

# NAVIGATE

Issue #8

Eunoia Junior College  
English Department  
2021 General Paper

# Contents

|                                                                                                           |           |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|
| <b>Navigate User Guide</b>                                                                                | <b>4</b>  |
| <b>Message from the 2021 GP Team</b>                                                                      | <b>5</b>  |
| <b>Essays: 2020 JC2 Preliminary Examinations</b>                                                          | <b>6</b>  |
| 1 Can luxury ever be justified when poverty exists?                                                       | 9         |
| 2 How important is it for citizens to know about the history of their country?                            | 12        |
| 2 How important is it for citizens to know about the history of their country?                            | 13        |
| 4 'Leisure is underrated.' To what extent is this true in your society?                                   | 16        |
| 4 'Leisure is underrated.' To what extent is this true in your society?                                   | 18        |
| 5 Consider the view that activism is more noise than substance.                                           | 20        |
| 6 'Previous generations have failed us.' Do you agree?                                                    | 23        |
| 6 'Previous generations have failed us.' Do you agree?                                                    | 25        |
| 6 'Previous generations have failed us.' Do you agree?                                                    | 28        |
| 7 'Diplomacy is the most effective means of managing international relations.' Is this a fair assessment? | 30        |
| 8 'We should always trust the experts.' Discuss.                                                          | 33        |
| 8 'We should always trust the experts.' Discuss.                                                          | 36        |
| 9 How far do you agree that technology is the solution to today's major problems?                         | 38        |
| 9 How far do you agree that technology is the solution to today's major problems?                         | 41        |
| 9 How far do you agree that technology is the solution to today's major problems?                         | 44        |
| 10 Does your society do enough to embrace diversity?                                                      | 45        |
| 10 Does your society do enough to embrace diversity?                                                      | 48        |
| 10 Does your society do enough to embrace diversity?                                                      | 51        |
| 11 To what extent is an appreciation of the arts essential for the individual today?                      | 53        |
| 11 To what extent is an appreciation of the arts essential for the individual today?                      | 56        |
| 12 How far is state intervention in matters of language acceptable?                                       | 58        |
| <b>2020 JC1 Term 3 Timed Assignment Paper 1</b>                                                           | <b>61</b> |
| 2 How far can religious beliefs and scientific knowledge be reconciled?                                   | 61        |
| 7 'Developed countries have the responsibility to accept refugees.' Do you agree?                         | 64        |
| 7 'Developed countries have the responsibility to accept refugees.' Do you agree?                         | 66        |
| 10 'The study of literature serves little purpose in society.' Discuss.                                   | 68        |
| 10 'The study of literature serves little purpose in society.' Discuss.                                   | 71        |
| 10 'The study of literature serves little purpose in society.' Discuss.                                   | 73        |
| <b>2020 JC1 Promotional Examination Paper 1</b>                                                           | <b>77</b> |
| 1 'The only thing that social media has done is divide.' How far do you agree?                            | 77        |
| 1 'The only thing that social media has done is divide.' How far do you agree?                            | 79        |
| 1 'The only thing that social media has done is divide.' How far do you agree?                            | 81        |
| 2 Are the Arts merely for entertainment?                                                                  | 83        |
| 2 Are the Arts merely for entertainment?                                                                  | 85        |



|                                                                                                             |            |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|
| 2 Are the Arts merely for entertainment?                                                                    | 87         |
| 3 How far is a university education still important in today's world?                                       | 89         |
| 5 Can racial equality ever be a reality?                                                                    | 91         |
| 5 Can racial equality ever be a reality?                                                                    | 94         |
| 5 Can racial equality ever be a reality?                                                                    | 96         |
| 8 'A nation cannot be considered successful if its citizens are unhappy.' How true is this of your society? | 98         |
| 9 Should nations prioritise their own interests in times of global crisis?                                  | 101        |
| 10 How far is the commercialisation of sport desirable?                                                     | 103        |
| 11 Assess the view that young people in your society have no reason to complain today.                      | 105        |
| <b>2020 JC1 Promotional Examination Paper 2</b>                                                             | <b>107</b> |
| Response 1                                                                                                  | 108        |
| Response 2                                                                                                  | 109        |
| Response 3                                                                                                  | 110        |
| Response 4                                                                                                  | 111        |
| Response 5                                                                                                  | 112        |
| <b>2021 JC2 March Common Test Paper 2</b>                                                                   | <b>114</b> |
| Response 1                                                                                                  | 114        |
| Response 2                                                                                                  | 115        |
| Response 3                                                                                                  | 116        |
| Response 4                                                                                                  | 118        |
| Response 5                                                                                                  | 119        |

# 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.
- Look at the 'Message from the 2021 GP Team' for a guide on the issue's key reads – it will point out interesting pieces, as well as our picks for pieces with especially strong qualities! Good introductions/conclusions, paragraph development, illustration, use of conceptual understanding, organisation of ideas and language use are some of the characteristics we point out.
- 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 2021 GP Team

Dear Eunoians,

“Learning to write is learning to think. You don’t know anything clearly unless you can state it in writing.” - S. I. Hayakawa

It is an oft-heard complaint that General Paper essays are difficult to write, and no wonder, since learning to write is learning to think. For JC1s new to argumentative writing, the rigour of shaping one’s words and so refining one’s thoughts will often be trying as you put knowledge and ideas on trial to find what rings true. For JC2s who have journeyed longer, take heart in the sharpening of your mind in every trial. In this issue of Navigate, a wide range of responses has been curated to help give you direction and stay the course. Each sample is a snapshot of the rigorous process of reading, processing, testing and communicating conducted by these young writers, as they not only reflect the world as they see it in their writing, but also simultaneously clarify the world in their minds.

Many of the essays here are effective because of the clarity of their knowledge. Contextual knowledge can often be a key aspect of in-depth analysis, and Amanda Lim (20-O1)’s specific considerations of Singapore on page 98 is a great demonstration of why. Several writers have also utilised their impressive conceptual understanding of the world to shed light on issues as diverse as the complex matters of citizenship and Identity (Lum Wan Tong (19-U1), page 13) the Systems and Structures that make experts trustworthy (Emmanuella Li (19-O2), page 36) and the Beliefs and Values that underlie science and religion (Nadia Sun (20-U4), page 61).

Others are notable because of the quality of their argumentation. As a starting point, check out Clarice Pui (20-O3)’s and Amandel Seow (20-I4)’s interesting bookended introductions and conclusions on pages 64 and 85 respectively. Jerome Tan (19-A2)’s rich use of well-developed illustrations help make his points well on page 23, while Kenme Lam (19-E3)’s consistent and well-negotiated balance puts across a sophisticated perspective on page 30. For an example of the standard point-elaboration-example-link structure done exceptionally well, look at Gan Wan Nee (19-I3)’s meticulous analysis on page 41.

Some of the most engaging pieces come from those who have found their voices: Chloe Wong (19-O2) and Gan Wan Nee (19-I3) both present strong ideas carried powerfully through their unique voices. Where Chloe’s is lively, felicitous and impassioned at points, Wan Nee’s is more subdued but exceptionally tightly constructed, with every nuanced word thoughtfully chosen. Read their works on pages 28 and 41 and contrast them for yourselves!

We thank these writers and all the rest whose work features in Navigate both for their commendable work and their generosity in sharing their writing - and thus learning - with us all.

All the best,  
Your GP Teachers ♥♥



# Essays: 2020 JC2 Preliminary Examinations

- 1 Can luxury ever be justified when poverty exists?
  - Teo Lek Heng, 19-I4
- 2 How important is it for citizens to know about the history of their country?
  - Chew Hoa Gen, 19-I4
  - Lum Wan Tong, 19-U1
- 3 'Democracy today is nothing more than a popularity contest.' How far do you agree?
  - Not represented
- 4 'Leisure is underrated.' To what extent is this true in your society?
  - Colin Hia Qingxuan, 19-I3
  - Lucas Hong, 19-I5
- 5 Consider the view that activism is more noise than substance.
  - Joshua Kam, 19-A4
- 6 'Previous generations have failed us.' Do you agree?
  - Jerome Tan, 19-A2
  - Natasha Tan, 19-O1
  - Chloe Wong, 19-O2
- 7 'Diplomacy is the most effective means of managing international relations.' Is this a fair assessment?
  - Kenme Lam, 19-E3
- 8 'We should always trust the experts.' Discuss.
  - Ho Yu Hao, 19-O1
  - Emmanuella Li, 19-O2
- 9 How far do you agree that technology is the solution to today's major problems?
  - Pang Xin Hua, 19-E2
  - Gan Wan Nee, 19-I3
  - Noah Ang Shi Hern, 19-U4 - 2 paragraphs
- 10 Does your society do enough to embrace diversity?
  - Lucas Loh, 19-A4
  - Li Sirui, 19-A6
  - Alayna Yap, 19-I4
- 11 To what extent is an appreciation of the arts essential for the individual today?
  - Koh Ning, Marilyn, 19-E1
  - Neo Lisuen, 19-O5
- 12 How far is state intervention in matters of language acceptable?
  - Clement Hooi, 19-O1

# 2020 JC1 Essays and Paragraphs

## Term 3 Timed Assignment Paper 1 [2018 EJC Promotional Examination]

- 2        How far can religious beliefs and scientific knowledge be reconciled?
- Nadia Sun, 20-U4
- 7        ‘Developed countries have the responsibility to accept refugees.’ Do you agree?
- Clarice Pui Mun Sin, 20-O3
  - Nerys Koh, 20-U4
- 10       ‘The study of literature serves little purpose in society.’ Discuss.
- Jolie Chen, 20-U2
  - Jamie Ng, 20-U2
  - Teo Rui Yuan, 20-U4

## 2020 JC1 Promotional Examination Paper 1

- 1        ‘The only thing that social media has done is divide.’ How far do you agree?
- Kee Yan Tong Yanisa, 20-O5
  - Cher Shining Clara, 20-E6
  - Luke Yeo, 20-I4
- 2        Are the Arts merely for entertainment?
- Tan Kai Teng, 20-E6
  - Amandel Seow, 20-I4
  - Pang Hui Bin Gabrielle, 20-I4
- 3        How far is a university education still important in today’s world?
- Phua Wei Jie, 20-O2
- 4        ‘The written word is a powerful tool for encouraging change.’ What is your view?
- Not represented
- 5        Can racial equality ever be a reality?
- Lennon Chua Ree Hung, 20-E6
  - Clarice Pui Mun Sian, 20-O3
  - Tan Wei Yee Ashlyn, 20-I3
- 6        Consider the view that we place too much value on individual freedom.
- Not represented
- 7        ‘Democracy is the best form of government.’ Do you agree?
- Not represented
- 8        ‘A nation cannot be considered successful if its citizens are unhappy.’ How true is this of your society?
- Lim Pei Han, Amanda, 20-O1
- 9        Should nations prioritise their own interests in times of global crisis?
- Lim Ying Xin, 20-O2



- 10      How far is the commercialisation of sport desirable?
- Cherilynn Yeo, 20-I3
- 11      Assess the view that young people in your society have no reason to complain today.
- Felynn Chua, 20-O2
- 12      How far should a nation's resources be used to extend life expectancy?
- Not represented

**2020 JC1 Promotional Examination Paper 2 AQ**

- Response 1: Joyce Ong, 20-O5
- Response 2: Yeo E-Xuan, 20-U3
- Response 3: Santiago Patrice Gabrielle Trinidad, 20-E6
- Response 4: Isabelle Lim Wenrui, 20-I4
- Response 5: Pang Hui Bin Gabrielle, 20-I4

