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1. Do you agree that social media does more harm than good to young people?

Social media has become an integral part of modern life, influencing various aspects of our daily experiences. In today's world, the influence of social media is undeniable for young people, shaping communication and social interactions. I firmly believe that social media does not do more harm than good, as its benefits, including enhanced connectivity and access to information, outweigh its potential negatives. Nonetheless, it is important to consider certain risks associated with its use. Overall, by promoting responsible usage, we can maximise its positive impact while mitigating drawbacks.

Social media provides a reliable method for staying connected with distant family and friends. The paragraph clearly presents this benefit as evidence of its positive influence. For example, texting and video calling are highlighted as modern solutions to overcoming geographical barriers. Detailed examples of preserving relationships support this claim. In addition, linking these benefits explicitly to the prompt would further enhance the argument.

Social media is instrumental in sharing valuable academic resources among students. This paragraph outlines how platforms like TikTok and Instagram facilitate the distribution of study tips and notes. The concrete example of collaborative learning demonstrates its positive impact. Clear transitions guide the reader through the argument, although a more explicit reference to the prompt would strengthen the link. Overall, the paragraph effectively supports the thesis while suggesting further implications for young people.

While some critics argue that social media can lead to the rapid spread of misinformation and harm individual reputations, this perspective does not capture the full picture. I acknowledge that issues like fake news and the sharing of embarrassing content are real concerns. However, these challenges can be managed through education and responsible usage. By adopting clear guidelines and fostering media literacy, the potential harm can be minimised while the benefits of connectivity remain intact. Ultimately, a balanced approach reaffirms that social media does more good than harm when used wisely.

To conclude, social media is a multifaceted tool that offers significant benefits when used responsibly. By supporting connections and facilitating the sharing of valuable information, its positive influence is clearly demonstrated. Although challenges such as misinformation exist, these can be managed with informed usage. This balanced view reinforces that social media does more good than harm when its potential is harnessed effectively. Ultimately, responsible use maximises its benefits while minimising potential risks.

2. To what extent is technology a positive influence on young people today?

In Singapore's digital-first society, technology is woven into nearly every aspect of young people's lives — from how they learn and communicate, to how they spend their leisure time. While some view this as harmful, citing issues such as distraction, social isolation, and overdependence on screens, the reality is far more balanced. Technology, when used purposefully and in moderation, can be a highly positive force, especially for youth in a tech-savvy and education-focused country like Singapore.

One of the most notable areas where technology has had a transformative effect is education. Platforms such as the Student Learning Space (SLS) and AskNLearn have become integral tools in the school system. These platforms allow students to revisit lessons at their own pace, access curated resources, and engage in independent or collaborative tasks beyond the classroom. Even during disruptions like the COVID-19 pandemic, students continued to learn meaningfully through video conferencing tools like Zoom and Google Meet. This ability to maintain continuity in learning, regardless of location, reflects how technology has made education more accessible and personalised for Singaporean youth.

Beyond the classroom, technology also facilitates communication and social interaction. Apps like Telegram, WhatsApp, and Instagram are commonly used among students to stay in touch, organise group projects, and express themselves. These platforms help maintain relationships across schools and communities, and allow young people to share their thoughts and experiences. Many also use digital platforms to follow local news from sources like CNA or Mothership, giving them greater awareness of current affairs. This engagement not only fosters stronger social bonds, but also encourages civic consciousness and digital citizenship.

In addition, technology has empowered young people to explore their interests and develop valuable life skills. Local platforms like Carousell allow entrepreneurial-minded youth to start small businesses or sell second-hand goods, giving them early exposure to marketing, budgeting, and negotiation. Others use design platforms like Canva to create digital content, while some learn coding through online courses. These tools nurture creativity and build digital literacy—skills that are essential in today's rapidly evolving job market.

However, it would be naïve to ignore the challenges that come with unregulated use of technology. Overuse of social media or gaming platforms can lead to a sedentary lifestyle, sleep deprivation, and weaker academic performance. Moreover, the rise in cyberbullying and online scams, even among students in Singapore, highlights the need for better digital literacy and awareness. Young people must be taught to use technology mindfully and critically, with guidance from schools, parents, and policymakers.

