politics and environmental crises. This has promoted students to ponder about many ethical dilemmas, where empathy and the ability to reflect. In the real world, where there are increasing technological developments and new scientific breakthroughs, many ethical and human rights issues may also arise, such as whether genetic engineering on humans and animals should be legalised. Schools can instil in students the oral capacity to decide for themselves on the ethics of such issues, after all the future will be for the, to create. Thus schools can prepare one for the real world to a great extent.	Make the point explicit that these measures are effective
Lastly, schools also give students the basic knowledge and skills students need for their survival in the real world. These skills range from the more basic skills to the more advanced, specialised skills that can help students secure employment. On a more basic level, schools can teach students how to communicate with others in society, through daily interactions with classmates. There are also Maths, Science and English that are taught to ensure that students have the basic knowledge they need in all aspects of their life. Schools also give students more specialised education for employment. For instance, schools can prepare students for a career in healthcare as the ageing population is a problem the world faces. This can help students specialise in their jobs in the future.	Paragraph is incomplete and not as well-developed as the others, probably due to a lack of time. Probably best to have dropped it and focused on the conclusion.
In conclusion, schools can prepare one for the real world by instilling the moral values, skills and knowledge needed.	Abrupt conclusion - it is important to manage time wisely so as to properly consolidate the main claim of the

8 How far can schools prepare one for the real world?

A relevant response with valid and well-developed points made that were advanced in a fairly logical and convincing manner. Demonstrated a good grasp of content and clear linking between what is done in schools and their use in the real world. However, a wider range of examples could have been cited as certain education systems were repeated within the response.

Throughout history, schools have been integral and essential institutions that cultivate necessary skills and knowledge in students, such that they can meaningfully apply what they have absorbed when they enter the real world. Especially today, in a world that is dynamic and volatile due to rapid technological advancement and globalisation, we must be equipped with the skillset to adapt, innovate and tackle new challenges that emerge as we march forward into the uncharted territory of the future. Therefore, schools continue to play the crucial role of equipping students with vital skills so that they can thrive. It is undeniable that schools largely prepare one to face the real world.

Clear thesis statement and unpacking of context, but needs stronger link to the role schools play (i.e., what they actually do)

Sceptics may claim that schools do not effectively prepare one for the real world as the knowledge and skills that these traditional learning institutions impart to their students have become outdated, given the sheer pace at which the world is evolving and progressing. In a dynamic world that is seeing technological progress at an unfathomable, incredible pace, the role that individuals perform in the working world has evolved in tandem with this. Therefore, they believe that skills and knowledge that students are acquiring in a traditional classroom setting in schools have long been outdated and are no longer relevant as students enter the working world. These critics would raise the examples of the emphasis on rote learning in various education systems around the world. In countries such as China, Singapore and South Korea, where greatly celebrated education systems are in place, there exists a heavy dependence on standardised testing as a benchmark of each stage in the education system. When students are required to undergo gruelling standardised tests that may determine their future pathways, such as the O and A Levels in Singapore, it is inevitable that students would prioritise the drilling of content. This is because the traditional examination setting is one that requires students to firstly be able to memorise content before they can progress to meaningfully apply. However, sceptics argue that modern technology has allowed us to obtain any information we may require with a mere few clicks of an electronic device. Thus, the extensive pool of information available instantly at any time has rendered memorisation and rote learning largely irrelevant. Therefore, critics believe that traditional educational institutions fail in adequately preparing students for the real world, given that the skills that are emphasised on are no longer in demand in the real world.

Content knowledge can still be relevant even though method of teaching is outdated

Not the strongest OA since there still remains a place for sheer memory work - might want to avoid absolute claims as well.

However, this perspective that sceptics of schools may hold is unfair and narrow in its assessment of schools today. In the present day, schools have evolved to nurture students beyond pure memorisation and regurgitation of content. Various holistic approaches to education have been successfully adopted by education systems around the world, in order to ensure that schools continue to equip students with relevant skills. A prime example of this is the Finnish education system, which is renowned for being the epitome of holistic education. Students in Finland undergo a plethora of unconventional experiential learning experiences

that cultivate skills such as critical thinking and innovation, all of which are tremendously relevant and essential to tackle future problems in the volatile real world. Even in the more traditional education systems such as Singapore, unique learning experiences have been tailored and integrated into the curriculum, to ensure that students develop the aforementioned essential skills. This is seen in the government's abolition of certain yearly examinations, such that students can now be assessed through projects and presentations. As such, it is seen that schools have evolved to cater to the changing demands in skills and thus continue to extensively prepare students for the real world. Moreover, it is unrealistic to claim that memorisation has entirely become irrelevant, since certain fields would still require its practitioners to possess a strong knowledge of various concepts. For example, one would expect that their doctors are familiar with a variety of medical conditions. To see a doctor flipping through books or searching the Internet for knowledge on common conditions in a medical consultation would be alarming to most and a sign of the doctor's incompetency. Therefore, it is uncharitable to claim that such skills have entirely become outdated today.	A better example could have been used since this is meant to relieve stress more than to provide new experiences. Generally convincing and well-developed paragraph with clear focus on the question
Schools can prepare their students for the real world as they equip them with essential knowledge and skills that can be directly applied in a practical manner. In the working world, regardless of what field or industry one chooses to work in, the need for basic knowledge of particular subjects that align with that field remains crucial. Thus, through academic and non-academic subjects in schools, students are sufficiently exposed to the fundamentals of the various fields. This lays the groundwork for students to then further and solidify their knowledge in a specific field during higher education. Students are empowered to meaningfully contribute to society in that field when they enter the workforce eventually. It is evident that schools persist in allowing students to acquire concepts and skills that will be relevant in a particular sector of work in the real world. For example, in Singapore's education system, Mathematics is a mandatory subject at all levels of compulsory education in primary and secondary schools. This is essential as it lays the foundation that supports students' subsequent understanding in other scientific subjects such as Physics and Chemistry. These scientific subjects are the basis of a myriad of fields and industries in the real world. With one subject initially acting as a stepping stone for another, this then equips students with the sufficient understanding of various subjects that allows them to have options of which particular field to enter in the working world. Having Mathematics as a compulsory subject is similarly seen in many education systems around the world, such as in the United States of America and China. Although students will only pursue higher education and work in one particular field eventually, schools playing the role of exposing them to a variety of subjects in the languages, arts, humanities and sciences adequately equips students with the ability to make a choice in their career paths and establish themselves in their line of work. Therefore, schools evidently prepare students to survive and thrive in the real world.	Logical and well-developed point, though could be further developed to highlight that schools cannot be expected to do more than this
In addition, schools are critical in preparing one for the real world as they equip students with key skills that transcend specific disciplines. In schools, students are exposed to a variety of subjects and learning experiences that allow them to cultivate soft skills that are equally as essential as academic concepts. Even if a particular subject appears to initially be irrelevant to any specific discipline, or that students do not pursue careers in a specific subject, the skills that students develop through it will prove to be vital for them to tackle problems and meaningfully contribute in the real world. For example, in Scandinavian countries such as Norway and Finland, the holistic education systems there greatly value and prioritise exposing students to the arts. In the words of the renowned French author, Marcel Proust, "Only	A relevant point though reasoning could be tightened by explaining why 'transcending specific disciplines' is of particular value in the real world.

through art can we emerge from ourselves and know what another person sees.” When students are exposed to the arts, be it visual art, music or drama, students have the opportunity to cultivate interpersonal skills such as empathy and effective communication. This makes evident the importance of schools in exposing students to various subjects and platforms that can cultivate these interdisciplinary skills. Another example of this would be in Singapore’s education system. At the Junior College level, students are required to take up the subject of Project Work, in which they work in groups and collaborate with their peers to innovate solutions that solve a critical problem faced by their community. Though this subject is not specific to any particular discipline, students are still able to develop critical thinking, collaborative and problem solving skills. Evidently, schools sufficiently cultivate interdisciplinary skills in students that will serve tremendous benefits as they enter the real world. These skills are beneficial because in an increasingly dynamic and unpredictable world, it is imperative that one is able to collaborate with others effectively and innovate to tackle unexpected, brand new problems that emerge in the present and future. Thus, schools have successfully equipped students to achieve this in the real world through cultivation of interdisciplinary soft skills.	Response could be elevated by assessing how effective schools have actually been in this area.
All in all, it is abundantly evident that schools have and continue to prepare one for the real world, through equipping students with both concrete skills and knowledge that can be applied to their career pathways in a direct, practical manner, as well as cultivating equally essential interdisciplinary soft skills in students. All these serve to prepare students to survive and thrive in the real world that is full of ever-evolving needs and challenges. As we progress into the future, it is essential that schools continue to adapt and cultivate in students what is absolutely essential for them to face the real world. (Ethan Foo, 22-02)	

10 ‘War can never be justified.’ Discuss.

<i>This response attempts to deal with the absolute term of ‘never’ by addressing conditions/circumstances under which the statement would/would not hold true. There is an attempt to address the point of contention of ‘justified’, although it is not consistently done. While examples are detailed and wide-ranging, there remain some gaps in reasoning.</i>	
War has been a major part of human history since thousands of years ago. It could be seen by some as humanity’s way of settling disagreements, and that might seem to be the case in many circumstances. However, considering the major repercussions humanity faces just because of disagreements, or some leader’s personal benefits that result in a war, it begs the question: can war ever be justified? In my opinion, war can never be justified due to the immense loss of life and the fact that war is pointless and results in the impediment to human progress.	The key terms of ‘never’ and ‘justified’ could have been addressed in the introduction to allow for a more consistently relevant response.
Critics of the argument may say that war can be justified if it is used to stop an aggressor from achieving their malicious agenda that may involve genocide and atrocities against its people if the fate of these people can only be changed if war is declared. take World War II as an example, where Adolf Hitler started an invasion into Poland to achieve his agenda of "lebensraum", or "living space", to capture land for the so-called "Aryan race" and to read the	Rather convoluted topic sentence that actually requires quite a bit of unpacking.

land of all "inferior races" like Jews and slavs. Knowing the atrocities that Hitler will commit, allied forces declared war on Nazi Germany and work together to put a stop to his plans, which saved many people from the atrocities that may have been committed, preventing the expansion of projects like the Holocaust. By stopping Hitler through war, Allied forces eliminated the threat of far worse consequences to the world. Therefore war can be justified when it is used to stop an aggressor's malicious plans.	What is some evidence to highlight that the benefits actually outweighed the costs? Paragraph, while valid, lacks necessary development of reasoning.
However, almost all wars have a hidden agenda that acts for the benefit of warring parties. All countries' justification of war only includes the morally right part of the agenda and not the part that benefits them if they win. All wars are fought to exert influence on others or to gain an advantage over another party. This hidden agenda is what compels many countries to initiate war in the first place. No country would waste its resources fighting in a world that brings no benefit to itself. In World War II, the US got involved because it could grow its economy by selling weapons to the UK and other European nations. A justified war would be morally right and is only for the salvation of people in desperate need of help, and any countries that participate in military action but have agendas that benefit themselves should never be able to justify their involvement. Due to the fact that no country would involve themselves in the world that brings benefits to them. I believe that war can never be justified.	Would be good to qualify the TS instead of being so absolute. Could also be more direct in addressing the question.
War can never be justified as it severely impedes the progress of humanity as a whole. War causes almost all economic sectors to grind to a halt. What does not only impact humanity in the short-term but in the long term as well. It slows down research and development of groundbreaking solutions to improve humanity like the development of medicine and slows down the development of technology as a whole. All war seems to do is maximise bloodshed and the development of more powerful weapons that may be used against the very people that developed it. In the conquest for power and world domination, humans have overlooked the immense benefits that could be enjoyed if it simply weren't fought and disagreements could be settled peacefully. War only prompts humans to develop new ways to ensure the destruction of their enemies, like the Manhattan Project which introduced nuclear bombs, where the technology has been improved and is in use today to instil fear into the lives of everyone. What threatens the very existence of the human race and progress will never be at its peak as long as wars between nations continue to occur.	OK, but in order to tackle 'justified' you would need to explain why this would outweigh any possible 'benefit' that may arise from it too.
Overall, more can never be justified as the repercussions far outweigh any benefit that is gained from it. This is even more true as we progress into the future, where weapons become more powerful and nuclear war becomes more likely due to more countries having access to these weapons of mass destruction. The fundamentals of the concept are to gain an upper hand over someone else or to gain resources and gain benefit for your own nation. These fundamental reasons for war are in itself morally wrong, and one can never explain the reasons for war without coming back to the above-mentioned reasons. Therefore even if war cannot be avoided, it can never be justified. (Zhang Ruijie, 22-15)	The weighing of cost and benefit needed to be more explicit throughout the response.

AQs: 2022 JC1 MYE Paper 2

In response to 2022 JC1 Mid-Year Examinations Paper 2:

Leo Barasi presents his ideas about why it is difficult to convince the public to take action on climate change.

How far do you agree or disagree with the author's observations? Illustrate your arguments with examples drawn from your own experience and that of your society.

Response 1

This response is overall a fairly competent one, with some good insights about the modern Singapore context and how that bears on the author's arguments. Explanations are mostly well-written and there is good use of illustration, although the response can be improved with a more accurate reference to features of Singapore's context.

In the context of my society, Singapore, I agree to a large extent with Barasi's observations.

Admittedly, one of the most inapplicable reasons to my society that Barasi raises is that 'cutting emissions requires people to trust authorities to be competent, honest and fair - a tall order at a time when only a third of the people say they trust the government'. While this may be true of some western societies, it is not a problem in Singapore, where there is a high level of trust in authorities. According to the 2019 Corruption Perception Index, Singapore was among the countries with the lowest corruption levels and a high level of public trust. This stems from how the government has often been upright and transparent in their workings. This is evident in the public's easy acceptance of government-imposed measures such as mandatory vaccinations and mask wearing during the COVID-19 pandemic, as they believe that the government prioritises the people's well being. Such faith is also demonstrated in the response of the public to the recent increase in carbon tax from \$10 per ton currently to \$25 per ton by 2024 announced in the 2022 budget - individuals and business alike did not protest, and even embraced this new legislation as a catalyst for a greater shift towards more sustainable living. As seen, with significant trust that the government will continue to work in the best interest of the people, the lack of public trust poses no significant obstacle to convincing the public to fight climate change.

Understanding captured with relevant evaluation and concrete substantiation.

A concrete example that is relevant to the point being made.

However, there are also many reasons Barasi raises that are applicable to my society, namely the problem of climate change seeming 'distant, happening mostly in the future and to other people'. In a first world, affluent nation like Singapore, we are sheltered from the worst effects of climate change such as declining food supplies and increased severity of natural disasters. The issue of climate change thus seems nothing but a far-off threat, irrelevant to Singaporeans' lives and less deserving of attention than other seemingly more urgent challenges, like the severe economic losses brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic. The lack of tangible impact on people's lives is apparent in the lacklustre efforts of the public in making lifestyle changes to combat climate change, despite repeated calls to action by the government. This is illustrated by how the household recycling rate has seen a significant decline of almost 7% since 2005, and the problem of household food wastage that has risen in magnitude and severity over the years. Such problems of waste bring about increased carbon

It is not immediately clear how Singapore's first world status and affluence shelters Singaporeans from these effects (we do not experience significantly declining food supplies due to our diversified food sources, or natural disasters due to our geographical location).

Apt example, but could be developed further in relation to the point being made

emissions due to the greater efforts needed for the production and disposal of waste products. Therefore, the diminished severity of the problem of climate change in Singaporeans' lives poses a significant barrier in efforts to convince the public to take actions to combat climate change.	
In conclusion, I agree with Barasi to a large extent that it is difficult to convince the Singaporean public to combat climate change, as even with high levels of trust in the government and easy acceptance of policies rolled out by the government, efforts are needed on an individual level to make lifestyle changes for efforts to combat climate change to be truly efficacious, a view corroborated by the author. The lack of incentive to do so due to the perceived distance of the problem therefore poses a very significant obstacle. (Caitlyn Marie Tey, 22-E2)	Good synthesis of the ideas presented to arrive at a final conclusion about the applicability of the author's views.

Response 2

<i>This paragraph's strength lies in its attempt to draw a distinction between the intentions of government policy and the response elicited (or lack thereof). However, note that it falls short when it comes to the development of ideas -- there was a tendency to assert rather than to elaborate and exemplify.</i>	
However, I do not agree with Barasi when he says that, "only a third of people say they trust the government," and that "cutting emissions requires people to trust authorities to be competent, honest and fair." I believe that Singaporeans have a fair amount of trust in their government, and thus, not trusting the government is not one of the reasons why it is difficult to convince the public to take action on climate change. Public education campaigns to raise awareness about climate change and its impacts have worked in causing more people to be aware and acknowledge that such a problem exists. However, the problem lies in getting Singaporeans to take action against climate change. Again, although they trust the authorities, they are still not willing to change the way they live simply because they "do not like change", as Barasi says. Therefore, action is lacking not because Singaporeans do not trust the government, but because they are unwilling to change the habits which contribute to greater carbon emissions. Right now, the government appears to be doing the bulk of the work, such as coming up with the Green Plan, the Green Mark Scheme and the 20 by 30 initiative, but citizens and the public still remain unwilling to change daily habits like reducing car or plane usage and using fans instead of air-conditioners. (Howra Manasawala, 22-O1)	Could have provided further substantiation A nuanced response -- there is indeed a difference between awareness and action. More could have been said about why the public remains unwilling to change their behaviour.

Response 3

<i>This is a thoughtful response that brings up some interesting viewpoints that challenge the relationships of concepts/ideas espoused by the author and reimagines them in light of the characteristics of SG. To do this, it draws on a good understanding of the unique economic and geographical context of Singapore, and substantiates this understanding further with illustration. However, more could have been done to synthesise the ideas in both paragraphs.</i>

Barasi argues that ‘most people do not like change, favour the status quo and are averse to losing what they have’ (line 37) This suggests that people are not willing to make changes to their lifestyles to contribute to environmental action. I agree to this to a large extent. While I acknowledge that some Singaporeans are willing to sacrifice what they have to contribute to climate action, as seen from 35% of Singaporeans who are willing to pay an additional 10% for goods sourced from environmentally friendly sources, this is not the case for most Singaporeans. Given that Singapore has very high costs of living, with inflation rates today at its highest in decades, most Singaporeans are not willing to fork out more money to do so. Most changes to lifestyles such as having a vegan diet, buying environmentally friendly goods and investing in alternative sources of energy are more costly than conventional goods. It was found in a survey by the National Climate Change Secretariat that 80% of Singaporeans found that higher costs of environmentally friendly goods would deter them from purchasing them. In addition, many Singaporeans were against the idea of paying for a single-use plastic bag in supermarkets, citing that it would bring about a greater lack of convenience in their lives. This clearly demonstrates the fear Singaporeans have when it comes to losing what they have and their dislike for change, especially in their consumption habits. Hence, I agree to a large extent.	A fair concession. Relevant contextualisation to Singapore. A cogent argument that is supported with concrete examples.
In addition, Barasi argues that ‘climate change is exactly the kind of threat that our minds are not equipped to worry about’, and that ‘it seems distant, happening mostly in the future and to other people’ (line 19). I disagree with this statement to a large extent. While it must be acknowledged that some Singaporeans are apathetic towards climate change -- with some arguing that climate change is ‘fake news’ -- most Singaporeans are aware of climate change and its effects. Given that Singapore has a low lying land mass and faces the effects of climate change, most Singaporeans are not apathetic towards the severity of climate change. For instance, 80% of Singapore’s land is three metres below sea level, which causes flash floods to be a common occurrence. In addition, climate change has caused more frequent extreme weather events to occur, such as heavy thunderstorms that lead to flash floods, reported in Dunearn Road which affected Singaporeans commuting to work. As a result, Singaporeans experience the effects of climate change and hence the issue of climate change is not foreign to Singapore. Rather, this has led to Singaporeans taking action against climate change. For example, more Singaporeans have taken alternative modes of transport to commute to work, 57% of Singaporeans commute to work using public transport in 2020, an increase of 2% compared to 2019. Hence, it would not be fair to say that the issue of climate change is distant to Singaporeans. (Elsa Wong, 22-O2)	Evidence provided is directly relevant to the point being made (clarity of relevance could be attributed to the use of effective signposting). There appears to be some contradiction, as the first paragraph states that Singaporeans are generally not willing to make sacrifices to protect the environment. Might there be a difference in the <i>type</i> of sacrifices Singaporeans are willing to make?

Response 4

<i>This piece succinctly depicts the characteristics of Singapore’s society, while coherently using this context to evaluate the chosen claims’ relevance in society. Nonetheless, evaluations can be further improved by incorporating better examples, and by a more concerted effort to synthesise the ideas in the conclusion.</i>	
Looking at my society, Singapore, I think most of Leo Barasi’s arguments can be applied, thus I agree to a large extent.	

The most applicable reason to Singapore would be that climate change “seems distant, happening mostly in the future and to other people, causing many to “assume such distant problems will not affect them”. Climate change is a long-term problem with long-term effects, and its effects may not be felt as immediately or strongly like issues such as the Covid-19 pandemic and the recent economic slowdown Singapore has experienced that may seem more pressing. Singaporeans are generally more concerned with their own livelihoods and jobs since these directly affect the way they live or even their survival. In contrast, climate change is more severe in places such as the Netherlands and the low-lying Pacific Islands, which are facing dangers of natural disasters like floods due to rising sea levels on a regular basis. Back home, perhaps the effects felt are merely hotter days and more irregular rain patterns, and not significant enough for us to feel a sense of urgency to stop climate change. For example, studies have shown that only 20% of Singaporeans are willing to pay more for greener electricity, showing the lack of involvement in terms of dealing with climate change. Hence, it may be difficult to convince Singaporeans to adopt lifestyles that are less detrimental to climate change, if they cannot feel the effects of it.	A salient point. Clear engagement of the TR & sensible development of the evaluation
However, Leo Barasi also brought up an argument that it is difficult to cut emissions as the majority of people do not “trust authorities to be competent, honest and fair”. Indeed, for government measures to be effective, people have to believe that these policies rolled out will be beneficial to them and the environment, and that the government has the ability to carry out the plans. I believe that this argument only holds in countries with governments with inadequate resources or corruption issues, and thus does not apply to Singapore. Singapore has long been envied and praised for its efficient government and relative inexistence of corruption, which successfully brought Singapore up from the slums to an advanced and vibrant city today. Most Singaporeans do trust our government as seen from high compliance with measles like the compulsory tracking of people’s locations during the Covid-19 pandemic. Singapore also has the manpower and resources to effectively roll out measures that allow Singaporeans to cut their emissions by changing their lifestyles. An example would be the increase in subsidies for Singaporeans who are willing to change from driving petrol cars to electric cars, thus reducing carbon emissions. Hence, the reason of incapable governments making it difficult to convince the public to take action does not apply to Singapore.	Good engagement of the textual reference. A better example would be one that demonstrates compliance with measures that address climate change. Could have gone further to explain whether -- and if so, why -- Singaporeans actually respond to these subsidies.
In conclusion, though government policies are put in place and there has been a rise in awareness campaigns or initiatives targeted at educating the public on climate change, many are still not willing to sacrifice time and effort to combat climate change. However, as awareness increases, and more open discussions are being made to generate ideas and solutions, there is hope that more Sngaporeans as well as the people across the world, will see the value in making changes to their habits and lifestyle, for the better of the environment we live in as well as future generations. <i>(Ng Tian Xin Keana, 22-05)</i>	The arguments presented in both paragraphs could have been synthesised here.

Response 5

A sound response that ticks all the boxes in terms of all requirements. While evidence needs some work, the strength of this response lies in the attempts to synthesise both TRs in order to achieve a convincing balance. Evaluation is systematically unpacked.

The author proffers the view that “cutting emissions requires people to trust authorities to be competent, honest and fair- a tall order at a time when only a third of people say they trust government” (lines 34-36). I disagree with this observation. Singapore has had quite a paternalistic government which the people rely on to come up with effective policies and sustainable initiatives. Thus, there is quite a high degree of trust in the government and people are generally supportive of the government. For example, many members of the community are engaged in the government initiated ‘Plant a Tree Programme’ which aims to plant more trees to act as carbon sinks in Singapore. Other green initiatives such as ‘Green Plan 2012’ and the adoption of natural gas over the burning of fossil fuels have been widely accepted by the public as well. The reason for people’s trust and compliance in the government may be due to the government’s successes. Singapore is a small country with limited natural resources, in fact, manpower is considered our only resource. Despite this, under the stewardship of Mr Lee Kuan Yew, Singapore was still able to utilise its geographical advantage to become a bustling trade hub, achieving its status as one of the most affluent countries in the world, Coupled with the fact that Singapore ‘s government has been efficient with minimal corruption along with the cultural tradition of asian governments 'hand holding' their citizens, it is likely that people have a great deal of trust in the government. Thus, any initiative to reduce emissions from the government will likely be supported by the people.

A strong start. Relevant textual reference with systematically-developed insights unto why trust is high in Singapore.

A stronger range of examples to demonstrate Singaporeans’ support of green policies would elevate this paragraph.

The author also mentions that “most people do not like change, favour the status quo and are adverse to losing what they have” (lines 37-38). I would agree with this claim. Generally, Singaporeans tend to strongly despise losing what belongs to them, commonly known as the ‘kiasu’ mentality. For example, although the local supermarket NTUC Fair Price has come up with a new initiative that charges people ten cents more for plastic bags if they do not bring their own bag for groceries, there are still people who are reluctant to change and continue using plastic bags. The reason for their reluctance for change may be because Singapore is an ultra-competitive, fast paced society. Many people are so fixated on their different goals and aspirations, that even the smallest change to their habits may offset that balance, thus many dislike change. Furthermore, the ‘kiasu’ mentality of Singaporeans has led to some taking more plastic bags than required when using the self checkout machines, no doubt under the impression that since they are paying for the plastic bag, they might as well get their money's worth. Thus, this resistance to change and fear of losing may actually result in an overall detriment to the environment.

Relevant choice of textual reference with generally convincing evaluation.

Illustration is not always apt, but there are clear attempts to link EV to evidence.

However, I would still largely disagree that it is difficult to convince the public to take action on climate change. Though Singaporeans may be stubborn, ‘kiasu’ and resistant to change, many events in history have shown that Singaporeans are likely to change if guided by the government. I believe that due to our high degree of trust in the government, once the government adopts new policies and initiatives, while explaining the rationale behind them, most people would follow suit and comply, allowing us to take action on climate change.

A good synthesis of the arguments in both paragraphs to reach a measured stand.

(Benedict Keng, 22-U3)

Essays: 2022 JC2 MYE Paper 1

1 To what extent can governments be held accountable for the failure of their nations?

The approach of looking at a range of government types adopted in this essay was well suited to the question posed, enabling it to provide expansive views on the matter. It raises good insights into some of these governing systems, and is in some paragraphs, such as the 3rd body paragraph, very well supported with examples. It could however have carried this strength in illustration more consistently throughout, as other paragraphs lacked the richness of real illustration. Finally, to address the question with greater focus, links to the 'failure of nations' could have been more explicitly drawn at parts.

Governments have always been the main [bodies] that [govern] the nation and aim to serve the people. They can either be democratically elected by their citizens, or they can be authoritarian in nature. Regardless, most if not all the governments in the world have the primary responsibility of ensuring the survival of their individual states through economic progress and political stability. Governments are also tasked with ensuring that the people governed by them are satisfied with their rule. Thus, it could be said that governments should be held accountable for failures of the nation as they wield the most power, authority and influence with [an] abundance of resources at their disposal to make changes and direct the nation's future. However, given the multi-faceted nature of different historical backgrounds and contexts of different nations around the world, sometimes the government[s] [can] do little in fixing the mistakes that were caused by external third parties. Hence I agree with this statement only to a limited extent.

Authoritarian regimes and maximum governments possess unlimited authority in their nation and face no opposition when it comes to decision making. The nation's economic, political and societal policies are pushed through according to the government's agenda which lacks transparency and voices from the people. Thus, the policies that the authoritarian regimes set ultimately decide whether they will thrive or fail. The Chinese government regularly pushes through policies that contribute to the nation's rapid progress as they are implemented effectively without opposing opinions. On the other hand, the Chinese government has failed in maintaining the nation's reputation due to the treatment of the Uighurs, something that the people in China do not talk about due to the lack of transparency. Similarly, the case of failing in ensuring basic human rights can also be seen in the case of North Korea where the country has shut their people off from the external world and [they] live in poverty and fear. The North Korean government has failed in terms of economic progress and [protecting the] social wellbeing of the citizens due to their emphasis in building a strong military, hence neglecting other aspects of the nation.