## Paragraphs: 2021 JC2 March Common Test

**2021 JC2 March Common Test Paper 2 AQ**

- Response 1: Zoe Kam, 20-U1
- Response 2: Joanne Ho, 20-U1
- Response 3: Eyu Kai Jie, 20-A1
- Response 4: Lim Tian Le, 20-A2
- Response 5: Nicole Lim, 20-O1



## 1 Can luxury ever be justified when poverty exists?

*This ambitious response brings in many different concepts, showing good broad knowledge of some issues relevant to the question. However, it is less successful in making connections in its details, as ties to the central focus of the question, luxury, are not strong throughout and most of the essay is more generally about the acquisition and possession of wealth in the presence of poverty rather than demonstrating clear acknowledgement of the excessiveness, opulence and rarity that characterise luxury. The illustrations were able to establish some relevance to the topic of luxury, but the response cannot rightly be said to deeply understand or demonstrate understanding of luxury rather than wealth, as the development of the points was not focused specifically on luxury. While more can clearly be done to examine the concept of luxury in more depth, the response does do a decent job of identifying and assessing different angles of justification, such that the evaluation sought by the question is delivered. The use of language here is likewise ambitious, with some attempts at rhetoric. However, this does tend to be repetitive and rather unconvincing in some cases. Some conscious sequencing of the arguments can be observed, but they can be put in a more compelling order: the last body paragraph, for example, does not help the overall coherence of the essay as it introduces an opposing idea right before the conclusion. As the conclusion does not acknowledge it, this point is left hanging.*

“Plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose”. The more things change, the more they remain the same. This popular French saying has been perpetuated through the ages regarding all things in life, claiming that despite massive changes, the underlying system and structures that undergird society will remain the same. I believe that this is highly applicable with regards to systemic inequality: Resources have always been pooled in the hands of the few; such is human nature; such is life. From the perspective of equality and equity, luxury could almost never be justified on moral grounds in the face of crushing poverty. Historically, the excesses of numerous regimes, such as the Royal Old Order in France and the Tsarist regime in Russia, have resulted in them being toppled by popular revolution due to the loss of moral legitimacy. However, from the viewpoint of human progress, luxury and the pooling of resources has resulted in vast improvements in both the arts and the sciences. Without the vast wealth of the traders and bankers of renaissance Italy, the technological and cultural flourishing of the renaissance could never have happened. Without luxury and the existence of a class of people free from the drudgeries of subsistence living, humanity could never have the curiosity and the drive to innovate and create. Therefore, I propose that, whilst luxury can never be justified in the face of absolute poverty, where basic human needs are not met, due to the morally repugnant and callous nature of such an extreme imbalance in resource allocation, and its potential implications on social stability, luxury can indeed be justified when its net positives, namely innovation and productivity, outweigh the suffering inflicted upon those in poverty, usually when poverty is only in relative terms.

A more immediately relevant start is advisable

Clear recognition of a basis for the evaluation: moral justification, with helpful illustrations tied in the start of the intro

Dilutes the focus on luxury by introducing another factor

Is luxury wealth? Noting the excesses of these groups would have strengthened relevance

Could have been more fully explained

Excellent articulation of a nuanced and sophisticated reason, under a condition which is wholly appropriate to the question

Ambitious and well-executed introduction, with a very strong awareness of relevant concerns and an exceptionally detailed thesis. However, there does seem to be a tendency to mix luxury with other factors, such that there is the threat of not actually focusing on the value of luxury critical to the argument



|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>“The strong will thrive while the weak suffer what they must.” While not exactly the words of renowned naturalist Charles Darwin, it captures the idea of Darwinism. Whilst an idea that has been shunned in recent years due to its associations with Eugenics and National Socialism, I believe that it is still relevant in the context of the modern system of capitalism in our world. Modern capitalism is a system that is inherently unfair, asking individuals to strive for an idea of “happiness” that is always on the horizon, with individuals accruing more and more luxuries in the process. This system however, has resulted in massive efficiencies in the global economy, resulting in a more innovative and productive world than has ever been seen in world history. Whilst we all strive for the “American dream”, the “Chinese dream” or other numerous “dreams” based upon the possession of luxuries and material goods, we inevitably leave some people behind. Such is the nature of competition. Such is the nature of capitalism. Such is life. In the context of modernity however, many countries through numerous welfare programmes such as in the Scandinavian countries, have nearly eliminated absolute poverty in their respective polities. The pursuit of luxury and “happiness” therefore, due to its ability to bring about the productive potential in human beings and bring wealth to most if not all sentient beings on earth, is most definitely justifiable. Examples of this abound, with numerous East Asian countries pulling themselves out of poverty through this pursuit of luxury, bringing up the productive capacity of their economies and resulting in improved living standards for all. The question however, includes the caveat of “in the existence of poverty”. Poverty, as long as it is relative and negligible, can be argued to be allowed to exist, in spite of luxuries being available to many, in the context of the modern world.</p> | <p>Instead of leading the reader along and potentially rambling, it is often recommended to get straight to the point or at least clarify the point being made</p> <p>Not immediately clear what this has to do with the question</p> <p>It's not to be assumed that capitalism is about happiness</p> <p>Missing links in the explanation: In what way is it unfair? How is it related to the pursuit of luxuries?</p> <p>Missed opportunity to expand on the specific nature of luxury to produce a more detailed response: What makes us strive for luxuries?</p> <p>A clearer answer to the question would be preferable: Can this justify luxury?</p> <p>To make this point better, clearer explanations of the links between luxury and happiness, and a closer examination of why we pursue luxury/where luxury fits into the global capitalist system &amp; the dreams were needed instead of the long explanations about other things, which only seem to argue that capitalism is justified</p> |
| <p>The excess of luxury by the few in the face of crushing poverty of the majority, however, is not only a morally repugnant situation but also a tinderbox for social upheaval and rebellion. “A hungry man is an angry man”, so goes the saying. Without access to sufficient resources and acceptable living standards, people are prone to anger against the incumbent regime and will fight for change, whatever the consequences may be. This situation foments chaos and revolution as partisans seeking change may take advantage of the anger of the people and rise up against the governing power. Examples of this include the previously stated, wildy unequal societies of Royal France and Tsarist Russia. In both of these societies, aristocrats controlled vast amounts of land, in the form of their estates, and large industries, allowing them to enjoy luxury and accrue massive wealth. Anger directed by the common lay-person against the regime was arguably highly justified due to its morally bankrupt nature, allowing millions to starve while the ruling class frolicked in luxury and excesses on a gargantuan scale.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | <p>Well set up in relation to the previous point</p> <p>What this has to do with the excesses of others needed to be clarified. Clear connections must be drawn to luxury, rather than assuming the reader will make the connections</p> <p>Relevance is limited without clear links to how luxury creates such problems. Furthermore, It also seems that this anger might be about</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |



|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>These include the building of vast palace estates, such as Versailles in Royal France or the excessive parties of the last Russian Tsar Nicholas. The morally bankrupt nature of both of these regimes proved intolerable to the people who rose up and installed new regimes in their respective countries. Therefore, excessive luxury by the few in the face of crushing, absolute poverty by the many, is intolerable and not justifiable due to its moral implications and impact on society.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | <p>the possession of wealth in general rather than luxury</p> <p>Missed opportunity to recognise how the enjoyment of luxury would have been greatly visible, symbolic of inequality and potentially incendiary</p> <p>Why exactly this was considered morally bankrupt could have been more well explained rather than mostly just repeated</p> <p>Why an 'impact on society' would make luxury unjustifiable is unclear</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| <p>Furthermore, luxury also does not guarantee happiness due to its nature as a “hedonic treadmill”, where individuals tend to return to a baseline level of happiness, no matter the amount of luxuries that they accrue. For example, is the average monarch of the 19th century happier than the average monk who has achieved self-actualisation? The hedonic pursuit of luxury may instead result in more unhappiness as one realises the meaningless nature of all of these material possessions. Since luxury cannot even guarantee happiness for the future, is it not better to allocate resources to those in need, those who suffer from crushing poverty? In spite of access to all the luxuries of the world, Korean idols still regularly take their own lives. Since happiness from luxury is not a guarantee, is it not better to allocate resources to the poor instead? In the context of the hedonic treadmill, luxury is likely to not be justified in the presence of poverty due to the more pressing needs of those in poverty.</p> | <p>This seems to go back to the ideas raised in the 1st body paragraph, and could be organised or at least signposted better</p> <p>Neither of these are relatable figures which 1) makes asking a rhetorical qn quite ineffective and 2) regardless of the answer, of questionable relevance to the average individual</p> <p>Repetition, where it does not serve an effective rhetorical purpose, can come across as grasping for arguments</p> <p>Reasonable and valid; essentially negotiates that the benefits are not sufficiently compelling when great need exists. How this measures up against the argument on relative poverty is however not addressed</p> |
| <p>In conclusion, whilst historically, luxury was justified in the name of innovation and human progress, as luxury was almost a prerequisite for innovation, requiring one to be freed from menial labour; the excessive accruing of luxury in the hands of the few is increasingly untenable and instead dangerous. In the context of modernity however, insofar as the basic needs of the poor are met and poverty is not absolute but rather relative, some amount of luxury and its pursuit in the form of modern capitalism is a desirable goal and justified as technological and social progress will bring about even greater wealth to all and increased</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | <p>This was not clearly argued in the body of the essay, but should have been</p> <p>It is not clear that this is about luxury rather than wealth</p> <p>These two lines set up a</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |



|                                                   |                                                                             |
|---------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| standards of living.<br><br>(Teo Lek Heng, 19-14) | contradiction, especially when the previous paragraph is taken into account |
|---------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------|

## 2 How important is it for citizens to know about the history of their country?

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p><i>This fluently written response clearly reflects a depth of evaluation and awareness of the issues raised by the question. Throughout, there is a keen awareness shown of the concept words of 'history' and 'citizens', with arguments made that demonstrate a depth of understanding of the opportunities and challenges surrounding the knowledge and teaching of history, as well as of what it means to be a citizen and how citizens fit into the larger picture of the nation. However, more depth can be accessed with further consideration of the keyword 'know', as there are opportunities afforded by the question to unpack the degree of knowledge of history further. It is consistent in its arguments at the same time as it provides a balanced discussion. The development of the paragraphs is quite meticulous, with apt use of illustrations that are very clearly targeted at supporting the arguments made. These are detailed to some degree, though more specifics and variety would strengthen the value the illustrations bring to the essay. Overall, in terms of its content, the essay is commendable for its level of thorough discussion that demonstrates a very comprehensive competency in argumentation. This depth of knowledge is supported by a good command of language that enables the ideas to be communicated with consistent effectiveness and sophistication.</i></p> |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| History is a tricky subject to handle. Some countries choose to manipulate theirs to suit their narrative and feed it to their citizens, some attempt to offer an unfiltered view of their past while others simply avoid educating their citizens at all. This then begs the question of whether it is truly critical for citizens to know of their country's history. Afterall, what value does it possess and what needs does it meet? There are those apathetic to understanding their country's history as they believe it is of little consequence in the present. However, one must also consider how knowledge of the past may ground a nation's identity and direction as well as how acknowledging it may be a crucial step in accepting accountability. Therefore, I believe it is, to a large extent, important for citizens to know about the history of their country.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | <p>Thoughtful context setting showing the range of approaches taken regarding history</p> <p>This 'accepting accountability' seems to be more the nation's problem than that of individual citizens</p> <p>Thoughtful stand and justifications made in a generally fluid intro with apt use of rhetoric</p>                                                                                   |
| It is understandable that some do not see the importance of knowing a country's history when they observe little tangible impact within that country as experienced by a majority of its citizens. To perhaps more pragmatic minds, being ignorant of the past has no implication on a country's well-being, technological advancements and general development, thus though it may be interesting, it is not crucial to the lives of the citizens nor the growth of the nation. Japan is known for not fully educating its youth on the true extent of its involvement in World War Two, pretending to water it down so that it is more palatable for its citizens to maintain a sense of national pride. Even so, Japan is prospering — it is lauded for its unique and innovative technologies in fields ranging from artificial intelligence to food. It is hard to argue that this ignorance of its history has brought devastating repercussions upon the country or that it must be quickly addressed, if at all. Citizens, hence, may seem perfectly content remaining indifferent to the country's past, disconnected from it to an extent. Thus, it is understandable that some do not see the importance of knowing their country's history.                                                                                                                                                                    | <p>Evaluation is based on the tangibility of the effects of knowing history</p> <p>Apt qualification that recognises different bases for importance</p> <p>Watering it down does not necessarily mean it was not judged important</p> <p>That a watered down history is of no clear detriment is effectively proven. However, the point that knowing history is unimportant has not been.</p> |
| However, though the impacts may not be apparent immediately economically, one must                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | Immediately relevant to                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |



|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>analyse the subtle ways in which obliviousness to history has perpetuated certain societal fractures. A country's history is almost never 'clean'; in the centuries it has existed, it has likely inflicted some form of damage upon other communities in its effort to grow larger and stronger. Today, it is easy to dismiss such actions as those of the past without acknowledging the tragedies others endured at the expense of one's country's growth. The United States of America (USA) is notorious for its manipulation of its history to fit the narrative that the founding of their country was not one of violent, ruthless invasion. Many have criticised the USA for actively teaching students a false representation of its actions, often painting the USA as having relatively peacefully displaced the Native Americans and occupied their land. As such, many grow up without fully comprehending the destruction these communities experienced, which lays in place a foundation of a society that lacks accountability. There is value in respecting and honouring the groups that suffered at the hands of the founding leaders that are so greatly admired. Beyond that, the perhaps even willful ignorance of some creates a community that will continually exploit these groups of people or make grand plans for the country with little to no regard for their needs or traditions. Some, understandably, refute this by claiming that it is ultimately the government's responsibility to offer reparations or to come to a resolution about the matter, and that citizens themselves have little need or value for acknowledging the country's history. While I agree that these issues are a systemic problem, it is also citizens as individuals who must be aware for society at large to see beyond the narrative painted to take action and push leaders for change. It is, after all, also an issue worsened by society's general ignorance. Hence, it is important for citizens to know about the history of their country as it is crucial to address fundamental societal fractures.</p> | <p>the importance of the historical knowledge</p> <p>Not quite at the level of a citizen.</p> <p>A suitable example, but it could provide a little more detail into the fractures that can be observed as a result of the lack of a knowledge of history</p> <p>Thoughtful argument that navigates a necessary flip fairly dexterously</p> <p>Thoughtful objection raised, demonstrating an awareness that there are different stakeholders in the knowledge of and response to history</p> <p>The guard recognises the relationship between what citizens care about and action that is taken on a national level</p> |
| <p>Furthermore, an individual's knowledge of a country's history offers a basis for their identity and direction for the future. This may be more common in smaller, emerging countries where an appreciation and understanding of their roots can inform the aims of the leading party and thereby what policies to enforce. In Singapore, there is a heavy emphasis on the narrative of the nation transforming from a small fishing port to a prosperous, diverse advanced society. This is the narrative that the government uses to ground its people and instill values of unity and perseverance. Having all citizens understand the sacrifices of the pioneer generation as well as the developments over the years builds a more unified front within the people, and a common understanding not to compromise the values and efforts of those that came before. A small nation may find necessity and value in this so that it can continue to leave behind a legacy and progress steadily and with social and political stability. Hence, it is important to citizens.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | <p>The importance of history is immediately recognised, but how it is relevant to citizens in particular could be established earlier</p> <p>At this point, the relevance to citizenship is established</p> <p>Justification and elaboration is provided for this argument, but it is less thorough than the earlier two</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| <p>Overall, knowing the history of a country is crucial to dismantle fundamental societal issues as well as to ground a nation's identity and direction, though some may refute that it does not have much implication on a country's tangible growth.</p> <p>(Chew Hoa Gen, 19-14)</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | <p>Short but provides at least a quick summary of the arguments made to conclude the essay</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |

## 2 How important is it for citizens to know about the history of their country?

*This is a thoughtfully written response which no doubt draws upon well-considered notions of history. The*



*response maintains a strong focus on the question's point of contention in its points, with attention paid to the key concepts of history and citizenship and demonstrating in-depth conceptual understanding, but it also shows a tendency to get caught up in other perhaps less central ideas - while these can be thoughtful, they would be of greater value if tied directly to answering the questions, which is a recurring concern in this piece. Some of the illustrations used are excellent, but they could often be more consistent or properly developed. All in all, coherent, ambitious and excellent within the constraints of the exam, but could be tied together more tightly as a response to the question with greater discipline in maintaining clear connections to the question. The response is supported by a very strong command of language, enabling fluency and coherence with fairly few errors. There is a confident personal voice, and the use of rhetoric is largely effective.*

"History shall be kind to me, for I am the one writing it." Winston Churchill once bellowed in his famous speeches. Indeed, history in and of itself is a very interesting field as it is arguably, constructed by those in power. It is at the same time, both tangible and intangible, in the sense that while we might not be able to directly and physically observe the impacts of our ancestors' behavior, it is embedded in our understanding of ourselves, as individuals, and more importantly, as a collective. While the history of a country is rarely kind in nature, it is still an extremely significant aspect that forms the basis of a citizen's belonging and understanding of the country. Beyond being a propagandistic tool wielded by the government, it allows us to understand our position in the world, giving us a bird's eye view of where we stand. Furthermore, the understanding of our past is also pivotal to propel ourselves into the future. Hence, to a large extent, it is crucial that citizens are well-versed in the history of their country.

Fun as these are, they're not directly relevant to the question's point of contention. Links could be more clearly drawn, or something more relevant could be used

The introduction could be more clearly crafted in relation to the value of history to citizens, rather than the value of history in general

Crucially, in order to fully address the crux of the question, which is the tension between the importance of knowing the history of one's country, a clear distinction must be made between citizens and residents of a country. Citizens, whether by birth or by choice, are individuals who, ideally, embody the ideals and aspirations of their country. This is why, for example, individuals who desire to convert to citizenship in Singapore are mandated to undergo a series of tests on Singapore's history and culture, in order to ascertain whether they are suited to be part of Singapore's social fabric. On the other hand, residents are those who are freely living in the country, usually for economic pursuits, and thus need not necessarily subscribe to the ideologies of the country. Therein lies the first and most prominent argument on why there is such a need for citizens to understand their country's history; it is a form of nation-building, engendering a collective group of people to come together and form a national identity together. As Benedict Anderson once posited, a nation is simply an "imagined community", and thus a construct, even a phenomenon, that causes people to take on the understandings of a shared past. Looking at Singapore's own national narrative that had binded Singaporeans together for the past 55 years since independence, this was a result of the government's efforts to pull different strands of our past together to unite the people who were of divergent background with little basis of commonality in identity. "The Singapore Story", as it is aptly named, was propagated in the past by the government, emphasising to Singaporeans Singapore's history as a former colonial trading port, that after suffering the disgrace of the Japanese Occupation, underwent a tumultuous journey for independence, while overcoming racial prejudices and hostilities. Certainly, because of its compulsory inclusion in schools, along with the annual National Day celebrations, "The Singapore Story" has become an emblem of our identity, such that Singaporeans, regardless of their background, are likely to recognise this familiar narrative and

Incomplete idea:  
Between this and what?

Is it not truly necessary to devote this much space to distinguishing citizens and residents, as the question only expects ideas about citizens. This distinction is therefore something to keep in mind rather than write about

This is not true, although it has been proposed by some. What we have is more like a module to induct new citizens into local culture.

Nation building is a reasonable argument.

Could reinforce why Benedict Anderson's concept is relevant instead of just name-dropping: we learn our history to participate in the imagining of ourselves as a community.

A well developed and



|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>speak of it with pride. Especially given Singapore's relatively short history since independence and our diversity of citizens from different backgrounds, the fact that we regularly host "Singapore Days" overseas, the swarming crowds at National Day Parades, even the high visitorship numbers to our Bicentennial Commemoration exhibit last year, are testaments to the significance of history as a form of nation-building.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | <p>fairly compelling argument about the importance of history to nation-building that remains focused on citizens. It could have dispensed with the bits about residents.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| <p>However, more than just its role as an instrument of the state, history also allows citizens to understand their country's position in the present. For example, after the horrors of the Holocaust during World War II, Germany's renunciation of such violence, and their desire to repent for these crimes against humanity, have seen them take up active roles in arbitrating peace and fulfilling humanitaian goals. During the Syrian Refugee Crisis in 2015, despite much opposition from other countries such as Hungary which closed its borders, Germany's commitment to keep its borders open and help as many refugees as possible was seen to be a renewal of their position as a defender of human rights. As such, the German citizens were also more willing to dispel and weaken the wave of xenophobia that had swept the other European countries, alluding to their cognisance of their country's history and thus their willingness to accept and help repent for the past. Hence, the understanding and acknowledgement of our country's past is significant and symbolic because it explains why and how our country stands together. A very primary function of History is the notion of causation and as such, not only does it account for the present, but an awareness of the past allows us to better understand how we can better ourselves in the future.</p> | <p>Why this is important for a citizen should be clarified</p> <p>Excellent example that demonstrates how the knowledge of history held by citizens translates into their actions in the present</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| <p>On the other hand, the awareness of History can be argued to be fatalistic and self-defeating in nature, acting as a form of pre-determination of one's own capacities as a country. This is especially so given the rapid modernisation and liberation of many countries in the past few decades. Critics have thus argued that the acknowledgement of History relegates the citizens to remain seeped in the pain of the past, harbouring resentment and anger against the many oppressive offences they have suffered under. For instance, it can be argued that for many former colonies, their focus should be on looking ahead instead of looking back; to strip away the imposed versions of history by their colonial masters and instead start afresh as a sovereign country. However, even then, the very rejection of such history requires one to be aware of it in the first place. Furthermore, the understanding of history requires the perception of both change and continuity, hence it is all the more necessary for citizens, in the process of reconciling with the injustices suffered by their country in the past, to then recognise the progress they have made as a country, and from then on, push forth to unite their country's history themselves.</p>                                                                                                         | <p>This seems rather extreme, and needs to be explained in more detail</p> <p>Needs to be supported with examples of countries that have suffered in being unable to cast off the yoke of a history of being a colony</p> <p>Assertion needs exemplification</p> <p>Care must be taken to explain these as the examiner will not see them as concepts</p> <p>There are complex and thoughtful ideas here, but they are made abstractly and without any clear and concrete exemplification to help clarify the dense arguments</p> |
| <p>Even more so now than ever, it can be argued that there is a greater need for citizens to know their country's history. With the rise of globalisation and social media, there has been a growing recognition of a country's history being more than just a set of institutionalised myths, as increasingly, citizens become more aware of their country's flaws and strive to overcome them. Take the recent uproar over George Floyd's death in America, for example.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | <p>Good awareness of current concerns relevant to the question</p> <p>How citizens know this history and what exactly they know can</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |



|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>What seemed to be another case of police brutality exploded and further exposed the entrenched history of prejudice in America, right from the very signing of its Constitution, with the 13th Amendment being weaponised against African Americans even after the banning of slavery. This catalysed more Americans to take action against the injustices of the past through community protests and calls for greater accountability stretching across different facets of society. Closer to home, the very same “Singapore Story” that was addressed in an earlier paragraph has recently come under renewed investigation, spurred by Singaporean citizens through different mediums. In particular, academics such as sociologist Teo Yeo Yenn and Cherian George and their works on inequality in Singapore were pivotal in getting Singaporeans to re-examine the rags-to-riches narrative to perceive the underpinnings of inequality in our story, dispelling the every common assumption amongst Singaporeans of our affluence and thus absence of poverty. History, therefore, is embedded in our surroundings and the very core of who we are as people. To be aware of History is to interrogate our past, to accept its flaws and thus improve upon them. While it might not be accessible or crucial for all citizens to understand the full scope of history, it is still significant to acknowledge how we have progressed as a people to see where we will go in the future.</p> | <p>be teased out more explicitly</p> <p>Links to the question could be more clearly drawn: What does this really say about the importance of knowing history for citizens?</p> <p>Some indication of an awareness that the academic’s knowledge of history cannot be expected of every citizen, but this could be further developed</p> <p>A valid point, but both illustrations, while suitable, need to be further unpacked and closely linked to the question’s point of contention</p> |
| <p>All in all, regardless of who or how our history is written, a citizen, [who belongs to and accepts] the country, must be able to accept it even with the knowledge of its flaws. Insofar as we accept the importance of one’s citizenship as a component of our own identity, the cognisance of our past binds us to a larger collective and reconciles with our own perspectives. Hence, I am hopeful for citizens to take on a more active role to unpeel and understand their country’s own history for themselves, even if it is difficult and unkind, such that we can strive to look forward to the future.</p> <p>(Lum Wan Tong, 19-U1)</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | <p>Reference or idea could be clearer</p> <p>What this means could be developed</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |

#### 4 ‘Leisure is underrated.’ To what extent is this true in your society?

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |                                                                                                                                                                                |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p><i>This response presented detailed and comprehensive illustrations that looked at different stakeholders in support of its relevant arguments. The entire essay was richly rooted in local knowledge, presenting a rather intimate view of Singapore society’s relationship with leisure. The essay was well moderated and coherently argued, although some logical gaps such as the mistaking of CCA and maternity/paternity leave as leisure were present. These detracted from the overall quality of the response, as the former was referred to more than once, but overall the consistent awareness of the needs of the local context and the measure of balance visible were meritorious.</i></p>                                                  |                                                                                                                                                                                |
| <p>For many in Singapore, a healthy work life balance seems to be an idealistic and unattainable goal. In the busy, hectic climate here, there always seems like there is more work to be done, more ways to improve to the point that many do not have time to stop and smell the roses. Invariably, this seems to suggest a low importance placed on leisure, but is this truly the case? Is leisure underrated here in Singapore? Admittedly, while many working adults seem to be busy, almost all the time, I believe that leisure is not underrated, but rather rated very highly, being an integral part of our lives here, as people partake in leisure to de-stress and social; network, albeit to different degrees for different demographics.</p> | <p>Shows some degree of awareness of issues in the question, though not to great depth</p> <p>Clear and well-moderated thesis that recognises relevant nuances and factors</p> |



Cynics often feel that leisure is a luxury that cannot be afforded by many, due to the very structure of our society. Competition seems to be engraved in our DNA, and Asian Confucian thinking has been a core aspect of Singapore's identity ever since our independence. Back then, we could not afford to be complacent, lest we were capsized by the rocky waves of [economic uncertainties and changing socio-economic landscapes] and the "Little Red Dot", a small vulnerable state, ever since. While this culture constantly pushes us towards excellence, it seems to leave little time for anything other than work - it is not an uncommon sight to see people here working five or six-day weeks, [or even] seven-day weeks. Overtime has also become the norm, with many employees not going home until all their work is finished, and some even taking on additional work unprompted in a bid to climb up the corporate hierarchy. Leisure takes a backseat to work, seemingly all the time. Even when time is found for many of the working adults, they are not released from their work, but rather haunted by it. On their off days, many employees are unable to let go of their corporate responsibilities, especially those in managerial roles who constantly feel the pressure to put food on their employees' tables. This competition not only pervades the working sphere, but also the realm of education. In Singapore, many young students go for school in the morning, then enrichment classes in the evening, and bed at night - with no time for much else. The "kiasu" culture (fear of falling behind) here is so prevalent that worried parents ignore leisure and push their own children towards constant self-improvement, constant pursuit of academic success. Even children as young as the age of four are sent for these tuition classes. Leisure time, such as playing video games, is heavily restricted and frowned upon by many parents. With such a culture being perpetuated all the way from youth to adulthood, it is no wonder why many feel that leisure is underrated as it seems secondary to the prevailing work culture here.

Note that to be cynical is not the same as being skeptical. Cynicism is to be more disparaging of the views rather than simply doubting them

Good awareness of contextual factors that inform the cultural perception of leisure here

What the cynics often do not realise is that this scarcity of leisure enhances [its value] more than detracting from it here in Singapore. Indeed, with so much going on here, it seems as though there is not enough time for leisure activities. Perhaps this is the case for many of the working adults today, but for many elderly and youths, this could not be further from the truth. After all, as the adage goes: "when there is a will there is a way" - time can be found even in unexpected areas. Leisure has become an integral part of people's lives as they try to de-stress and find balance among their typical hectic routines. After all, Singapore has been labelled one of the most stressful countries in the world, so de-stressing is vital. For example, while a "kiasu" culture: is ubiquitous in education, there are also often times for recreation for students. The holidays are a prime example, with Singapore having a rich "stay-cation" (domestic tourism) culture, whereby families bring the children to stay in local hotels and enjoy themselves for a few days, sometimes even merely a weekend. This is in fact a work-around of the busy lifestyles of many working adults - as long trips over long distances seem less viable, short domestic trips have become the norm. Food as a form of leisure is also huge here, with many going out of their way to have their meals at far off places, often for good or "instagram-worthy" food. Aside from this individual level, the system has even changed in recent years to support and promote leisure activities. Going back to schools, the implementation of Co-Curricular Activities (CCA), which are clubs and societies that every student must join, offer students a place to escape academic distress and to de-stress, doing an activity they enjoy. In terms of domestic tourism, many companies and even the Government have jumped on the bandwagon. Hotels often offer free hotel rooms to loyal customers or members on days whereby is projected to be quite empty; and recently the

Best avoided and replaced with 'the young', as in the cultural context of the Cambridge examiners, 'youths' carries the connotation of young people up to no good or misdemeanour

Questionable if this can be considered leisure (even if it's enjoyable) as there are obligations and expectations to deliver as well (for some CCAs more than others)



|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>government has set aside hundreds of millions for domestic tourism vouchers that will be given to all Singaporeans. Admittedly, the latter was implemented in light of the current Covid-19 Pandemic to boost the economy, but it does show the degree of importance the Government places on such leisure activities. Of course, there has been criticism towards some of these attempts to push leisure - CCA has often been criticised for being too limiting and possibly not offering students support for more niche interests, but it is clear that leisure's de-stressing abilities are not underrated here, to the point where it has become integrated into many of our lives. While there is less time for leisure, it would be wrong to say that it is underrated.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | <p>This is not convincing, as this is more to boost the recessive economy in the post-CB period than to encourage leisure</p> <p>Not clearly explained: How does this effectively prove that leisure is seen as important?</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| <p>Aside from the most obvious benefit of reducing stress levels, leisure offers an avenue for many to work on and form new social bonds. Returning back to CCAs, they are also often seen as avenues for students to interact with others, whom they would typically not have the chance to. For example, the competitive meritocratic nature here has manifested in the form of academic streaming in secondary schools, and students of different streams are typically far removed from each other in terms of socialising opportunities. CCA however is one of the few avenues which break this barrier, allowing students to forge friendships with each other. This benefit is not merely restricted to [the young], the elderly are beneficiaries as well. From the many taichi classes held in parks, to the free courses hosted at community clubs, the elderly are able to connect and form bonds, especially vital here as we tackle the issue of an ageing population and lonely elderly persons. Leisure not only works wonders for new bonds, but also pre-existing ones. Karaoke is one such activity which is highly popular among the [young people] here, as well as movies which are popular among all age groups. In fact, it is rarer here to see a new movie that is not sold out, or a karaoke place that is not filled to the brim during peak hours. Within families, shopping or eating out also serve the same effect - with many organisations too promoting such leisure by offering more maternity leave, and more recently paternal leave. For many, leisure is a way to wind-down, not alone, but with others, and is actively used by people from all walks of life to network and socialise. Of course, not everyone will partake in leisure to network, and there are still many here who do not see the point in such activities - especially the elderly generation who are more reserved. Yet undoubtedly, it is still clear that as a whole, my society does not seem to underrate leisure.</p> | <p>As it is unclear that CCAs are even considered a form of leisure, this point is not as effective from the start. This could be avoided by providing reasoning following the point, rather than building it based on an example</p> <p>These are for caring for children, not leisure time</p> <p>Leisure as time taken for one's self to reflect, meditate, and enrich one's soul could have been included. Phenomena such as spikes in gym and yoga memberships could have been mentioned</p> |
| <p>While progress and constant self-improvement are the core aspects behind my society's vision and culture, to side-line leisure entirely would be to put the cart before the horse. Especially in our hectic climate, leisure has become evermore important for us to relax and network, even if there seems like there is less time to do so. A perfectly healthy work-life balance will likely remain recognised and respected as a vital aspect of life for my society, for as long as we too recognise and respect constant effort and work. After all, work and leisure are like light and shadow, you cannot cast a light without casting a shadow, no matter how small that shadow may be.</p> <p>(Colin Hia Qingxuan, 19-13)</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |

#### 4 'Leisure is underrated.' To what extent is this true in your society?

*This piece demonstrates a consistent focus on the question and illustrates its arguments with much detail and breadth. However, it also presents gaps in its explanation on what specific values or benefits leisure has to offer to*



*us Singaporeans. Because the question is about perceived value vs actual value, it was essential that the actual value was established, but it instead tended to be assumed. The perceived value of leisure, on the other hand, was quite well and consistently described. Some of the ideas raised, especially by simply pointing out interesting observations about local food culture and lingo are incisive and original. Considering more varied stakeholders, like the elderly, the poor and the employers or even parents and their perceptions of the value of leisure as well would have widened the scope of the essay. This would have helped deepen evaluation by considering how even as we do largely appreciate leisure for what it is worth, there are many who do not for various reasons and in various other ways besides the point about Singaporeans' 'perfectionism' and 'high achievement' mentalities. Such depth of evaluation could and should have been consistent throughout the paragraphs instead of being confined largely to the first body paragraph.*

In a performance-driven society, rest is secondary. At first blush, this seems to be the case for Singapore. Our fervent attempt to achieve economic success has painted an illusion of a culture of overwork, one which has little mercy for recreation. However, a closer examination of the way Singaporeans behave suggests otherwise. Cinemas are crowded. Beaches are crowded. Shopping malls are crowded. While it may seem that our mindsets of perfectionism have resulted in most Singaporeans undervaluing leisure, our behaviour as well as systems and structures that enable us to take breathers show that we actually do value leisure as much as we should.

Recognition of the perception in the question and clarification of the reality set up the argument well

Clear and well-balanced thesis showing awareness of the point of contention

It cannot be denied that the culture of perfectionism is rather prevalent in Singapore. This culture has admittedly, influenced many Singaporeans to turn a blind eye to the worth of leisure. In Singapore, many of us value tangible achievements and we have a general consensus that being hardworking is a highly desirable trait. However, [mindsets that misconstrue the notion of hard work] and pushing beyond reasonable limits have oftentimes led to many prioritising performance over rest. Such mindsets have been fuelled by our desire to always give our best to look good, even if it means sacrificing time that we should be setting aside to rest and recharge. For instance, Singapore ranks high in terms of a poor work life balance and number of hours spent on work across the world. Sights of Singaporeans constantly working overtime to complete a project rather than spend quality family time at home are, unfortunately, rather common. This problem extends beyond work - students spend most of their holidays drowning in piles of books and notes to prepare for examinations, and sportsmen and performers train relentlessly to points of exhaustion to perfect their performance. Hence, this culture of perfectionism has admittedly influenced Singaporeans to undervalue leisure.

