

Discursive Essay – Exemplars (Based on O level papers from 2013-16)

2015 Q2: 'The world would be a very dull place without music.' What are your views?

"And I think to myself...what a wonderful world", Jazz legend Louis Armstrong croons the world with his classic masterpiece "What a Wonderful World". Indeed, the world is a wonderful place to live in, with <i>breath-taking sights, delicious cuisine</i> and <i>diverse peoples</i> from unique cultures all around this <u>blue marble</u>. The key driving force that unites us from all different parts of the world is music -- the <u>bridge</u> that connects and inspires and the universal <u>language</u> of love, peace and all emotions. Music <u>colours our lives</u> -- taking us away from the routines of daily life -- and <u>provides us an outlet to express ourselves</u>. Firstly, music enhances our lives. Be it a boring plane ride, or our daily commutes to work from home and back, music is always there to give us a <u>window</u> that brings us away from painfully slow bus or car journeys that inch on a jammed highway. Humming to a soothing melody, tapping to the beat and moving in sync with a tune, music grants us such pleasures. Some people even become rappers, operatic sopranos or popstars in the privacy of their showers, belting at the top of their lungs to the cake of soap in their hands, before <u>shuffling</u> routinely to the office or school. Such nuances and thrills music gives us in our life! <u>Disco</u>, <u>karaoke</u> and <u>concerts</u> allow us to unload our burdens and dance and sing our hearts out without a care. Additionally, <u>classical repertoires</u> and <u>musicals</u> enthrall and captivate us in stunning musical numbers that relax us or <u>floor our jaws</u>. To immerse in music haven, all we need are an earpiece and our ears -- of course -- and a library of thousands of songs via a mobile device are at our fingertips to relish. Indeed, music rejuvenates our spirits, touching the soul. Next, music speaks for us when our words fail. Through music, we can express our feelings to someone else through a romantic song about love and courtship. Alternatively, feelings of spite and anger can also be translated into a catchy melody -- a frequent antic that Taylor Swift pulls off about her countless failed relationships with different partners. Simply put, music speaks to our emotions and speaks for us. Singing or playing a musical instrument transports us to the <u>centre-stage</u>, where we become <u>stars</u> -- empowering us to be ourselves and not conform to being a <u>guppy in an ocean of million fishes</u>. When we choose to represent ourselves through music, others will begin to relate to and understand our plight better. Using music to communicate breaks prejudices and stereotypes that hinder and obstruct who we are in society today. Therefore music is an effective platform to express ourselves. To conclude, music is something we can all enjoy, regardless of race, language or religion. Jazz, rock, pop or classical -- we all have our own favourite genre to "jam" to when we are stuck in a traffic jam. All thanks to music -- what a wonderful world this is. (499 words) Joshua Soh (4SA 2018) Edited by LSF	- Good use of a popular song as Hook - List of three - Metaphors - Thesis: use of parallelism - Clear topic sentence - Metaphor - Vivid sound imagery - Show not tell - Apt vocabulary - Hyperbole - Personification in Topic Sentence - Apt example - Apt vocab - Metaphor
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If you could write this much for the body paragraphs, it is alright to have just two points.

Check out an effective body paragraph by Caleb Lim (4SA)

Music can evoke emotions and thoughts, allowing us to better appreciate our world through these brief rides of emotion. An up-tempo pop song can provide bright sparks in our otherwise dour existence. A familiar classical tune can resonate within us and bring up emotions that would otherwise stay dormant. This is why music scores can work wonders for movies. In Hans Zimmer's score for 'Dunkirk', it evokes feelings of fear, urgency and hope. It vividly conveys the range of emotions in that movie. It is safe to say that without music, our ability to feel certain emotions is seriously hampered on the big screen. This would inadvertently make our lives duller. Music allows us to experience feelings and new emotions, from the fear generated by the iconic two notes in 'Jaws' to the triumphant feeling as the 'Star Wars' intro music bursts to life. (144 words)	Clear Topic Sentence Apt example Good Link - using different words from Topic Sentence
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2016 Q4: To what extent do you agree with the idea that some teenagers lead an unhealthy lifestyle? Give reasons for your views.

This can be handled with the following three topic sentences that Jerome (4S2 2018) used:

1. *To begin with*, teenagers are spending less time outdoors to participate in physical activities.
2. *What is worse*, more teenagers are frequenting fast food restaurants for their meals.
3. *Above all*, teenagers tend to stay up late and are not getting enough sleep.

Jerome has used good transition words to show how his three points are lining up.