On the facade it may seem like the authoritarian governments are the ones making the decisions; however, some have observed that it was actually the top leaders of each government who have all the power and hence should be held accountable. Take North Korea for example again, it was actually the supreme leader that has all the power and the government along with its officials are merely his puppets. He decides which individuals are given which position, and makes decisions on even whether they live or get prosecuted. In Libya where there was civil unrest and the country was in shambles, the situation was caused

Not advisable to use the same extreme example again, as it is unrepresentative and skews the discussion

solely by the tyrant ruler and not the government itself, thus it was actually the ruler or leader that should be held accountable for a nation's failure.	
Furthermore, given the context and historical backgrounds of some countries, some governments face heavy pressure from external bigger powers and have little control of their nations. In the Cold War era, many countries were used by the USA and Soviet Union [for] proxy wars which led to irrecoverable damage done to the host state. The use of bomb[s] by the USA in Vietnam during the Vietnam war has done significant damage to the agriculture sector and struck the Vietnamese government heavily after reunification as they face the problem of starvation and damaged infrastructure. Furthermore, in Afghanistan the current Civil War and unrest was also caused by proxy war between the USA and Soviet Union[;] the government has little say in the situation and was even overthrown. Some governments face complicated historical problems to begin with in the first place. The current Palestinian crisis was caused by unclear instructions left by the British which caused both Palestinian and Israel fighting for territory. Thus the failure of maintaining peace and stability could not be blamed on the government as they are constantly under pressure from a stronger Israeli force and when the root cause of the issue started from the British.	Good range of examples provided to illustrate the complexity and variety of contexts that can result in less blame Layering of argument
Democratically elected governments consist of officials that have proven themselves worthy to the citizens [and] that they are capable of bringing progress to the nation with their abilities hence they are to be held accountable when the nation fails as it shows that they failed in fulfilling their promises and misled the voters with their trust. Furthermore, in democratic elections, the candidates themselves volunteer to take up the responsibility, and so it is also their responsibility to take the blame. For example during Brexit, the British have held the government accountable for problems like inflation and more. The British government has chosen to exit from [the] EU, so it is also [their] responsibility to handle the consequences that follow to prevent civil unrest and strikes.	Skimpy on the examples when compared to previous paragraphs
However, in a democratic country we only think about the government being incapable when it fails, but we should also remember that it is the people that chose to vote for the government. So in this case the voters should also be held accountable in voting [for] an incapable government and making the wrong choice.	Needs development and illustration
In some special cases, the countries that failed did not even have a government to begin with. This can be traced back to colonial times where the colonial power had full government control and the locals lacked governing experience and lacked knowledge on how a government or nation works. Therefore when the colonial powers left abruptly without passing [on] necessary knowledge [the future of their country] is up to the natives. Due to conflicting goals and ideologies they often ended up having civil wars and humanitarian crises which persist till today due to lack of proper political structure. This can be seen from Rwanda when Belgium left, [as] the people started forming gangs and fought within the country which caused the infamous Rwandan genocide. Until today the region is still filled with chaos despite external help, and the government could not be held accountable because it does not even exist in the first place.	
Despite having power and authority, the governments face different problems that need to be addressed based on different contexts. Sometimes many have overestimated the abilities of governments in addressing these problems as governments are often restrained by resources,	

and external powers. Nevertheless, governments will still ensure the nation will continue to develop and do whatever it takes to prevent their nation from failing. (Davey Loka, 21-A1)	
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2 Assess the importance of the humanities in a technology-dominated world.

A sound response which shows a clear understanding of the issue raised in this question and used a range of suitable examples. This student handled an intro-conclusion pairing rather effectively. Most ideas were well expressed, though some paragraphs could have drawn clearer links to the question requirements.	
In the film 'Wall-E', we see robots, one of today's latest technologies, take over the world. While humans lie on sunbeds, peering through Virtual Reality headsets and picturing themselves at a beach, in reality, the world around them is crumbling, only turning more polluted, dirty and unwanted. Such is the future predicted by many, if we allow technology to completely take over our world. Of course, this may very well only be fiction, yet we observe that the humanities are seemingly losing their importance in today's technology-dominated world. With the onset of the pandemic that has diminished even further the relevance of the arts, more and more countries are choosing to direct their funding to technological research, rather than to support those with jobs in humanities. Therefore, this begs the question: is the humanities still important, if at all, in a technology-dominated world? From pragmatists' perspective, the obvious answer would be that the humanities lack concrete contribution to the development of technology, which has increasingly taken priority as its advent progresses. However, I believe that the intrinsic value of the humanities far supersedes its apparent lacking practical value, as the humanities provoke thought, and teach us lessons.	Interesting hook Context Setting Clear understanding of the tension
To a pragmatist, it may be painfully obvious that the humanities are significantly dwindling in importance in today's technology-dominated world, as the humanities cannot directly contribute to the research needed for the development of technology, nor can it teach people the hard skills needed to secure jobs in the sector of technology. In today's technology-dominated world, many countries are economically competitive, and technology has proven to be a key area of focus for many countries to grow their economy and legitimise their place on the global stage. From schools placing even more emphasis on coding lessons, to a decreasing appreciation of the humanities, it seems as though the humanities have only become less important. In Singapore, Yale-NUS' Liberal Arts College closed down in 2021 and was merged such that the facility would no longer stand alone but just be one of the modules that students could take. In contrast, the government is pumping even more money into research agencies such as A*Star and Defence Science and Technology Agency (DSTA) to further the advancements made in biotechnology, digitalisation and Artificial Intelligence. This proves the point that economically, the humanities has lost its importance and given the spotlight instead to technology.	Clear understanding of where the question is coming from (context) The examples here do not truly prove the point you are making at the end.
While I concede that the humanities does not, on the surface level, directly play a role in improving technology or give one the hard skills required in tech-related jobs, I argue that the humanities are essential to one's soft skills and logical thinking, which is just as crucial in a technology-dominated world. The humanities allow for deep introspection and thought by reflecting societal issues in an engaging and thought-provoking manner, forcing the citizen to	Evaluation Well expressed Clear link made to 'the

formulate his own opinions and to hopefully take action. For example, the study of geography can provide insight pertaining to critical issues such as climate change, an increasingly worrying phenomenon in today's society. Greta Thunberg, a teenager deeply passionate about this issue, has harnessed the power of technology through social media in order to spread awareness and push governments to take action. Furthermore, the humanities can also give one invaluable 21st Century competencies such as creativity. This is very important, as tech-related jobs require employees to be able to think out of the box to solve problems that may not have surfaced ever before. While some may argue that current affairs can bring the same attributes as the humanities, I believe that the humanities allow for a deeper layer of understanding far beyond merely superficially recognising issues in society, thereby giving one a greater impetus to solve issues in society and thus proving its importance.	humanities' What is this example trying to prove? How does the humanities give one creativity? The 'creativity' point is not fully developed.
In fact, the statement that humanities are no longer important in a technology-dominated world makes an assumption that the importance of the humanities and that of technology are mutually exclusive. Yet, this is not the case, as both complement each other, and are both necessarily crucial in today's world. Without the humanities, our world would become void and dull, hyper-fixated on merely making progress economically and technologically, yet without any sense of humanity or colour to the lives of people. Without technology, progress would be severely stunted, and eventually the lack of progress would wipe out humanity. The symbiotic relationship of the humanities and technology can be demonstrated by the ever-increasing number of orchestras or ensembles which display their mutual dependence. For example, during the COVID-19 pandemic, the Concordia Quartet made use of technology, such as Zoom and audio-editing software, to continue their mission of sharing music with others. Their 'Lunchtime Concerts' have been a source of joy and comfort to many confined in their spaces at home during the lockdown. In addition, the study of linguistics has been greatly helped by technology. Using technology, linguists are able to form a rough idea of ancient characters of dead languages, and predict possible systems used in that particular language. This deepens their understanding of languages and allows us to get a better insight about the evolution of languages, something pertinent to any society. As such, the importance of the humanities is equivalent to that of technology, even in a technology-dominated world.	A rather clever point What is 'the humanities' here?
Lastly, the humanities can serve as a warning and allow us to be [wiser] in the handling of technology and the control of its development. The humanities is a library of past events, mistakes made and lessons learnt, for without which humanity will be trapped in a vicious cycle of repeating the same mistakes and thus never truly progress. For example, the study of history clearly reflects the disastrous effects of the possession of arms and new technologies such as nuclear weapons, which is the basis for many international laws today concerning the use of weapons and restrictions to control its abuse. In addition, the humanities can show us dire predictions of the future should technology be made use of, and these impacts can severely undermine all the progress modern society has made. In George Orwell's novel '1984', he paints a bleak picture of an authoritarian government using technology to spy on all citizens' every word and every action. The complete lack of privacy and collapse of any social contract is a nightmare and horrifying situation for many who live in democratic societies today. Hence, the humanities have the power to urge those who own technology to keep it under control and prevent it from getting out of hand.	Good point. Clear understanding of the point of contention. Links to "the humanities" can be more explicit.
As portrayed in Wall-E, a film and an aspect of the humanities, the complete loss of importance of the humanities would result in humanity losing control and allowing	Nice sense of closure: making reference to Wall-E again (from the

technology to ruin our morals or potentially deprive us of the opportunity to be human. I strongly believe that the humanities are still just as important in a technology-dominated world, thanks to its ability to bring up perennial issues, to alert humanity of potential consequences, and thereby ensuring the healthy progress of humanity alongside technology. (Chan Ning, 21-13)	introduction)
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3 'Ignorance is no longer an excuse for inaction.' Discuss.

<i>This is an insightful response which is backed up with contemporary sources. The paragraphs were well evaluated though this essay lacks clarity in some aspects.</i>	
"See no evil, hear no evil" – a phrase commonly used when someone [deliberately] turns a blind eye to another situation. In a world so technologically advanced and filled with thousands, if not millions of ways to attain information and spread awareness for pressing issues, it is highly unlikely for individuals to be ignorant as before. As such, with the rise in media availability today, we see increasing trends of activist movements and online petitions taking over our social media explore page. The question then is, is ignorance still an excuse for inaction? Some argue that in less developed countries plagued with war and strife, ignorance of the happenings in the outside world is common, if not expected, of those prioritising more pressing issues at the moment. However, this only applies to such countries, like Yemen and is not an excuse for first world nations to purposely ignore their social responsibilities in order to focus on their personal interests. Furthermore, the tech-savviness of today's societies asserts that ignorance can no longer be an excuse for inaction on three levels – personal, regional and global.	Evaluation Counter-argument Comprehensive coverage of factors
Detractors argue that in conflict- plagued nations, such as Yemen and Afghanistan, it is largely understandable, to expect a lack of awareness of global affairs amongst the people as their priority to survive. If a country cannot even solve their internal issues, then how can one expect any form of action from them on a greater level? For instance, Yemen; plagued with civil wars since the 1940s and a continued violent battle for power as we speak Yemenis have suffered for decades, unable to free themselves of the curse of war. A World Health Organisation report asserts that nearly 8 Million Yemeni are on the brink of starvation, with 300 000 deaths from the aftermath of battles – unsanitary living conditions, widespread diseases and malnutrition. In such a deserted nation with no safety and security, Yemenis are deprived of technologies that connect them to the outside world, making locals largely unaware of things happening outside, other than the day to day killings. Similarly in Afghanistan, where a war lasted nearly two decades, has finally attained "peace" on the day the Taliban signed an agreement with the United States. However, long years of hardship and war has left the country depleted of its resources, disallowing citizens from concerning themselves with anything more than their next meal or water ration. In such nations, ignorance of the outside world fills the air, and it simply cannot be expected of these people to have the same level of awareness and access to current affairs, since they are deprived of the resources and energy to take action.	Counter-argument Example Good example Evaluation Example
However, the above argument only encompasses the countries faced with dire situations, making it largely inexcusable for more technologically advanced nations to purposely turn a	

blind eye and not take action for the greater good of humanity. While some nations, like the aforementioned, are forced into unwanted situations like war, and thus are preoccupied to concern themselves with global affairs, others simply choose to ignore them for the sake of personal interest. On a global level, tech-savvy nations have the responsibility to use technology well and keep up with current affairs. Choosing otherwise only shows their concerns with personal security rather than the greater good. This is commonly seen in the United Nations Security Council, where superpowers often abuse their VETO power and prioritise their own interests, above that of humanity. In the Myanmar Crisis, China has been quick to VETO resolutions pertaining to sending troops and aid to Myanmar as they wanted to secure communist influence in the nation. In another, the lack of political will of member states to take action against the Rwanda Genocide in the 1990s serves as another prime example of countries with power blatantly ignoring the atrocities happening on are televisions, for the sake of saving resources and gaining leverage in terms of development. With the availability and power accumulated by major global powers today, it makes the lack of action inexcusable as it is a part of our social responsibility as a global village to be aware of current affairs and sought to release countries trapped in dire situations.	Insightful evaluation here Example Good example
Furthermore, on a regional level, where nearly all countries are easily affected by the happenings in the neighbourhood, it is expected of countries to support one another and condemn wrongdoings in order to secure greater prosperity for all. The interconnectedness of regional states in Asia made our social networks extremely volatile and prone to terrorist attacks via media influences. This rise in media availability only allowed for a greater penetration of information and evil thought provoking messages to sway the hearts of loyalty of the people to their nations. Extremist ideals spread like a wildfire in the Southeast Asia region, captivating individuals and leading to an outbreak of instability. For example, the mass shooting by Brenton Tarrant, one of the worst New Zealand has seen. The youth, driven by extremist ideas, live streamed his “act of justice” for 17 minutes straight, where there were over hundreds of viewers. Ignorance is no longer an excuse for inaction because of how close countries in the region are, connected by waters and now technology. Instead of pushing the blame, it is imperative for regional nations to work together to combat the threat of terrorism, to equip themselves with substantial knowledge and take action to ensure the safety of their people. Thus, as countries of the same region are more interconnected because of technology today, it inevitably intertwines the issues faced by different countries, making it significant to more than one party and ignorance is then one’s fault rather than an excuse for inaction.	Link to ‘ignorance’ could be made more explicitly What exactly people are ignoring in this example should be unpacked to address the question properly Plausible but not supported well in the examples
Lastly, ignorance is also no longer an excuse on a personal level because we as citizens of the country pledged to ensure the well-being and prosperity of our nation, making it entirely our responsibility to be up to date with local affairs. Perpetuated by technological advancements today, one will only be ignorant if they choose to be. A Straits Times article asserts that as of January 2021, internet penetration in Singapore has reached an all time high of 90%, with a 2.8% increase in mobile phone users since 2019. In a country as tech-savvy and dependent on the internet as Singapore, local news and videos are simply one click away from over 6 million users. Recently, a video of a girl being beaten up by a group of young people, men and women, of similar age was captured and uploaded onto Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and many more. The viral video outraged thousands of viewers, yet little to no actions have been taken to address the issue. Even upon hearing the girl’s cries and her repeated bowing to her bullies only to get kicked in the face and hit with a rod on the back, Singaporeans have taken a	Good example Example Example

back seat in the issue. This shows that the reason for inaction is not ignorance, but rather indifference. With such high media penetration in many developed nations, it is inconceivable that one can be untouched and unaware of issues in need of action, unless they personally choose to forgo their responsibilities as citizens, to ensure that the people around them are also safe. As such, ignorance is no longer an excuse for inaction on a personal level because of the immorality that comes with not knowing, or pretending not to, especially with the wide variety and access to information online today.	Evaluation
The term “ignorance is bliss” is often questioned in our society today. With technological advancements racing across our very eyes, and the availability of online information being so easily accessible to most, is it then acceptable to be ignorant? The momentary bliss attained from being ignorant only prolongs the selfishness of countries and individuals in ignoring their society responsibilities to take action against the oppression of human rights. Though less-developed countries with less access to technology and information from the outside world can be less expected to take action, ignorance is still inexcusable. Take young Malala for an example, though living in a war-filled life and plagued with daily struggles, Malala still advocated for women’s rights to education and made her impact worldwide. In today’s world, ignorance is a choice and not a decision made for you. For one to willingly decide to be ignorant, it shows the indifference of our people today. However, even while given the bleak realities of human’s attitudes and compassion for one another today, there are still individuals and organisations who pursue hope. Hope for a brighter and safer future for all of humanity, but only if more choose to open up their eyes and stand together as one global body and not let ignorance be an excuse for inaction in their lives. (Im Sing Lu, 21-04)	Evaluation Good example

3 ‘Ignorance is no longer an excuse for inaction.’ Discuss.

<i>A relevant attempt throughout with decent examples, though some examples could have been more detailed and wide-ranging. Some of its strengths are the various ways in which evaluation has been carried out, as well as the apt use of balance. Insightful points were brought forth via good vocabulary and expression.</i>	
I am sure we have all heard the term “ignorance is bliss”, and in some cases it really does help to not be aware of or turn a blind eye towards a certain issue or matter because it serves as a reason to not do anything about it or to not care about it – “I did not even know that that was happening so you cannot expect me to have done something right?”. However, in an increasingly interconnected world with technological advancements that previous decades could have only dreamed of, ignorance is slowly losing its power [as] a valid excuse for inaction. While it is true that there exist some reasons for not being aware of social issues that have not changed, I believe that ignorance is no longer an excuse for inaction because of the emergence of social media and the exponentially growing severity of certain issues, and also posit that ignorance was never really an excuse for inaction at all.	Relatable start to the introduction Singlish Evaluation Apt introduction with a clear stand
It is firstly undeniable that the world we are living in now is a much more interconnected one compared to that of the past, and the rise of social media and media in general has aided the dissemination of information across the world, hence ignorance is not something that we can rely on as a reason for not taking action anymore. In the past, before social media had such a	Evaluation

huge presence in our society, news was spread comparatively slowly and hence the lack of awareness of social issues happening worldwide was somewhat forgivable, making not doing anything to help also somewhat excusable. However, the ability of the media to transcend borders and inform the international community about happenings around the world means that individuals can be more well informed and it also increases the probability of one knowing and being aware of certain social issues. Usually, the headlines in newspapers or the most frequently posted about issues on social media are the ones that require the most help, for example during the Ukraine-Russia crisis, both tangible and intangible aid was needed in Ukraine, and this need was communicated via online platforms that did not exist in the past like Instagram or Facebook. Hence, it is easier for us to know and be aware of action that we might need to take to help out communities in need now compared to in the past, and thus inaction now would be because of our own choice and we can no longer blame our lack of action on not being aware of the need for our help. It is because of the power that the media has to reach people who might be able to help that aid was sent to Ukraine. Furthermore, governments can no longer turn a blind eye to these issues that need to be addressed because the more people in the international community know about it, the more the world leaders will have to confront the issue and address it. They can no longer ignore it because the media makes sure that the issue is made known to them, making their inaction not because they were not aware of it anymore. For instance, if not for social media, the school shooting at Robb Elementary School in the United States of America might have been unknown to the rest of the world, but because its happening blew up on social media platforms Instagram and Tiktok, the president at that time was made to face it and do something about it as if he did nothing, the online backlash would have been extremely severe and detrimental to his presidency. Hence the rise in the media makes our world more well informed, meaning ignorance is no longer something we can hide behind for our inaction.	Example Insightful distinction with evaluation of the past versus the present, with a layered discussion of how different stakeholders have been made more accountable with the development of the media Evaluation Example Evaluation Comprehensive paragraph
Besides being more aware of global happenings and the extent of awareness, the worsening of the degree of the issues at hand also means we can no longer use ignorance as an excuse for inaction. Certain social issues are becoming and have become increasingly severe and we thus cannot blame the fact that we were not aware of it to defend our lack of action. In the past, some might use the excuse that the issue at hand was too small and insignificant for them to know about. However, some global issues now have become more and more severe, to the point where it is almost impossible to not be aware of it and thus not do anything about it. For example, global warming might have seemed like something that we had a lot of time to deal with in the past, as we were listening to scientists talk about how in ten or twenty years the earth would be at a point of no return. We might not have been able to fathom the extent of severity of the issue then, thinking that ten to twenty years was quite a while away. Well, it is now ten to twenty years since then and we can no longer ignore the burning forests and scientists getting arrested while protesting against governments who do not do enough for the environment. We can no longer not care enough to not do our own research about it because it has become a looming presence at our backdoor that we can no longer escape from. Hence, because of global issues like global warming being something that has gotten progressively worse, we can no longer use the excuse that we were not aware of its severity to explain our lack of care or action.	Good approach to looking at the issue from the very different but still critical angle of Could be linked with the information available, mentioned in the previous paragraph for a more coherent argument Evaluation Example, though some finer details would provide stronger support: e.g. in what ways does it loom at our backdoor?
It is important to acknowledge that when it comes to ignorance being an excuse for not doing anything, some justifications are still valid and hence have not been changed with time. One instance is how for governments, ignoring global issues is justifiable if they are preoccupied by	Counter-argument

their own internal social issues. A government with a shaky internal social climate would understandably want to focus more on solving and alleviating their own problems before trying to offer external help, like in Rwanda where there exists social chaos and riots, and clashes between different factions on the ground. It is reasonable for the government to thus not care enough about and hence ignore other issues that plague the global climate because of their need to focus their attention on their own problems. However, despite this being a valid point in some cases, this act of only caring for themselves might be seen as selfish and unfair to the rest of the world, especially if the country is receiving help from the international community, which Rwanda is from the United Nations. Hence, this invalidates their not caring about bigger issues beyond their own, and in the end not helping because of not caring enough to be aware of what is happening is no longer a valid excuse for inaction.	Practical evaluation Needs greater detail in the example Slightly unfair judgement here. One should not expect back/done if giving out aid. Consider evaluating the long-term progress after internal problems have been solved
Furthermore, some might also argue that ignorance is still a valid reason to not do anything about something if we do not feel strongly about that issue. They argue that the basis of all action still continues to come from a place of passion or strong desire to enact change, and if we ourselves do not feel that passion or desire to fight for certain issues then turning a blind eye to it and not caring enough to be informed about it is justifiable. However, I believe that this is a very selfish way of thinking, and that even if we do not feel strongly about an issue, it is only socially responsible to be aware about happenings around the world even if they might not affect us directly. If we all only cared enough about the things that concerned us that we do research about it, then our world would be a rather isolating one where everyone only fought for themselves or what they cared about. We all live on this planet and regardless of what we feel towards a certain cause, it is our right and responsibility to fight for what is right and be well informed and if needed, to take action to stand with those who might not be able to fend for themselves. Hence, ignoring social issues by not caring enough to know more about it and do research about it to be at least well informed is not an excuse for inaction.	Counter-argument, though the focus on 'ignorance' could be clearer from the start Counter-argument Explain why we need to be socially responsible for a better argument Could have a stronger attempt to chase the whys and provide concrete support
Overall, the increasingly interconnectedness of our world as well as the growing severity of certain issues means that it is almost impossible to not be aware of social issues that exist around the world now, and hence ignorance is no longer an excuse for our inaction. Furthermore, this calls to question whether ignorance was ever an excuse for inaction – does not being aware of an issue really justify us not doing anything about it? While it is true that if we are not aware of something happening we cannot act, I am sure we all know that there are – and have always been – issues plaguing our world, and the extent to which we are aware of that is highly dependent on the amount of effort we are willing to put in to find out more about what is really happening around the world, be it social, political or climate-related issues. We have the power to not be ignorant and hence it is also possible to argue that our lack of knowing enough about something could never be used as an excuse for not doing anything about it. <i>(Kaylee Chang, 21-04)</i>	Coherent conclusion

4 To what extent has your society embraced environmental sustainability?

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Touted as a “Garden City”, and home to many world renowned eco-friendly architectural	Sound context setting and awareness of

models such as [the] Oasia hotel, and known for being the cleanest city in the world, many would believe that Singapore is a society that very willingly and whole-heartedly accepts and embraces the notion of environmental sustainability. While it is true that the government has always kept the idea of environmental sustainability in mind throughout our nation's development, and recognises the vital significance in ensuring that current progress does not compromise the ability of future generations to continue prospering, not all factions of the Singaporean population are as eager and committed to the concept of environmental sustainability. Therefore, my society embraces environmental sustainability to a limited extent, as while the government and some individuals are highly attuned and more than willing to ensure environmental sustainability through their words and actions, the large majority of the population merely accepts and only participates in eco-friendly acts when it is convenient. Hence, my society largely fails to truly embrace environmental sustainability.	opposing perspective A clearly expressed, nuanced stand; reasons are sound & concisely articulated
It is undoubtedly true that the Singaporean government has understood the importance of, and readily integrated environmental sustainability into its goals and policies, hence evincing how my nation has eagerly embraced environmental sustainability to a large extent. The government has always acknowledged Singapore's limited land capacity and lack of natural resources, and how it may result in impediment to our development. As such, the idea of sustainability, maximising existing resources to enable growth while still ensuring that future batches of Singaporeans will be able to meet their needs such as housing and food, has remained a key part of policy planning ever since before independence. The slew of government plans and blueprints centred around the environment and sustainable development such as the Singapore Green Plan 2030, or the Singapore Sustainable Blueprint, prove how pertinent our authorities view environmental sustainability to be. The multi-agency effort to ensure enhanced liveability and a greater emphasis on environmental protection that is the Singapore Green Plan 2030, comprises five pillars, including a "City in Nature" and "Green Economy". It also outlines how a net zero-waste Singapore can be achieved, alluding to the idea of environmental sustainability. The existence of such a comprehensive and collaborative plan that displayed incredible foresight and accountability, evidenced by the numerous targets and indicators that are laid out to outline how each domain of sustainable living may be achieved, reflects how committed and willing the local government is to address sustainable development, along with environmental sustainability. Besides crafting policies, concrete action has been taken by authorities to incorporate environmental sustainability into everyday living. For instance, Punggol eco-town in Northern Singapore integrates energy saving elements, like motion sensor lights and smart water and electricity metres into its buildings. Moreover, a centralised recycling chute has also been installed to facilitate and encourage recycling among residents. These energy-saving and recycling promoting conditions are crucial to minimising environmental damage in the long term. Clearly, the Singaporean government is a ready embracer of environmental sustainability, and materialised its commitment towards environmental sustainability by integrating eco-friendly services into the infrastructure, used by the local population. This thereby ensures that locals too, are involving themselves in environmentally friendly practices.	Interpretation of key terms integrated well into the reasoning here Relevant examples to back up claim; more precise development below may help Explain the allusion? The commitment has been very nicely stated, but not yet precisely illustrated? Clearer support for the claim explained here Hmm, given your stand & what follows, I wonder if it may be better to end the paragraph on the previous sentence? Sound point! Uneven support

However, despite the government's ready embrace of environmental sustainability, this does not necessarily translate to citizens sharing the same attitude towards it. Singaporeans may be considered to be simply engaging in such environmentally friendly practices when it is convenient to them, rather than out of a true willingness and desire to protect the environment, and hence cannot be said to embrace environmental sustainability. Singaporeans are known to value convenience and efficiency, and as such, may display behaviour such as throwing their trash, like food wrappers, into recycling bins if they happen to pass by one, without a second thought of the consequences of this careless action. Throwing rubbish into recycling bins, or throwing recyclable materials into the wrong recycling bins leads to contamination of recyclable materials, and wastes more man hours sorting through what is trash and what is truly recyclable, overall making the recycling process much more laborious. All this stems from a lack of true understanding of the sheer importance of environmental practices, such as recycling. Hence, the lack of understanding of what actually constitutes proper eco-friendly practices, in favour of a convenient way of disposing one's waste, clearly illustrates how the common man in Singapore does not embrace environmental sustainability.	TS - different stakeholders' attitudes is a promising angle Promising evaluation showing keen understanding of 'embrace' Problem of recycling contamination is sound and well explained. It will benefit from supporting evidence - consider citing the CNA documentary into the issue? Effort to chase the whys Link to the point & TS
Additionally, the consumerist culture that has engulfed Singaporean society also points towards the limited embrace of environmental sustainability by Singaporean society. The rise of consumerism in Singapore, attributed to the majority of our basic needs having already been met, spawns a desire to acquire more material possessions. This is coupled [with] the notions of buying things as a form of "self-care" or a way to treat oneself amidst our hectic, fast-paced lives in Singapore, as marketed by many Western companies such as Sephora. On top of that, the idea of using material goods to elevate one's social status is immediately appealing to our ethnically Asian society, where ideals of high social standing and wealth are ingrained in our psyches. Hence, these factors spur a growing consumerist culture in Singapore, as evidenced by the large crowds that flock to major malls and shopping districts such as Orchard Road during the annual Great Singapore Sale. Obsessively buying items, with no need for them, leads to a lot of waste being generated when Singaporeans need to clear underused or unused items to make way for more purchases every sale season. Given how most locals are relatively well-off, and have sufficient disposable income to supplement their unsustainable purchasing habits, items become almost disposable in the eyes of many Singaporeans. Further fuelled by fashion and technology companies capitalising on society's consumerist tendencies, new models of Apple products and trendy apparel are released every year or every few months, leading to Singaporeans purchasing new models of iPhones every year or every other year, and throwing out their still-functional phone for the latest model. Moreover, going back to how we also favour convenience, online shopping has become increasingly popular. Due to the pandemic, physical outlets shut down, causing locals to flock to online merchants like Shopee or Lazada. In fact, Shopee experienced a 78% increase in website visits when the pandemic first struck in April 2020. The lack of consideration for the environmental damage, and how wasteful online shopping is, is certainly palpable. The amount of plastic wasted in packaging of goods, and carbon footprint generated from delivering the cheap goods from overseas alone is astounding. Not to mention, the waste generated when Singaporeans decide to dispose of their excessive in-person and online purchases. By continually subscribing to consumerism and exhibiting such environmentally-damaging behaviour, it is certain that the large majority of Singaporeans do not genuinely care about, let alone embrace, environmental sustainability.	Sound evaluation of reasoning; nice effort to contextualise it to Singapore! Support for claims on observation and values/identity Environmental impact explained This will benefit from supporting evidence. I wonder if doing so with the case of online shopping & fast fashion is easier to do so? Environmental impact of online shopping explained Well actually, it would help to develop this! Clear link to question

To embrace something means to fully accept and be very willing to adopt or appreciate something, and the attitude of most Singaporeans - which is to simply be passively involved in eco-friendly practices when it is convenient, without truly considering whether one's actions are really environmentally beneficial or not, [fails to reflect an embrace of environmental sustainability]. Moreover, the consumerist tendencies which are extremely environmentally damaging, and not at all sustainable, further highlight the limited extent to which Singaporeans do embrace environmental sustainability. Despite governmental efforts to whole-heartedly embrace sustainable living and environmental protection, it seems the majority of my society's attitudes are still anthropocentric and selfish. Hopefully, greater strides may be taken through environmental education to truly inculcate the belief in the importance of environmental sustainability, so future generations will truly embrace it. (Tiffany Lim, 21-E3)	An effective recap of stand & key ideas. Clearly linked to question demands Sound hope for future angle linked to education
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4 To what extent has your society embraced environmental sustainability?