A clearer explanation of how resting and recharging are linked to leisure activities would make the argument more focused

A greater focus on how leisure has the potential to benefit such groups in reality would have good to show how their perceptions show an undervaluing, as the value of leisure has yet to be explained

That being said, this may very well be an inaccurate picture painted of Singaporeans - both from the outside and Singaporeans ourselves. Our minds have been so attuned to judging our lifestyles in terms of our work performance or other tangible achievements that we think we do not value leisure when we actually do.

While this paragraph seems to be meant to provide a turning point, it can and should be joined with the next as they are making the same argument

More often than not, a closer inspection of the way Singaporeans tend to behave shows that we actually do see the worth of leisure. After all, it is still human nature to have instances when we simply do not feel like doing anything at all. Slang such as "nuah" or "lepak" that both mean wanting to laze around and do nothing are very common in the everyday conversations of most Singaporeans. Such behaviour often translates to Singaporeans cherishing time that they have to relax. Snaking queues of the cinema or popular shopping

Interesting observation that draws on what people often talk about to consider what they value



|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |                                                                                                                                                                         |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>centres such as NEX are incredibly common (perhaps before the COVID-19 pandemic). Moreover, Singaporeans are inclined to make full use of their rest times to, well, rest. For instance, a local newspaper publisher The Straits Times uploads posts regarding when Singaporeans are expected to see long weekends which usually means that either a Friday or a Monday is a public holiday, for Singaporeans to grab such opportunities to take long breaks and plan short vacations with their families or friends. Later school start times in many schools are oftentimes fully maximised for breakfast or sleeping in. These are all signs that paint towards showing how much an average Singaporean does value leisure. While there may still be days when sacrificing such time is an absolute necessity to meet pressing deadlines, such times are occasional, especially for people that are very efficient anyway. As such, even though Singaporeans may not realise this natural inclination towards leisure, it is largely untrue to say that leisure is undervalued in Singapore.</p>                                                                                           | <p>Informal and should be avoided in formal academic writing</p>                                                                                                        |
| <p>Looking beyond an individual's lifestyle choices, there are systems and structures that are in favour of leisure. As Singaporeans have gradually come to terms with the benefits of leisure, the government has often helped us reap these benefits by offering many avenues for recreation. Compulsory paid leave gives employees the chance to take a breather from the hustle and bustle of work. Such treasured opportunities can be well spent going to the outdoors. For instance, park connectors and a rather extensive park network has made going to the park for leisure very appealing to Singaporeans. East Coast Park is often full of cyclists, families having picnics, and friends playing ball - these are just some of the many facilities that the government has invested in for us to enjoy our leisure time. Furthermore, to appeal to our unquenchable love for food, there have been numerous efforts to preserve hawker culture so that Singaporeans can spend our free time over a good meal. Therefore, with the numerous avenues that the government has invested in for leisure, it is not too difficult to see that leisure is indeed valued in Singapore.</p> | <p>This could have been elaborated on to provide a better sense of why leisure ought to be valued at all in the first place</p>                                         |
| <p>In conclusion, leisure is, to a large extent, valued as we should. It is difficult to say that it is underrated due to our constant tendency to crave for relaxation, and the government's spending on infrastructure that promote fun and play. Notwithstanding the fact that Singapore will probably remain as a performance-driven society, our desire for economic prosperity - which we are already enjoying - will hardly ever make us give up our rest time and make leisure underrated. Cinemas will continue to be crowded. Beaches will continue to be crowded. Shopping malls will continue to be crowded.</p> <p>(Lucas Hong, 19-15)</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | <p>Not very sophisticated to repeat this, especially as the density of the crowd is not directly relevant to value, and stronger ways to end the essay can be found</p> |

## 5 Consider the view that activism is more noise than substance.

*This thoughtful response consistently addresses the dynamism between noise and substance within activism, providing considered reasons for why activism today is more one than the other. As activism is complex, taking many forms and seeking many different ends, balance could be better negotiated in acknowledging movements that have brought more than just increased awareness to provide a fuller sense of the substance of activism. While the examples are described richly, they could be more clearly explained to exemplify the arguments. This piece is conveyed effectively through a good use of complex sentence structures and a clear personal voice can be discerned. However, care must be taken to avoid features that are more conversational or informal and overly-long sentences which can compromise clarity.*



|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>“The road to hell is paved with good intentions.” This famous quote has long stressed the idea that ideas and plans without proper execution are all but futile. There is perhaps no better time for the discussion of this phrase’s application than the 21st century. In recent decades, activism has found itself becoming more and more prevalent, with people around the globe becoming more passionate than ever, pushing for change and reform in various aspects of society and institutions. Yet, with all this push for change, many are quick to point out that activism has slowly degraded into nothing more than an indiscernible voice. The cries of thousands seem all but meaningless, with little impact actually being felt. Although a pessimistic view, I am inclined to agree with it. Despite the often well-meaning nature of activism, the conflict it incites, coupled with an utter lack of consensus globally and/or nationally, often result in activism being more senseless yelling than legitimate pushes for change.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | <p>This is not immediately clear in relation to the point of contention, and it would be better used if properly attributed to who said it</p> <p>Thesis statement shows a clear understanding of the terms ‘noise’ and ‘substance’ in the question in relation to what they mean for activism</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| <p>When addressing the ideas of activism, it is perhaps impossible to avoid the elephant in the room, and subject of debate for much of the controversy surrounding activism lately, the Black Lives Matter (BLM) protests in the US and across the world. Following the unjust murder of an innocent African-American man George Floyd, citizens in the US expressed severe outrage, protesting on the streets and online, calling for institutional reforms to tackle systemic racism and oppression. The hashtag #BLM was trending on social media, with companies like Reddit even altering their logo to make it look dark as a show of solidarity. Yet, one must question the true impacts of such activism, and the validity of their actions. Perhaps the Achilles' Heel of such activists’ efforts is the sheer scale of the problems they wish to tackle. The issues of systemic oppression and institutional racism, like many other major topics of discussion today, are diverse and complex by nature. The systems and structures surrounding their continued relevance in today’s context require greater efforts to tackle. Furthermore, with such a tremendous amount of people stepping up to push for change, it is (sadly) inevitable that some dilution of the original purpose of such activism will happen. Shifting focus back to the BLM protests, many protestors saw it as a protest against police officers and law-enforcement institutions, vandalising police cars and damaging emergency vehicles meant to help injured protestors, which is rather ironic. This lack of understanding towards the issues being addressed, and a lack of unity on the part of most activists, is arguably the main reason that their actions seem like senseless yelling, with little actually being done. Granted, to say they are without substance is an overgeneralisation and myopic. The BLM protest was rooted in legitimacy, and it did lead to the arrest of the police officers responsible for the murder. Nonetheless, when we consider activism on the whole, particularly large-scale activism in the modern world, the sheer lack of cohesiveness amongst activists often results in the creation of conflicts and misunderstandings, and the legitimacy of their claims notwithstanding, it is easy to see how activism is often little more than noise to most. The fiery passion of activists often seems to be viewed as senseless blaming and a cacophony of meaningless phrases. Thus, I feel that activism, especially today, is more noise than substance due to a lack of understanding and cooperation on many complex issues.</p> | <p>It is highly advisable to start with an argument, not an example, to foreground the reasons for the stand taken and avoid an example-driven argument</p> <p>Good insight about the limitations of activism here</p> <p>Technically it was a protest against police officers, so this could be clarified</p> <p>The explanations of different stakeholders could be written to foreground the lack of understanding and cooperation to support the point better</p> <p>Long uncontrolled sentences like this can lead to a loss of meaning, and should be broken into more readable chunks</p> <p>This argument should come at the start of the paragraph for greater clarity</p> |
| <p>Even in other areas of activism, the lack of understanding of issues is arguably worsened by the lack of a clear goal. In a push for change, activists should ideally have specific targets in mind. The second wave of feminism, for instance, had the strong goal of pushing for the voting rights of women. However, in activism, especially today, the ideas of a clear goal and key objectives seem to be neglected, or left highly ambiguous. Much debate is sparked and wishes for change are made clear, yet a concrete plan of action is rarely provided. This mess of</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | <p>Whether this thus makes activism more noise than substance could be clarified for a more direct answer to the question</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |



|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>yells and cries for reform thus looks and sounds like nothing more than radio static, a series of voices crying and neither in unison nor in sync. There is no greater example of this in modern media than the Extinction (X) Revolution in the UN. Following the massive traction gained by Greta Thunberg last year, many environmental activists were inspired to take up action and push for policies to curb climate change. A noble cause, to be sure, yet its actual execution fell woefully short of such inspired ambitions. Some protestors blocked roads to encourage public transport, while others blocked public transport to encourage walking, some asked for reduced use of coal, while others acted like chickens in Trafalgar Square (why they did this, I may never know). The lack of a concrete goal, in this case, was arguably the nail in the coffin. For the X Revolution, with many referring to protestors as “caring lunatics” and many more dismissing their claims entirely, I do concede that their intentions were of substance. They all wished for climate action and to stop the 2°C rise in global temperatures as best as they could. However, much like the issues mentioned earlier, climate change is a very complex issue, and the sheer number of goals of the X Revolution are a testament to its multi-pronged nature. It is precisely because of this that a lack of clear goals can completely dismiss certain movements. There is only so much that can be done at once, and as a politician or otherwise, the tackling of such issues needs to be taken one step at a time. With so many wishes on the part of protestors yet no clear course of action, even the most influential in society have their hands tied. The lack of clear plans makes it seem like activists simply want things to happen, but do not know how to realise their ambitions, undermining their claims. Thus, although I acknowledge the often noble and legitimate causes such activism push for, I must sadly admit that their lack of clear, outlined action heavily diminishes their substance, and they are thus more comparable to noise.</p>                                            | <p>Informal language like this should not be used in a formal essay</p> <p>The illustration could be more convincing in demonstrating how there was a lack of clear goals for the X Revolution</p> <p>Unclear goals and diffused efforts are different things, and the argument should be sharpened</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| <p>Some might challenge my above claims with the notion that in a way, part of the substance of activism is its ability to make noise. Activists are meant to push for causes, and the sheer scale of their activities is often what lends credence [to] their ideas; in addition, it sparks conversation, and the legitimacy of such activism thus preserves itself in the form of increased awareness and discussion. This is an interesting view to consider. After the inception of the X Revolution, for instance, climate change jumped from being the 8th most screened topic on television in the UK to the 3rd most, and the BLM protests brought with them increased discussions on the rights of minorities worldwide. It is thus possible to argue, according to some, that the large scale of many activist movements is what gives them substance and an ability to make change. However, taking a step back and removing our rose-tinted glasses, we must realise that the increased awareness sparked by activism is not solely sufficient to justify its substance. Despite the increased awareness on climate change in the UN, the politicisation of such issues led to a growing resentment towards the sentiments of such “left-wing” news. In the US, a man was just murdered in Arizona by six police officers last week, heavily calling into question the effectiveness of such protests. Even closer to home [in] Singapore, pushes to lift 377A, a law which prevents intercourse between males, quickly lost traction to the contentious nature of the subject. The substance of a movement thus lies not just in the reasons for its creation, but also everything that comes with it. A substantiated movement must be able to give legitimate reasons for a need to change, have compelling enough reasons to gain traction, but most importantly, has to hold onto this attention and accomplish something with it. This is a tall order, but by no means impossible, as seen in the actions of Malala in the Middle East and many other change-making activists. Unfortunately, in many countries, the ideas of activism stem from a desire to see change, but this desire is rarely met</p> | <p>Good negotiation of noise and substance, that challenges the opposition that the question puts them in</p> <p>Each of these examples raised have different reasons for lacking substance, which can help challenge the notion that the attention activism generates is sufficiently substantial</p> <p>Not necessarily true – a strong assertion such as this lacks legitimacy without proper substantiation</p> <p>Good clarification of what a substantive movement looks like, demonstrating insight</p> |