Ultimately, the extent to which technology is a positive influence depends on how it is used. In Singapore, where digital tools are integrated into both education and daily life, technology has largely empowered youth—academically, socially, and creatively. When accompanied by responsible usage and appropriate safeguards, its benefits far outweigh its drawbacks. Thus, technology is not only a positive influence on young people today; it is a powerful enabler of their growth and potential.

3. Should traditional cultures adapt to modern values in today's world?

In an increasingly globalised and fast-changing world, the tension between preserving traditional cultures and embracing modern values is more apparent than ever. While traditions offer a sense of identity and continuity, modern values often promote progress, inclusivity, and innovation. The question of whether traditional cultures should adapt to modern values is not one with a simple yes or no answer. However, it is clear that in order to remain relevant and meaningful to future generations, traditional cultures must evolve and adapt, while still preserving their core essence.

One compelling reason for adaptation is that modern values often promote greater inclusivity and human rights. For instance, some traditional practices—such as gender discrimination, caste hierarchies, or the rejection of interracial or interfaith marriages—are incompatible with today's ideals of equality and freedom. Holding on to such outdated customs in the name of tradition risks perpetuating injustice and division. By reforming these elements, traditional cultures can retain their identity while aligning with universal human values. For example, in many Asian societies, daughters were historically discouraged from inheriting family wealth. Today, these customs are gradually shifting to reflect the belief in gender equality, while still upholding values like filial piety and family cohesion.

Moreover, adaptation allows traditional cultures to remain relevant to the younger generation. In many places, youth are increasingly disengaged from cultural practices that feel rigid, inaccessible, or out of touch with modern life. By embracing change, such as incorporating technology or using contemporary mediums like film, social media, or digital art, cultural practices can be revitalised. For instance, traditional Chinese festivals in Singapore are now often promoted through digital campaigns and youth-led community events, making them more engaging while still passing on cultural knowledge. If cultures do not evolve, they risk being forgotten or viewed as relics of the past.

Additionally, cultures that adapt are better positioned to survive in a multicultural and interconnected world. Modern societies—especially in cosmopolitan countries like Singapore—are built on diversity. When cultural groups are open to dialogue and willing to evolve, it creates space for mutual respect and harmony. Traditions do not have to be sacrificed, but rather reinterpreted in ways that foster understanding across communities. This balance between preservation and progression helps cultures thrive in a shared, pluralistic environment.

However, it is also important to acknowledge that not all modern values are inherently beneficial. Blindly adopting every trend risks eroding important cultural foundations. For instance, consumerism and individualism—common traits in modern societies—can weaken traditional values like community spirit, respect for elders, and responsibility towards one's family. Therefore, adaptation should be thoughtful and selective. Cultures must evaluate which modern values genuinely enhance their way of life, and which may compromise their moral and social fabric.

In conclusion, traditional cultures should adapt to modern values to remain meaningful, inclusive, and relevant in today's world. However, this adaptation should not mean abandoning all traditions. Instead, cultures should evolve selectively—retaining the wisdom and values that define them, while discarding harmful or outdated practices. In doing so, they can honour their past, meet the needs of the present, and prepare for the future.

4. Is it better to protect wildlife even if it limits economic development?

As the global population grows and economies expand, conflicts between environmental protection and economic development have become increasingly common. Forests are cleared for agriculture, marine ecosystems are disrupted by overfishing, and endangered species lose their habitats to construction and mining. While economic growth is undeniably important for national progress and improving living standards, protecting wildlife must take precedence—even if it places some limits on development. This is because biodiversity is essential not only for ecological balance but also for long-term human survival, health, and sustainable growth.

Firstly, wildlife plays a crucial role in maintaining ecological balance. Every species contributes to the health of ecosystems, whether by pollinating crops, purifying water, controlling pests, or supporting food chains. When animals go extinct due to habitat destruction or pollution, it sets off a chain reaction that can lead to ecological collapse. For instance, the disappearance of bees and other pollinators can severely affect food production worldwide. Protecting wildlife is therefore not simply about saving animals—it is about protecting the natural systems humans depend on for survival.