<i>This piece, with its wealth of illustration gives the sense of being well-read and being up to date in this topic. It thoroughly considers the circumstances and context of Singapore's society, systematically considering key stakeholders' level of interest and participation in environmental sustainability efforts. Ultimately, it provides a sound and thoughtful look at the question and gives readers a depth of understanding of the issue.</i>	
Have you ever bought bubble tea before? Perhaps, the drink was presented to you in a plastic cup topped with a plastic seal, carefully slotted into the carrier and accompanied by a single-use straw. Unfortunately, these plastic products are likely to end up in a bin and suffer from a long, painful death in Semakau Landfill. In fact, this is what detractors posit when they point to the supposed 'inaction' of my society towards sustainability, accusing us of contributing to the eight million tonnes of plastic thrown into the oceans annually and destroying the habitats of our marine animals. What they have failed to recognise, is that beyond the common misconception that Singaporeans are apathetic towards saving our planet, our society has instead demonstrated a clear desire for the very same cause Greta Thunberg is fighting for. Considering that various important stakeholders like individuals, corporations and the government have joined hands in the climate race, I am thus inclined to believe that my society has embraced environmental sustainability to a large extent.	Interesting hook, but do take care not to cross over into being overly informal Tension established Clear stand
Detractors of my view posit that my society has only embraced environmental sustainability to a small extent at best due to the fast pace of our life, which necessitates practices that are detrimental to our environment. In a society where time is money, it is no secret that Singaporeans are often deemed as 'busy bees' – working adults rushing on board the MRT to Raffles Place while students scramble to hop onto buses and get home quickly and study for the upcoming examinations. Often, as we strive to meet the many demands of our workplaces and institutions, we are left with little to no time for the most basic aspects of life such as mealtimes. The rise of the gig economy thus provided an opportune solution through food delivery services, allowing us to enjoy our favourite dishes without needing to head out. Yet, this industry has caused our plastic consumption to increase rapidly as single-use plastics that are used to contain the food are often, if not always, disposed of. Plastic, unfortunately, is notorious for either taking a long time to break down or worse still, being non-biodegradable.	Reasons for the opposing argument are clear Evaluation

Yet, our well-educated Singaporeans continue to rely massively on such services despite knowing the worrying impact of their actions towards increasing their carbon footprint. The fact that we do tend to de-prioritise the climate for the sake of our own convenience thus justifies the narrative that perhaps, we have not reached the epitome of sustainable consumerism yet. Considering the relative ignorance towards the climate in casting our dollar votes, detractors can hence put forth the argument that my society has only embraced environmental sustainability to a small extent.	
However, riding on the same topic of individual choice, it is unjust for actions taken out of necessity to be entirely reflective of my society's attitude towards sustainability. With the rise in environmental literacy brought about due to our interconnectedness with the world, my society has indeed embraced environmental sustainability to a large extent, evident from the rise of environmental advocacy groups who have been inspired by similar movements globally. As a former British colony, Singapore remains heavily influenced by happenings in the West. This is further proven by the high internet penetration rate of at least 82%. A pertinent example would be the Singapore Climate Rally, which launched the #TakeBack 2050 campaign to slow down climate change. Quoting German activist Greta Thunberg as the impetus behind the cause, the movement has garnered wide support from the public, including actress Oon Shu An. In recent years, #BringYourOwnBottle has also made its way into the sustainability spotlight as founder Kate Yeo strives to reduce plastic waste from beverages. Considering Singapore's geographical location as an island surrounded by water bodies, we are extremely vulnerable to the effects of global warming as rising sea levels could very much envelope the nation we call home. It is thus of no surprise that Singaporeans have been willing to give up short-term conveniences for the sake of long-term benefits like preserving a cleaner environment, not just for themselves, but for future generations alike. Thus, the public support for such movements in my society indicates a paradigm shift towards embracing environmental sustainability to a large extent.	Interesting point of view Evaluation Initiatives How has the general public responded? They seem to be separate individuals. How do we determine what it means to EMBRACE environmental sustainability?
In a bid to cater to rising consumer demand, firms in my society have also been incorporating sustainability into their business models so as to retain their market share in our extremely competitive domestic markets. With the high labour costs and scarcity of land in Singapore, it is an open secret that it is immensely difficult for businesses to stay afloat amidst the influx of new corporations. Given that firms often prioritise maximising profits, they are thus incentivised to align their production processes with the tastes and preferences of the consumers in order to reap the most sales. Hence, fast-food chain KFC took the first step towards making their products more environmentally friendly and ceased the provision of plastic straws and lids for drinks. Local start-ups have also recognised the booming market for sustainable goods under the Sustainable Enterprise Fund, with household brand Tee Yih Jia investing in research and development towards the production of plant-based meat alternatives. Even the culprits that critics point to as major contributors to environmental degradation have taken steps to reduce their carbon footprint. Supermarket chain NTUC now charges 10 cents per plastic bag, while food delivery companies Grab and Foodpanda only provide cutlery upon request. On our roads, ComfortDelGro has announced its plan to include electric vehicles (EVs) in its driving courses in a bid to shift away from traditional, pollutive fossil fuel-powered cars. Given that these businesses often have great political leverage by virtue of their economic worth, it is thus heartening to observe that they are using this power for the right cause. With such important stakeholders on board the climate movement, I can safely say that my society has indeed embraced environmental sustainability to a large extent.	Listing Very descriptive, though your range of examples is quite commendable. Need to draw clear links to what 'embrace' means.

With the aforementioned stakeholders galvanised, the Singapore government has also responded to growing concerns regarding the environment. Fulfilling its moral duty to the citizens who supported them through the ballot box, the government has maintained democracy in Singapore through enacting policies, which is prized as a platform for every citizen's voice to be heard. Considering the diverse racial and religious communities in my society, democracy has always been valued and seen as an integral aspect of our political system to ensure that everyone is cared for, regardless of the language and speak and the colour of their skin. In the past decades, this right to vote has hence enabled Singaporeans to vote in generations of stellar leaders that led our country from Third World to First World. In the case of environmental sustainability, the clear support of the people has allowed the government to enact the 2030 Green Plan, which aims to prepare Singapore in the face of climate change. From aiming to green 80% of our buildings to increasing the accessibility of charging ports for EVs and even aiming to fulfil 30% of our nutritional needs by 2030, these concrete initiatives are testament to the government's commitment towards a sustainable future. Considering that the government holds great power over the state, the fact that they have been willing to implement such green policies amidst the volatile political climate shows the importance of environmental conservation to them. Coupled with the fact that citizens are content with this decision and consent to the use of their taxpayer money to fund such sustainability projects, it can hence be inferred that my society has embraced environmental sustainability to a large extent.	Not sure how this is really relevant. Fair point.
Against the backdrop of our seemingly never-ending hustle in the quest for a better life, be it through work or education, it may seem as though immediate convenience and personal benefits have superseded all other concerns as the top factor in our decision-making calculus, while environmental sustainability takes a backseat. Yet, I posit that the increasing pervasiveness of concrete plans aimed at tackling climate change reflects the willingness and the ability of the 5 million individuals, who call the sunny island home, to join hands and slow down the effects of global warming. So the next time you buy a cup of bubble tea, remember to bring your own tumbler, for individuals, corporations, and even the government will stand by your decision. (Nicole Won, 21-13)	

4 To what extent has your society embraced environmental sustainability?

<i>This response takes a different approach by examining three notable areas of environmental degradation. In each, the stakeholders and their varying degrees of willingness to adopt environmentally sustainable practices are explored, resulting in fairly thorough and effective evaluation. It is relevant and grounded in the Singapore context, and well argued for the most part with decent examples.</i>	
Singapore is a small city surrounded by water. Located close to the equator it also experiences high temperatures and humid weather. As a country heavily impacted by environmental degradation and climate change, the recent hikes in global temperatures and quick rising sea levels has pushed Singapore to embrace the concept of environmental sustainability by incorporating sustainable measures into our daily lives. Such measures have been implemented in the energy as well as transport sectors while environmental	Nuance of need well woven into the intro Could point out that these are 3 of the major contributors to carbon emissions in SG, and thus important to

sustainability has been heavily advocated for in our culture. Hence, our society Singapore has embraced environmental sustainability to a large extent.	address
As a very fast-paced society, Singapore prides itself in its transport system. We also boast an extensive public transportation system, whereby buses and trains can bring people to any part of the country at a lower cost than taxis or even private cars. This does not only improve equity by making transport affordable for everyone, but also helps reduce the number of vehicles on the road greatly, hence reducing air pollution by exhaust fumes. Public transport is a very common mode of transport for many in Singapore, especially for students and the elderly, who can ride at further subsidised rates than regular citizens. This not only shows how Singaporeans have, over time, grown to make public transport a part of their daily lives, but also highlights the government's efforts to encourage public transport usage, hence making our transport system more environmentally sustainable. We also see that the newly invented electric cars have finally made it to our shores, via BlueSG, a brand of electric cars used in Singapore. The government has also taken care to build charging stations for these cars. By making these types of cars available in Singapore, as well as ensuring convenience of charging the car, people are more encouraged to use these more environmentally friendly cars. While electric cars are still not that commonly used by the public, we have certainly seen an increase in electric car users, suggesting that more will continue to join over time. Hence our society has embraced environmental sustainability to a large extent, because our government has implemented relevant measures and the people have responded well to these measures in the transport sector to reduce air pollution and improve our transport systems sustainability.	A clearer link to the question could be made at the start Evaluation Evaluation Example Rising trend could be more convincingly established
Secondly, our government, being heavily in charge of energy related decisions for the country, has also pushed to utilise more environmentally sustainable energy sources. By participating in various talks and signing agreements regarding this aspect, the government has shown its willingness to reduce our damage to the environment. One such example is the famous Paris Agreement. Singapore, along with all other nations in the world, ratified the agreement and aimed to reduce greenhouse gas emissions sufficiently such that the rise in global temperatures can be better managed. Additionally Singapore has also taken concrete steps to be more conscious of the environment. One example [is] the shift to using natural gases as an energy source. Not only has Singapore increased its usage of natural gas in favour of other more environmentally damaging sources of energy, it has also been pumping in funds for research and developing the usage of natural gas. In fact, Singapore recently announced that it had developed tanks to store natural gas in liquid form. This increases efficiency by reducing time and energy, since the tanks can now be shipped instead of having to be transported as gas by underground pipes. It also decreases environmental damage as sellers and buyers of natural gas will no longer have to rely heavily on drilling the ground to add pipes, or even constantly maintain current pipes. The money invested by Singapore in natural gas is the show of the country's investment [towards] using more renewable and hence sustainable resources. However, we do know that participation in an agreement is not enough. Singapore fell short of its goals to reduce emissions sufficiently, just as many other countries did. While this may suggest that insufficient effort and planning [were] made hence causing this result, we also have to understand the government's responsibility to ensure sustainability of all other sectors in Singapore in light of this reduction, in order to ensure safety of the people. Falling short of expectations in the Paris Agreement indicates a lack of results, not a lack of effort. While we may consider this to not be embracing environmental sustainability, we should also	Example Slip leads to some confusion Cost seems to have been a larger factor in this development Example did not prove this point Example Could articulate what responsibilities have come into conflict with environmental sustainability that reasonably slow down our embrace of it

consider various restrictions that affect a government's choices, and at least acknowledge the efforts to work sustainability.	
Furthermore we also see growing occurrences of regular citizens incorporating the idea of environmental sustainability into their daily lives. While some initiatives are backed by the government, others have been inspired to start their own initiatives too. Recently a no-plastic-bag-policy has been increasingly adopted by many supermarkets prompting Singaporeans to bring their own bags or pay to get plastic bags. While at the start Singaporeans were unhappy with the policy, it has grown to be a part of daily life, as we see more people bring their reusable bags for grocery shopping. This increase in receptiveness to government initiatives suggest that these measures have grown to be accepted by the general public. A few years back we also saw the rise of Carousell, an online platform where one can shop 2nd hand, encouraging people to reduce excessive consumption of new things and [the] throwing away of older items in order to reduce generated waste. The user pool of Carousell has since grown, with Carousell even introducing a 'CarouPay' option to increase security, highlighting the enthusiasm of Singaporeans to participate in more sustainable shopping by reducing wastage and hence saving space in landfills and reducing environmental degradation. We can also see increasing appreciation for the environment and hence growing awareness for our need to be more environmentally sustainable. Students in Singapore are educated from young about societal issues through participation in voluntary activities via the Values-in-Action program (VIA). Through VIA, students experience firsthand what it is like trying to make a positive impact in society, spurring them on to take up the mantle in their own community. This is applicable to the embracing of environmental sustainability because many schools include coastal or neighbourhood cleanups for VIA, helping students understand the environmental degradation caused by water and land pollution. The education of students in Singapore has led to a growth in [the] sense of responsibility and hence advocacy amongst teenagers and young adults of today. The increased number of Youth For Cause advocacy projects about saving the environment and Telegram channels calling for coastal cleanup volunteers is testament to the increased willingness of youths to help. Not only does this highlight their embrace of environmental sustainability in Singapore, we can also be more assured that this sense of responsibility will continue on. As we see the various aspects of our society playing their part in saving the environment, and the younger people putting in effort to even mitigate the negative effects and advocate for more sustainable measures, we can come to understand that our society has embraced environmental sustainability to a large extent.	Example Example Not as convincing that this really increases environmental sustainability Example Evaluation Example Paragraph has been well-argued for the most part
All in all, we can see that the need to mitigate the effects of climate change on [the] small island [of] Singapore has forced it to take on more environmentally friendly measures to protect itself. Through improvements and efforts to change in the transport, energy and even social aspects we can observe how the various aspects of our society - government, communities, schools and individuals alike - have understood the implications of a declining environment and hence have shown effort and in some cases solid results in embracing environmental sustainability. While we may not see that much impactful change immediately we have to bear in mind that change does take time and we will not see the impacts of sustainability measures immediately. We can see efforts and measures to save the environment, hence implying a willingness and fortitude to work towards and hence consequently the embracing of environmental sustainability. Hence, Singapore has certainly	

embraced environmental sustainability, and will do so even more as projects are completed and measures can be fully implemented. (Jacynthe Liew, 21-O3)	
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4 To what extent has your society embraced environmental sustainability?

<i>This essay is insightful and provides a counter-culture perspective on the question without being only critical of the efforts made. A range of well curated examples was provided, and each was evaluated thoroughly throughout. There was a good balance in multiple views, though there were minor errors made in unpacking and responding to the meaning of 'embrace'.</i>	
Living in a world coming under increasing threat by climate change with temperatures soaring and extreme weather events becoming increasingly frequent, governments all around the globe are pursuing the goal standard of environmental sustainability. Their goal is to reduce the emissions of greenhouse gases such as methane and carbon dioxide in an attempt to cut the onset of great global warming. However, across the globe countries clearly have different degrees of commitment towards embracing environmental sustainability. While Singaporean society has not flat out rejected it, we have only embraced environmental sustainability to a small extent. An environmentally sustainable society consists of a circular urban metabolism, with low consumption, high rates of reuse and recycling and minimal outputs, whose emissions are offset by technologies such as carbon capture and storage. Singapore has admittedly failed on two of these fronts with minimal progress on the remaining front. Singapore society has not embraced environmental sustainability as we still have excessively high rates of individual consumption and a car-centric society. It is not to say however, that Singaporean society has entirely rejected the concept of environmental sustainability, as societal norms have prevented Singaporeans from thinking outside the box to pursue true environmental sustainability.	Comprehensive Doesn't really seem to be the meaning of 'embrace'.
Firstly, Singapore society has not embraced environmental sustainability as it is plagued by consumerism. Singaporeans consciously make "not environmentally friendly" choices in their daily lives leading to high rates of resource consumption. choices and decisions that one makes should be considered not environmentally friendly if a choice with less negative impact on the environment exists, instead of the other way around. Based on United Nations statistics from 2021, Singapore's overshoot day is the 4th of August 2021, meaning that our current rate of resource consumption, Singapore is consuming resources at [such] unsustainable rates that we will need 1.7 Earths to sustain it. This clearly demonstrates how across the different sectors in our society, Singapore is still putting a strain on Earth's resources. Detractors might cite national recycling programs as Singaporeans wholeheartedly embracing environmental sustainability, but I beg to differ. While recycling habits are no doubt a step forward on an environmentally friendly Singapore, excessive consumption will always offset the impact that recycling has toward reducing carbon outputs. Based on NEA statistics in 2020, 30% of households recycled waste, and only 57% of their contributions could actually be recycled. Furthermore, around 78% of the products we consume are non-recyclable. For example, a shampoo bottle can be recycled, but the shampoo itself, which makes up the bulk of the carbon emissions, cannot. Mathematically, this translates to around 0.3% of products we consume being reused or recycled. As such, although Singaporeans may attempt to	Top draw reasoning

embrace the idea of environmental sustainability through their actions, it is clear that we have not truly embraced it, as evidenced by the disparity between our excessively high rates of consumption and the meagre rates of "true" recycling.	
Singaporean society has also slightly failed in our pursuit of environmental sustainability, being a car-centric society. Singapore has one of the densest road networks in the world as reported by globalstatistics.org. Private transportation accounts for around 24% of our yearly emissions, the third-largest behind Industry and Power. For every five Singaporeans, there is one car. Cars in Singapore see almost daily use, as areas such as the Central Business District (CBD) are very accessible due to the numerous expressways crisscrossing our island. Singaporeans also want to make the most out of their cars, having paid eye-wateringly high prices for a certificate of entitlement (COE) to own a vehicle. That being said, it is imperative that we acknowledge the fault of both groups, the government and Singaporeans. The government has failed to embrace environmental sustainability from the onset of urban planning, where instead of focusing on the creation of a highly walkable, car-lite society as seen in more environmentally sustainable cities such as Amsterdam, they chose to create a car-centric society, leaving us with the eyesore of roads spreading like a cancer all over Singapore. Even though the government has made attempts to redeem itself from engendering the fiery hell Singapore would become in light of climate change, some Singaporeans too, have not made the environmentally conscious decision of utilising public transport, stubbornly choosing to fork out ludicrous amounts of money for COE and pay for road tax and Electronic Road Pricing. Undoubtedly, this is the failure of two parties, creating a society where some are rooted in their unsustainable habits of utilising private transport instead of public transportation, thereby failing to embrace environmental sustainability.	Awkward The meaning of embrace has not been fully engaged here - is this even an attempt to embrace environmental sustainability?
It is myopic to say that my society has failed to embrace environmental sustainability outright. Instead, it is more accurate to say that while most Singaporeans are aware of and keen to pursue environmental sustainability, most have failed in reaching a sustainable level of consumption. Contrary to my previous point, it must be said that 70% of Singaporeans, according to the government, commute via public transport. Now, while that may seem like a huge percentage, and an absolute win toward embracing environmental sustainability, it most definitely is not. Even public transportation, in spite of the switch to electric buses and "green" trains, still contributes towards carbon emissions. Commuting itself forms an integral part of daily Singaporean life; even though minimal, it still contributes to a segment of an individual's carbon emissions. The embracing of environmental sustainability encourages us to question the norms of our lives, and to make radical changes to them. For example, the question at hand should not be "How can one make one's commute more environmentally sustainable?" but instead "Why commute at all?". Going one step further to challenge the norm where commuting to work is just another part of life is exactly what my society should be doing to embrace environmental sustainability. Remotely working from home is a key component of the urban sustainability framework, as when one does not commute, it eliminates emissions from the "transport" category entirely. Needless to say, concessions must be made for people whose jobs require their physical presence, such as retail workers. However, the majority of Singaporeans could embrace environmental sustainability through remote work, as platforms such as Google Meet and Zoom enable seamless communication between parties, enabling virtual meetings and online classes. The goal of fully embracing environmental sustainability is not easy, but it is within reach. Many Singaporeans may be starting to realise and adopt more environmentally sustainable habits. However, by comparing	Writing can utilise more nuance and hedging to avoid seemingly contradicting earlier statements Evaluation Interesting point

the urban sustainability framework against Singaporean society, it is crystal clear that radical changes to our lives and society must happen if we want to progress further towards embracing environmental sustainability.	
As it stands, Singaporean society has embraced environmental sustainability to a very small extent. Achieving true environmental sustainability goes far beyond what Singaporeans associate with such as taking public transport and recycling. No doubt, these actions can herald the beginning of the pursuit of true environmental sustainability, but I feel most Singaporeans are incredibly short-sighted, as their tunnel vision and being accustomed to societal norms prevent them from realising how they can fully commit to an environmentally sustainable lifestyle. Unhealthy habits like over-consumption also contribute negatively to embracing environmental sustainability. The car-centric nature of our society also displays our governments' and Singaporeans' failure in embracing environmental sustainability from the start. Having a circular urban metabolism with low rates of consumption and minimal output is one of the key tenets regarding environmental sustainability in our urban context. Society so far has not yet succeeded in achieving environmental sustainability, but with the right shift in our mindsets, we could be well on our way. (Joey Chia, 21-04)	Note: A circular urban metabolism is one where any sort of input (energy/resource) and output (waste) is minimised to ensure efficiency and optimal use of resources.

4 To what extent has your society embraced environmental sustainability?

<i>A well-argued and evaluated response supported with apt examples. Like many of the other effective responses to this question, this piece showcases rich knowledge and deep awareness both of the issue of environmental sustainability and the real considerations of the Singapore context, the latter of which have often meant that the former does not come without trade-offs. It is well-written and appropriately expresses the subject matter, though there are some instances of odd phrasing littered across the essay. Care must be taken especially where personal conviction is strong to avoid being carried away, such as in the last body paragraph here - while emotion can be stirring and compelling, it is important to remain clear-headed and argue fairly, rather than emotionally.</i>	
As defined in the Brundtland Report in 1987, sustainability refers to meeting the needs of the present generation, without sacrificing the aspirations of future generations. With atmospheric carbon dioxide concentrations at its highest in millions of years, the increasing threat of sea level rise, and more erratic and intense extreme weather events, it is evident that the delicate scales that maintain Mother Nature's balance have been tipped. Climate scientists, environmentalists, and other like-minded people have all called for action to be taken – for us to take steps to rebalance the scales, and keep them balanced. From this, arises the concept of environmental sustainability, a subset of sustainability focusing on the built and natural environment. While some argue that Singapore's focus on more environmentally-friendly technology shows that environmental sustainability has been embraced, I generally do not believe that this is the case, due to Singapore's limited land, as well as its fast-paced urban environment.	Great start Effective use of metaphor to demonstrate the delicate nature of the issue
Certainly, some argue that Singapore's focus on greener technology is evidence of it embracing environmental sustainability. In recent years, with a multitude of emission-related issues globally, such as global warming and air pollution, it is important that governments worldwide play their parts in pushing for a greener future. For the conservation of Mother	Counter-argument

Nature. And Singapore is no stranger to that, having taken part in many climate summits, being part of the Kyoto Protocol since the 1997, the Paris Agreement in 2016, and most recently COP26 Glasgow. The Singapore government's stance is thus clearly on the side of environmental sustainability. Additionally, the 2030 green plan has also been the focus of Singapore for a period of time now. It involves many things, such as a transition to electric cars by 2030, reduction of greenhouse gas emissions by 30% by 2030 through greener energy sources, as well as an increased focus on public transport, with better connectivity and efficiency. It is thus evident to some that Singapore cares about the environment, in the present and in the future, showing that Singapore does in fact embrace environmental sustainability.	Well-researched series of examples
However, while the aforementioned argument does hold some water, and Singapore's stance might be to embrace environmental sustainability, it lacks adequate technological capabilities to do so fully. As mentioned in the green plan, Singapore aims to shift its reliance on fossil fuels to more renewable, clean energy sources. Unfortunately, options such as hydroelectric power and wind farms are simply not feasible due to our restrictive geography. Thus one of our main methods have been solar panels, with the Housing Development Board having already installed solar panels on roofs of HDB buildings in numerous estates such as Ang Mo Kio, Bishan and Toa Payoh. However, the effectiveness of these solar panels are limited, as they do not rotate to face the sun 24/7, and there are frequent periods of cloud cover due to our tropical climate. Thus I argue that it cannot be said that Singapore embraces environmental sustainability, as it is not really capable of doing so with current levels of technology.	Evaluation Example Evaluation A well-argued paragraph
As a matter of fact, Singapore's limited land area prevents it from fully embracing environmental sustainability. Singapore, being a small island, must ensure that land space is used efficiently and appropriately. With a majority of Singapore's land being used to build concrete buildings, the natural environment has to pay a price. Even though the Prime Minister has actively campaigned for more trees to be planted in Singapore, this mainly benefits the built environment. The natural environment, the rainforests with all their fauna has already been cleared. Now, only our central catchment reserve, and wetlands in the peripheries have been left untouched. Singapore's desperation in this land crisis can be seen in the construction of the Cross-Island Line, a rail transport network that connects Singapore's extremities. However, its construction has been met with much negativity, as the public shunned SMRT for tunnelling beneath our central catchment area, disrupting wildlife and ecosystems in the area. Furthermore, a large patch of forested area was recently cleared in Khatib by accident. Such negligence and irresponsible actions thus show that Singapore does not truly embrace environmental sustainability.	Fact check: our green spaces occupy nearly or more than half of our surface area Example Consider bringing up how efficiency takes precedence over environmental sustainability in SG Unfair to blame SG society for one company's mistake
Lastly, it is nearly impossible for Singapore to embrace environmental sustainability due to its unique, fast-paced urban environment. Singaporeans rank one of the highest in terms of being overworked, owed in part to the struggle to stay competitive in society [and the world]. With that, comes the need for car ownership, as many feel that time is money, and public transport is simply too inefficient to meet their needs. Even though the government has made an effort to dissuade Singaporeans from purchasing more cars – by releasing a limited amount of increasingly expensive ownership contracts, the large concentration of wealthy people in Singapore negate this measure. Thus cars are still flooding expressways and roads all over Singapore daily. In fact, 20% of Singapore's greenhouse gas emission is from privately-owned	Evaluation Astute observation - evaluation and example

Furthermore, for those who only consume media from one or similar perspectives, such as mostly state funded and supported media like The Straits Times and local news, it is likely that the same views are reinforced, giving individuals a more informed perspective.	
However, most individuals do not get all their information from just one source. The different forms of media provide a wide range of information from varying perspectives and sources. When some take the time to consume varying forms of media and learn about differing perspectives, it can enable them to be more thoroughly informed. This is particularly true in the case of academics engaging in research. On the other hand, too much information can be confusing. When presented with contrasting opinions and contradictory views, many can find themselves utterly confused. For example when attempting to understand the current protests in the US about abortion law a simple Google search is likely to leave one more confused than informed. Some perspectives argue that the key tension lies in the Justices wanting to abolish women's right to abort, others contend that it is the leaking of state papers, or some even believe that the abolishment of the right is the right thing to be done. Presented with all these perspectives it is difficult to come to a clear understanding.	Good attempt at comparing the propensity to confuse versus the ability to inform More can be said to tie this strand back to the main argument here
Some forms of media, such as social media, allows users to express their views to a large outreach of people as anyone with an account can post. This can be helpful for people to understand situations from the individuals on the ground. In 2020 the Black Lives Matter protests were trending on social media platform TikTok. Millions of users extended their support to the African American community, with some even donating to African American organisations. Not only did the spread of the situation on social media inform people, it can also lead to tangible action. However, allowing anyone to post can also lead to consequences. People can post things even if they are untrue. During the US elections in 2016, teenagers from a small city, Veles, in Macedonia, wrote untrue headlines about the presidential candidates and posted them on Facebook to earn money from advertising when people clicked on their pages. Many of these fake pages received millions of hits, effectively shaping the perspectives of many Americans. Some have even theorised that these fake articles are what had potentially helped Trump win the election. Faced with so many fake stories, individuals can find it difficult to discern who to believe, hence becoming more confused than informed.	Nice comparison again Link to confuse should be clearer
The media today travels fast - some might even say, way too fast. The media enables people to learn about issues in real time. For example, the media was instrumental in informing the world of the recent Ukraine-Russia conflict. It provides updates in real time. However, due to the fact that information is often disseminated or the situation is still unfolding, what is spread may not be entirely accurate or fact checked. When different sources tell different stories this can be more confusing than informative and invoke panic. In 2018, NPR falsely reported in real time that a gunman shot down a Congresswoman in the US. BBC News and [the] New York Times cited NPR to report the same thing. Some news sources reported that she died, while others reported otherwise. Later, NPR was proven wrong. This led to more misinformation and confusion.	Good comparison again
There are many situations in which the media confuses more than it informs. However if people know who to believe and make the effort to get the information from varied perspectives, they can have a more thorough understanding. The wealth of information the media brings causes both confusion and information. The media today has come far beyond a	

simple radio and the world feels bigger and more confusing than ever before. But some simple steps of fact checking and knowing who to trust can help you be informed instead. (Avril Lim, 21-A1)	
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6 Examine the claim that the media confuses more than it informs.

<i>These 2 paragraphs have been selected for their detailed arguments and illustration built on an insightful understanding of the way media operates. They give us a look into the pressures on the side of producers of the media to present quality information, as well as the opportunity the media gives us to correct the narratives.</i>	
However, I argue that firstly, the media has an obligation to promote accurate and cohesive information, through systematic fact-checking and rigorous reporting of the facts, and since there usually is only one set of facts, this results in a cohesive and informative portrayal of facts across many trustworthy news outlets and reputable organisations like the New York Times, the Washington Post, and the BBC, to name just a fraction of the trustworthy organisations out there, have made truth and rigorous reporting a part of their brand, and thus it is now inseparable from the public's perception of them. Journalistic integrity, however, and maintaining the public's trust in them is not the only reason that many news media outlets strive to inform honestly. Below the surface, most major news organisations are profit-oriented. As such, providing cohesive and clear information that does not mislead or bewilder the readers is their primary way of ensuring trust in them by their stakeholders, advertising partners and subscribers as well. Though these reputable media organisations may have differences in articles' writing styles, they thus usually do not deviate too heavily from the set of facts they find out, or [are] provided with by viral companies, for fear of spooking their funders with accusations of 'disreputable reporting'. Even if there are slip-ups in the reporting, retractions or edits are put out immediately, proving that such media outlets strive to inform over confuse, especially since it is in their interest to do so.	How this obligation translates into the ability to inform should be explained Good point Successful layering of arguments for the tendency towards informing on the part of the broadcast media
Secondly, the media also can involve creators directly cutting through others' portrayal of them to provide their own first-hand perspectives and experiences, informing the public of their lived situations instead of letting others who have motives to confuse and mislead, to do it for them. Films have increasingly focused on the experiences of minorities, who are still underrepresented in parts of society. Thus, cinema allows them the ability to tell their own stories, as opposed to letting other media confuse and mislead. For instance, in the face of the discrimination against the African-American community in part due to malicious and purposefully confusing and misleading portrayals of black people by white politicians, many black filmmakers have taken up the camera or the pen, and created films that portray their own (albeit more fictionalised) lived experiences. This includes 'Moonlight', as well as films by noted black filmmaker Spike Lee. Admittedly, films, with their priority as entertainment, can also confuse viewers slightly with their fictionalised portrayal of events. However, the suspension of disbelief needed for most audiences to connect to and enjoy media portraying fiction like film, is usually enough for audiences to understand what they are watching is not real, and can only inform them of a fraction of the realities minorities face. However, in the real world, the media's role in allowing people to directly tell their stories is not negated either. For instance, amidst a huge and systematic disinformation campaign by the Russian government in partnership with Russian TikTokers and state television, there has been an	What 'creators' these are could be clarified Nice concession

equally if not larger pushback by Ukrainians on TikTok itself and other platforms, who portray the reality of the situation they are in. One TikTok creator who shared how a day in the life of her shelter looked like garnered 19 million views, with the TikTok featuring a section where her city had been covered in destroyed buildings, showing many previously unaware TikTok users especially those outside Russia or Ukraine who had been exposed to Russian-created content, the true gravity and reality of the situation, cutting through the righteous propaganda the Russian government had been previously broadcasting. Ukrainian President Zelenskyy has also broadcasted his messages using various platforms such as through interviews with western media, and even social media through platforms like YouTube, cutting through a thicket of Russian sources trying to discredit him, and portraying the true reality that many Ukrainians are suffering through, as well as the efforts him and his government are putting in to help the Ukrainian people. This direct creation of media has therefore been instrumental in cementing the direct purpose of media as a tool for information, more than confusion. (Ashley Koh Yu Xi, 21-A1)	Well put ideas While the media's ability to inform is well argued and illustrated here, its opponent in this paragraph seems to be less confusion and more deliberate misinformation
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6 Examine the claim that the media confuses more than it informs.