|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |                                                                                                                                                               |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| with an equal level of understanding of the issues being addressed and the changes that activists actually want to see. With an inability to make long-lasting change, much activism today seems to be picked up briefly for moments at a time due to fads and uproar, but the ball is quickly dropped once it gains more momentum due to the above-mentioned reasons. It is thus no wonder, then, that activism seems to be more noise than substance, as there seems to be a lot of yelling (albeit with legitimate reasons), but very little impact.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |                                                                                                                                                               |
| <p>To say that much of modern activism has fallen woefully short of its ambitions would not be an inaccurate observation. In today's world, the sheer number of people pushing for change with no real goals or objectives is worryingly high. When well-executed, activism is a powerful force that can radically change how we view the world and how we do things as a society, but when poorly managed [it] can often seem like indecipherable noise that starts out credible but degrades into utter nonsense over time. Sadly, the graveyard of failed activism movements is growing worldwide, its graves containing the shattered remains of what was originally noble, and its tombstone lined with the slogans once used to push for change, but are now devoid of meaning. Activism will never truly die off, so long as there is something to fight for, but its effectiveness hangs in the balance. We have to consider how we approach it, and the methods we use, to prevent it descending further into the realm of noise.</p> <p>(Joshua Kam, 19-A4)</p> | <p>Conclusion could be more clearly signposted</p> <p>A thoughtful conclusion, although arguments made in the essay could be more specifically reiterated</p> |

## 6 'Previous generations have failed us.' Do you agree?

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |                                                                                                                                                                                             |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p><i>This piece is well-argued and well-balanced, and on the whole quite sound. The illustrations used were apt, wide-ranging and detailed, engaging a broad swathe of past generations. However, it is worth noting that the exploration of the concept of failure could have been in greater depth with consideration of how failure comes hand in hand with expectations. Why current generations might perceive the actions of their forefathers as failures could then be clearer. It could also have been productive to consider specific generations rather than just treat 'previous generations' as a reference to those from the past, providing a gateway to the examination of generational attitudes and beliefs.</i></p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| <p>Looking back at the entirety of human history, it would be easy for one to jump to the conclusion [that] entire previous generations have failed us, shaming humanity as a whole: our past is littered with acts of greed, selfishness and jealousy that have had severe repercussions on the memory of humanity as a whole; or, (arguably) worse still, acts that we have to bear with today. However, although there are certainly many citable cases of how our ancestors have messed up in some way or another that has caused problems for our current generation, it would be unfair to make such a sweeping judgement that claims that previous generations have failed us as one collective humanity. In fact, I believe that our previous generations have made many more achievements than mistakes, laying the foundations for the betterment of our lives as a whole, and made unintentional mistakes [which] us individuals of the new generation can learn and grow from. With all this being said, I thus largely disagree that previous generations have failed us.</p> | <p>Usefully expands on the notion of failure to involve both the motives and repercussions of actions taken by previous generations</p> <p>Thesis is clearly set out and well-explained</p> |
| <p>Some might argue that some individuals of our previous generations had committed unspeakable atrocities against humanity as a whole that are inexcusable in terms of morality, bringing shame to humanity as a whole. Indeed, throughout human history, charismatic and</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |                                                                                                                                                                                             |



|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>powerful leaders that rose because of undesirable conditions that their country was facing definitely exist, with many of them abusing the power granted to them in one way or another. The 20th century alone was filled with tyrants or dictators that did exactly so, not just marginalising and discriminating against entire communities or ethnicities as a whole, but outright prosecuting them. No one today can ever forget the Holocaust, where an estimated six million Jews were killed by Hitler's Nazi Regime that tortured them with desolate living conditions, mocked them publicly based solely on their race, starved them, and finally had them killed en masse in their many concentration camps. Then Prime Minister of Indonesia Suharto's mass communist purge in the 1970s would be another example of a crime against humanity, in which over one million communists or communist sympathisers alone were captured and executed. Such indiscriminate and unjustifiable killings of human lives have truly left their stains on humanity. However, while it is true that many innocent people died suffering, it must be taken into account that these acts against humanity were initiated by only a few selfish individuals, which as terrifying as they are do not serve as good examples of how past generations have failed as a whole. Moreover, stories of human compassion [have] also existed alongside these atrocities, such as the various officers that helped Jewish children escape certain deaths by hiding them and delivering them safely to neighbouring countries during World War Two. Such examples show that not everyone in the previous generations were either absolutely evil, or suffering under the evil: there were also those that emerged as heroes, who in no way failed humanity, but instead brought greater hope to it.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | <p>These examples should have been taken one step further to show how there have been adverse effects that can be considered as failure - e.g. failure to lead or set an example for subsequent generations morally</p> <p>Good evaluation that considers the reach and impact of these past actions, and balances them against contrasting examples</p>                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| <p>Moreover, some might also bring up environmental burdens that our previous generations have created, disasters that we, as the new generation have to cope with now. Once again, plenty of examples that support this assertion exist, without a doubt. In order to clean up for their upcoming Founders' Day in 1961 to commemorate the anniversary of their town, the leaders of Centralia Pennsylvania in the United States of America decided to lazily burn all their trash in a pit, instead of bringing them to their respective waste disposal venues. However, they failed to realise that their selfish and seemingly insignificant action would result in the downfall of their town, as the fire spread to the underground mine still rich in coal deposits that their town was built upon, resulting in an underground fire that forced the authorities to condemn the town in 1980, and forcefully displaced its two thousand residents. On a larger scale, there have also been environmental disasters that have affected humanity to a much worse degree, such as those of the long-gone soviets. For instance, the explosion of the nuclear reactor Chernobyl in 1986 resulted in the entire surrounding area [being] dosed with unacceptably high levels of radiation, causing the entire area of several hundred kilometers to be inhabitable for what scientists estimate to be the next 500,000 years (not to mention the negative health impacts that the radiation had caused locals too). These disasters have truly left long-lasting problems that our generation has had to deal with, such as having to build an expensive dome over Chernobyl to prevent the still high levels of radiation from killing even more people, or causing the animals in the surrounding environment to mutate further with the potential of further disrupting the ecosystem. However, once again, these problems caused by our previous generations, cannot be linked to the absolute standard of everyone in our previous generation having failed us, as they were the result of mismanagement of a group of individuals, and definitely not the rest of humanity.</p> | <p>Chernobyl was an accident, so it is necessary to argue clearly why some may deem this to be a failure - was it due to factors such as irresponsibility that can be more directly blamed on past generations?</p> <p>Repetitive of the previous paragraph's guard. Instead, it could be argued that humans both past and present are fallible and it would be hypocritical of us to judge the actions of previous generations when we have the benefit of hindsight today, and have made many tragic mistakes too (i.e tech ethics)</p> |
| <p>In fact, it is undeniable that our previous generation has blessed us with more achievements</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |



|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |                                                                                                                                            |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>than shocked us with problems, helping to lay many milestones in human history that helped our current generation today to reap the benefits of their hard labour. For instance, we must not forget the key scientists that have helped to tame then-widespread diseases to the point of non-existence to many of us living in the world today, such as scientist John Snow in the 1850s who helped resolve London's cholera outbreak by proving to officials that the source of contamination came from their command water pumps, and not what was widely believed to be a 'cloud of cholera' lingering over London. The bulk of useful tools that we still use today on a common basis can also be attributed to our previous generations, for instance, the Wright brothers and their aeroplane, and Alexander Graham Bell with his telephone, which set the foundation for modern communication technology. It would be difficult for one today to imagine their lives still confined to their home country, and unable to communicate with people from all around the world, as having to travel for a few days and nights by boat to a faraway foreign land, when they could have instead reached in a couple of hours by plane. All of these inventions, pioneered by our previous generations that we still use today, and [which] are the result of the collectivity of human genius, are thus proof that our previous generations have not failed us that badly - but instead, helped our current generation to thrive.</p> | <p>Reasonable argument that is supported with some important, if somewhat standard successes of the past</p>                               |
| <p>In conclusion, it would be unfair to just state that our previous generation had failed us, when we as the current generation are also making many mistakes too, arguably much more dire ones than them. Perhaps our current generation needs to focus more on our own actions rather than those of our ancestors.</p> <p>(Jerome Tan, 19-A2)</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | <p>A rushed and brief conclusion, but it raises an interesting point that could have been more well developed in the body of the essay</p> |

## 6 'Previous generations have failed us.' Do you agree?

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p><i>This response is largely well-argued and supported. It recognises that the perception of failure is tied to the expectations set and held by the different generations, though in many areas, there is space for further development of the evaluations and reasonings that support why it is a failure of current generations' 'expectations'. Greater fairness and a more representative argument can also be accessed through more consideration of the opposing perspectives present, as is pointed out in the annotations on the last body paragraph, to avoid presenting a skewed and hence less effective argument.</i></p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| <p>"We are at the beginning of a mass extinction and you sit here talking about fairy tales of eternal economic growth." Addressed to numerous political leaders and influential businessmen at the 2019 United Nations (UN) Climate Summit, teen activist Greta Thunberg delivered a scathing speech, where she declared that the older generation has failed the younger generations in leaving a sustainable world to live in. Her sentiments were echoed by thousands of students around the world, leading to the rise of [the] #fridaysforfuture movement. This essay seeks to argue that previous generations have failed us, the younger and future generations to a large extent in terms of not just [the] environment but social injustice and economic prosperity. Although optimists may point out the various successful efforts by specific leaders of previous generations that have had a lasting impact, the reality is that the actions carried out by previous generations, dating back to the 1800s and even further, have been unable to meet their proposed goals.</p> | <p>Highly relevant reference that strikes at the heart of the unhappiness of the perspective in the question</p> <p>Clear and balanced thesis, showing some understanding of how the expression 'failed us' is tied to expectations</p> |