Moreover, long-term economic prosperity actually depends on healthy ecosystems. Forests, oceans, and wetlands provide natural resources and services that support industries such as agriculture, fishing, tourism, and even medicine. In Singapore, nature reserves like Sungei Buloh and the Central Catchment Area are not only valuable for biodiversity but also serve as natural buffers against floods and provide educational and recreational spaces. Countries that overexploit their natural resources for short-term gain often face environmental degradation, loss of livelihoods, and higher costs in the future to repair the damage. Thus, protecting wildlife is an investment in sustainable development.

Opponents argue that conservation efforts can slow down economic progress, especially in developing countries. Infrastructure projects like roads, dams, and plantations can generate jobs and boost GDP but often come at the expense of wildlife habitats. However, this presents a false choice. With careful planning, governments can pursue "green growth" strategies that balance development with conservation. For example, eco-tourism has allowed countries like Costa Rica to earn revenue while preserving their natural heritage. Similarly, sustainable urban design and renewable energy projects can fuel growth without harming ecosystems.

Another consideration is our ethical responsibility. As the most powerful species on the planet, humans have the moral obligation to protect other forms of life. Wildlife has intrinsic value, and species should not be driven to extinction purely for human benefit. Cultural and spiritual beliefs in many societies, including in parts of Asia, also teach respect for nature. Preserving wildlife is therefore not just a scientific or economic issue, but also a reflection of our values and conscience as a global community.

In conclusion, protecting wildlife—even at the cost of limiting certain types of economic development—is not only necessary but wise. The health of the planet and the well-being of future generations depend on the biodiversity we choose to conserve today. Economic growth that ignores environmental limits is ultimately unsustainable. Therefore, it is far better to grow slowly and responsibly than to advance rapidly at the cost of irreparable ecological loss.

5. Should university education be free for all students?

University education plays a critical role in shaping a country's future. It develops skilled professionals, fuels innovation, and allows individuals to realise their potential. However, rising tuition fees have made higher education increasingly inaccessible for students from low- and middle-income families. This raises an important question: should university education be free for all? While the idea may seem idealistic, making university education free for everyone is not only fair and beneficial to society, but also an investment in national development—provided it is implemented sustainably.

Firstly, education is a right, not a privilege. If primary and secondary education are provided free of charge in most countries, including Singapore, then higher education should not be treated differently. Talented students from disadvantaged backgrounds often have to give up their dreams because of financial barriers. This leads to a waste of potential and reinforces the cycle of poverty. Free university education would give every student an equal opportunity to succeed, based on merit rather than their family's income. In doing so, it would promote social mobility and a more equitable society.

Secondly, investing in education benefits the entire country in the long run. Graduates contribute more to the economy through higher incomes, increased tax contributions, and innovation. Countries such as Germany and Norway offer free or low-cost university education and still maintain strong, competitive economies. Their success shows that free university education is not only possible, but also sustainable when managed properly. By reducing student debt, governments also enable young adults to start families, buy homes, or launch businesses sooner—all of which contribute to economic growth.

That said, opponents argue that free university education places a heavy burden on taxpayers. After all, someone must pay for the costs of running universities, and funding education for everyone—even those who can afford it—may be seen as unfair. However, governments could design policies to make free university education more targeted. For example, students from wealthier households could pay higher taxes in the future, or financial aid could be provided only to those who need it most. Alternatively, governments could invest in cost-effective, public university systems rather than funding private institutions.

Another concern is that making university free may lower the value of a degree or cause overcrowding in institutions. However, this can be addressed by maintaining strict academic entry standards and expanding capacity gradually. Moreover, not everyone will choose university; some may pursue vocational education, apprenticeships, or enter the workforce directly. The key is to provide choices and ensure that finances are not a barrier to those who truly want and deserve a university education.

In conclusion, university education should be free for all students—at least to a reasonable extent. It is a public good that benefits not just individuals but the nation as a whole. While cost and implementation challenges exist, they can be overcome through smart policies and sustainable funding. In a world that increasingly values knowledge and innovation, ensuring that higher education is accessible to all is not just generous—it is essential.