<i>While this essay has effective arguments, the clear links to the question and its comparative nature tends to come near the bottom of the body paragraphs. The ideas can be re-organised so that these appear higher up in the body paragraphs to prevent confusion in the mind of the marker.</i>	
When a picture seemingly depicting the collapse of the rooftop of Punggol Waterway Terrace was uploaded, people were in a frenzy. Firefighters and other relevant personnel were instantaneously called to the scene, only to realise it was only a hoax created by altering the angle in which the photo was taken. Undoubtedly, such inaccurate portrayals of incidents by the media are not uncommon. Considering our over-reliance on the media as a key source of information, some tout it as an essential tool we cannot do without. However, some others are less certain, claiming that the media also poses various concerns regarding its accuracy and ability to convey messages in a clear manner. In my opinion, I largely agree that the media confuses more than informs since it can proliferate fake news, is overly-saturated with content and can be manipulated, thus confusing individuals especially if no appropriate measures are taken to regulate its use.	Appropriate hook Balanced Clear stand
Firstly, some detractors opine that the role the media plays in informing people is far more significant than the confusion it brings about due to efforts taken to censor undesirable or inaccurate information disseminated. With the media, any limitations to information transmission due to time or space constraints can be obliterated due to the ease and speed in which content can be transmitted anytime and anywhere. For various forms of traditional media, such as television networks or the press, their reputation as credible knowledge sources often places pressure on these bodies to only publish content that is factual and objective. As such, these organisations often have stringent protocols put in place to ensure that every piece of information they make accessible to the public has undergone meticulous perusal and multiple rounds of checks and editing. This thus ensures that the media remains an informative and reliable platform that individuals can rely on to be informed about current events around the globe. For example, newspaper firms such as the New York Times and	

Washington Post are known for their journalistic professionalism and have been awarded numerous accolades for being responsible news sources. Apart from providing credible news, their articles are also organised in a structured and clear manner so that key information can be viewed at first glance, reducing confusion. Therefore, considering the fact that these modes of media can be trusted to provide unbiased and extensive coverage of world wide events, as well as the clarity in which they display their content, these individuals argue that the media informs more than confuses.	
However, though these proponents have provided sound arguments, their viewpoints are myopic in nature since they fail to consider other aspects of the media - more specifically, social media. Due to the wide reach of social media, it has inevitably become a key mode of interaction and discourse. However, unlike traditional media sources where boundaries can be put in place to regulate its content, the sheer number of social media users and overwhelming amount of content uploaded makes it an uphill battle for authorities to thoroughly scrutinise and police each and every post uploaded, leading to the rapid spread of fake news which only serves to confuse and alarm instead of inform. The spread of falsehoods is also exacerbated by the anonymity of social media, causing perpetrators to be further emboldened to create misinformation as they believe they are less likely to be caught and held accountable for their misdeeds. For example, during the COVID-19 outbreak, much uncertainty about the virus and its spread led to what the World Health Organisation (WHO) termed a massive 'infodemic'. On social media platforms like Facebook and Twitter, conspiracy theories about vaccines and baseless suggestions on recovery methods spread like wildfire, such as allegations made that Microsoft Bill Gates aimed to inject microchips in people through the vaccines. Though many would debunk such fake news as ludicrous, its ability to evoke feelings of fear and anxiety amongst people translates to the grim reality that many would blindly believe the misinformation, hampering global efforts to curb the virus spread due to confusion over the differentiation of what is real or fake. As such, such evidence is testament to the fact that the media can potentially confuse more than inform, particularly through social media platforms where the lack of regulation over content leads to the undesirable spread of falsehoods that provide inaccurate knowledge that goes against the truth, confusing users.	'myopic': wrong word Comparison Indirect addressing of "inform" but could be written more explicitly
Moreover, the media confuses more than informs since it can be manipulated by governing bodies or influential organisations, causing individuals to lack breadth of information required to make intellectual and informed choices. For governments that reign over the control of the media, they are able to utilise the media as a political mouthpiece to influence public sentiments to support their political aims. By creating echo-chambers that portray themselves in an overly-positive light, individuals are limited in their viewpoints and hence unable to exercise clarity and certainty in their decisions regarding their government. This is especially so when political parties spread unjustified slanders about rival parties to influence votes. For example, during the 2016 US Elections, the Russian Internet Agency allegedly created thousands of accounts to upload information in favour of political candidate Donald Trump and against Hilary Clinton. Other media, such as Fox News, also provided sensationalised coverage that was biased towards Trump, with hosts making outrageous and politically charged statements against the opposition. In such scenarios, the media fails to inform since it prevents citizens from having access to objective viewpoints. In fact, it only serves to confuse, especially if the information conveyed by the media clashes with their initial perceptions of the political candidate, causing citizens to be in a dilemma as to whether to go with their intuition or vote based on the seemingly accurate content the media provides. Hence, this	They may not be "informed" but is it accurate to describe them as 'confused'? Clear link to question

clearly shows how the media confuses more than informs when it is manipulated by governments or influential bodies to influence mindsets and behaviour.	
Finally, the media confuses more than informs since it is overly saturated with content that is superficial and unhelpful, preventing actual pressing issues from getting the actual coverage they deserve. Developments in the media have led to a rise in performative activism, where individuals utilise the media as a means of shedding light on problems within society. However, unlike actual social advocacy conducted by passionate individuals who really wish to implement change, such activism usually stems from virtue signalling where individuals wish to portray themselves as an individual with good moral character or simply since people wish to jump on the bandwagon and be part of ongoing trends or fads. As a result, activism in the media has become largely superficial and perfunctory, failing to actually raise awareness about pressing issues but instead causing confusion over the actual causes that need to be addressed. For example, after the Black Lives Matter campaign gained worldwide recognition, many individuals, including idols and famous figures, posted a blank square on their social media in support of 'Blackout Tuesday'. However, this behaviour sparked much controversy, with critics claiming that it only caused much confusion amongst users who were previously unaware about the cause and flooded out crucial posts providing more constructive information about the issue. Hence, the ease in which people can share their viewpoints with others through the media could instead lead to greater uncertainty and confusion, particularly if taken into another extreme, as in the case of performative activism where many mindlessly show supposed support without actually comprehending the issue.	This sounds like a problem of the media but does not clearly link to the concepts of confusion vs (clarity of) information. Clear link to question
With rapid technological advancements, it is an indisputable fact that the media will only become increasingly intertwined in our lives due to its key function as a source of information, entertainment and interaction. As such, it is fundamental that we all understand and acknowledge that the media is a double-edged sword that could potentially confuse more than inform if abused. More effort thus needs to be done to encourage responsible use and enhance regulation to mitigate such unwanted consequences. (Clarice Tan, 21-06)	Call to action

6 Examine the claim that the media confuses more than it informs.

<i>For this essay, the examples are too heavy on social media and lack range. However, the redeeming factor is that there is a clear understanding of the dichotomy in the question: confusion vs clarity of information. Weighing and comparison could be done more consistently across paragraphs.</i>	
"Covid-19 originated from Bill Gates!" This is an accusation put forth by America's former President, Donald Trump. As absurd and as blatantly baseless as it sounds, this tweet published by Trump immediately roused the curiosity of millions globally, and even convincing some that it is true. Amidst rising speculations about the origins of Covid-19, this brings to question: does the media confuse more than it informs? While the media is able to provide the public with different perspectives, allowing them to make a more informed opinion, the media is in fact unregulated, allowing the spread of misinformation. Biassed media sources have taken stances on political issues, spreading falsehoods and creating confusion. Furthermore, the media has also caused confusion around one's self-image and identity;	The focus of the example is unclear: what are you trying to say?

hence I agree that the media confuses more than it informs.	
Even though the media allows us to access crucial information anywhere, it is ultimately unregulated, which enables the spread of misinformation and things to be taken out of context, thus causing more confusion than information, as it does not present a double-sided vision. The media is a place where everyone is entitled to their own views. Especially for individuals who are introverted in reality, they make use of the high level of anonymity it offers to make stances on several issues. However, this privilege to anonymity has inadvertently led to netizens sharing false information, given that they are protected from severe consequences. For instance, at the peak of the pandemic in Singapore two years ago, while everybody, including the government was scrambling to manage the issue, an anonymous user began to spread that a lockdown was confirmed. In the midst of the confusion, Singaporeans panicked to reset their schedules as they anticipate a work-from-home situation, all the whilst cancelling plans and making new arrangements. Some even phoned government agency hotlines, causing mass confusion across all boards of ministries. This thus demonstrates the adverse influence that the media has, as it can cause widespread panic and stall a society from functioning properly. Furthermore, it brings about more burden to the government, as it has now an added responsibility to remove this source of false news. Beyond state misinformation, the media also creates confusion in the circle of celebrity life. In the most recent defamation case of Johnny Depp and Amber Heard, many users have taken clear stances. While some are more objective, the majority are extremely biased where they villainise one of them and over-glorify the other. This is extremely prevalent on TikTok, where multiple users, namely @amber_turd174, hash Heard's story even though it might present some elements of truth, which has also caused widespread confusion on the case. Given the extent of vilification of Heard, the public is deluded and confused about the actual scenario and truth about this long-standing lawsuit. Thus, this again shows the power of media as it remains highly unregulated, allowing misinformation to spread like wildfire, causing polarisation. Hence, I agree it confuses more than it informs.	Are they misinformed or confused? Why is this confusing? Not clear from your example. But they are not confused. They just believe what they want to believe. Unclear logical link to confusion.
The media also confuses more than it informs because the media can become tools of political interest, enabling the spread of biased news that distorts the truth, rather than inform by presenting the duality of a situation. Given the power of media and its high penetration in the lives of many, some states have used it to control public's perception and alter several narratives such that they favour them, allowing their reputations to be maintained. For instance, in 2020, Fox News publicised an interview with Donald Trump where he gave his opinions against allegations from China that the US created the virus. Instead of providing an objective stance and display intellectual humility in this claim, he immediately blamed the origins on Bill Gates, a philanthropist in the US. The absurdity of this statement not only shocked the public, but also confused them as they begin to question the integrity of their country and their news sources. As a result, many lost faith in Fox News, and left with foggy minds. In the same vein, North Korea's Korean Central News Agency has also claimed that Kim Jong Un was immortal and resistant to Covid-19, and assured the public that they would be immune too. Even though some devotees believed this, the disillusioned mass questioned the validity of the statement and tried to search for more answers, to no avail, given high censorship of the state-controlled media media agency. Hence, this demonstrates the extent to which media can be used to influence public perception, but at the same time, also cause people to question the validity and integrity of said claims and news sources. Given	Link to "inform" Clear link to confusion Need evidence: just how widespread is this?

the declining faith that the public has in the media, I agree that the media confuses more than it informs.	
Lastly, given that the media rides on trends, it has caused confusion around self-image where people have begun to question their self worth and confidence, causing widespread confusion one one's identity rather than inform, where the media presents extreme depictions of how one should look like, rather than how one can choose to look like. How often than not do you witness beauty trends on social media platforms? Undoubtedly, they have been dominating the media, and this has since caused many to be uncertain of their image. For instance, similarly, the 2000s is where the rise of "SnapChat Dysmorphia" circulated the internet. It is a phenomenon where people gradually become disconcerted and confused with modern beauty standards as "filters" became drastically more unrealistic. This has since caused confusion on how one should present themselves in public, and whether or not it is appropriate or normal to look or grow in a certain way. A 2016 study done by the University of New South Wales on 350 American and Australian women proved beauty trends to be confidence-attacking, as women expressed confusion as to what the "new normal" of beauty should be. Instead of presenting individuals with opinions that validates their appearances and builds confidence, the media has destroyed many identities and confused individuals. Hence I agree that the media confuses more than it informs.	Clear link to confusion, but lacking in comparison to "informing"
However, realists proposed that the media informs more than it confuses because the media is regulated to a certain extent, allowing the public to be more certain on the information they are consuming. For instance, there are numerous "fact-checking" engines attached to the internet, where people can verify news sources to check their respective validity, such as in Google, and factchecked.com. This reduces uncertainty on the credibility of news sources, allowing the public to make a more informed opinion. However, realists completely ignore the limits of these 'fact-checking' tools as it is highly impossible for every word and piece of information to be verified. For instance, while news articles can be run through these engines, social media posts and text messages are restricted. Given that most falsehoods and misinformation circulate in social media platforms and messaging channels, this renders the 'fact-checking' system largely ineffective. Thus, the media remains a place where confusion soars as it is ultimately unregulated.	Balance Strong rebuttal
In conclusion, the media confuses more than it informs. With the rising number of netizens taking more extreme and uneducated stances, coupled with political leaders abusing news outlets to present biased information, the media confuses more than it informs. Even issues regarding societal beauty standards and one's identity are being questioned. This raises a question on whether the media can ever truly become more objective and honest. Where they are able to present wiser and multi-faceted statements to aid in the public's perception of themselves and the world around them. However, given the current circumstance, it appears that there is still a long way to go. Hence, I agree that the media confuses more than it informs. <i>(Kaw Chu Ting, 21-U1)</i>	

7 Is it fair to expect corporations to be socially responsible?

This response directly engaged with the question's demand of considering 'fairness' by stating the criteria for such an evaluation very clearly. Its arguments were completely sound and spot-on for most parts, with relevant - if a little run-of-the-mill - examples. The opposing perspective could have been constructed better with similarly appropriate illustration, to round out the argument more effectively. Though the language used is undoubtedly clear throughout, there is space here for expression with more colour, finesse and voice.

In recent years, there has been mounting pressure against corporations to engage in more ethical practices, with many people speaking out on the issues that corporations have caused, and the term 'eat the rich' being thrown about on social media to criticise corporations. In light of these complaints, there has been growing awareness of the issues regarding corporations and the way they function, and thus, this essay argues that it is mostly fair to expect corporations to be socially responsible.

Some context provided, but the intro is otherwise rather brief and could benefit from fleshing out of the point of contention

Firstly, it should be fair to expect corporations to be socially responsible, as they should be owning up to and resolving the damage that they have caused to various communities and groups of people. In the process of manufacturing, corporations often invest in production lines in developing countries, where it is a lot cheaper to produce their goods, and regulations are a lot more lax compared to back home. As a result, many companies also tend to offshore their pollution to these developing countries to avoid punishment and legal action back home. Such is seen with denim brand Levi's, whose use of chemical dye in Vietnam resulted in permanent pollution and damage of a river. Since Vietnam is a country still heavily reliant on such waterways, this destroyed the livelihoods of some locals and damaged an important water source. Adding on to the harm that corporations cause to indigenous communities, many other corporations, especially beverage corporations such as Nestle and Coca-Cola, tend to over-pump water from water sources in developing countries, leaving locals with barely any water to drink or go about their daily needs with. Even back home, exploitation of workers remains a huge social issue, with many corporations underpaying and overworking their employees. One such corporation commonly receiving criticism for such practices is Amazon, where warehouse packers are often made to work with little to no breaks in gruelling conditions. As such corporations can be seen to cause a multitude of social problems. Thus, it should be fair to want them to at the very least stop engaging in such practices and make repairs to the damage they have caused.

In questions where the focus is not explicitly on Singapore, Singapore should be named like any other example

Secondly, it is also fair to expect corporations to be socially responsible as the power and influence that they hold in society is greater than that of regular citizens, and sometimes even that of governments. As many corporations have grown larger over time, they hold a great deal of market power and social influence. For example, corporations like Nestle and Mondelez are the parent companies of many major food brands, and essentially hold power to influence the majority of the food industry. Other multi-billion and multi-trillion corporations such as Tesla, Facebook and Amazon also have a large influence in society due to the large consumer base that they have en[trapped]. In many countries, especially developing nations, governments often have to submit to such corporations as they are simply too weak to oppose [them]. Thus given the power that outclasses even some governments and that can easily influence a large number of people, it is fair to expect them to be socially responsible since they have the power to do so and can afford to do so, as compared to regular citizens

Would be better to provide examples that explicitly demonstrate the power and influence held by such corporations

and weaker governments, whose efforts alone, while possibly improving some aspects of society, may ultimately still be too weak to make any major change in their society.	
Furthermore, it is also fair to expect corporations to be socially responsible as they have been shirking such responsibilities for a long time, and not only that but they have instead been pushing the blame and responsibility to consumers instead. In an effort to continue unsustainable practices without moral reprehension, many corporations have embarked on huge marketing campaigns that aim to convince consumers that their way of life and their actions are responsible for the damage in our societies. More specifically, this is observed with British Petroleum, as well as other fossil fuel companies, that pushed out the term 'carbon footprint'. The term refers to the amount of carbon and environmental damage our actions cause, and is mostly used in the context of consumers. While it is true that consumers have a role to play in contributing to climate change, the truth is in the grand scheme of things, just 100 corporations are responsible for an overwhelming majority percentage of carbon emissions worldwide. Despite their contribution to the rapidly worsening climate situation, such companies have continued to hide behind the pretence of carbon footprints of consumers being the main issue, while continuing to engage in their polluting practices. Thus, given that these companies have not been responsible, and have even been pushing the blame to consumers, it is fair to expect them to be more socially responsible to make amends for their actions.	
However, despite the view that it is fair to expect corporations to be socially responsible, there are still instances where it is not entirely fair to have such an expectation.	
Ultimately, corporations are still in it for the profits. As organisations that facilitate the trading of goods and services, it is arguable that wants to have fulfilled that role, they are under no further responsibility to be socially responsible, especially given that other groups and organisations such as governments and consumers, should be taking up the key responsibilities in driving a sustainable and ethical society. This is especially the case for the government, who are the leaders of society and other key players in driving the welfare of society. In the case of consumers, as aforementioned, consumers do play a role still in choosing what to consume, and it is arguable that corporations are merely producing to meet the demand of consumers. Thus, it is not fully fair to expect corporations to be socially Responsible.	Needs illustration of an otherwise sensible point
However, we should still expect corporations to be socially responsible, as there is only so much that governments and consumers can do if corporations continue their unethical practices. Due to the sheer size and influence that corporations hold, governments cannot afford to force them to take action to be more ethical as they possibly face huge economic repercussions. As such, there will be a limit to how much action governments can take in our society in the first place to improve the welfare of citizens. In the case of consumers, the choices we make while consuming are but an illusion, given that as previously mentioned many major corporations act as the parent brands for the majority of the bigger food brands, essentially forming a monopoly. Thus, consumers will still end up having to support unethical business practices. In addition, many lower income consumers will not even have the luxury of such choice, and are virtually powerless against corporations. Thus, corporations have to put in at least some effort to be socially responsible, if not actions taken by other groups will be severely limited. Thus it is fair to expect corporations to be socially responsible.	Well-handled rebuttal Can also consider how such companies utilise advertising to create demand for their goods and services by telling consumers what they should desire

As part of the social contract in our society, everyone is expected to have some level of social responsibility to maintain the structures of society and ensure the welfare of others and ourselves. As part of our society, corporations are no exception to this. In the system of give and take that our society has functioned and thrived on, it is understandable that many on social media would be using the term 'eat the rich' unironically, as the growing income gaps and exploitation by corporations seem to consistently indicate that corporations have been taking, but not giving enough. In the name of the betterment of our society and to put an end to unethical practices by corporations, it is fair to expect corporations to be socially responsible. (Cheang Hui Xin, 21-A1)	
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8 To what extent is your society a desirable place to live in?

<i>These 2 body paragraphs draw on copious illustration to make their points effectively. Though there are gaps present in both, they demonstrate good knowledge of the society and the ability to utilise knowledge from many different areas of life to make a point well.</i>	
Singapore's strict and successful laws allow her to be a desirable place to live in, provided that the people obey these laws. Since the beginning of our independence, the late PrimMinister, Mr Lee Kuan Yew, also our founding father, has implemented many laws that many find ridiculous, since these policies have diminished one's freedom in various ways. However, their results have been rewarding as many people obey them obediently. Such laws include the fine for jaywalking, reaching as high as \$1000, to prevent antisocial behaviours and threats to road users and pedestrians. Another law is the fine for littering which also reaches up to \$1000, to remind people to keep shared spaces clean. A more extreme punishment that was implemented was the capital punishment, a death penalty for drug traffickers, so as to protect citizens and deter more people from developing drug addictions. All these laws act as a warning to the people who are considering committing crimes, that there will be consequences he or she has to face. These laws also ensure that Singapore's residents are well taken care of. Another example would be the fine for smoking at non-designated smoking areas; success has been evident from government reports which state that the smoking index has decreased from 11.8% in 2017 to 10.1% in 2020. Hence this shows that Singapore's laws are effective in ensuring our society is a comfortable and safe space to live in, making it very desirable to live in.	Could also have considered the flip side of such strict laws - some loss of both real and perceived freedom Effective series of examples, successfully showing the strictness, though how effectively they are enforced to be successful can be pointed out A well-presented and largely well-supported point
[...]	
However, Singapore may not be that desirable to live in, considering how the employability is threatened when comparing the "newborn" Singaporeans and the native Singaporeans. With the two evil towers of the increasing ageing population and the fall in fertility rate looming, the workforce population has been shrinking. Thus the government opened its borders to welcome foreign talent and foreign workers to contribute to our economy. This results in many jobs being taken away by foreigners. This behaviour has been brought up to the government by Jack Neo's famous film "I'm Not Stupid" and another famous play "Cook A Pot Of Curry" where the Singaporeans feel that they are not favoured in employment.	Series of examples

Both show how the native Singaporeans feel that they are not given the priority to have the jobs, and criticising the way the government has responded to the shrinking workforce population. To make matters worse, in 2011, many Singaporeans went to Hong Lim Park to protest, showing their discontentment with the government's approach to alleviate the problem of employability. While it was a silent protest, their unity and presence was a 'voice' loud and clear to the government. Singaporeans living here, especially those facing unemployment, may thus not view Singapore as a liveable society, as many doors are closed to them and they are unable to have a proper job to sustain themselves economically. This pushes many to go abroad to pursue new career opportunities and thus Singapore may not be a very desirable place to live in. (Ong En Yee, 21-03)	While this does show the desirability of living in Singapore, the view presented is a little short-sighted and could have considered how many international firms have also set up shop here, providing employment opportunities and giving Singaporeans a means of survival despite being a resource-poor nation
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8 To what extent is your society a desirable place to live in?

<i>A well-written essay demonstrating a strong command of the English language. It is evaluated effectively and argued well throughout. However, note that relevance to the question and the points being made should be readily apparent in every example - here, only the last body paragraph came close, and more can be done to draw out the connections in the examples to demonstrate how they support the points.</i>	
As the economic landscape continues to evolve around the world, Singapore, being a small and open economy, is also inevitably shaped by the forces of demand in supply of the global market. It is imperative for Singapore, especially, to continue to adapt and remain competitive, else we become invisible in the eyes of the world's economic superpowers. This has led to our endless pursuit of propelling Singapore to greater heights and making our voice heard on a global level. However this further pursuit has come at the expense of trade-offs, namely heightening inequality, growing competitiveness and a fast-paced lifestyle which have made my society not a desirable place to live in. Does a robust economy necessarily guarantee that Singaporeans will be happier, more related and more secure - in other words, will Singapore be a more desirable place to live in? I personally beg to differ, and hence agree to a very small extent that my society is a desirable place to live in.	
Firstly, Singapore is not a desirable society to live in as there is heightening inequality in my society that pervades the social, economic and political realms, that does not guarantee individuals equal opportunities. Meritocracy and capitalism are tightly held tenets of our system of governance, where people are given credit based on their achievements. However, this has led to social stratification as only those who are inclined in a certain field and prove themselves to be the creme de la creme will be glorified while others would be relegated to the sidelines in terms of education opportunities and career prospects. This phenomenon is very much evident in our own education system. Often glorified as a tool of empowerment and the ultimate solution to perennial problems that plague our society, this may come as a shock to many; however, our education system remains culpable of the fact that it heightens inequality. Our education system seems to be obsessed with the elite group, which the government has identified to be the next generation of future leaders, with multiple scholarships and training opportunities reserved for this group of people. On the other side of the fence, those who are less academically inclined tend to be overshadowed by their peers, and are often not given the same attention that they	Evaluation Example As this is a work of

rightfully deserve. Furthermore, a local production by Jack Neo titled 'I Not Stupid', showcases how those who are less academically inclined tend to be belittled by their peers. To many people's surprise even those who are supposedly more educated such as administrators of education - teachers and principal - also have a role in perpetuating such elitist and socially stratifying mindsets, by shunning those who are not as bright. From this example, it clearly illuminates how the meritocratic principle which is the cornerstone of our education system does not provide Singaporeans with equal opportunities to gain respect, recognition and approval from society in a manner that they deem fit. This has resulted in a yawning chasm between the haves and have nots, which make some people feel like second-class citizens despite co-existing in the same place. Such a system that is slanted to provide outlets only to a certain group of elite individuals will never truly breach the gap between the different segments of society, resulting in a vicious cycle of inequality that makes it extremely difficult for people to climb these social ladder and prove themselves in any manner they deem is worthy. As such, heightening inequality in my society has made Singapore not a desirable place to live in.	fiction, it does not stand strongly as an example of the real treatment of less academically inclined children in our society Evaluation What do they deserve then? Link to the question could be clearer Evaluation Evaluation
Secondly, the fast-paced environment that has led to overly stressed citizens is an excellent manifestation of the undesirability of Singapore as a place to live in. Singapore is often proclaimed to be a 'smart nation', but technology has brought about significant benefits in a multitude of fields. Undeniably, technology has made our lives better by granting us greater convenience, efficiency and a higher quality of life. Superficially, this may come off as a positive development. However, upon closer examination of this strand of argument, technology has forced us to do things faster than if our non-computerised, non-robotic brains and limbs were put to use. This has bred an attitude in which Singaporeans do not have time to stop and smell the roses. It is often said that 'even if you win the rat race you are still a rat'. Indeed, technology has allowed us to accomplish so much more in the same amount of time, but this has robbed us of the joy and the luxury of enjoying the little things in life. In our society where instant gratification and lightning speed communication are highly coveted, this has led to people squeezing as many tasks as they can into their already hectic schedules. This is very much evident from the skyrocketing stress levels that Singaporeans face. In addition, given the tireless invasion of our handheld means of portable escape - our hand phones - people have no excuse not to be contactable 24/7. As such, people's working hours have been extended to a limitless extent and do[] not just end once one steps out of the office. Singapore is renowned for having extremely long working hours which are much greater than the world's average number of working hours and that of Western countries. Long working hours coupled with proliferating stress levels has the potential to be detrimental to both our physical and mental health. We are now even more vulnerable than before to a plethora of health complications associated with stress and fatigue, such as obesity, kidney failure, diabetes and depression. I can say with confidence that no common man would wish for such disastrous and tragic health complications to befall [] them. As we are too busy cocooned in our technological comfort zones, we often lose ourselves in the endless pursuit of better, faster and smarter, which has resulted in a pace of life that is too fast for our own good. Therefore, our overly fast pace of life makes Singapore a desirable place to live in.	Evaluation Awkward phrasing
Granted, there are also a host of factors that exist, which makes Singapore a desirable place to live in. No one can deny the benefits they are brought about by our robust political system, our transportation system that extends to all corners of the country that runs like	

clockwork and potable water that flows into every household upon the turn of the tap, not to mention that our neighbouring countries may not even get to experience the luxury of political stability and high standard of living as we do. These are but a few examples that the detractors of my stand would not hesitate to point out. However, I stand true to my stand and contest that our non-material standard of living - mental well-being, health, [or the] environment, should definitely not come at the expense of improving our material standard of living. A truly enlightened society is one that can strike a balance between economic growth and ensuring that the people are truly happy, [and] it pains me to admit that my country definitely still has a long way to go before it can proclaim itself to be an enlightened country.	Evaluation Good rebuttal / evaluation
In conclusion, I am of the view that heightening inequality in my society and increasing stress levels, given our fast-paced lifestyles, are compelling corroborations of the assertion that my society is not a desirable place to live in. My society cannot truly progress as a nation if so few have so much, yet so many have so little. Everyone should be given equal opportunities to shine in various fields and people should be granted the right to stop and smell the roses for our pace of life has exceeded humanity. This, in my opinion, will be the hallmark of a desirable society to live in. (Ariel Oh, 21-03)	