|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>Firstly, previous generations have failed to fulfill the ambitious targets set to reduce greenhouse gas emissions as a part of a wider goal of improving environmental sustainability. The repercussions of having a concentrated amount of greenhouse gas emissions in the atmosphere has led to global warming, which exacerbates the effects of climate change. Climate change has the potential to affect the current and future generations as impacts such as extreme weather events and rising sea levels are long-term. Despite geopolitical efforts to reduce emissions such as the signing of the 2015 Paris Agreement, these efforts have been criticised as largely ineffective, as illustrated by the reports from climate scientists that carbon dioxide emissions have actually increased after 2015. Recent waves of climate activism, fuelled mostly by the younger generation, have highlighted the responsibility and expectations placed upon the older generation to be more sustainable. Sustainability can be defined as the actions of the current generation that do not reduce the amount of resources available to the future generations. However, on an international level, the signing of the Rio +20 treaty, the 2012 Copenhagen Accord and many other non-legally binding agreements have had limited success. Conservationists may point out that political leaders such as American President Roosevelt, who was elected in 1901 have paved the way for environmental sustainability on a national scale. During his administration, President Roosevelt established over 150 national parks, including the famous Yellowstone National Park and set aside over 500,000 hectares of protected land. However, actions by the Presidents after him, such as President Reagan and President Trump have been counteractive and resulted in the rollback of about 100 environmental laws, allowing coal and oil mining companies to enter previously protected land. Hence, the actions of previous generations have failed us due to the lack of enforced political action and inability to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, despite a few successful sustainability efforts by previous leaders such as President Roosevelt.</p> | <p>If the targets they failed to meet are ambitious, it may not be fair to judge them as having truly 'failed us'. It would be better to recognise that the unmet aims are urgent instead</p> <p>The definition is out of place and not clearly useful to the point being made. It could instead have been incorporated more organically or omitted</p> <p>How President Trump might be considered part of previous generations could be clarified</p> <p>The paragraph shows a strong awareness of the expectations present and how failure can be understood as not meeting those expectations. Considering whether such expectations of previous generations are reasonable could provide further insight</p> |
| <p>Secondly, previous generations have failed in achieving or trying to achieve the United Nations goal of world peace and minimising conflict. Based on morals and ethics, countries should naturally provide aid to one another if a call for humanitarian aid has been explicitly sent. If countries are unable to unwilling to do so, the United Nations has a collective responsibility to step in, be it through the form of armed troops or diplomacy. However, in the case of the Rwandan genocide, the Syrian war and many other violence-fuelled scenarios, previous generations have grossly failed us. The Rwandan genocide was a bloody ethnic conflict between the Tutsis and Hutus that resulted in over 10000 casualties due to fighting from both sides. Despite being aware of the situation, few countries sent aid and the United Nations decided to pull its peacekeepers out of the country after one of them [was] killed, despite the issue clearly being a humanitarian and not political one. The numerous lives that were needlessly lost due to the lack of foreign aid received, that could have brought a measure of stability to the country, is yet another indication of how previous generations have failed the young Rwandans who had to live through such horrors. Additionally, previous generations have failed us due to colonialism which resulted in conflict and poor living conditions for the younger and future generations. Haiti is one of the poorest countries in the world and over 70% of the population is dependent on foreign aid. However, Haiti was once a flourishing agrarian economy until it was [colonized] by the French, resulting in a loss of lives as well. The actions of previous generations such as in the case of Haiti has led to negative long-term</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | <p>More accurately, they mediate such conflicts</p> <p>There were 500000 to 1 million casualties in 100 days</p> <p>The examples here are cherry-picked to show failure without considering fully the achievements of previous generations and the UN/WHO as well before arguing that overall, it has been a let down. This is unfair representation and argumentation as major improvements such as denuclearisation have been made, and the UN and NATO have greatly</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |



|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| consequences in the form of poverty. Thus, previous generations have failed in the attempts to achieve world peace and de-escalate conflicts.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | limited international wars since WW2                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| <p>In terms of economic growth, the facts are indisputable. The growth of both developed and developing countries around the world indicate that previous generations have not failed in providing a better world but rather brought economic prosperity to the younger generation. However, the same economic prosperity has manifested in increasing income inequality and wealth gaps. For example, Singapore developed from a fishing settlement into an urbanised city with towering skyscrapers over the span of 50 years. GDP growth has been increasing almost every year and majority of Singaporeans enjoy subsidised healthcare and an efficient transport system. Public education is also free or heavily subsidised. Such benefits are brought about due to economic prosperity, allowing the tax reserves contributed by previous generations to be used for public spending. However, not everyone has had the opportunity to prosper economically. The marginalised such as those who are illiterate or disabled have been neglected in the pursuit of economic success. Homelessness is still an issue in Singapore, despite it being touted as a first-world country. Hence, in the context of Singapore, previous generations have not failed us, although their actions have resulted in more problems such as income inequality.</p> | <p>How this affects the stand taken can be explained for clarity</p> <p>Initialisms like 'GDP' should be spelled out</p> <p>The residual effects of economic prosperity that have resulted in some falling between the cracks cannot be blamed fully on the previous generations. A more balanced perspective could recognise that they have already enhanced our lives significantly and do not owe us a living. It is then up to us to pick up the baton and continue to refine and polish their work</p> <p>Consider: despite the perceived economic benefits, further problems that run deeper like bitter resentment, feelings of injustice/unfairness/inequity have festered and negligence of these shows that previous generations have failed to uphold our SG pledge to build an equal and prosperous nation, supporting the thesis better</p> |
| <p>In conclusion, previous generations have failed us in mitigating the long-term problems faced by mankind, such as climate change. In some cases, previous generations have not only failed to solve, but created more problems in the pursuit of world peace and reduced conflicts. One must concede that previous generations have met the target of providing the younger and future generations with a better world in terms of material wealth. However, as aptly pointed out by Greta Thunberg, one cannot forever justify one's actions through 'fairy tales of eternal growth', and it must be acknowledged that previous generations have failed us, the younger generation, to a large extent in terms of shaping the physical and social environment today.</p> <p>(Natasha Tan, 19-O1)</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |

## 6 'Previous generations have failed us.' Do you agree?

*The greatest strengths of this essay lie in its consistent focus on the question, efforts to cover a range of important domains, and the illustrations which are unusually detailed and rich. Control can be seen in how balance is*



*created, though there is some space for a fairer representation and consideration of why such actions are to be seen as failures. While the examples are no doubt valuable, they could have been evaluated further against a clearer backdrop of our expectations of our predecessors to explain with greater reasoning why the repercussions are not forgivable, inexcusable and therefore failed obligation besides them merely having had negative effects on today. This essay is also notable for its confident and easily discernible personal voice, as the writer employs her strong command of language to her advantage in conveying shades of meaning. However, there is also a tendency to overuse emdashes and employ long sentences that list things which can be structurally repetitive or even disruptive to clarity. Awareness of one's own writing habits will enable self-monitoring and editing for more lucid writing.*

'History repeats itself' is an age-old adage; a familiar saying undoubtedly well-known to all, and for a good reason. There is clear truth in this statement in that our current present has inextricable links to the past, and actions of the previous generations have undeniably impacted current circumstance and society. Be it in the way humans have operated in the environmental, social or economic spheres of influence, I believe to a large extent that the youth have inherited the many failings of our predecessors, and in most part, the previous generations have failed us.

Skewed introduction as it only asserts a stand and does not proportionately acknowledge the opposing view nor outline reasons for either side of the argument

The manner in which the previous generations have handled matters regarding the environment is one clear instance of how the previous generations have failed us. Utter decimation of rainforests, widespread pollution of our rivers and seas and uncontrolled killing of animal species in the past have culminated in a shattered global ecosystem, where global warming has caused temperatures to ricochet out of control, parking harsh wildfires, intense blizzards and heavy storms in regions that had never before beheld such intensely calamitous natural disasters. The mass extinction of numerous animal species — China's Yangtze Dolphin, after being critically endangered for 10 years due to the heavy pollution of its rivers, has now been declared extinct — and the endangering of animals [has] been due to the careless management of our actions. Though warnings against the overfishing of sharks have been made since the 1900s, the ineffectuality of such claims in controlling and curbing the market for shark fins have resulted in sharks being declared as functionally extinct in 2020. While they still exist in the wild, their numbers are so few that their presence is now insignificant in the food chain — no longer do sharks perform their duties as apex predators of the sea, simply because there are too few of them to do so. Whilst such maltreatment of the environment by the older generations have been in the name of more industrialisation, development and urbanisation — to create better cities, economies and wealthier nations — the consequences of human mismanagement [are] undesirable in its devastating outcomes. Although immense advancements have been made in the economy, technology and scientific fields, owing to the rich resources harvested from the environment, the wealth gained from the harvesting of natural resources does not negate the irreparable damage actions [taken by] the past generations have inflicted on nature and its wildlife. This is damage that has been left to the present generations to patch up to the best of our abilities — a legacy of Man's failure to the environment that we have inherited. In the way humans of the past have harmed the environment, leaving the present generations to attempt to mitigate and slow its state of decline, the previous generations have failed the people of the present.

This paragraph uses in-depth knowledge and detailed illustration of the multitude of ways in which the actions of previous generations have resulted in to make a compelling argument that they have failed to protect the environment for the generations today

On a social level, the previous generations have also committed grave errors. The rampant gender, racial and religious discrimination of the past have cast [their] insidious hooks into the social fabric of today. In the past, women had been forced into submissive [and] passive roles



|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>whereby they were expected to spend their lives housekeeping, viewed as too ‘emotionally fragile’ to manage tasks outside of sweeping floors, feeding babes and spreading neighbourhood gossip. This practice of subjugating females has carried on for thousands of years, often manifesting itself in the gruesome practices of footbinding, genital mutilation or honour killing. We see the results of such long-held discrimination in today’s clear gap in pay between gender, or the fact that in some rural areas of China and India, women are still subjected to child marriages, sold to traffickers or confined at home to be perpetual housekeepers. Racial discrimination, such as the centuries long enslavement of the African-Americans in the United States of America in the past, have manifested in clear wealth imbalances between the races — as of the present, 80% of those living in the poorest neighbourhoods of America are Black. Religious discrimination of the past may also be seen to have resulted in the continued oppressions and discrimination against people purely due to their religion — notable examples such as the recent Rohingya crisis in Myanmar, and the building of concentration camps (disguised to be ‘reformation buildings’) in China. In both cases, discrimination against those following the teachings of Islam bear evidence to the fact that the persecution of people based on their religion in the past has continued to manifest itself in the present. Additionally, these acts of age-old discrimination have bred long-standing resentment and hate that encourage the formation of terrorist groups — which [now] serve as physical manifestations of the emotional trauma wreaked by the oppression of religion by past generations, The terrorist groups Al Qaeda and the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) are some examples of such terrorist groups. Hence, in the case of gender, racial and religious discrimination — which have had an irrevocable impact on the construction of social identities, stereotypes and practices of the present generations and circumstance, the actions of the previous generations have failed, serving to leave behind harmful stereotypes and practices that the present generation must now combat against.</p> | <p>To fail someone is to not have met expectations/duties/obligations, so the writer could have articulated what these expectations were (ie. forefathers are expected to be wise, experienced and revered, yet...), and so how previous generations have failed to measure up to them for a clearer and more precise argument</p>                                                                          |
| <p>That being said, the previous generations have left the people of the present with better lives, as it has been through their toil and hardship that thriving economies, vibrant cities and first-rate technology have been able to spring forth. Singapore’s rapid ascension from a third-world, impoverished fishing village to a first-world nation renowned for their advancements in technology, healthy economy and as a central trading hub, may be said to be due to the blood, sweat and tears of its previous generations who spent a lifetime working in menial, back-breaking jobs with the hope of providing the future generations with better opportunities. From Indian workers to Chinese coolies, who toiled under the scorching sun to earn enough to provide food, shelter and most importantly, education for their family, to politicians such as Singapore's first Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew, who dedicated his life to the development of Singapore, and has been instrumental in catalysing the rise of Singapore into a prosperous nation in less than fifty years, Singapore may be seen as a clear product of the efforts of the previous generations, which has culminated into a successful business hub that continues to thrive today. However, Singapore is a single example of success in a sea of failed attempts. Countries such as Greece and Venezuela suffer now as a result of the actions of their predecessors, who encouraged and perpetuated political corruption and social instability within the nation. These have resulted in the crashing of the countries’ economies, with the youth finding themselves trapped in a country where job prospects are close to none, violence and instability wreak the streets and the quality of living has suffered a huge plunge. In Greece, the youth unemployment rate was found to be over 83% in 2017, and in Venezuela, the country’s economy has been virtually at a standstill — in 2019, a series of electrical</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | <p>This rapid shift in perspective could have been less stark with acknowledgement that social circumstances have changed for the better for many as well</p> <p>Overly long sentences such as this one can be difficult for a reader to follow, even when they are grammatical. It is advisable to chunk the information and break up the sentences for greater readability</p> <p>Again, the argument</p> |



|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>blackouts spread across the country, lasting for days at a time and resulting in the failure of hospitals to operate, people to go to work and food to be kept unspoiled. In such countries, the actions of the previous generations through the mismanagement of the economy and political corruption have clearly resulted in the letting down of the present generation, who now find themselves stuck in a situation where to break out of the poverty cycle is impossible, owing to a stagnant economy, poor quality of living and lack of job prospects.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | <p>would be more effective with the clearer establishment of the expectations that we have for our previous generations, instead of largely using the examples to demonstrate problems caused by them - here, it could be argued that we can reasonably expect to inherit a better world</p>                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| <p>In conclusion, while I do acknowledge that to say the previous generations have completely failed us is inaccurate, I do feel that to a large extent, their actions of the past have let down the present generation, leaving the working population and youth of today to deal with an ailing environment and cultures deeply ingrained with discriminating beliefs, although the hard work of the past has indeed granted prosperity to many nations, enabling many countries to develop into thriving economies, allowing the raise in literacy rates to over 90% worldwide and improving the overall standards of living globally (should we compare to just a hundred years in the past, where the comforts of modern-day were non-existent), should we take a closer look at this apparent wealth and social well-being, we would see that these benefits are concentrated in the hands of a few, with many countries still struggling with poverty, and a divide between the rich and poor, and — for us all to now handle — a dying Earth.</p> <p>(Chloe Wong, 19-02)</p> | <p>A long and convoluted sentence that could be sectioned into smaller parts for greater clarity, readability and lower risk of errors</p> <p>An interesting observation which could have been developed earlier to point out that many of the systems and structures today which pose as obstacles or disadvantages to certain groups were formed in the hands of previous generations, thereby failing to deliver a better, fairer world into the hands of the current generations</p> |