2016 Q2: Do you agree that we can learn from the mistakes of others or do we need to learn from our own experiences?

Let's examine the good intro and body from Jonathan Tan (4S2 2018)

'Once bitten, twice shy' is probably one of the few English idioms we can apply into our daily lives. We often hear extraordinary testimonies of how ordinary people learn from their mistakes and failures, rise from the ashes, and ultimately emerge much stronger. However, we just cheer and applaud after such testimonies, never really learning from their mistakes. Most times, we have to go through the tough grinding and 'boiling water' ourselves before we learn and emerge stronger – one day even being the ones on stage sharing our own testimonies. So, can we learn from the mistakes of others or do we need to learn from our own experiences? I concur with the latter. Firstly, when we hear of the mistakes of others and how they learned from them, we cannot exactly feel the pain and hardship they had to	Hook Transition Thesis -Mixed Present and Past tenses
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endure. However, when we <u>ended</u> up in the ditch ourselves, we <u>could</u> immediately feel the pain of trying to climb out of that pit, as well as the struggle and the misery that <u>came</u> along with it. In the end, when we finally <u>emerged</u> from that situation – like a butterfly emerging from its cocoon – we <u>remembered</u> the pain and struggle encountered very well. We would come to a resolve that we never want to go through that ever again. So when we come face to face with such a situation in the future, we will make sure that do not trip on the same step like we once did before. (135 words)	- Past tense used to talk about hypothetical situation - Future tense
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Let us examine an effective conclusion from Stanley (4SA 2018)

The more cynical amongst us may opine that humans will never be rid of our basic, primal and unreasonable instincts. However, I beg to differ. We can learn much from the mistakes of others – from knowledge to words to everything in between. We only need to accept that everyone has weaknesses and that mistakes are a part of life. After all, to err is human but to forgive them and learn from their follies – in my opinion – is divine. (78 words)	Saying from Alexander Pope
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2015 Q3: ‘Shoppers have too much to choose, from chocolate bars to jeans.’ What, in your opinion, are the advantages and disadvantages of having many things to choose from?

Let us examine an intro and body paragraph from Yap Hong Xian (4SA)

Three years ago, British retail giant Tesco’s CEO Dave Lewis made headlines by pulling one-third of Tesco’s products off their shelves in an attempt to cut costs and to simplify consumers’ weekly grocery shopping trip. This sparked debates on whether having many things to choose from is good or bad. Downsides to having choices include ‘decision paralysis’ and decreased satisfaction. However, one cannot deny that there are positives like the availability of cheaper products and a guarantee that there is no product shortage. (83 words)	Use of fact as hook Transition Thesis
‘Decision paralysis’ arises when shoppers spend too much time thinking over the plethora of items on offer thereby causing them to not be able to make a purchase decision decisively. A professor at Columbia once carried out a social experiment where shoppers were presented with a display of jams. She found out that when customers had more choices, they questioned themselves and only three per cent made a purchase. When the options were severely restricted, nearly a third of the customers made a purchase. This means that when presented with too many options, we end up having a hard time making a well-informed and well-thought out purchase which disadvantages the shoppers as they cannot buy what they need due to indecision. (121 words)	*Defining a concept - adds interest value to topic *use of scientific study *using apt vocab to hint

	of disadvantage
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2013 Q3: 'The way we dress reveals who we are.' What are your views?

A decent introduction from Ahksan (4SA 2018)

We have always been told to not judge a book by its cover. But sadly, when it comes to humans, the way we dress has an impact on how we are viewed upon or categorised in society. Whether we are at work, school, shopping mall or the park, we are judged just because of our clothing. We are a society quick to judge based on the 'outside' which denies us the opportunity to really know a person from the 'inside'. Like it or not, our external appearance – as exemplified by how we are dressed – plays a key role in how we live our lives in many ways and in how we are being portrayed or even treated.	Hook Transition Thesis
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Can use the following topic sentences to approach the topic like Gareth Pang (4S2 2018) did:

1. We reveal our interest by wearing our favourite band's t-shirt.
2. Our attire reflects the jobs we do.
3. Lastly, our mood is shown via the clothes we put on.

2013 Q1: Parents often believe that it is better to be safe than sorry. Do you consider young people to be too protected?

Decent intro by Keegan Tay (4SA 2018)

Often dubbed the 'Durian Generation', youths of Singapore today are often condemned by their elders. They lament that the youths' parents are protecting their progeny, keeping the soft insides safe even if the exterior is spiky and obnoxious. Being a youth myself, I can attest that my generation is undeniably over protected and it is evident in our everyday life. Parents almost always give in to their children's every demand. Next, parents defend their children to the hilt. Lastly, parents will go out of their way for the sake of their precious darlings.	Hook Transition Thesis that clearly spells out the points.
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(93 words)

Synonyms used for 'youths'

Can try this approach with the following topic sentences like Liu Qingyu (4SA 2108) did:

1. Born with a silver spoon in their mouths, many Singaporean youths have been too overly sheltered by their parents and are extremely dependent on them.
2. In addition, some parents may give their off-springs misleading advice and ideas on how they should behave in life.
3. However, there are independent young people who refuse to be cocooned by their parents' safety nets.