8 To what extent is your society a desirable place to live in?

<i>Clear and well explained; however, points are heavy on the issue of inclusiveness, with one separate point on political stability. The range of ideas discussed can be broader, to more effectively cover what desirability can entail when it comes to being a place to live. The essay can also be further balanced. A well written piece!</i>	
Singapore has been proud of its multiracial, multi religious and multicultural society, with the survival narrative of being the 'small fishing village' to a 'First rate economy' etched into the minds of Singaporeans. Singapore has definitely struggled through various obstacles, prioritising the economic growth and social welfare of its citizens has always been its main concern. While the government has implemented various policies and infrastructure to ensure Singaporeans will continue to consider their homeland a place they would like to live in forever, others, especially the marginalised, may argue that since their various needs have yet to be met, they consider that living in Singapore has led to more problems and thus deem it undesirable. Ultimately, I agree that Singapore is a desirable place to live in as not only has the government ensured that majority needs are addressed, they also ensure that there is ample trust between authority figures and the common man such that citizens would not feel oppressed.	Appropriate hook for the topic SS Not just Singaporeans, but people overseas... Clear stand
Critics argue that Singapore is not a desirable place to live in given that the high cost of living prevents the low income group from having the capability to make ends meet. They struggle to pay hefty rental bills, electricity and water supply bills are left unpaid and their living conditions proves how difficult it is for the low income group to climb up the social ladder. The fact that one room flats in Singapore still exist highlights how we need to consider the 'rags to riches' narrative since the problem of income inequality exists, which could turn Singapore into a nation that discourages foreigners or even their own citizens to	Poor people (inclusiveness) + \$\$ Balance

the government has explicitly made clear that racial sentiments towards specific groups are unacceptable, and we have laws which will punish the perpetrator should they choose to incite and sow more discord. Moreover, the creation of common spaces such as playgrounds and void decks allows everyone to interact with one another freely and mix with other races, while the Ethnic Integration Policy ensures that a single Housing and Development Board (HDB) block is not made up of solely chinese, eliminating the segregation between the ethnicities in the past. With such legislation and policies to maintain our racial harmony, this has made Singapore a much more prosperous society to live in, as seen from how foreigners are choosing to live in Singapore simpl due to the nation's pride in being harmonious with one another. Everyone feels safe to know that there are rules that protect them from harm, and this leads to increased confidence and happiness to live in Singapore. As such, our nation's pride in its five decade racial harmony has allowed Singapore to be a desirable place to live in, since we are accepting of everyone and our government makes sure that the rights of everyone are protected by condemning those who threaten to destabilise the nation's racial diversity.	
Singapore is also a desirable place to live in since there is mutual trust between the government and its citizens in ensuring order in our society without having the need to feel oppressed. Unlike other countries like Myanmar where there is a battle of power between the military and its citizens, we are a democratic society where everyone has the right to have a say, especially if it concerns the welfare of the citizens. While it may be unfair that citizens aged 18 and below are not allowed to cast a vote to elect the next party to govern the state, government officials have also turned to social media such as Instagram and Facebook to address the concerns of the young, making them feel included in deciding how the nation should be governed. Since we are a digital generation, we no longer have to submit official emails to voice a concern and instead directly contact these ministers, which makes this a two-way-approach rather than a one-way-street. Government officials' direct appeal to citizens als lends a personal touch, which strengthens the bond between the government and its citizens. This then leads to a mutual understanding where the citizens place their trust in authority figures to govern our nation with care, and the government trusting that the citizens will do their own part to ensure order in their society and not just the government alone. This shared responsibility thus allows the state to run smoothly without any predominant tensions. The government has also allowed its residents to take part in planning the city, such as the Green Link Way that allows volunteers to plant their own greenery. Resident participation grants citizens the same power that governments have in constructing plans for future generations, and the fact that our government holds Meet-the-Party sessions to engage with residents further highlights how citizens are not stripped off their rights in having a say to official matters, which thus once again leads to increased trust to the authorities since citizens are made aware that the power these higher figures hold will never be abused and are only used to serve the country and improve citizen welfare which they can then trust in making key decisions. As such, Singapore becomes a desirable place to live in sine its citizens are able to live in a society that regulates them but also gives them power to regulate their own affairs and open up to government officials about their struggles without having to feel restricted.	Political stability Balance
Ultimately, I agree that Singapore is a desirable place to live in since it addresses most of the needs of its Singaporeans, ensures the racial harmony between citizens to prevent them from being constantly attacked by unreasonable remarks and empowers citizens to make	

their own decisions while also being able to place their faith in the government without having to feel that their rights as a citizen will be compromised. Once a 'small fishing village' peppered with tensions and strife across various groups as seen from the Racial Riots which threatened Singapore's identity as a nation that everyone wishes to continue living in, the country has definitely evolved and became a metropolis that embraces and accepts everyone, allowing citizens to feel inclusive and encourages them to continue to live in a harmonious city. Not only are Maslow's hierarchy of needs such as physiological and social needs are met, the fact that foreigners are coming into Singapore to become a permanent resident further highlights how inclusivity is something our nation prides on, and we sold do more to ensure that our society continues to meet the various criterias that makes our city a desirable place to stay for a long time. (Charmaine Chua, 21-06)	Apt conclusion Could have used Maslow's hierarchy of needs more
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8 To what extent is your society a desirable place to live in?

<i>This piece presents a thoroughly balanced view of the issue, and is incisive in laying out the tradeoffs that have been made in the Singapore context that have affected livability here. In every case, the evaluation has been well thought through, and undoubtedly focused on the question. In addition, it is largely expressed successfully and makes use of a fairly effective metaphor to convey the careful balance struck here in making Singapore not only survive as a nation, but liveable for its citizens.</i>	
When considering to what extent my society, Singapore is a desirable place to live in, one must view Singapore as a coin. There [are] two different sides to it, yet one side cannot do without the other. In essence the coin is only valuable if both sides of the coin are together. While many have been critical of Singapore in recent years for its 'lack of freedom', with some even branding Singapore as a civilised 'North Korea', this does not mean that Singapore is any less desirable to live in. From how Singapore has effectively dealt with the coronavirus pandemic to continuing to remain relevant to the world, Singapore certainly is a desirable place to live in, despite [the presence of] some sentiments [] otherwise.	An insightful metaphor, but strange image of a split coin Balance
Singapore is a desirable place to live in given how well developed the country is, with a low crime rate, although this is a result of strict laws. Coming across as harsh and Draconian, Singapore would find it hard to establish safety without strict laws. In a recent survey by various think-tanks, Singapore ranked second in terms of safety, behind only Japan, due to low crime rates. Such an achievement will not be possible without strict laws. For example, vandalism carries the punishment of caning and imprisonment, which is heavily criticised by Western Nations and human rights groups for being primitive and harsh. It also led to tensions between Singapore and the United States over the 1994 killing of teenager Michael Fay, who was caned despite US President Clinton's appeal for clemency. In fact, it is through these strict laws that Singapore is able to achieve such low crime rates, given how Singaporeans do not wish for such punishments to be imposed on them precisely due to the harshness of these laws, which encourages citizens to refrain from such crimes. If the punishment for crimes were less severe ([such as having a mere] fine for vandalism), more instances of such cases would [arise], given the lower opportunity (and personal) cost involved here. This is also because as a small nation which relies heavily on its people due to a lack of natural resources, Singapore can hardly afford to have a sizable number of its population in jail for petty crimes.	Good awareness and balance with both the upsides and downsides of the laws in Singapore Balance accounting for a different perspective on livability, albeit using an example that is a little dated

As such, the need for strict, draconian laws exist[s], preventing people from committing those crimes in the first place. Thus, this makes Singapore a desirable place to live in given the low crime rates.	Clearly evaluates the two sides of the same coin
In addition to my earlier point, Singapore is a desirable place to live in, given how society functions and gets along in harmony, though this comes at the cost of the lack of freedom of speech. Despite having so many different races of people in Singapore, Singaporeans from all racial groups generally get along in harmony, due to how the government has strategically managed to engage different races of people. Through policies such as the Ethnic Integration Programme (EIP) which was introduced by the Housing & Development Board in 1989, races are guaranteed to interact with one another, fostering more understanding of one another. This makes Singapore desirable as no one is made to feel like an outsider, allowing for peace to be bred in Singapore. Critics may claim that this idea of ‘racial harmony’ is an artificial one as people carry their own innate biases towards people of other races, which I admit is true. Yes, while people may be biased, the important thing is that society as a whole still gets along to work together and coexist together without saying whatever they feel, which is important in order for Singapore to survive. Indeed, while it could even be due to the strict punishments for acts which wound racial feelings that prevent people from making racist remarks, at least in Singapore. After all, prevention is better than cure. Compare this to America, where freedom of speech is upheld as one of the key American values and it is clear [] why freedom of speech is not all that desirable, and if freedom of speech were to be allowed in Singapore, it could possibly lead to civil unrest and a more fragmented society. It is an issue of swallowing the lesser evil for Singapore. Either be open and allow for freedom of speech which might increase racial tension or totally clamp down on free speech to prevent further conflict and create a society which at the very least, gets along with one another for the greater good of the country, and that is Singapore’s [selected] option. Choosing the latter has allowed for Singapore to progress as a whole, with no races being excluded, and that makes Singapore desirable.	Balanced topic sentence Clear links made to why such diversity and harmony make Singapore a desirable place to live in Convoluted and unclear sentence fragment A little more elaboration about what exactly the reader is supposed to draw from America’s example would make the point better, rather than leaving it entirely open for the reader to infer Effective evaluation of the desirability, based on the choices that have been made by SG society
However, Singapore’s desirability as a place to live is severely undermined by its lack of equity, according to critics. With sprawling mansions being located near rental flats, the income divide is widening. Critics point out Singapore’s Gini coefficient as a point of reference, showing how Singapore’s desirability as a place to live in only applies to the wealthy. In addition, Singapore’s high cost of living as compared to other countries is an extra point in showing how Singapore is only desirable for the rich. Yet, [these] critics fail to realise that Singapore’s high cost of living stems mainly from non-essential goods and services such as cars and luxury properties, which are not key in enjoying a high standard of living. For example, [the] Certificate of Entitlement, which is required to be held by vehicle-owners in order to drive their cars, has been nearing \$100,000. \$100,000, an exorbitant sum to pay for what literally is a piece of paper that gives one the permission to drive one’s car. Yet, such high taxes do not lower Singapore’s desirability to live in at all, given how Singapore’s public transport system is so well developed throughout the island, making a vehicle unnecessary even for families and being more of a symbol of wealth. Besides, property prices are rather affordable, especially for government-subsidised HDB flats for the lower income groups to ensure everybody has a roof over their heads. For example, Singapore’s property prices are [far] more affordable than other equally developed cities such as Sydney, Tokyo and Hong Kong. To tackle inequity, the government has also successfully rolled out various forms of aid	More evidence is needed to make this judgement: How affordable are daily necessities? How cheap is the cheapest available food? How true is it that this high cost of living is about luxury good and not necessities? Effective quick comparison with similar countries

to the lower income groups to ensure that they have the basic necessities (food, lodging) through grocery vouchers and top-ups to their Medisave accounts. Singapore remains a desirable place to live in for everyone, regardless of income group, rather than just the wealthy as is so often claimed by the critics of Singapore.	
Lastly, Singapore is a desirable place to live in, until the issue of life balance and stress arises. Singapore has been labelled for not ensuring that its workers get sufficient rest, leading to an exodus of workers from their jobs due to stress and being overworked, in what was labelled The Great Resignation. Students too are pressured to do well in their studies and have to cope with various commitments, leading to stress. In addition, the rise in suicide cases [has] also raised concerns that Singapore is an undesirable place to live in due to the lack of attention paid to such issues. While I concede to this point, it is also key to note that Singapore does not have much choice in addressing this, given how Singapore is entirely reliant on its people to thrive. If Singaporeans are unwilling to work harder than others, we would lose our competitive edge which has been the key reason for our rapid rise from third world to first. It is imperative that we must remain connected and relevant to the world, not resting on our laurels. That said, Singapore still has some way to go in addressing this to make ourselves a more desirable place to live in while continuing to be relevant.	Could be expressed more clearly Good awareness of contextual demands that shape the situation What are some indicators that Singapore is trying to improve in this aspect?
In conclusion, Singapore remains a desirable place to live in, given its high standard of living, high levels of safety and income. Yet, as with all other countries, there is still room for Singapore to improve, especially with regard to mental health. It is thus an issue of flipping the metaphorical coin mentioned at the start and hoping that it will land in the middle, balanced and upright. Only then can Singapore be a truly desirable place to live without exceptions. (Jerome Foo, 21-U1)	Interesting image that recalls the introduction and conveys the challenge of achieving such balance

9 'Governments should prioritise the economy above other concerns.' Comment.

<i>This essay has a sound understanding of issues in the question and question requirements. Balance and illustration were offered and well woven into the fabric of the argument. The initial two paragraphs were especially well explained and support was strong.</i>	
The state of a country's economy has long been used as a yardstick in assessing the progress and standing of a country, leading to multiple governments pursuing economic growth at a frenetic pace. Superpowers like the United States and China are characterised by their strong trade relations with countries all over the world, as well as their robust economy. However, the frantic pursuit of economic growth has led to a whole slew of problems, such as rampant inequality, abused human rights and environmental degradation. The problems of the past that were tightly linked to the state of our economy – poverty, malnutrition, lack of access to basic necessities – are no longer the focal point in today's context, given the progress we have made in revitalising the economy over the past few decades, albeit with a few stragglers of the likes of developing countries. Hence, I believe that governments should no longer prioritise the economy above all other concerns but pursue economic growth mindfully, without neglecting other factors that may constitute a better life for their citizens today.	Context setting Balanced perspective. Reasons offered after considering pertinent opposing viewpoints

Detractors may argue that a strong and stable economy lays the foundation for the achievement of other government goals, such as an increased standard of living and greater equity, and thus should be a priority. Poverty in developing countries like Haiti is indeed the root cause of many problems, such as the lack of access to education and thus a low skilled working class, diseases that have a disproportionately large effect in communities due to unsanitary living conditions and more, all of which seek to perpetuate the poverty cycle and by extension, hinder economic growth. The economy in these countries are thus prioritised by the government as the revenue generated from a more robust economy can subsequently be invested into public goods and services which benefit the society, such as education and healthcare, which are essential social levellers to lift its citizens out of the poverty cycle. Thus, the prioritisation of the economy in developing countries is seen as a long term solution to the multitude of issues plaguing these countries, many of which are rooted in the economic instability of governments.	A pertinent opposing perspective raised Well explained reasoning Clear link back to the question
While I do concede that developing countries do indeed need to prioritise their economies to a greater extent than other countries, they still should not do so blindly without care for other concerns. Prioritising growth without taking its consequences into consideration inadvertently leads to the neglect of environmental sustainability which was a mistake that was made by the developed countries in the past and is still a mistake being made by developing countries in the present. The effects of the industrial revolution can still be felt, manifesting itself as a multitude of catastrophes such as increased instances of drought, flooding and heat waves due to global warming. Despite all this, countries like Indonesia continue to burn down large acres of forested land to make way for palm tree plantations to maintain their economic edge by keeping up with the increasing global demand for palm oil. While I do understand the Indonesian government's desire to remain competitive in the market, such actions highlight the blind pursuit of economic growth. Additionally, the loss in biodiversity and forest coverage will only come to bite Indonesia in the back in years to come as such unsustainable growth only seeks to limit their resources such as viable land space for agriculture in the long run while merely providing an easy yet unsustainable solution for their economic goals in the short run. Thus, governments should not pursue economic growth at the expense of the environment as such methods would only cause more problems for the future governments to deal with and may also adversely impact the economy in the long run.	Concession and Rebuttal This is a useful point that will benefit from some brief development of what resources. Why the short-run, long-run concern? Link back to the question. Reasoning is explained well, and greater support for the claim about future adverse impact will help.
In addition to practical reasons for countries to chase economic growth sustainably, one must also consider the moral implications such a choice might have. First and foremost, a government's duty is to its citizens as they have the moral responsibility to safeguard the citizen's standard of living above all else. Without a functioning and cohesive society, any economic progress is meaningless if other aspects of a country's citizens' wellbeing is not addressed, or even made worse through the government's pursuit of economic growth. An example would be the exploitation of sweatshop workers in India by multinational corporations all over the world such as Nike and Adidas. The labour intensive yet undercompensated nature of the job has resulted in many accidents such as mass faintings due to overexhaustion, and even the 2013 Dhaka garment factory collapse which resulted in a death toll of more than 1000 workers. However, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi has not done anything to redress this increasingly pressing issue of overworked and underpaid workers, and has even gone on to make it the focal point of India's economy. Under the slogan "Make in India", Modi has continued to seek prospecting investors in order to revive India's economy. How then, could the workers free themselves from such inhumane working	

conditions if the government not only does not give them sufficient support to pull themselves out of poverty but even advocates for their exploitation? The economic growth experienced by India is thus senseless to its citizens due to the government's failure to keep to their side of the social contract. Economic progress needs to be broadly based if it is to foster social and political progress. The importance of the connection between economic growth and social progress, as well as the consequent concern for what will happen if living standards fail to improve should thus not be neglected.	
In a similar vein, more countries are shifting away from the traditional goals of economic growth but rather focusing on niche aspects that have allowed them to make a name for themselves, highlighting their success and perhaps beckoning other countries to follow in their footsteps. This is due to the increasingly prevalent notion that the pursuit of material wealth does not guarantee happiness. With increasing concerns regarding the environment and global warming, it is indeed heartening to know that Bhutan is the first country to achieve carbon neutrality. Despite having a relatively weak economy due to its citizens' self-sustaining way of life and the imposition of a cap for tourists to ensure the sanctity of the country's environment, the people in Bhutan are reported to be one of the happiest in the world. This really begs the question as to whether our mindless pursuits of wealth have led us into a never ending chase for happiness through acquisition of materialistic goals.	It will help to elaborate on your reasoning and what 'niche aspects' refer to before launching into the case study.
Ultimately, it is important to note that times are different, and economic prosperity, which was what government goals used to be centred around, is no longer the only thing they should be worried about. There is increasing awareness about the many problems that plague society today, and with it comes increased pressure from citizens to call on governments to adopt a more comprehensive plan to improve societal welfare, rather than just focusing on the material aspect. While this may be easier for developed countries due to a larger reserve of funds to draw on, developing countries do still need to prioritise economic development to resolve some of its deeply entrenched problems rooted in poverty. Nonetheless, while pursuing economic growth, it is paramount that we take other concerns into consideration, and not neglect nor diminish the other problems we continue to face as a result of industrialisation, such as climate change. (Sim Khok Yin, 21-12)	

9 'Governments should prioritise the economy above other concerns.' Comment.

<i>An incisive and wholly focused response to the question, this piece showcases not only a layered, insightful understanding of the issues in the question, but also the capability to tie the various threads together into a relevant discussion of the tradeoffs made when the economy is prioritised. It eventually reaches the compelling conclusion that the costs are simply far too great, as its thorough analysis examines how the prioritisation of the economy causes other important concerns to be neglected or compromised. Such consistent awareness of the relationship between prioritising the economy and its effect on the other concerns is the hallmark of a good response in such a question, as it never departs from a laser-sharp focus on the question.</i>	
Governments, by their very existence, often have a duty of care towards the nation they govern, and by extension, towards the citizens of that nation. By nature of being elected or representative governments, their power stems from the masses, who imbue their	Consider starting with a more interesting hook

governments with the moral authority to make administrative decisions that have the capacity to fundamentally alter the lives of these citizens. By virtue of possessing this power and capability, governments are the only decision making agents that are able to choose between the various concerns and needs of their constituents to make decisions about policies that impact not only the economy, but also the environment, the wellbeing of their people, and so much more. With rising socio-political disquiet and dissatisfaction in many parts of the developed and developing world, many have begun to question the types of trade-offs that governments choose to make in pursuit of economic growth. While most tend to accept that governments should prioritise the economy and its growth so as to create trickle-down effects that benefit wider society, I will contend that in doing so, governments inherently de-prioritise other important concerns that have a more significant bearing on the quality of life for their citizens – namely labour rights concerns, environmental concerns, and even larger geopolitical concerns.	Understanding of the issue Thesis statement
Regardless, proponents of the idea that the economy should always be prioritised by the government argue that economic growth fundamentally benefits the economic status of everyone in the nation, thereby justifying governmental prioritisation as it creates the greatest amount of human joy by uplifting everyone, even the poor. Supporters of this idea essentially subscribe to the “Washington Consensus”, which is the idea that capitalism and economic growth can be taken to be the key to maximising human happiness by virtue of the fact that it significantly elevates the material conditions of all people. The argument follows that by prioritising the economy, either through giving subsidies to corporations or even tax incentives to encourage multinational corporations (MNCs) to set up in their nations, governments are able to successfully stimulate their economies. This also means that there are more employment opportunities for individuals, allowing them to earn higher wages as the company succeeds, thereby improving their quality of life. It is also argued that improvements made to the economy and the growing wealth of citizens and corporations alike allows the government to have a larger tax base and thus, higher tax revenue that is able to substantially improve state-provided services. These services, like public transportation or state-subsidised healthcare, inarguably improve the quality of life for citizens, and ultimately fulfils the government duty of care for their constituents. Furthermore, this argument posits that such growth and development that materially improves the quality of life for the average individual is only possible when the government positions economic concerns and growth above all else. At the point that economic concerns take centre stage, government resources can be focused and channelled specifically towards this goal, maximising the extent of growth given that resources and decisions are now primarily directed towards this end. A primary example in this argumentation would be the government prioritisation of big corporations in America, that are heavily subsidised by governments to carry out research and development in the hopes that their findings will grow the economy. Industry juggernauts like Tesla and Amazon see millions in government subsidies yearly, with Amazon creating ‘Factory Towns’ in suburban regions of America. Many have praised these towns as creating meaningful employment opportunities for workers, as well as providing infrastructure like roads and electricity to some of these regions. Thus, proponents of the prioritisation of the economy will argue that because governments are in the unique position to stimulate economic growth in a manner that creates widespread advancements in wages, standard of living, and in the provision of necessary infrastructure, they should prioritise the economy above all else.	Rather insightful. Shows a depth of understanding Shows sensitivity to the point of contention and key terms of the question
However, supporters of this argument neglect the fact that the decision to prioritise the	Evaluation

economy does not exist in a vacuum. That is to say, this decision will ultimately incur opportunity costs and trade-offs that I would argue should never be sacrificed by governments for the sake of economic growth. Notice that to spark economic development, governments often lean heavily on corporations and MNCs to create economic growth. The result then is that in pushing for these companies to truly maximise their profits in order to create the most amount of economic growth, governments inherently turn a blind eye to the violation of labour rights carried out by MNCs, as they choose to put economic concerns above the wellbeing of their own citizens. In developed nations, we see that huge conglomerates like Amazon and Starbucks have repeatedly depressed the wages of their employees, refusing to pay them above the minimum wage stipulated by the government. Calculations, done by food industry juggernaut McDonalds themselves, found that in America, two minimum wage jobs are required for the average worker in one of their stores to sustain themselves. By prioritising the profit margins of these big corporations, governments have made it clear that keeping minimum wage low is necessary, so as to keep raking in immense profits that are believed to benefit the national economy and thus, benefit everyone. However, we already see that the logical conclusion of this argument does not hold, at the point that the workers' wellbeing is not enhanced by the prioritisation of growth but is rather eroded by it. Moreover, many of these companies in the developed world carry out human rights violations – such as Amazon forcing its workers to work, unpaid, through their breaks. Attempts from workers themselves to push back against these conditions have been illegally shot down by corporations who prevent workers from unionising despite it being a right for many workers in developed countries. Starbucks infamously utilises many 'union busting' techniques that are designed to prevent workers from unionising and demanding higher wages. While these methods are illegal, governments often turn a blind eye to these occurrences, or merely give corporations a slap on the wrist rather than actually holding them accountable, as governments are cognisant of the fact that keeping wages low is crucial to keeping economic growth steady. Therefore, to prioritise the economy is not to simultaneously create better outcomes for workers. Rather, to prioritise the economy is to trade off crucial rights and the wellbeing of the nations' labourers in the pursuit of constantly developing the economy. Therefore, it is principally unjust for governments to prioritise the economy over labour rights concerns, as this allows for the average workers' material wellbeing to be sacrificed for the sake of 'trickle-down economics', that merely lines the pockets of corporations more than actively improving the lives of citizens.	Nuance All the time? Why? Paragraph is generally coherent More often than not
I would also argue that especially in developing nations where prioritising the economy tends to be synonymous with prioritising and supporting foreign direct investments in the form of MNCs, governments become beholden to these corporations and thus are unable to protect the rights or lives of their workers and the general population. Many developing nations, in their early years, encourage MNCs to establish factories and plants in their nations via tax cuts or subsidies, thus prioritising economic growth in the hopes that it will create development for their country's educational, transport, and healthcare sectors. However, in doing so, these developing countries create a reliance on these corporations due to the massive amounts of revenue that these MNCs generate that improves the GDP of many of these nations. At its surface, it appears that by prioritising the economy in this case, governments have helped industrialise and modernise their nations. Once again, however, this beholdence to and reliance on MNCs means that they cannot be held accountable for their human rights abuses, as doing so will compromise on the economic stability and growth of the nation. For example,	Topic sentences are clear Ev Why do companies end up following this pattern? Why is it difficult to trust

Nestle factories in the Ivory Coast source their cocoa from farms that specifically employ child labour to keep costs low. Many MNCs similarly have utilised the Global South, with its heavy reliance on corporations for economic growth, as a means to cut corners and improve their bottom line. Due to the fact that governments have prioritised the economy, they trade off the ability to protect their very own citizens to appease these MNCs, fundamentally failing in their governmental duty to create safe and equitable working conditions. Since it is apparent that economic prioritisation by governments – both in the developed and developing world – only harm, not benefit the material and non-material living standards of the average citizen due to the prioritisation of the economy over labour rights, I would argue that governments have the moral imperative to not prioritise the economy over their own people.	companies to do the right thing?
Moreover, governments prioritising the economy in the short term neglect environmental concerns in the long term, that not only have the potential to ruin future possibilities for economic growth but also threaten the lives of the poorest and most vulnerable citizens in the here and now. Climate change is upon us. This is a fact that is ostensibly well known and recognised, by the international scientific community, and governments across the world as well. And yet, little has been done to alter the trajectory of our climate crisis, which is primarily due to governmental refusal to de-prioritise the economy. The truth is that the economy growing exponentially cannot go hand in hand with environmental conservation. Every dollar of GDP growth amounts to some level of carbon emissions, making economic growth and environmental salvation fundamentally antithetical. Even green technology has not progressed fast enough to keep up with the ever-growing manufacturing industry that endlessly churns out products to improve the revenue of companies and the earnings of governments. While the issue is often pointed to as the lax environmental regulations on manufacturing plants, due to the government's unwillingness to cut down on the profits of mega-corporations, I would argue that a more insidious and sometimes invisible issue is that governments see economic growth as the only option for the nation, thereby implicitly prioritising the economy over the environment in every decision they make that improves the economy. Even cleaner energy, or more regulations on carbon emissions, or environmental campaigns are not enough – it is economic growth that needs to be de-prioritised. This sentiment is echoed by many prominent “de-growth” economists, who suggest a widespread scaling back of economic growth, which involves governments stepping in to make the economy a secondary, rather than primary concern, by focusing on the environment and the impacts of climate change instead. De-growth economists suggest the elimination of planned obsolescence and overproduction that currently elevate economic growth. By prioritising the economy, governments fundamentally accept this trade-off, and imply that they are willing to allow the rising sea levels and immense heat waves that will result from climate change to ravage our earth, and are willing to sacrifice the future of humanity on our planet in their devoted focus towards the economy. At the point where governments are the only actors that could make sweeping changes to prevent the destructive capacity of climate change, but choose to focus on the economy instead, they fail to meet the needs of their future generations, thus also failing in the face of their state duty of care as governments.	Rather interesting take, well-expressed Clear links made to the point of contention
Another interesting facet of this argument is that governments should not prioritise the economy in circumstances where greater geopolitical interests would be sacrificed in the pursuit of economic growth. Most notably, many countries have displayed that they are willing to de-prioritise their economies to an extent so as to impose moral and diplomatic pressure on other governments to stop their human rights abuses. Many are in support of the	Personal voice

idea that the economy should be made a secondary concern in the face of shocking human rights violations committed by other nations, which justifies the imposition of economic sanctions or the raising of tariffs. Often, governments are perceived as having a moral duty not only to their citizens but to the wider international community as well, particularly in cases of egregious breaches of international law and human rights. In the recent Russian invasion of Ukraine, many countries have taken the moral imperative of imposing sanctions on Russia to diminish Russian resources and economic capacity and to place diplomatic and financial pressure on Russia to withdraw. For many nations, making the choice to impose sanctions on Russia harms their economies, as it blocks off a relatively large market to export their goods to. And yet, many countries have opted for sanctions anyway, showing that there exists a widespread belief that governments should not prioritise economic concerns in circumstances when doing so would be damaging to the sanctity of international laws. Therefore, governments should be willing to make the marginal trade-off of some of their economic prosperity, when it helps preserve the democratic world order to help ensure security and peace. As members of the international community, these nations and by extension their governments, should not prioritise their economic gains in these dire circumstances.	Interesting point made here. Links to question are relatively clear.
Governments, in their role as the Leviathan and the governing body meant to protect the average citizen and their interests and wellbeing, should not prioritise the economy in the vast majority of cases. By doing so, governments make a massive trade-off between the economy and other inalienable human rights. While economic concerns must always remain important in the governmental agenda, putting them first and ignoring the crucial human rights, dignity, and happiness of citizens is fundamentally opposed to the concept of governance that is for the people. Governments should not put the economy above other concerns, because to do so is to sacrifice the wellbeing of workers, the sanctity of our international laws, and the very future of humanity on this earth. (S Sanjana Rajan, 21-01)	Clear understanding of the question

9 'Governments should prioritise the economy above other concerns.' Comment.

<i>A coherent and well-organised essay that presents little to nit-pick. It is a well-argued, balanced, effectively supported and consistently evaluated attempt, showing awareness of what some of the key competing concerns might be, but always focusing on the relative value of focusing on the economy.</i>	
In this dog-eat-dog world, many governments often prioritise boosting one's economy over other concerns due to the increase in global competition. Each country needs to constantly evolve and adapt to the changing times to merely keep afloat. Hence, with the number of developing countries growing, more governments believe that a strong economy is the panacea to problems within their country. I contend with the argument that governments should prioritise the economy over other concerns as it provides countries with the means to solve their other concerns.	Apt context Evaluation
Opponents may argue that the environment is a more critical concern that governments should be prioritising as it has a widespread effect. Boosting the economy often comes with negative impacts on the environment such as deforestation and air pollution which not only	Opposing view Evaluation

affects the country itself but the whole world. Hence, it would make more sense to invest and prioritise solutions to environmental problems, not to feed into the vicious cycle of environmental damage just for economies to grow. Even though developing countries may not have the means to help themselves and reduce their own carbon emissions, many developed and wealthier countries can chip in for the benefit of everyone. For example, for the Belt and Road initiative, China contributed funds to Pakistan for Pakistan to build a hydropower station as they were facing a huge energy deficit. With the hydropower station, this creates an alternative environmentally-friendly source of energy for Pakistan, reducing their need for coal significantly. From this example, it can be seen that with this investment from the Chinese government, where environmental concerns were prioritised over economic ones, more people from the surrounding countries also benefited from the cleaner environment.	Evaluation Example Consider: what impact does this have on the natural habitat on the other side of the dam?
However not all developed and wealthy countries are willing to splurge on the well-being of other countries' citizens, showing that this instance of China helping Pakistan is a fringe example. Hence, without foreign aid, a growing and booming economy is higher up on the list of importance compared to meeting environmental goals to address such concerns especially for developing countries. Developing countries are often fraught with a thousand and one problems but the main goal is to decrease the poverty rate and increase the quality of life by growing the economy. Although there is acknowledgement that the environment does affect everyone, governments are selfish in the sense that they would do anything to increase the quality of their citizens' lives even if the environment is at stake. This claim can be substantiated by the example of India where coal is usually seen as the sole source of growth and income in many of the poorest regions. Even though the Indian government promised to reduce their carbon emissions by 35% by 2030 during the Paris climate conference in 2015, this task proves to be a herculean one for them as they are heavily dependent on coal. There is no other alternative source of energy that the government can sustain that is as efficient and booming as the coal industry in India. Therefore, the Indian government has to make the choice of allowing coal to continue to be the main source of energy, increasing their citizens' income and increasing their material standard of living or help to clean the environment. The choice is clear: let California and others immolate while India grasps at prosperity.	Evaluation for a rebuttal Example Example Assured style and an appropriate metaphor
In addition, the government has a societal role in ensuring the safety and security of its citizens and funding is needed for doing so, hence prioritising the economy is essential first. Some might argue that the government plays a key role in their citizens' well-being so social concerns require more attention. However, while I acknowledge that social concerns are important, its strong economic position enables the government to have the means to fund social schemes, eventually addressing these pressing social concerns. Countries that have pre-existing debt and do not have any economy with the potential to grow cannot provide [solutions] to solve these societal concerns. For instance, a developing country such as India is often seen as a country with high crime rates and has corrupt law enforcement. Without a strong economic position, the government cannot afford to pay the authorities a higher wage which causes them to turn to bribes and corruption, allowing criminals to run free and the low non-material standard of living to persist. On the other hand of the other end of the spectrum, Singapore is often hailed as one of the least corrupt and safest countries in the world. Our stable economy enables the Singapore government to be in a healthy budget position, helping their citizens improve their quality of life with various welfare schemes. When the Covid-19 pandemic hit, although the economy did take a blow, monetary aid was still provided to address Singaporeans' needs, even emotional and financial ones. Therefore,	Concession and rebuttal Example Evaluation Example could include Corrupt Practices Investigation Bureau's budget to better illustrate the benefits of a strong economy

from the comparison of the two countries, it can be seen that governments that prioritise their economy are better able to address societal concerns in the long run by having better means of doing so.	
In conclusion, the state of the country plays a pivotal part in deciding on what government should prioritise. The financial means and short term goals for a country varies but I believe that addressing economic concerns takes precedence over societal or environmental ones as money is always needed to start projects or fund schemes. In this climate, governments are salvaging their own resources in order to prosper, fostering this ‘each man for himself’ mentality. Therefore, governments ought to put themselves first and do what is best for the economy to help their citizens. (Tivya Nhing Balasubramaniam, 21-03)	Evaluation

9 ‘Governments should prioritise the economy above other concerns.’ Comment.

<i>A well-written and effectively structured response based on two key ideas: that the economy is necessary to support the tackling of all other concerns, and that it also gives countries leverage outside of the nation. While not fully cognisant of the tensions in the question at all times due to some missing links such as in BPs 1 and 3 to why focusing on the economy might compromise other concerns, this piece also has strong reasoning and balance, comprehensive examples, and confident evaluation.</i>	
Since the 1950s, the Golden Age of Capitalism [has] heralded in an era of unprecedented growth to the global economy. From then, the economy has been inseparable from politics and has been one of the government’s top priority due to its ability to improve living standards. However, while the economy can possibly propel living standards, should it remain a priority at the expense of other concerns? Overall, I agree that the governments should prioritise the economy above other concerns like poverty or the lack of inclusivity. Only with economic development and improved financial capacity, can governments start to tackle other social issues. Furthermore, a powerful economy can grant countries immense leverage over other countries. Hence, I believe that the economy should remain a top priority above other concerns.	Good context presenting the central place of the economy in many societies Clear thesis with reasons. Well-rounded intro
True, some may argue that in this modern day and age where countries are largely developed, governments should pivot their focus away from the economy, and instead [focus] on the welfare of its people. Indeed, the welfare of citizens is undoubtedly important and cannot be neglected; it has been linked to a greater satisfaction of life and increased productivity in society. This can possibly allow for a happier, more satisfied population. Scandinavian countries like Finland and Sweden have long been world leaders in terms of providing welfare to its people. For example, Sweden provides universal healthcare for its citizens and children aged 15 and below pay absolutely nothing for their bills. Finland also has progressive maternity leave policies that mandate companies to grant work leaves to women more to take care of their children. It is no surprise that their citizens are the world’s happiest while their country also boasts the best work-life balance amongst OECD countries. Not only that, with increased productivity amongst their working population, their GDP per capita tops almost all countries in the world - Denmark’s GDP per capita is almost that of Singapore’s 62000\$. All	Addresses a common opposing perspective Concession to the importance of such a concern Detailed and effective examples that make a strong case for the importance of focusing on such social welfare, though why it might come into conflict with prioritising the economy could be clarified Opposing view clearly and fairly developed,

this begs the question, if countries can prioritise other concerns like the lack of healthcare and maternity leave by instituting progressive policies, is prioritising the economy a bad choice?	while leaving room for disagreement in this smooth transition
Firstly, it is pertinent to note that while those countries indeed provide splendid welfare to their citizens, one may [be underestimating] the importance of the economy in these countries. In other words, the governments were only able to tackle other concerns like the lack of healthcare and discrimination because they had enough financial capacity; governments had to prioritise the economy above other concerns first, before it could tackle other concerns. Going back to the previously mentioned Scandinavian countries, they could only start tackling such issues and provided welfare when their government needed to ensure public hospitals and clinics could be built for all citizens. The government also needed to provide economic infrastructure like power grids and intricate water supply lines to supply hospitals with such necessities. This infrastructure has added over 200 billion dollars of taxpayer money to the bill of such countries since 1997. In other words, the astronomical expense that the government had taken up had to be supplemented by the economy once again. Without the economy and an affluent middle-class, the government would not have been able to finance the bills of such other policies with taxpayer money. As such, before governments tackle other concerns, the economy should be the first priority. Without capital and money, governments will never be able to create change and improve the lives of other citizens.	Fair rebuttal Good continuation of the same example to bring across the importance of focusing on the economy Source could be clearer
Not only that, but the same argument can also be made for other issues like inclusivity and discrimination as well. In my opinion, I believe that systemic, progressive issues like racial or gender inequality can only be eradicated with reeducation and time. Beliefs and ideas that stem from centuries of discrimination towards racial groups and demographics can only be slowly chipped away with reeducation policies and stringent policing measures from governmental agencies. As such, the government can prioritise such concerns by improving the quality of education and employing more police or surveillance officers, but they will need to note that these solutions will come with a price. Money must be pumped annually [in]to improv[ing] training for teachers as well as to improve cybersecurity and surveillance to prevent the radicalisation of society. In Singapore, the Internal Security Agency frequents religious forums and arrests potential suspects for radicalisation. Up till 2015, it has arrested various Indonesian terrorists that were planning to plant a bomb in Marina Bay Sands. These efforts help to prevent the division of society. Terrorist acts can often divide society and cause the society to pin the blame on certain demographics. In the case of the example above, it could have potentially created racial tensions between Malays and other Singaporeans, disrupting national unity and perpetuating racial discrimination. However, efforts like that still require financial capital to sustain. Singapore spends an estimate of 2% of its GDP, or 6.4 billion dollars on internal security. As such, combating such issues requires strong economic foundations to succeed. In other words, while governments can prioritise other concerns and issues like racial discrimination, the economy must still remain a priority, so it can continue financing other agencies.	Extension of previously developed ideas, though like the 1st BP, why focusing on these issues might be problematic could be expanded on: how might focusing on the economy potentially put issues like inclusivity on the backburner? Interesting word choice The paragraph is largely further support for the arguments already made previously
As many political analysts say, “Wars are no longer won with military might in this age, but with money.” In this day and age, the economy has immense power. It can grant countries unparalleled leverage to exercise their power and gain favours. For example, since 1979, China has embarked on the open door policy. Deng helped establish special economic zones that allowed unregulated foreign investment into their countries. This planted the seed for China’s	Links to the question could be established more clearly from the start Any notable names?

spectacular double digit growth from the 1990s. In the past, Western powers looked down on China for its measly living standards. But in this present day and age, people look at China as a potential adversary, a bully due to their sheer economic power. Since 1985, China has established its claims in the South China Sea. Holding 32 trillion cubic feet of natural gas and 4 trillion dollars worth of annual trade, China has exercised its economic leverage immensely to intimidate other countries. Using its economic leverage over ASEAN - 500 billion dollars of annual trade -, it has pressured Vietnam and Philippines to vacate key islands in the South China Sea by threatening to cut off trade with them. As China's trade with Vietnam makes up almost 17% of its economy, Vietnam was forced to drop its claims over Paracel Island in 2017. Essentially, China successfully asserted its claims without raising a single finger. The economy now is no longer just to propel living standards, but also as a weapon - the economy now has never been more important than now. In this age, governments are not willing to sacrifice human lives for war (except Russia). The economy has taken a centerstage for wars and battles - take the recent US-China trade war. As such governments should prioritise the economy above other concerns due to the immense potential it has to defend and assert a country's interest.	Detailed example, but example-led rather than driven by an argument Would focusing on their economies have allowed Vietnam and the Philippines to resist China's influence? Could more successfully select an example that demonstrates the ability economic might affords a country to defend its own interests, such as this one
In conclusion, I believe that governments should prioritise the economy above other concerns. After all, the economy has been the catalyst for development and a growing political tool. Without the economy, governments will find it extremely tedious to affect change and prioritise other concerns. Just as the 1950s was the Golden Age of Capitalism, our recent years was also an era - an era of the pandemic. With increasing concerns for mental health during this pandemic and the recent resurgence of Monkeypox, will the economy still be the top concern? (Wah Tee Liat, 21-04)	Effective conclusion, with a clear reiteration of the main thread of the arguments made, as well as some bookending to close the essay nicely, but there's no need for new points or examples

9 'Governments should prioritise the economy above other concerns.' Comment.

<i>This essay's strengths lie in its insight into the longer term impact of prioritising the economy above other concerns, a thoughtful dimension that was uncommonly seen in most responses. However, this could have been applied to other contexts for a more nuanced response, as the present and future concerns of nations with greatly differing circumstances would likely warrant different priorities.</i>	
We have all groaned and rolled our eyes when our parents remind us of the phrase "money makes the world go round" in an attempt to get us to study harder. Yet, in our increasingly competitive and pragmatic society, this view has concurrently taken precedence over all other concerns. If money is what turns visions into action, then why should the government prioritise anything else besides the pursuit of economic growth? This essay seeks to overturn this notion, as governments should not purely prioritise the economy due to their moral obligation to the people, pressing environmental sustainability and the acknowledgement that the economy itself is not purely one-dimensional, being affected by other societal issues as well. Naysayers might argue that it is only with the prioritisation of the economy that societal issues such as poverty can be curbed, how this view is largely parochial.	Context Clear stand Balance

Foremost, governments should not just place emphasis on economic growth, as economic growth itself is not a one dimensional issue. Economic growth is mainly led by the productivity of the nation's citizens. Therefore, the level of societal welfare has the potential to stimulate or stall the state's economy altogether. Simply rolling out policies in favour of squeezing productivity out of the workforce, will be detrimental even to the economy itself. Whilst money turns vision into action, it is still the actions and visions of the people. For example, Japan's work culture has been cited by news sources such as the Arcadia as 'extreme', wholly negligent of worker's welfare, placing a lopsided emphasis on company loyalty. As a result, this has led to the stagnation of the Japanese economy, logging less than a percent in annual growth over the past few years, due to employees becoming 'less motivated' and 'ambitionless' according to JapanToday. Thus, we see that other societal issues can potentially negate the emphasis on the economy, making the prioritisation of purely the economy for states largely irrational.	Meaning could be clarified Scope can be broadened: what about cases of very poor countries?
In other spheres such as environmental sustainability, the prioritisation of the economy would also lead to greater consequences. Governments simply prioritising the economy over other concerns would lead to consequences that trump all else in scale. Issues such as the environment can potentially affect issues such as even liveability of the state, making economic growth a meaningless concern in the long-run. For example, Peru's reliance on mining for their economy, as can be seen from the country's major exports being copper (31 percent of total shipments) and gold (18 percent), has led to several environmental issues, such as the pollution of water, leading to a decrease in water quality and quantity for locals. Furthermore, the engagement in unsustainable mining practices has led to the continued destruction of the local habitats for plants and animals as well.	Unqualified assumption that prioritising economy means that all other aspects are ranked far, far below it rather than a close 2nd or 3rd
Additionally, besides the immediate consequences, the prioritising of the economy over all other concerns also endangers long-term livability of not only the state itself, but internationally as well. Unhealthy environmental practices facilitated by legislation that only concerns the economy, would only take away from the future, worsening intergenerational inequity. This can be seen in legislation such as Ex-President Donald Trump's removal of the Obama Administration's mandate that state officials have to consider environmental impact when decision-making, along with the pulling out from the Paris Climate Accord. Whilst this practise benefits oil and other carbon-emitting industries, allowing the economy to flourish, it would lead to greater consequences from enhanced greenhouse effect from carbon emissions. This concern is very much real, as studies have already identified that several small island states such as the Maldives are in danger of rising sea levels, 80% of its land becoming uninhabitable as early as 2050. Therefore, when intergenerational equity is at stake, governments should not prioritise the economy.	Again, what about poor states? Are you suggesting that all states should prioritise the environment over the economy?
Some might argue that governments should prioritise economic growth over other concerns, as the economy is what allows for the funding of policies that entail societal welfare in the first place. This especially applies in developing countries such as India, housing approximately 18 million people living in poverty. As an extension of this principle, governments should purely prioritise the economy as there are simply no resources available, and only with economic prosperity can nations enact sustainable policies ideal for the state. For example, India, as one of the world's leading emitters of carbon, should invest in sustainable energy sources. Yet, studies have shown that for India to do so would require approximately "4-6 times the annual budget spent on healthcare and education, or the military budget", way out	

of India's economic capabilities. Therefore, India should purely prioritise economic growth first and foremost. However, whilst this argument holds true, it is built on the assumption that other concerns are not able to be fulfilled without a prospering economy, when it is possible to give both equal priority. For example, before Singapore became the prosperous financial hub it is today, Lee Kuan Yew's iron and ruthless leadership still accounted for other concerns, as can be seen from his 1960s Green Campaign which funded the planting and growing of communal trees in Singapore. Today, not only does Singapore prosper economically, but also as one of the world's greenest cities. India may not be able to fully address all other concerns, but it is the mutual priority of both issues that lead to sustainable futures. Sustainable development is not just a goal, but also a journey. Therefore, prioritising the economy is not the only means of achieving societal welfare, though economic growth might assist in doing so.	Unclear how India's changing energy sources are comparable to SG's planting trees. Is planting trees prioritising both the economy and environment equally, or even the environment over the economy? Attempt to balance argument, but could be better executed
Lastly, it would be morally dubious for the government to prioritise the economy over all other concerns, as the government is morally obligated to serve the needs of the people. According to the social contract theory, the government is selected by the people, for the people. As it is the people who voted the government into office in the first place, the people's concerns should ethically be the government's in decision making. For example, Margaret Thatcher, known as the 'Iron Lady', was a British prime minister for her lopsided emphasis on industrialization of the economy, whilst neglecting the needs of the people at the time. Her policy of subsidising domestic industries instead of welfare though led to economic prosperity, led to many societal issues such as systemic inequity. This led to Thatcher's legacy being largely criticised, being cited as unethical by many. Therefore, governments are morally obligated to not prioritise the economy over the people.	While the example is valid, it is based on the assumption that people will not want the government to prioritise the economy, but this is not necessarily the case in reality
In conclusion, due to decision making being largely multi-dimensional, the government should prioritise more than simply just the economy, for greater benefits temporally. Whilst this essay largely favours not prioritising economic prosperity, it has to be asserted that prioritising the economy and other concerns are not dichotomous, as both can be progressed towards concurrently by pursuing sustainable practices. Whilst primitive technology has made the pursuit of economic growth detrimental to other concerns such as the burning of coals to the environment, the advancement of technology has allowed governments to no longer be restricted by the notions of that time. (Lau Qingrui, 21-U1)	Nuanced evaluation

11 'Small states have no influence over large states.' Do you agree?

<i>With a sound understanding of question requirements and issues in the question, this response raises a number of promising ideas, offering some apt illustration and considering balance fairly. Some of these ideas could however have been reasoned and illustrated with greater consistency of quality to more effectively bring out the logical links underlying the arguments made.</i>	
We strive to live in a world where might does not determine power whereby regardless of the physical capabilities and resources of any stakeholder, they should each be able to hold the same power and influence. However, this has seemed to be incredibly difficult in International Relations (IR). The view that states with a smaller size, population, and thus	Should perhaps be 'might does not equal right' instead Intent of 'small states' is thorough and

likely less resources and capital, are at the mercy of large nations who often hold more economic, geographical and historical power has been prevalent for as long as IR has been discussed. While it may be true that small states have little and limited influence over large states, I do not agree that they have no influence at all. The influence in question can come in many forms, through hard power and soft power which can then play a part in various negotiations and decisions.	well-integrated Awkward - what does it mean to discuss IR? Clear stand and reasoning. Unpacking what is meant by 'hard' and 'soft' power, and linking to the characteristics of small states outlined above will strengthen the intro
A key argument made by those who believe small states have no power over large ones is that there is a large inherent power asymmetry between small states and larger states due to natural geographical endowments and this asymmetry continues to hinder small States from having any influence over large states. Large states are often able to be self-sufficient due to vast capital. With mere land, people, and resources, they are better able to produce the various diverse needs of the country without external help. Furthermore, this advantage has allowed them to advance and develop quicker than smaller countries. Thus, these countries were able to finance exploration and colonisation around the world. Even though we have left the colonial era, the postcolonialist theory of IR argues that this still impacts countries' current power. It posits that countries that break free from colonisation later are at a developmental disadvantage. The disruption and unrest involved in gaining independence, as well as rebuilding political, social, and economic structures mean that these nations start almost afresh. Thus, those who emerge later are likely less developed, especially in the economic aspect. As explained previously, the states emerging from colonisation are likely the smaller states, since the larger ones are the ones who had the capacity and ability to colonise. Thus, not only does the initial physical disadvantage limit these small states' power, but the historical events also further widens the power disparity between these large and small States. These large states until today are still the ones considered 'first world' nations at the forefront of economic development. These states thus hold their political, economic and military might as their prime bargaining chip. In bilateral trade relations, smaller countries who lack productive capacity and technological expertise often require trade agreements with the larger nations with those productive capabilities. These small nations, due to the necessity of maintaining these ties, are thus often unable to forward their other interests in fear of upsetting the larger power, whereas we see the large nation more able to get their way. In China's recent engagements with the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) and vaccine diplomacy, they targeted Southeast Asian, South Asian, Middle East and Latin American nations to include in these initiatives. Under [the] BRI, they offer Foreign Direct Investments (FDI) into the country, usually through infrastructure and expanding businesses. Under vaccine diplomacy, they gave these nations free vaccines during a time when other large countries were busy obtaining vaccines for their own people, locking smaller countries out of offering them. Since these small countries lacked better alternatives due to lack of economic power many of these countries accepted China's offers. The level of influence China had was so strong, that even their historic enemies, like the Philippines, agreed to this. Due to smaller countries lacking the means to develop and grow in comparison to larger countries, they thus often need to even neglect their own national interests and policies and agree to the terms of the larger country.	Clear topic sentence of the opposing view Explanation of reasoning Can be clarified: developed and advanced in what sense? Influence asymmetry explained Relevance to the point could be more directly, especially given the subsequent supporting illustration It is important to first highlight and show that they are to avoid the risk of appearing to veer off track. This more directly answers the question Sound reasoning Avoid jargon: funds to build / invest in building Could have clarified what alternatives - is this problem about their own reserves, or not having investors? Could be more clearly explained and illustrated A sound point that shows awareness of the issues in the question, but there is uneven development of reasoning, examples and some veering off track

While it may be true that these factors still play a part today and are key reasons why such small countries lack influence, there have been developments that allow small countries to have some influence instead of none.	Transition
The formation of various international organisations has allowed small countries to have some influence over large countries. The international organisation United Nations (UN) was formed after World War II [with the aim] of fostering peace in the world. Today, in most of its major organs, it provides all nations with one vote each. This is part of [its] aim of mitigating the influence might may have on a nation's sway on issues. While this system may not be perfect since large nations still hold more bargaining power, it at least puts smaller countries at the negotiation table. The protections awarded under the UN charter and various other treaties is also able to mitigate small nations' fears of opposing large powers. With international conventions protecting sovereignty, nations may be more willing to not support large nations with less fear of being invaded. Thus, they minimally get a platform to speak and discuss international issues. Another kind of international organisation that has allowed increased influence for small nations would be regional organisations. Small nations in understanding their lack of power, formed organisations to discuss issues and aligned their stances, increasing their ability to gain international clout and importance. A prime example of this is the Association of SouthEast Asian Nations (ASEAN), where they have various mechanisms and programs, like a shared rice reserve, to reduce reliance on large countries, and discuss regional topics. With small countries organising and aligning their stances, this increases their influence over large nations because the large nations now have their relations with an entire region at stake, thus helping to slightly level the playing ground when negotiating. This allows smaller nations to be able to forward their national interest on the international stage on issues that concern them.	What this refers to could be clarified. Is this aligned to the earlier stated aim of fostering peace? How so? And if not, where does this aim come from? This promising point could be elaborated on What such support means could be clearer Seems like a low bar! How far this actually influences larger states actions could be better considered with some supporting illustration Which ones? An illustration of such relations and how the playing field has been levelled would be effective here Promising point and explanation of reasoning was sound. Clear illustration has yet to be offered; doing so would strengthen the argument.
Lastly, small states have been able to somewhat build influence with soft power. While large nations, particularly the United States has historically held more soft power, smaller States like Japan, Korea, Brazil and Thailand have been able to increase their soft power in recent years. Due to the increasing interconnectivity provided by increasingly accessible communications technology, small nations have been able to spread their soft power through media. South Korea has well utilised this through the boom of Kpop and Kdrama globally. Furthermore, the global nature of companies has also allowed these nations to gain soft power. Japan, through Sanrio, has been able to spread its power globally, particularly with a globally recognised hello Kitty. This soft power emerges not due to physical endowments but the talent and creativity of individuals creating strategic marketing tactics to propel these nations into relevance. How does soft power increase a small nation's influence over large countries? The unique benefit of soft power is that it allows other countries to gain familiarity with the culture of a country. In IR, this means that large countries would feel more familiar with how the society of a small country is like and feel a sense of familiarity to the culture, beliefs and phenomena. Thus, they will be more willing to connect and negotiate with these familiar countries because they have gained a sense of credibility and reputability. This does allow smaller countries to be able to have some power in negotiating since they are able to	Instead of just naming countries here, the notion of 'soft power' should be unpacked More accurately, they spread their culture/art/films etc and hence build soft power. Is this only in the case of firms? Could illustrate to clarify Explanation of soft power and its effect on influencing larger countries could be moved up in the paragraph for greater clarity Does familiarity equate

field opportunities and agreements from more sectors, and are thus less reliant on large nations. This reduces the power asymmetry in discussions, as well as makes the image of the nation transform into one of reputability and someone to be an ally of.	to credibility? Needs more supporting illustration of this idea Sound point on soft power, but support for the claims about the link between soft power and influence are lacking. Reasoning and organisation of ideas will benefit from closer focus on the terms of the question.
In conclusion, while large states [are still dominant over] smaller countries, this has shrunk as smaller nations have been able to galvanise others through unity and increasing power in non-material aspects, allowing them to wield some influence over a large state. Furthermore, we are progressing to have even more discourse on elevating small nations, especially with global debate on UN security council reform. Thus, I believe that small states will grow to have more influence over large states than they do now as they get invited more and more to have a seat at the table, as we progress to negating the idea of might carrying power, and providing small states with more control over international affairs. (Guillermo Caryl Kristine Co, 21-E6)	Relevant recap of stand and arguments raised Projection to the future has some grounds, though could be better supported

11 'Small states have no influence over large states.' Do you agree

<i>This piece demonstrates a sound understanding of the issues in the question, and of the concept of influence being based on relationships between different parties. Throughout, it has a high quality of relevant argumentation, with both analysis and handling of balance carried out effectively. The writing is also fluent and well handled, resulting in a clear and engaging read. It could be strengthened with further development of examples to support its points, as well as with a wider range (or number) of examples where appropriate.</i>	
In our global society today, the exponential increase in levels of interconnectedness across borders has catalysed an entanglement of fates wherein countries, regardless of their geography, have found their decision making models intertwined with that of other countries worldwide. It is for this very reason that sovereign states today, big or small, are so vulnerable and susceptible to external influences on the global stage. While some may argue that small states, with their seemingly small size, are inherently endowed with fewer, less valuable resources, thus making them less influential when it comes to pragmatic considerations, I believe that in spite of such constraints, smaller states compensate for such shortcomings in the a multitude of ways and thus should not be belittled for the forces and pressures that they can exert on their larger counterparts.	Apt context-setting Opposing perspectives and tension in the question are articulated Clear stand and reasons

With the world treading along the trajectory towards digital integration and cross-boundary exchange of information, it is unequivocal that mass media outlets such as newspapers and social media have become what most people rely on for their daily dose of current affairs. It is precisely due to the wide reach of the internet and mass media that states, regardless of their relatively smaller size, can have the ability to sway the decisions of the larger powers. This would be aptly exemplified by the case of Sahar Khodayari, the woman who resorted to self-immolation in response to being taken into custody for dressing up as a man in order to enter a stadium to spectate a football match in Syria. The principles of the ban rested on the 1979 Iranian Revolution, wherein Iranian society conformed to a more conservative interpretation of religious doctrines known as the Sharia Law. These laws legislated by the constitution were recognised by netizens far and wide, from states such as Singapore for its stereotypical, blatant devaluation of women and their rights, inciting violent public outrage and backlash when Sahar's story was published on various mass media outlets. In turn, the Iranian government eventually relented under heavy public scrutiny, allowing 4600 women to enter the stadiums for a football qualifier. It is thus evident that smaller states and the people they comprise can in fact harness the power of mass media to mobilise the masses and galvanise larger states to reform discriminatory laws and policies despite being a blip on the world map due to the ability of mass media to transcend geographical boundaries.	Such terms should be clarified Evidence required The paragraph seems to focus more on people power rather than the relationship between small and large states. The approach and/or example can be better chosen
In addition to the power of small states arising from its ability to tap on mass media's favourabilities, small states today can exert various pressures on larger states through mutual agreements that bind countries involved to its terms. With the current global climate where international trade is essential to bolstering a country's economy and setting it up for economic success, a compelling reason is provided for countries to engage each other to reap mutually beneficial outcomes. Trade agreements become more commonplace and because small states too have resources to offer, they can be major stakeholders in such agreements. Furthermore, as the saying goes, 'There is strength in unity'. Smaller countries with small individual influence can amplify this through a coordinated, collective response to large states in order to reap intended outcomes. This is especially prominent in the case of the 2019 Amazon forest fires which were responsible for the razing of forests that catalysed colossal levels of carbon dioxide emissions. When Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro refused to implement measures to rein in the blazes brought about by his legalisation of slash-and-burn farming, several notably smaller states such as Ireland and France in the European Union unanimously threatened to veto the EU Mercosur Free Trade deal, which proved effective in setting Brazil back on the right track towards environmental preservation. This elucidates that small states, despite their limited abilities on the individual level, can influence larger states simply through unions with other smaller states to bolster this influence in an age where such international agreements permeate the global economy.	Promising point The example needs to be better developed to show the influence exerted on Brazil that led to the action taken Promising idea Exemplifying the influence more explicitly in the supporting example will enhance this point

Nonetheless, pessimists may argue that small states lack soft power required to influence larger states as the intrinsic lack of resources tied to small size subjects them to the whims and fancies of larger states. They cite examples of foreign aid, drawing attention to the issues that inherently arise with smaller nations' unhealthy dependence on larger states to sustain their ways of life. A common example usually surfaced includes that of the United States (US) and Haiti, wherein the US' supply of rice grains to Haiti accounts for 80% of its total demand. Precisely due to Haiti's heavy reliance on US food aid, when the US decisively halted exports to Haiti following the widely disputed 2000 elections which threatened to reduce the US' economic revenue generated by the provision of food aid, the small nation was sent into a spiral of crippling poverty and recession, unable to reverse the course of events due to an acute lack of basic resources which limited retaliatory efforts on the US. They argue that the sobering reality of our interconnected world today is that when the fate of small states lie in the hands of puppet masters whose sole interest is economic growth and the preservation of their own nationalist agenda, conditionality will always underpin such provisions and the influence of small states on larger states will always be undermined since the power they wield is ultimately dependent on the aid they receive from these larger counterparts . In a state of fragile geopolitics and age of multipolar nations, small states cannot and must not influence larger states as it directly jeopardises the smaller state's way of life.	Aptly put Language of balance used well to clearly mark this as an opposing view Explain: How does the disputed nature of US elections influence this? Needs clear explanation Promising idea here; the example of Haiti, however, may not be apt to illustrate the complexity of the idea articulated. It seems a cherry-picked e.g. that merely shows a dependent state being abandoned instead of the idea of being beholden and unable to exert influence
However, this argument assumes that all smaller states have nothing of value in the eyes of larger states as it downplays commodities of value to physical, natural resources. This assumption does not hold true in a world where technological advancements have already started to take root in many smaller economies. For example, in the case of Singapore and Malaysia's water deal, Malaysia values its partnership with Singapore despite its lack of water resources to contribute simply because Singapore has the futuristic, advanced technology required to process and purify its water to make it potable, explicitly elucidating the fact that contrary to popular belief, things of value need not be correlated to size or for that matter natural resources. For this very reason, it is possible and plausible that small states, for the prized services it can offer, can be indispensable to large states, allowing these small states to influence larger countries to act in its best interests.	Rebuttal shows deeper evaluation Reasoning explained Clarify how Malaysia stands to gain here Sound point, but the example should be better developed for the point
All in all, while smaller states are arguably less geographically endowed with the natural resources that larger states are blessed with given their smaller land area, it is myopic to assume that smaller countries can be undermined for their influence simply for this reason. Furthermore, to assume that the only commodities valued on the international stage are natural resources is naive, especially when many of these raw materials are unable to be used without intensive purification and processing which smaller countries may be more thoroughly suited for, given their needs to overcome the physical constraints of size and limited natural resources. Small countries, while a blip on the world map, bring resources and skills of value to the table and for this reason, do and can exert influence on larger states despite their small size. (Joann Kwek, 21-12)	

11 'Small states have no influence over large states.' Do you agree

<i>A clear and nuanced essay which shows some level of insight. Enhance your evaluation further by considering how the aspects of power measure up against each other: hard power (military might) vs soft power (cultural and economic power). Does one ultimately trump the other?</i>	
From the expansion of the Roman Empire to the pillaging by the Mongolians, historically, smaller states or nations were often under threat of being eliminated or taken over by larger states, those that commonly wielded a stronger military, had larger populations, wealthier or had a better endowment of natural resources. Though the fear of elimination is drastically reduced in modern civilization due to mutual respect of state sovereignty, larger states still exert a significant amount of dominance over smaller states. However, I disagree with this statement to a large extent, due to the presence of cultural and fashion influence that smaller (states) can have on larger nations.	Appropriate hook Addressed current context Balanced stand
Proponents of the idea that small states have no influence over large states often cite military might and resource independence as the salient points of their arguments. They posit that having a relatively larger military force allows larger states to do whatever they want, as a stronger military discourages any smaller states that happened to be weaker, from objecting beyond verbal condemnation. In the event that the small state tries to obstruct the larger state's plan, the larger state can simply remove the smaller state from the equation by means of military intervention. This argument stems from the idea of "larger army diplomacy", which was frequently the only method of dispute resolution between states, utilized years before modern civilization. In this form of diplomacy, the state with the smaller army almost always had no influence on the larger state, and the outcome. They could not demand anything due to fears of a complete takeover. Similarly, resource independence of larger states prevents smaller states from influencing them, due to a reduced dependence on other states for resources. This inhibits smaller states from being able to influence the financial stability and economy of larger states through trade. For example, if China launches an attack on Taiwan, and Singapore stops exporting electronic components to China as a form of protest, China can simply produce their own electronic components, due to the abundance of precious metals, labour and land. As such, Singapore's influence through this act of condemnation is reduced significantly.	Paragraph is clearly argued
While these arguments are ostensibly cogent, they fail to depict the full scale of the issue. "Larger army diplomacy" has lost much significance in modern times, due to the rise of non-violent methods of diplomacy that came along with greater respect for state sovereignty. While larger states that are militarily powerhouses such as the United States, China and arguably, Russia, are feared and respected on the global stage, smaller states are still able to influence these large states due to the formation of international organizations, often consisting of mostly small states. These organizations include the UN, NATO and ASEAN, which allows for strength in numbers. Article 51 of the UN charter states that there will be nothing in the charter to prevent the rights of any member state from self-defence in an event of an armed attack on said nation. While the article does not explicitly mention that the member state will be backed up by other member states, it suggests that small states are under informal "protection" by the organization. As such, under mutual protection, small states are able to influence larger states when they are under threat, often through intervention undertaken as part of a larger organization. A similar concept applies to resource	Concession Nuanced Need concrete examples of this happening

independence, when multiple small states impose economic sanctions on a larger state and cripple it through sheer volume of restrictions. Therefore, it cannot be said that small states have absolutely no influence over larger states.	
In the discussion of influence, “softer” aspects of influence are often left out of the conversation. These aspects of influence include cultural and fashion influence. Smaller states such as Japan and Korea have had a significant and unprecedented cultural influence on the west in recent times. The prominent rise in cultural exports from these two smaller states can be seen from the film, entertainment, food and beverage, music, clothing and make-up industries, just to name a few examples. The specific examples for which include extremely popular Korean dramas like Crash Landing on You, award winning Korean film Parasite, popular animations such like Demon Slayer from Japan, rise of Korean barbeque and Japanese restaurants, the large presence of the Korean-pop boyband BTS, Japanese music duo Yoasobi, and Japanese fashion brands in clothing like Uniqlo, and make-up products/routines from Korea. In essence, almost every aspect of daily life, even in large states, have been significantly influenced by these cultural exports from Japan and Korea, giving rise to unprecedented shifts in consumption behaviour by citizens and preferences of the people. In 2013, Japan also had a project called “Cool Japan”, where the government officials were tasked with finding “Japanese aesthetics” to boost the consumption of cultural exports. These factors have led to a gradually rising economic influence of smaller states on larger ones, making it inaccurate to state that small states have no influence over large states.	Check out “soft power”
In conclusion, though smaller states used to be essentially at the mercy of large states with no say in the larger scale of things and no absolute method of changing any course of action undertaken by the citizens or governments large states this cannot be said in the present. Small states are able to influence large states through culture and fashion, leading me to disagree with the statement. (Justin Ho, 21-06)	Clearly argued, with cogent ideas

12 Discuss the value of memory in your society.

<i>A strong response that raised insightful points which showed a keen understanding of the issues in the question. The latter 2 paragraphs, in particular, were persuasively argued and thoroughly supported with apt illustrations.</i>	
As the world marches in lockstep with the steady drum beat of time, Singapore too has embraced change. The rise in the prominence of pragmatism in Singapore has led to immense economic growth for the nation which has propelled her from a third world country to a first world country in a matter of decades. It would appear to some then that the value of memory has diminished over the years given Singapore’s fixation on economic growth. However, we should avoid adopting the insular stance that memory has been rendered absolutely useless in Singapore due to its crucial functions to build a national identity, drive economic growth and teaches us vital lessons of the past which still hold[] true today. Hence, I believe to a large extent that memory still has a place in Singapore.	Explain the role of this in growth / its relation to the value of memory? Stand and reasons in support of it are articulated clearly.
Pragmatists posit that memories of the past are often intangible and lack relevance to the ever-changing present, making it more of a stumbling block rather than a benefit to	Topic Sentence (the link to growth is well explained here)

Singapore's pursuit of economic growth. Memories have often been associated with the nebulous as it contains recollections of the past which may bear tenuous links to the present. While the mere presence of memories does not interfere directly with Singapore's economic growth, it does represent resources wasted on something which would be more useful. For instance, when the government announced that they will be demolishing the old National Library to make way for a tunnel to ease congestion into the city, many Singaporeans expressed their discontent. For many, the old National Library has been an indispensable part of their childhood memory and they could not bear to see it being demolished. However, despite the public outcry on the decision, the government still went ahead with the proposed plans to demolish the National Library. Similarly, when the government decided to exhume thousands of graves at Bukit Brown cemetery, many members of the public (especially loved ones of the deceased) expressed unhappiness at the government's decision to remove the graves. To them, Bukit Brown cemetery represents a lasting memory of their loved one's final resting place. Their memories, although cannot be quantified in dollars and cents, are nonetheless valuable to them on an individual level. However, the lessons gleaned from these two examples is that memories, from the eyes of a pragmatic government, means almost nothing. Singapore is, by nature, land scarce and this means that trade-offs between competing uses of land are bound to occur. When faced with the choice of protecting memories or prioritising economic growth, Singaporeans generally choose the option that is 'safer' and 'tried and tested', which is economic growth. Therefore, from a realistic point of view, memories have diminished in significance in Singapore.	What do you mean by 'presence' given the intangible nature of memories? Link to question made To consider: wonder if the tension is with pragmatic use of land rather than growth as you've made the connection to the former better than the latter. Valid idea; eggs explained well to illustrate the point and make a link to memory.
However, such an argument does not hold water due to its erroneous assumption that memories bring no tangible economic gains to Singapore's economy. Firms in Singapore have been known to tap into the memories of the masses and harness their memories to make lucrative profits, dispelling the myths that memories do not bring economic growth. It would be highly parochial for one to view memories and economic growth as two mutually exclusive entities, when they are in fact very much linked. Ultimately, memories add to further subtract from the vitality of an economy. It does this through two ways. Firstly, firms can use memories of the masses to create products that evoke a sense of nostalgia among Singaporeans. One case in point would be Naiise, a brand which sells Singaporean memorabilia like Ang Ku Kueh cushion covers and Good Morning Towels. Local coffee shops like Ya Kun have also designed their shops with wallpapers depicting coffee sellers in the past. All these are attempts by local businesses to evoke their customer's sense of memory and nostalgia. In an increasingly fast paced Singapore, more Singaporeans, including youths, are trying to slow down their pace of life. This also means that there is a growing demand for such goods and services which evokes one's memories of a less stressful past. Secondly, memories have also been used by firms to project Singapore's unique cultural heritage to tourists, giving Singapore lucrative economic benefits. Singapore's cultural heritage and traditions are often physical manifestations of our memories of the past. These memories are not just gatekept for locals to peruse but shared to a global audience who are more than willing to pay to learn about our past. A survey by Singapore Business Review in 2019 shared that over 60 percent of tourists in Singapore are willing to pay up to fifty dollars for a hypothetical tour of Singapore. The amount of tourism revenue in Singapore accounts for about 4.1 percent of our GDP in 2019 and it is by no means insignificant. Hence, it must be acknowledged that memories still have economic value in Singapore.	Topic sentence does capture the point that follows well but may need tweaking based on the note that the previous point appears to be about land use, not directly the memory. Sound point and good effort to support claims.
Beyond economic reasons, memories are valuable as they act as a binding force in a pluralistic	Topic sentence: sound

society, helping us foster a common Singaporean identity. Memories are not only deemed valuable because they bring about tangible benefits, but also because they offer intangible advantages which, when forsaken, would be detrimental to society. Memories of our founding; the difficulty in rising from a third world to a first world nation, have been evoked by the government. Singapore was once a colonial outpost abandoned by our colonial British overlords and were once expelled from Malaysia, yet we still made it to a gleaming and prosperous city state. This narrative has been parroted many times by the government on the need to not take our prosperity for granted. Every year on the fifteenth of February, the air raid sirens across Singapore will sound. This simple action on Total Defence Day is a symbol of the dark past when Singapore fell to the hands of the Japanese. Likewise, recruits in Basic Military Training are required to march 24 kilometres during their passing out parade to remind these soldiers that safety did not come easy. The 24 kilometres march was a parallel to a memory of British prisoners of war in Singapore being forced by the Japanese to march to their prison camps as an act of humiliation. These examples show how memories are utilised in Singapore to bring out certain emotions and to let people reflect on the arduous journey Singapore undertook in its struggle for independence. It is a common story that binds all together in good times and in bad times. Hence, it would be evident that memory is valuable and is valued in society.	point, well expressed. Well-supported, insightful point.
Memories play a vital role in Singapore as it lets us learn from lessons of the past which prevents us from making the same mistakes in the future. There is a Chinese saying which likens memory to a bronze mirror in how memories can let us reflect upon ourselves. Indeed, memories are vital in informing the decisions we make today. A classic principle which underpins Singaporean society is that of self-sustenance. Our memories of the past when we were under British Colonial rule or the oppressive rule of imperialist Japan shaped how politicians in Singapore view self-reliance. To founding Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew who lived through the Japanese occupation, such memories shaped his views on diplomacy. He once said that 'In a world where big fish eat small fish and small fish eat shrimp, we must be poisonous shrimp', showing the need for a small country like ours to be self-reliant in issues like national defence. Memories were what drove Singapore's push for conscription and the establishment of a deterrence force. It was what pushed us to spend fifteen billion dollars on defence annually. Another more recent example would be the 2003 SARS epidemic in Singapore. The memories of the loss of lives during the outbreak were deeply etched in the minds of Singaporeans. Even after seventeen years, when the Covid-19 pandemic reached our shores, people were still cognisant of the damage a pandemic could bring and Singaporeans cooperated with all the government regulations on mask wearing and contact tracing – save a few deviants – not entirely out of fear and deterrence for the government but out of fear that such a painful memory of SARS may once again re-appear. Hence memories are still crucial in Singapore today as memories of the past informs the decisions we make in the present.	Relevant example with links to point
It is perhaps true that memories are intangible, nebulous and have ever diminishing relevance to the world we live in today. However this does not mean that it is no longer worthy or appreciated in my society. To comprehend the scale of memory, we have to see past the surface and unpack its nuances. It is only through such means that we can understand the value of memories in building our national identity, teaching us valuable lessons and reaping economic returns. Hence I would agree to a large extent that memories are of paramount value in Singapore.	Recap of stand and key points

12 Discuss the value of memory in your society.

Sound understanding of the issues in the question and raised valid points in response. Balance and supporting illustration were offered too.

Singapore should not be where it is today. From a small, humble fishing port surrounded by global dominant powers like Indonesia and Malaysia with no natural endowments and a measly land size of seven hundred and twenty-eight square kilometres, and with four main racial groups, each with a culture so unique and rich, it seemed improbable that we could co-exist, much less prosper. But still, we did, and although we are a far cry from where we are from the past, with the small kampongs replaced by tall metropolitan skyscrapers glittering the skyline, there is merit to memory, and remembering the past is something we hold dear to our society. The value of memory lies in its significance to our various racial and cultural groups in practices and its ability to help foster a common national identity, as well as its role in shaping the Singaporean values important to us today. Even though detractors may argue that there is no value to memory since it is pointless to think back on the past given that Singapore has evolved greatly from the past, there is still merit in learning timeless lessons from the past, and this is achieved through memory.

Clear understanding of issues in the question

Firstly, memory has value because of its cultural significance to the different racial groups in Singapore. Being an Asian society, filial piety and honouring one's parents is heavily emphasised in our Singaporean culture. This also extends to the different racial groups in Singapore where honouring one's parents by extension also means remembering one's relatives and ancestors. For example, the Chinese in Singapore celebrate the Qing Ming festival every year, where families gather to honour their ancestors who have passed away by cleaning their gravesites. For Hindus, every year they celebrate Deepavali, a day that celebrates the triumph of light over darkness, where relatives visit each other and engage in festivities. Though these two racial groups are different, what is common in both these practices is that it centres on memory; for the Chinese, it is about remembering those who have passed on, even if they did not get to meet them. While for the Hindus, it is about remembering those that are often forgotten (distant relatives, estranged cousins...) and celebrating with them for just that one day in the year. As such, though it may not seem obvious, memory is a core tenet of many cultural practices across the various racial and cultural groups giving memory value to Singaporeans.

Clear topic sentence

Reasoning explained

Furthermore, memory can help to foster a common national identity, especially for a multicultural and multiracial society like Singapore. With each racial group's distinct and unique practices, it may seem hard to find something in common to bond over as a nation. Thus, recollecting our shared history and progress presents an opportunity to unite Singaporeans regardless of race, language or religion. Keeping the memories of our past alive strengthens Singaporean's sense of camaraderie and brotherhood and unites the different groups as everyone reflects on the part they had to play in getting Singapore to where it is today. This is highlighted through the series of recollections recited every national day, with each recollection centred on remembering different points of hardship in our journey. This helps to keep the memory of our past alive which, in turn, strengthens our social cohesion.

Potentially valid point, but not clearly developed or illustrated

Being Singaporean should not be a matter of subtraction, but addition; not division, but multiplication – memory adds more value to our Singaporean identity, and it is through remembering that we are reminded that identity is not binary but fluid that though we are Indians, Malays and Chinese, we are Singaporeans first. Thus, there is value in memory, especially when recollecting on our shared history as a nation, because it strengthens our Singaporean identity.	
Moreover, memory plays a key role in shaping our values and traits as Singaporeans. It is because we remember our past that it allows us to shape our visions and values for today. Many distinctive Singaporean traits, such as self-reliance and pragmatism, were all born from the past and our intense struggle to survive. Pragmatism first became a core tenet of our identity as Singaporeans in the past, when politicians such as Lee Kuan Yew prioritised bread and butter issues in 1965 over other concepts like liberty and freedom due to the state we were in. He set a precedent for other politicians to follow in Singapore, and though he has passed on, the memory of his decision-making and choices lives on and even manifests in today's political scene, with the ruling People's Action Party (PAP) centering most of its policies on pragmatism, such as the Built-To-Order (BTO) flats that are only available to married couples in order to encourage them to have children and boost our declining birth rates, which seems to be the very epitome of pragmatism. Memory is invisible but pervasive; subconscious but yet it has very tangible effects on shaping what makes Singaporeans, Singaporeans. It is the subconscious force of memory that influences how we act and what decisions we make even at the governmental level, based on our traits that we have developed as a result of what has transpired in the past. Hence, though it may be invisible, there is value in remembering what has happened as it allows us to gain a deeper understanding of why we act.	More could be done to evaluate and chase the whys Why subconscious?
However, detractors may argue that there is no value to memory in Singaporean society because of where we are presently. They feel that because we are so vastly different from where Singapore started from in the beginning that there is no merit in memory since the past is irrelevant to where we are today. Coupled with the rat race that is our Singaporean life and the (almost) non-existent work-life balance, we should be looking forward, not backwards, especially because it looks like there is nothing more to learn from the past as the circumstances have evolved drastically.	Opposing argument Reasoning explained
Still, though pragmatism is synonymous with Singaporean identity, this view might be too pragmatic. Though there is relevance in the line of argument that the Singapore then is completely different from the Singapore today, it fails to take into consideration the timeless lessons that memory provides, that remains unchanging even as time progresses. A major turning point in Singaporean history is the race riots that occurred around the time period of our independence, such as the Maria Hertogh riots and the Chinese-Malay race riots. Though our strong emphasis on racial harmony today seems divorced from the rampant violence that took place in the past, remembering and reflecting on such violence teaches us not to take our racial harmony for granted. Even with more racial violence taking place around the world, in countries like America where hate crime rates are skyrocketing, it is through remembering our past that keeps Singapore grounded by reminding us of what could happen again. Thus, though we should focus on building our future, the past cannot be overlooked and its memory proves to be a key foundation for doing so as the past teaches us universal lessons, and it is through memory that we are able to carry this into the future.	A sound point - good effort to illustrate the point.

Singapore should not be where it is today, but we are. We defied the odds stacked against us and became a society, that is most succinctly put, excellent. However, even as times change and Singapore becomes unrecognisable (for the better), memory still holds much value in Singapore. It functions as the foundation to which sky-high skyscrapers are built on; it functions like the air we breathe in – invisible but pervasive – that is life-giving and breathes life into our national identity. If culture is the heart of Singaporean society, memory is as integral as arteries that pump the blood that flow straight back to it. Memory is what makes Singaporeans, Singaporeans. <i>(Kyran Narayanan, 21-12)</i>	
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12 Discuss the value of memory in your society.

<i>A well-written and thoughtful piece that draws on reserves of knowledge about the Singapore context and history. Its arguments are richly supported with memories significant to Singapore's societal consciousness, and it successfully traces the impacts of these memories on the society that we see today for a very effective consideration of the question's key issue.</i>	
In the latest addition to Pixar's 'Finding Nemo' franchise, 'Finding Dory' [which] was released a few years back [] centered around Dory, an iconic character that suffers from short-term memory loss. Her well-known catchphrase 'just keep swimming' was advice from her parents to help her get by without remembering her past. This proved successful as Dory survived the harsh ocean landscape into adulthood and caused memory to be perceived as something of little value when one can still progress without it. However, it is precisely through Dory where we most evidently see the value of memory when she remembers her past to successfully trace back her roots to the people she loves most. Closer to home, we see such values taking root in Singapore as well. Despite our result-driven society adopting more of Dory's 'just keep swimming' mindset, memory has proven to be of value by shaping our identity and beliefs as Singaporeans, reminding us of our past shortcomings to shape our systems in hopes of avoiding conflict, as well as holding those in power accountable.	Interesting hook Clear stand
In Singapore, memory plays a key role in shaping our national identity, teaching us about our history and the beliefs and values we should continue to uphold as Singaporeans, going lengths to show the value of memory in our society. Preserved and published is our history as a fishing village turned colonised trading port which later on evolved from a less developed country suffering from the aftermaths of a war to the metropolis we live in today. Memory of our national identity reminds us what our country has gone through till this day and who we are as Singaporeans. Looking back and taking important lessons from Elizabeth Choy's loyalty, Mr Lee Kuan Yew's vision and many other important figures in our society also teaches us about the values we should uphold as a nation and the beliefs we should centre our society on to achieve progress. These are constantly reiterated through our National Day Parades every year to ensure that we remember these vital aspects that have shaped our nation. Such collective memory of the people allows for a common identity to be built which is important for building nationalism that helps unite the varied groups in Singapore. Despite our different backgrounds, our social fabric is still tightly stitched together when the power of collective memory of our common history and national values bring us together as one people to stand together against all odds and progress as one Singapore.	Clear function of memory

Nonetheless, the fruit that memory bears is intangible and can be argued to serve no pragmatic purpose, especially in result-driven Singapore. With our modernising and rapidly advancing globalised world and or values as an Asian society that prioritises excellence and achievement, Singaporeans just do not need memory of the past when we are so busy running towards the future. Why remember and learn from the past when you can adopt the newest technology to solve your problems and better your society? The increasing digitisation of Singapore into a SMART city has already begun changing the mindsets of individuals to devalue memory of the past when futuristic advancement that can earn more profit is widely available and promoted in our society. Our competitive and results-driven society prioritises economic development and tangible achievements over the intangible results of remembering our past. As Singapore continues to progress towards the future, it is not surprising to see more and more Singaporeans seeing no value in remembering the past.	Opposing argument raises a fair point Unsure why this is phrased as something specific to Asian societies
However, such Singaporeans fail to see that memory plays a vital role in shaping the systems and structures that govern our society as we continue to achieve progress by teaching us crucial lessons that prevent conflict. Memory of our past brushes with violence, terrorism and volatile international relations help us realise our mistakes and teach us about ways to improve our systems to ensure stability in our country. The 1964 race riots still continue to be refreshed in our memory yearly during the commemoration of Racial Harmony Day where we remember how tension between racial groups can threaten our society's safety. In our multi-racial and diverse country, racial harmony definitely plays an important role in ensuring our society's security and peace. Hence, remembering the causes and aftermaths of the 1964 racial riots remind us that our systems must continue to ensure racial harmony through relevant policies and bodies are established to ensure no tension arises amongst racial groups that may lead to such turmoil again. Committees overlooking the laws of Singapore have established bodies to ensure laws have no racial or religious prejudice, preventing discord from showing amongst racial groups. Our brush with Konfrontasi also remains a key memory in Singaporeans' minds that shapes the way our government and law enforcing bodies protect us from international conflict and terrorism. Singapore continues to adopt a 'friend-to-all' attitude towards foreign affairs and places emphasis on maintaining docile and friendly relations with different countries. Our home affairs group has also continued to promote SG secure to educate people about terrorism and help our country survive what may be another Konfrontasi bombing when terrorism strikes our shores. Memory of our past shortcomings and brushes with conflict has evidently shaped the systems and structures in charge of governing and ensuring our safety and security. With the stability of our society being a vital necessity for us to continue thriving and developing, memory holds value in Singapore by actively shaping the way our country is run.	Good point, though you could consider addressing the opposing argument more explicitly Several different ideas in this paragraph. Consider how you can foreground your main argument.
Additionally, memory also helps us hold those in power accountable, preventing misuse of power in government and ensuring those elected into parliament work towards the betterment of society. In recent news, the government announced that data from TraceTogether, a Bluetooth contact tracing app, will be used to track down criminals and assist in police investigations. Such data would easily be misused by the government to track citizens, invading our right to privacy and transparency from the government. This usage of the data was not announced when Tracetogether was first accepted by the citizens. Hence, our outcry at such changes in policies that stems from our memory of the government's initial promise holds their power in check and ensures that they remember the people's awareness of their actions which could lead to their loss of power in the next elections. Diving	Function of memory is clear Rather descriptive. Not sure what the point is?

into the past, ex-Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew also made a controversial remark that the press has to be controlled by the government for Singapore to be a successful society. In our current fight to protect our freedom of speech and democratise the press, it is important for us to remember such sentiments of our ruling party and continue to bring them up for discussion and hold them accountable for such borderline autocratic ideas. Even though the use of Tracetogether data for criminal investigations and the Newspaper and Press Printing Act of the 1970s born from Mr Lee's ideas still exist today, memory of such instances where the government goes back on their words or says controversial statements gives the people power against the government as one can easily vote them out in the next election. The government will hence be held accountable for their actions and promises with the knowledge of the people's power. Memory helps to ensure they work towards the betterment of society and not misuse their power for corrupt reasons, therefore showing its value in our democratic yet traditionally one-party state.	Consider nuancing and evaluating the extent of your agreement
In conclusion, the value of memory in Singapore is still high despite changing mindsets towards the need to remember the past during our advancement towards the future. Memory of our history and past happenings shape the important concepts that influence our society with that being our identity, our belief and values, our systems and structures and the usage of power. It is evident that we need memory in our society because it is the only tool serving all these purposes holding our society together and ensures the betterment of our society. Just imagine if we just kept swimming ahead with no memory of our past like Dory, who knows, we might just swim right to our doom. (Yap Kah Him, 21-13)	Reference to introduction made here.

12 Discuss the value of memory in your society.

<i>While it misses the mark in its opposing perspective, there is still some awareness of the context that causes us to dismiss the value of memory in the introduction - this challenge to our understanding of the past posed by the rapid pace of development should have been more central to the discussion. The supporting arguments in body paragraphs 1 and 2 do effectively address the question with good reference to the Singapore context, and the introduction and conclusion frame the arguments well.</i>	
Many would baulk at the idea of "Singapore's memories". After all, Singapore is a mere 57 years old, so to hearken back to Singapore's memories would be akin to recalling yesterday with saccharine fondness. Yet still, even in these short 57 years, the vertiginous state of the world, coupled with the extremely quick development within Singapore, gives us a lot to remember. In fact, I would argue that it is precisely because of our quick development, that memory is an even more significant force in Singapore. Memory is critical not just in maintaining our cultural diversity in the face of external threats, but also in preserving our values when faced with internal threats. Memory is also responsible for a key cornerstone of Singaporean values and way of life - Singaporean's judgement. Although this is a rather unpleasant aspect of Singaporean society (that we can perhaps do without), it is undeniable that memory has made its mark on such a rudimentary aspect of Singaporean life.	Function and value of memory in the Singapore context What does this mean?
When we think of a country's memory, it is only natural to think of history, and in Singapore, our historical past is etched in the foundations of the metropolis. From our architecture alone,	Fair point

it is clear how our memories continue to influence our modern society. As such, I believe that remembering history is instrumental in preserving our cultural diversity, in the face of external threats like cultural homogenisation. For an advanced society such as ours to exist, it is nearly always necessary to allow some external, often Western, influence to enter our society. However, despite the threat that these influences can pose in eroding local culture and replacing it with the West's, Singapore has been able to fend off these threats, due to our memory. From the National Museum of Singapore (NMS), to the Asian Civilisation Museum (ACM), Singapore has many reminders of our cultural diversity as well as the grim past of the Japanese Occupation, reminding Singaporeans of what could happen if we were to give in to these external forces. We also see the power of memory in action with the case of 37 Emerald Hill. The extreme backlash to the government's plan to bulldoze for development, as well as the subsequent successful petition to name 37 Emerald Hill a heritage site, is testament to how memory allows Singaporeans to combat the external threats to our heritage and diversity, illustrating the value of memory.	Is this happening in SG? Examples here can draw clearer links to the question and the point being made.
Apart from fending off external threats, memory also attempts to neutralise internal threats to our society and our harmony. This is particularly seen in the case of racial and religious harmony in Singapore. As a multicultural, multi-ethnic society, we are constantly reminded of how precarious our racial harmony is and this is achieved by memory. On the 21st of July every year, Singaporean students don ethnic costumes, play traditional games, and watch videos on the worst racial riots in Singapore. A day dubbed 'Racial Harmony Day' is celebrated on the anniversary of these bloody riots, serving as an annual reminder of what could happen if our racial harmony ceased to exist. But apart from school celebrations, the memory of these racial divides also influences our government's policies, namely the Ethnic Integration Policy (EIP) in public housing. The EIP creates quotas in public housing to ensure that the demographic within all buildings mirrors the national demographic. This policy was created due to the formation of racial enclaves in the past and helps to combat it, by ensuring that Singaporeans interact with other races within residential areas. This illustrates how our memory of the past, in this case the formation of racial enclaves, helps to neutralise threats in the present, ensuring harmonious living. As such, we see how memory reminds us to be watchful of these internal threats and also fuels action against threats. Hence, we see how memory is significant in combatting internal threats to Singaporean society.	Function of memory SG context raised A stronger paragraph in terms of coherence and clarity, being fully relevant and having effective paragraph development
So far, we have seen how memory has been used to fuel action against threats and protect Singapore. However, memory can also be weaponised, to create an air of mistrust. This is often the case in Singapore. Singaporean society can be characterised as rather unforgiving, and I would attribute this unfortunate trait to memory. From politicians to athletes, mistakes and slip-ups are not forgotten and continue to be used against these people. Online forums and social media platforms are ripe with caustic critique of small errors, like when Minister Chan Chun Sing mistakenly said, "Cotton comes from sheep". To this day, posts about unrelated matters by this minister are guaranteed to be inundated by comments on this mistake. This exemplifies how unforgiving Singaporeans are, and how these memories are weaponised to bash people. We see this also in the indelible scandal of Raeesah Khan, a Member of Parliament from the opposition party. Despite her resignation from the party, her mistakes continue to be used to discredit other members of the Workers' Party, proving how memory of one's mistakes is used to pass judgement. Although this does show how memory contributes to the Singaporean identity, and is hence important in forging a national identity, perhaps we should reflect on whether this is something we want for our national identity. The	Opposing argument This paragraph seemingly misses the point of contention. Balance is handled awkwardly Consider: Why would someone argue that memory has little/no place in Singapore society? The issue is less about the weaponisation of memory, and more about the irrelevance of memory to a society like this

unforgiving nature of Singaporeans can make Singapore a suffocating society, something that Joseph Schooling, a national swimmer, has pointed out. Schooling has been a victim of Singapore's relentless critique, with his recent loss prompting public discourse on why he was not doing his National Service. Weaponising his loss to further critique him creates an all-round very unpleasant environment. As such, we see how while memory does forge a national identity, it can be a very unpleasant one, where Singaporeans use memory to bash others, creating an unforgiving environment. Hence, while memory is significant in our Singaporean values, maybe it should not be.	
All in all, we see how memory is instrumental in the protection of Singapore from internal and external threats and is also a key cornerstone of the Singaporean way of life. Memory is undeniably important in developing and maintaining Singaporean culture and identity but given how detrimental memory is to the atmosphere in Singapore, creating an unforgiving and overly critical society, memory should not be valued as much as it is in Singapore. In other words, perhaps there are some things we can afford to forget. <i>(Kundala Vineeta Shankar, 21-O2)</i>	Poetic end

AQs: 2022 JC2 MYE Paper 2

In response to 2022 JC2 Mid-Year Examination Paper 2:

Bryan Lufkin provides insights about the phenomenon of overwork. How far would you agree with his observations, relating your arguments to that of your society?

Response 1

This piece illustrates quality evaluation and contextualisation. Insightful, balanced and nuanced evaluation and contextualisation with relevant examples explained with pertinent details. Keep up the good work!

Lufkin argues that overwork is driven by our “drive for efficiency”, implying that our quest to become more productive is what ultimately resulted in our culture of overwork. Personally, I largely agree with Lufkin’s belief. In Singapore, efficiency is heavily prioritized in almost all sectors of our society due to how important it is to our culture. As a small country, we have to be efficient to maintain our ranking and place in the global economy to survive. Thus, in Singapore previously under the stringent supervision of the late Mr Lee Kuan Yew, our previous Prime Minister, he largely advocated for people to work harder so that many projects are completed as fast as possible to help Singapore progress. From the relatively fast clean-up of the Singapore River, to the construction of Jurong Island through land reclamation, such projects have been accomplished at a breakneck pace to help Singapore. As a result, this mindset enforced by Mr Lee Kuan Yew has been indoctrinated and further perpetuated through generations, making it applicable even today. Singapore is ranked in an international survey 32/40 in terms of work-life balance, suggesting that Singaporeans generally still partake in the culture of overwork, with most if not every Singaporean working 9 to 5 jobs to accomplish their goals. In some instances, these hours are not enough and hence results in overtime work, another prevalent phenomenon in Singapore that arises due to our drive for efficiency and to maximise our productivity by using all available hours of the day to work. One such instance of this can be seen across the Education Industry in Singapore. Especially for language papers like General Paper or Geography, such essays and even the Application Question in General Paper tend to require a lot of time to mark. Thus, it is common for me to see many of my teachers bringing back these papers to mark just so that their students can receive them on time. Regardless of secondary school or Junior College, such a trend is something that has been established as the norm in our society, simply because as Singaporeans, the views of Lee Kuan Yew to keep working hard as a measure of success and productivity, are prevalent in literally almost every public sector today. Hence, I do agree that our drive for efficiency as stated by Lufkin does contribute to a large extent to the overwork culture of Singapore.

Requirement

Explanation

Context

Context

Example

Explanation

Example

Evaluation

As a result of the phenomenon of overwork, there thus [have] been experts that suggest we are entering an era of a reduced focus on hard work [and an increased focus] on societal welfare. However, Lufkin disagrees with this phenomenon as he believes that as long as we “glamourize money, status and achievement”, this culture of overwork will persist. He thus then attributes the culture of overwork to the concept of impression and image, where he finds that as long as one cares about their personal image, the culture of overwork will persist. In my opinion, I do agree that this issue has plagued Singapore in the past and probably to some extent today, but as of now moving into the future, I believe that the hold image has over the lives of Singaporeans is becoming less applicable especially when it comes to work. In the past, it is true that people cared about the status of their wealth, or how they appeared to others. Especially in Singapore, after gaining independence, there has been a form of social stratification where the poor and rich are separated by their wealth in terms of opportunities. Not only that, but due to Singapore being a traditionally Asian state, there is generally a large focus on image. From simple things like how elite one’s school is, to how prestigious one’s job is, image is a key component of most Singaporeans. This is simply because as humans and even more so Asians, the need and desire to compare and triumph over others is so heavily ingrained into our culture. Even though there are definitely people who try not to compare with others, this mindset is still an inevitable part of society. For work specifically, most people would compare tangible things like the type of house they live in, one’s annual pay or even how many overseas trips they take. As a result, when one realizes that they are doing worse off than their peers, innately there is some form of scolding oneself as a form of motivation to work harder. However, many Singaporeans fail to notice that this then leads to the culture of overwork due to the constant vicious cycle that we are locked in when we compare with others. For example, many Singaporean students simply want to be doctors just for the high pay and the grandiose, extravagant lifestyle it provides. Hence, many medical students and doctors continue to work tirelessly at their jobs, interning and spending multiple hours without sleeping, just for that one goal. Thus, it is true that as long as one continues to focus on one’s image, the culture of overwork will most likely never die out in Singapore.	Requirement Explanation Evaluation Explanation Context Evaluation Example Evaluation
That being said, I believe that the cultural shift of today’s society suggests that Lufkin’s claim of image as the reason as to why overwork will never die out is possibly invalid. Rather, I disagree with his view since in fact, Singapore is slowly entering a human-centric economy that looks after the wellbeing of their workers. While image is definitely a key reason for some to overwork, such a belief however is less applicable today. After all, if everyone did care so much about their image when it comes to overworking simply due to prestige, then the threats of a great resignation in 2021 to 2022 would not have occurred, since most of these workers ultimately do come from a well-paying, relatively prestigious job. Conversely, I propose that while image is still important in most aspects of Singapore’s society, this claim is rendered invalid when it comes to work. Due to Singapore being increasingly connected to other countries from digitalization, more and more people are increasingly aware of the idea that they should work for what they want, with this trend being highly reflective amongst the Singapore populace. Many workers have actually either quit their first job to go for a more relaxed one for their own mental health, or to pursue their own passion. Personally, one of my teachers actually did stop being a full-time teacher, and opted for a part-time role instead so she could spend time with her children. Others have also followed this trend as well. Johnathan Chew, winner of the third season of MasterChef Singapore has also mentioned	Example Context Explanation Example

how he is deciding to swap from dentistry to baking to follow his passion, even though comparatively speaking, being a dentist is arguably a more high-profile job. With Singapore continuing to advocate for people to chase their dreams with the slogan “Passion made Possible”, most Singaporeans, especially youths would ultimately choose to prioritise their own goals over prestige. While it is definitely true that there will always be money-minded people who will overwork to achieve their desired wealth, status or achievement, I personally believe that the general direction that some, if not the vast majority of Singaporeans will take is to prioritise themselves first, especially in today’s society and ultimately, the future. Hence, while I do agree with Lufkin that “money, status and achievement” will perpetuate the culture of overwork, I believe that in recent years and possibly the future, the culture of overwork will die out due to people feeling dehumanized and being physically and emotionally exhausted, with them opting to prioritise themselves over their status or image. (Koh Cheng Xiang, 21-04)	Evaluation Evaluation Explanation
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Response 2

<i>A strong attempt with good evaluation and contextualisation, and a good use of examples. Balanced overall with reasonable consideration of both sides, although more nuance could be achieved within each paragraph.</i>	
The author gave very thought-provoking assertions about the phenomenon of overwork. His observations are largely applicable to my society as many embark on the practice of overworking themselves as a way to show off their lives and treat exhaustion as a prize. However, his view that it is unlikely for nations to prioritise wellbeing over work in the future is largely applicable in my society. Overall, my society does agree that it will take conscious, continuous and non-passive action for us to work towards achieving a better work-life balance in the long run.	Awkward, as it’s not clear how this consensus from the society was achieved
Firstly, in paragraph 6, the author asserts that people “embrace the overwork culture” as there is a “performative element” to it because it “manifests a new car to show off, a dream career, doing something meaningful or even exhaustion that can be displaced like a ... trophy”. My society supports the stance that overwork culture can be bragged about because of the common mindset adopted in our Asian community. The World Economic Forum Index shows Singapore as the number one most competitive nation in the world, and this is further corroborated by Channel News Asia studies of Singapore being the second most overworked nation in the region. In Singapore, it is not uncommon for festive gatherings to be filled with mothers bragging about their children’s work and instead of adopting a worried attitude towards the late nights where their children do work, parents endorse it. Our highly competitive mindset is driven by “kiasuism”, where Singaporeans are afraid of losing and have a strong vulnerability complex. Being brought up in such a merit-based society, one can only live a well-off life and afford the expensive lifestyle here in Singapore if we tired ourselves out. This leaves our conversations to either being about schooling achievements and promotions at work, giving the younger generation the impression that in order to impress their parents or to give back to them as a sign of filial piety, themselves being overwhelmed should be a norm and should be flaunted around. As such, this drives a vicious cycle of new workers	Requirement Context Context Example Series of evaluation supported with understanding of the local context Explanation

adopting the overwork culture in Singapore as they see it as the “right” thing to do and thus exacerbating the conditions of their wellbeing for the sake of it.	
Secondly, the author also mentions in paragraph 9 that it is “highly unlikely that we’re entering a new era that prioritises well-being over overwork.” This claim is not evident in my society because of the increasing trend of mental health awareness schemes and the people’s reluctance to accept overwork culture any longer. In recent years, stress levels due to work and studies have been sky-high, with 74% of surveyed Singaporean students by the Organisation of Economic Development claiming that they feel unprepared despite studying tirelessly for their exams. Furthermore, a Channel News Asia report shows that over 50% of Singaporean workers surveyed felt drained and tired from consistently long working hours. To address this, in 2021 the Alliance for Action committee introduced the Alliance for Work-Life Harmony scheme, which championed working with the Ministry of Manpower to secure more flexible working conditions and more comprehensive leave systems. Many local corporations are also considering four-day work days weekly, so as to allow workers to attain a healthy work-life balance and increase their proficiency at work after getting more rest. With the influence of westernisation and the influx of new, more liberal views in society by the younger generation, Singapore has become more liberalised as seen from how the government seeks advice and opinions from the public through more feedback systems. The intense overwork culture in Singapore has also enabled many to crave a slower pace of life. Furthermore, the pandemic has reignited the nation’s views on the importance of kampung spirit, as families were separated during the lockdown and more people started to work from home. Even in schools where students implemented mental health awareness projects and the Ministry of Education [lessened] the number of major examinations from four termly exams to one final exam yearly, it shows the steps Singapore is actively taking towards prioritising work life balance rather than overwork.	Requirement Context Example Explanation Evaluation Evaluation Example
Overall, Singapore still largely agrees with the author that the future of achieving work life balance is rather bleak because of the inflexible mindset of work and achievements. Singapore is still, and some may even say always will be, a nation driven by competition. As a small nation, we have no choice but to pressure relevance in the global society by keeping ourselves the best and hardest workers we can be. Thus, it is still largely unthinkable for Singapore to be a nation with work life balance as our World Happiness Index placing is still 27th place, well below other developed nations. However, we are still hopeful that, albeit not anytime soon, Singapore will continue to grow and care for the people’s wellbeing more. (Im Sing Lu, 21-04)	Note that you’re not expected to write as a representative of Singapore, but merely represent your own views as someone living within the society Evaluative use of context

AQs: J2 Term 3 Timed Assignment

In response to 2019 A Level Paper 2:

Anne Walford argues that zoos should be closed down while Ray Morgan argues that the work they do has never been more essential.

How far do you agree or disagree with the views expressed in the **two** passages? Illustrate your answer with examples of how you and your society regard zoos.

Response 1

A well-supported and consistently evaluated response that makes much reference to the Singapore context. Throughout, it shows understanding of the authors' concerns and builds a reasonably compelling argument.

Anne Walford argues that “[zoo] animals are exhibits, expected to perform in the fake authenticity of their enclosures, a stage of synthetic trees and pre-recorded soundtracks.” I agree that this view that animals are treated as little but sources of entertainment by the general public is relevant to my society, Singapore. The Singapore Zoo provides visitors access to a number of different shows which seek to showcase the wonder of the animals which are kept in the zoo. During the shows, birds are expected to fly over the heads of spectators and perform tricks for rewards such as treats, elephants are made to paint pictures on canvases and dolphins are made available for people to prod and touch. These shows performed within small arenas are catered directly towards the Singaporean consumer, as they seek to inspire as much awe and excitement as possible. Singaporeans pay good money to visit the zoo, with ticket prices of around thirty dollars for local adults, hence money-minded Singaporeans who are always looking to get their money’s worth in terms of experience and enjoyment do not expect to be paying upwards of thirty dollars for merely a walk in the zoo to view a few animals through glass. Zoos are thus all the more pressur[ed] to provide additional entertainment to these visitors, subjecting these animals to rigorous training to perform bizarre tricks and engage in behaviours which would not come normally to them in the wild rather than leaving these animals to their own devices in their own enclosures. Furthermore, in a small country such as Singapore where land space is particularly scarce, it is difficult for a zoo to have the space and scale to truly replicate the natural habitats of the animals which it keeps. One cannot deny that attempts are made to establish somewhat of a connection between visitors and animals at the zoo, with each animal given a name and these shows attempting to explain the background and nature of these animals to spectators, thus encouraging meaningful education and raising awareness on top of mere superficial entertainment. However, the unavoidable reality is that the majority of tourists and visitors go to the Singapore Zoo to have fun and enjoy themselves, so they are much more likely to focus on the marvellous tricks and stunts performed by the animals rather than fun facts sprinkled between the performances. Hence, animals in the Singapore Zoo do remain largely as exhibits, present for the amusement of paying Singaporean consumers aiming to get their money’s worth, while being subjected to rigorous training and made to live in artificial habitats nowhere near the scale of their true homes. Hence, I agree with Walford’s view.

TR

Stand

Explanations and example is detailed and shows familiarity with the situation in Singapore

Evaluation

Evaluation

Evaluation

Evaluation

Link to the broader issue in the question could be clearer: Do you agree with Walford that zoos should be closed down then?

Ray Morgan asserts that zoos “offer sanctuary from such threats”, with the word “threat” referring to “deforestation”, “poaching and illegal trade”, as well as “pollution on land, sea and in the air”. I disagree with Morgan’s views on the importance of zoos in preventing the extinction of species in the midst of numerous social and environmental problems in the context of Singapore. While it is true that animals in zoos are provided with a regular supply of food and water as well as proper care from zookeepers and wildlife experts, I believe that zoos should not be the ultimate answer in terms of protecting biodiversity. Singapore is a country which believes in tough legislation and regulation in order to protect the values and liberties which it holds dear. The sanctity of life and the importance of animals to our ecosystem is enforced by Singapore’s laws, with any form of poaching, entrapment or killing of wildlife being punished under the Wildlife Act. Such activity is heavily monitored in the nation, with the government even calling upon its own citizens to aid in the reporting of any suspected illegal poaching activities through the Animal Response Centre hotline. Hence, animals living in the wild can be sufficiently protected through joint action by the government and citizens of the nation, especially in countries such as Singapore where law enforcement is strict and effective. With regards to environmental issues such as deforestation and pollution, the threat that wild animals face as a result is very real, as changing climates can lead to a loss of habitats and food, resources for many animals, and consequently a loss of biodiversity. In the short run, zoos may be an effective solution to provide these animals with a safe and stable living environment as well as access to food and water. However, I do not believe that capturing animals and getting them to live in small, artificial habitats which barely mimic their natural living spaces is a sustainable solution in the long run. Singapore has already recognised the harm that environmental problems bring towards our ecosystem and the animals which call Singapore home, and has taken efforts to tackle the root cause of the issue. By planting more trees to curb the impacts of deforestation, cutting down on emissions and adopting cleaner [unclear] to reduce air pollution as well as engaging in more recycling efforts instead of merely dumping waste into the ocean and landfills, Singapore is taking action to resolve environmental issues so that in the future, animals will be able to live freely in the wild without the risk of their means of survival, namely their habitat and food resources, being stripped away from them. Therefore, I disagree with Morgan’s view, as it is evident that zoos are not a means to an end in protecting these animals from extinction in the long run, and are at most a tool to provide for these animals while other issues that threaten these animals are taken care of.	TR Stand Evaluation Evaluation Explanations and evaluations very consistently developed throughout for an impressively evaluative paragraph Evaluation Consider: deforestation in itself kills the species living in that plot of forest. In the face of economic pressures and climate change (which is ultimately a global issue and not just a local one), is there value in keeping zoos to house endangered animals?
In conclusion, I agree with Walford’s views on the need for zoos to be closed given the unrightful treatment of animals reducing them to mere sources of entertainment, while I disagree with Morgan’s views on the importance of zoos in protecting animal species, given that a more sustainable means to protecting animals would be to save their natural environments rather than to capture animals and place them in artificial habitats. Zoos are evidently losing relevance and importance in modern day society, as they are more often in the news for their abuse and mistreatment of the animals which they hold captive, rather than for the good that they do in terms of wildlife conservation. (Cameron Setiadi, 21-A2)	Addresses the question Evaluation Questionable if this is really true in the case of the Singapore Zoo. Media bias might also be a complicating factor to using this as an indicator

Response 2

A strong effort that engages well with the important ideas raised by the authors. Not all the arguments have been well-made, but the good broad understanding and measured approach to considering both sides is appreciated.

Walford argues that ‘zoos incarcerate animals for the amusement of our species’. In essence, she argues that the purpose of zoos, rather than conserving and ensuring animals do not become extinct, is instead geared towards maximising satisfaction from spectators by exploiting the freedom of animals. While I understand her concern as there are still ideologies of humans as superior to animals and thus many justifying the exploitation of animals, Singapore’s pragmatic concerns about the survival of animals diminish their desire for entertainment. Thus, I disagree largely that zoos are used to exploit animals, since I believe Singaporeans truly care about the safety and well-being of animals. One evident example is the recent birth of Le Le, Singapore’s first panda cub. Although the large number of visitors granted to see Le Le could be seen as exploitation of Le Le for consumers’ satisfaction, there was actually no harm or restrictions imposed on the movements of the panda. It has ample space to play with various enrichment toys and is exposed to new surroundings, and is not forced to perform any tricks. The birth of the giant panda species also helps to ensure genetic viability of these endangered species in the long-term. As such, rather than thinking harshly of zoos as imprisoning animals, we should consider how zoos provide a comfortable environment for animals while also bringing educational and enjoyable factors to the spectators. In addition, most animals in the Singapore Zoo are not housed in cages, but rather fences that are waist-high and in large enclosures. The existence of the Fragile Forest in the zoo allows spectators to have no separation from animals, this showing how caging of animals [is] only used when absolutely necessary. Thus, while Walford shows genuine concern for animals, the concern is irrelevant in my society due to Singaporeans’ priority on the safety and well-being of all, including animals.

TR

Excellent explanation

Good awareness of the bigger picture

Needs clarification

Clear, reasoned stand

Ok, so not trained to amuse, but does this mean that we’re not just keeping them unethically for our amusement?

Explain what it is, for a non-local reader

Context could be more compelling if expanded on, but the discussion at least shows a strong understanding of the author’s views, and real consideration of her concerns.

Morgan argues that ‘zoos’ offer us the chance of face-to-face encounters... visits are recreational and instructive, given the wealth of information zoos offer us.’ As such, Morgan believes that zoos are beneficial to humans as we are able to undergo an immersive experience instead of merely gaining knowledge of biological animals through detached perspectives. I agree with Morgan as I feel that the Singapore government has even tried to inculcate learning journeys to the zoo as part of the school curriculum. These learning journeys are provided to students at a young age, and these trips are usually aimed at educating students since they are usually equipped with many activities regarding animals and wildlife to complete. Moreover, instead of only learning about the biology of animals, zoos also seek to educate and raise awareness among spectators for animals’ conservation, to ensure that animals do not go [extinct]. This is evident through various programmes that [have been] launched in Wildlife Reserves Singapore. One programme included rhinos, where spectators [were] encouraged to donate their nail clippings as a gesture of support for rhino conservation in 2014. These acts serve to remind us about the purpose of zoos and why they remain as an important and educational itinerary in our lives. Furthermore, given Singaporeans’ conservative educational mindset, the exposure to zoos and the animals involved are able to provide for them a new and different perspective for learning rather than relying on rote memorisation. Despite all the benefits of zoos, it is also important to consider the receptiveness of Singaporeans, especially when most live hectic lives and fail to recognise the importance of zoos, causing them not to frequent zoos.

Needs a link to the question: How is this essential work?

Why is this carried out in SG?

This really needed more explanation to be sensible - what does donating nail clippings do?

Note that the educational outcomes should not be the focus here. Could examine how raising awareness about conservation might be especially important in a modern, consumerist and urban society like SG’s.

A little hit-an-miss on the focus, but the value we seem to place on it has been thoroughly

	considered for a reasonable analysis
Walford's concern about zoos' possible mistreatment of animals, and Morgan's encouragement about educational benefits of zoos both have merits. Singapore has proven that zoos reap more benefits than costs, because of the government's educational outreach and the priorities of Singaporeans. The onus is on us, as individuals, to ensure that the safety and well-being of animals in zoos continues and we ought to be cautious in not exploiting these animals. (Tay Wei Lin, 21-E6)	Good clear conclusion that addresses the question on the whole

Response 3

<i>A thoughtful look at the issues raised by the authors, with a good overall view of where the writer stands on the issues. Richer consideration of the SG context throughout and stronger understanding of the tensions in the issues discussed could push this response further. BP1's TR should be more well-chosen or addressed, as its main concern is not that animals are made to perform, but that the keeping of animals in captivity already makes the animals an unnatural performance.</i>	
Anne Walford makes the claim that "zoos incarcerate animals for the amusement of our species." This would be applicable on the surface as most zoos use such shows to draw crowds and entertain guests. The Singapore Zoo is no exception and boasts three animal shows, with multiple show times daily. Although I would agree that one of the purposes of the show is to entertain guests, I believe there is a larger purpose and reason for having the shows - to spread a positive message on the preservation of wildlife. I believe that is the true purpose of these animal shows in Singapore, as the shows are all educational in nature, rather than focused on entertainment. For instance, the "Rainforest Fights Back" show and "Splash Safari" show follow the theme of how humans affect the natural habitats of animals, such as [through] pollution and [poaching]. These help viewers gain awareness and leave a more lasting impression on viewers as compared to posters or educational videos. Furthermore, these shows can also benefit animals such as [through] developing their confidence. The "Animal Friends Show" showcases different abandoned domestic dogs and cats that were rescued from being put down by the zoo. The audience members are able to interact and play with the animals, which often allows these animals [to] regain trust in humans which they often lost through their traumatic [pasts]. These help these animals regain their confidence and lead a better quality life. I believe, in these cases, where the animals are not exploited explicitly through starvation or physical abuse, [they are] able to utilise these shows as a form of exercise which can benefit their physical and mental health. Most importantly, these shows can also serve a greater purpose of being an effective educational medium to promote the conservation of the natural environment. Therefore, I would disagree that zoos should be closed due to zoos incarcerating animals for [our] entertainment.	TR Link to question could be clearer Consider the SG context: Why is this the case? What value does such a motive for the shows bring to us as a society? Why might we do this, and why might it be significant? Ok, interesting, but is it really important for people to be developing the confidence of wild animals? Not showing strong understanding of the specific TR, but still generally relevant to the passages. Supported with some developed illustration, but lacking greater depth which could be addressed with more thoughtful consideration of the SG context.

Ray Morgan argues that zoos’ “focus on scientific research and the worldwide conservation of animals and their habitats remains paramount to this day.” I would agree that Singapore’s zoo places a larger emphasis on the protection of wildlife as Singapore is widely known for its [diverse] flora and fauna. Singapore would want to preserve our ‘garden city’ image and bring in tourists to admire our conservation efforts. These would prove to be important in this day and age as Singapore is surrounded by countries such as Malaysia and Thailand with reputations of [being] smugglers and poachers in the illegal wildlife trade. These countries often clear large areas of their forests and leave animals displaced and endangered species without a home. These make Singapore’s preservation efforts important as a positive example in the region and [key to keeping] regional species’ populations healthy. Hence, Singapore would remain an important place for conservation efforts. For example, the Singapore Zoo contributes to the global conservation effort through captive breeding programmes and in 2014, the zoo successfully bred over 100 animals, many of which are endangered or threatened in the wild. In addition, the Singapore Zoo also plays an important role in education and research by inviting overseas students to and researchers for collaboration and educational programmes to better help the conservation of animals in different parts of the world. Therefore, the argument to keep zoos open in the name of preservation and conservation aligns with Singapore’s value towards nature conservation.	TR R Ties to identity are interesting Good awareness of the surrounding context to emphasise the importance of the zoo’s work here Could use more suitable examples, e.g. recent work to save the pangolin, to illustrate the poaching and smuggling issue Why does it do this? Good use of context, conveying authenticity and engagement with the issue
The Singapore Zoo is certainly far from closing down, being one of the world’s most renowned zoos and currently undergoing a massive expansion and upgrade. I believe it is a [source of] national pride for many Singaporeans to have our national zoo continue its conservation efforts and serve the greater purpose of preserving our values towards the environment. (Ang Shao Xu, 21-E6)	A strong conclusion showing consideration of the SG context, but could also have considered why it’s a point of pride for many here also

Response 4

<i>This response makes a concerted effort to link to the Singapore context throughout, employing examples to demonstrate its point well. It also shows a strong understanding of the task and the passages by staying very faithful to the quotes and the question. However, more concrete examples that deal with the actual functioning of the zoos here could be used, and the more irrelevant or far-fetched bits of logic could have been more soundly argued.</i>	
Across both passages, I am more inclined to agree with Anne Walford than Ray Morgan.	

In passage 1, Walford argues that zoos should be closed down since ‘zoos incarcerate animals for the amusement of our species’ in paragraph 4. This is true in my society and hence I agree to a large extent. Living in Singapore means having to abide by laws such as being subjected to capital punishment for crimes related to drug trafficking. The desensitisation of citizens towards human rights issues by our draconian rulings may have inadvertently led us to turn a blind eye to morally-incorrect animal showcases in zoos. For example, when [the] Singapore Zoo’s very own pandas Kai Kai and Jia Jia had their first panda cub Le Le, flocks of Singaporeans rushed to see them in their enclosures. The same with our other treasured animals like the orangutan has occurred, where our animals sit isolated in their enclosures for overjoyed humans to take pictures of them with their flashy phones and cameras. Perhaps due to the high-stress that our work-obsessed and competitive society has offloaded onto this century’s citizens, citizens lack the emotional capacity to question the ethics behind their actions, as seen by how thousands of Singaporeans headed to zoos to use up their Singapore Rediscoverers vouchers, drawn in by the hook of not having to pay a single cent. Hence, I do agree that how people spectate animals for their own happiness under recreational activities should be a valid reason for closing down zoos.	This seems like a bit of a stretch Closer links could be made to amusement
In passage 2, Ray Morgan argues that zoos have never been more essential as many species owe their survival to captive breeding programmes in zoos in paragraph 4. I agree with this claim to a small extent given that it applies to the context of my society only in a handful of cases. Of course, we must acknowledge the efforts that zoos, such as the Singapore Zoo, have played in protecting endangered animal species. According to Channel News Asia’s (CNA) documentary, the Singapore Zoo had collaborated with a zoo in Indonesia to allow their leopards to breed. In the end, the successful programme meant that we were one step further from losing this species of leopards in Asia. Considering how Singapore is a country of diverse cultures and races, this is one of our priorities in terms of protection and conservation, [and hence] it is not unexpected that we have allowed this spirit to transcend into protecting our endangered animals. Furthermore, seeing [that] Singapore has built eco-bridges to protect our wildlife diversity in compensation for modern developments like building more roads, a growing respect and empathy towards animals has also channelled into the efforts for zoos to protect endangered species. However, these efforts are really few and far between. Briefly touched on by Walford, conservation efforts are rarely successful and do in fact require large amounts of funding and scientific research. Transitioning from a third to first world country, Singapore has settled in comfortably with its rising affluence and wealth. Singaporeans are also unlikely to be willing to see their hard work and money being used by higher authorities to improve the lives of other animal species that are not human or not them. Moreover, Singapore lacks a strong wildlife culture in the first place due to our rapid modernisation and we have few endangered species of our own. Thus, it is far-fetched to say that zoos are essential when their work reaches few. <i>(Hong Chu Yan, 21-13)</i>	A stand like this can be confusing - it is advisable to just state that you mostly/ largely disagree Good use of balance Relevance of this could be clearer