## 7 ‘Diplomacy is the most effective means of managing international relations.’ Is this a fair assessment?

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |                                                                                                                                          |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p><i>This is an original and insightful response, with perceptive ideas in its last two body paragraphs alongside a complex stand and three other thoughtful justifications in the first three body paragraphs. It reflects thorough evaluation of issues in the question, but limits its scope of discussion by considering diplomacy solely through the context of war, when diplomacy is carried out in other contexts as well. The essay is well-balanced and fairly comprehensive within its scope, taking care to not merely pick a side but to critically analyse the strengths and weaknesses of diplomacy. Every argument is fully relevant, and it answers the question with not only sustained attention to ‘most’, but also a stand that hinges on a technical appreciation of its meaning. The use of illustration here is apt, with most examples except for the one in the last body paragraph being effectively chosen and linked to the justifications for the point. While well-chosen, the examples could have been more consistently original and demonstrate attention to contemporary developments that would help to further persuade the reader.</i></p> |                                                                                                                                          |
| <p>In a world constantly faced with conflict and disagreements, it seems that forceful methods have always been the most popular tool for countries or governments to settle disputes. However, as our global ideals shift increasingly towards the establishment of cooperation and consensus in order to tackle the new wave of problems we face today, it seems that diplomacy is the most effective means of managing international relations. However, to claim</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | <p>Pointing out some of these new problems is more helpful in bringing them to the reader’s mind than merely stating that they exist</p> |



|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>that diplomacy or peaceful negotiations is the <b>best</b> way to maintain international peace and security is too absolute, as it is <b>not always feasible or the most beneficial</b>. Hence, I believe that the statement that 'diplomacy is the most effective means of managing international relations' is not an entirely fair assessment.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | <p>Attention is paid to 'most', which is critical for this question</p> <p>These important considerations could benefit from brief justification here</p> <p>A fluidly crafted introduction that sets a broad (if rather abstract) context</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| <p>In most cases, it may seem that diplomacy is the most effective solution [for] managing international relations, as it ensures that countries maintain peaceful relations with each other when in conflict, preventing the escalation of tensions and setting a good basis of mutual respect and cooperation for the future. Given that peaceful, diplomatic negotiations allow for perspectives to be shared, it sets the basis for mutual understanding, bridging the gap between conflicting countries. Not only is this essential in the immediate process of conflict resolution, it lays the foundation for long-lasting amity and cooperation. For example, in the South China Sea conflict, despite China acting aggressively to assert its control over the disputed Spratlys and Paracel Islands by building bases on them, other countries involved in the conflict did not resort to hostile means of opposition, but rather, continued to engage in diplomatic negotiations in order to seek a peaceful settlement of the issue. This shows that diplomacy, when exercised appropriately, provides countries and their leaders with the ability to avert hostility, thereby allowing the region to continue <b>functioning</b> simultaneously alongside the ongoing resolution of the conflict at hand. Similarly in Singapore, despite numerous disagreements with Malaysia since their separation in 1965, both countries have been able to maintain strong working relations as neighbours for the betterment of both nations. For instance, when Malaysia threatened to cut off water supply to Singapore, the Singapore government responded calmly <b>instead of retaliating with even greater aggression</b>, on the basis of seeking cooperation and consensus through diplomatic negotiations. With such employment of diplomacy, Singapore and Malaysia continue to enjoy cordial relationships till today, with the latest proposed establishment of a high-speed railway linking both countries in the works, a testament to decades of mutual alliance and cooperation. As such, it becomes clear that diplomacy is a <b>highly effective</b> solution for managing international relations, especially in times of conflict.</p> | <p>Claim established, with attention to both 'most' and 'effective'</p> <p>Justification is acceptable, although a little more work could be done in persuading the reader why 'most' applies - e.g. it is most effective because it lessens the likelihood of conflict occurring in the first place when countries share goals</p> <p>Relevant example, though 'functioning' is not the clearest choice of vocabulary, as it is not clear what function the region might be expected to serve</p> <p>Comparison with alternate methods of conflict resolution implicitly provides evaluation, though it could be made more overtly</p> <p>Note that 'highly effective' is not the same as 'most effective', but the claim has been adequately proven</p> |
| <p>Furthermore, peaceful negotiations also seem to be highly effective in managing international relations as it ensures that valuable resources vital to economic growth are maintained, and not wasted during times of conflict. Diplomacy, although it may sometimes be a complicated effort, is usually put into action only by the diplomats or government officials representing countries involved in a conflict. Forceful methods of conflict resolution, such as war, on the other hand, bring about large-scale destruction and suffering to the parties that engage in it, which may result in devastating long-term consequences. For instance, during the Vietnam War, billions of dollars were poured into the war effort by the USA, with millions of troops sent to fight in the proxy war to defend Vietnam and the rest of Southeast Asia from the fight against the claws of communism. As a result, many American soldiers returned home traumatised by their experiences on the battlefield, and had to suffer the devastating</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | <p>Weaving in of rebuttal demonstrates some ability to handle more complex argumentation</p> <p>More explicit evaluation of effectiveness of various means of conflict management than the previous paragraph</p> <p>Example relevant and unpacked in a coherent</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |



|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>psychological impacts that came afterwards. This often impaired their cognitive functionality, preventing them from seeking employment after they returned. This blatant waste of bright individuals evidently shows the severe drainage of human resources during periods of war and hostility. Similarly, many people in Vietnam, adults and children alike, suffered from the harmful impacts of Agent Orange and napalm that rained upon their villages. This severe destruction of villages and loss of civilian lives impeded Vietnam's ability to recover quickly from the war, and its impacts linger even till today. Evidently, it is clear not only from the sheer waste of human resources, but also the large sums of funding dedicated towards fighting in wars and battles that diplomacy presents itself as a much more feasible and preferred way of resolving conflict, since it completely averts such reckless use of resources which are essential for economic growth.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | <p>fashion</p> <p>Could be phrased better</p> <p>Uncommon but feasible approach to proving the effectiveness of diplomacy by proving the ineffectiveness of war, which is presented as an alternative to diplomacy</p>                                                                                                                                                          |
| <p>However, there are many instances in which the inherent weaknesses of diplomacy prevent the effective management of international relations and conflicts. First of all, engaging in diplomacy to resolve issues through peaceful negotiations is time-consuming and has limited effectiveness in serving as a quick and effective resolution, especially in heated conflicts. Negotiations between conflicting parties often require long periods of time in order for both sides to state their demands and make concessions to one another before finally reaching an agreement. While this long-drawn out process takes place, those in conflict may continue to engage in actions that escalate the conflict even further, making the conflict even more intractable and difficult to resolve. The Rwandan Genocide in 1994 is a testament to such a weakness of diplomacy. The Tutsis and Hutus were embroiled in hostile conflict due to the ethnic cleansing of Hutus that was taking place in the region. Despite the United Nations attempts to intervene with the United Nations Mission in Rwanda (UNAMIR), they simply acted too late, and subsequent actions were futile as conflicting parties had escalated violence to an insurmountable degree, resulting in the genocide of over a million Rwandans, with diplomacy having no role in de-escalating or resolving the conflict. Similarly, North and South Korea have been locked in a stalemate for over 50 years, with diplomatic negotiations being completely ineffectual as both countries are unwilling to back down. Hence, from both examples illustrated above, it becomes clear that diplomacy may not always be the most effective, given its long-drawn, bureaucratic nature that impedes fast and effective decision-making necessary to resolve certain conflicts.</p> | <p>Opposing idea initiated, though it could be more carefully handled</p> <p>Justification based on efficiency is acceptable</p> <p>Acceptable but not immediately clear for the reader whether such intervention was peaceful/diplomatic or violent</p> <p>Rebuttal proven thoroughly</p>                                                                                      |
| <p>Another major factor impeding the true effectiveness of diplomacy as the best means of managing international relations and conflicts is the fact that it is the threat of war that pushes conflicting countries into negotiation in the first place. This is because countries feel no threat in continuing to escalate tensions with one another given that there are no tangible repercussions. For instance, in the Cold War, the USSR and USA engaged in brinkmanship and were on the edge of engaging in war for years. It was only with the realisation of the devastating threat of nuclear destruction itself that they began to engage in diplomacy and sought ways to avert such a crisis. Similarly, between the US and North Korea, the threat of nuclear warfare in the 21st century is the main reason hindering them from engaging in outright war, but rather choosing to engage in diplomacy, with their leaders meeting to discuss how to proceed in order to renew cooperation and reduce tension between them. As such, it is evident that diplomacy is only effective when there is a greater threat at hand that may bring potentially devastating consequences.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | <p>2nd opposing idea initiated: thoughtful justification but phrasing can be clarified, as the main idea was not immediately understandable - how is this related to diplomacy's effectiveness?</p> <p>This appears to be the real point in this paragraph: that diplomacy's effectiveness is only strongest in times of last resort. this needed to be argued more clearly</p> |



|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | Why this means diplomacy is limited should be articulated more fully                                                                                                                                                                      |
| Furthermore, there are instances in which diplomacy is rendered totally useless and ineffective as conflicting parties refuse to make any concession. In such cases, diplomacy is unable to serve any real purpose if conflicting parties are unwilling to engage in civil and peaceful discussions to resolve the conflict. For instance, the global war on terrorism leaves no room for diplomacy. Terrorist groups such as the Islamic State (IS) refuse to give in to any demands from the rest of the world, while global leaders in the fight against terrorism refuse to provide them with any leeway. As such, there is no choice but to engage in war against each other, as both parties feel that mutual coexistence is impossible, and will not settle until the state is completely obliterated. Hence, it is evident that diplomacy is rendered ineffective in managing international relations when conflicting parties refuse to engage in diplomatic negotiation, and strongly believe in the destruction of the other party in order to achieve world peace. | 3rd opposing idea established<br><br>Example does make the point, but some readers may object to its inclusion as it is not immediately clear how engaging with terrorist organisations can be considered part of international relations |
| In light of the perspectives raised, I believe that while diplomacy is undoubtedly the most preferred way of settling disputes and managing international relations, it cannot be said to be the most effective means due to its inherent weaknesses that impair or even renders it completely ineffective under certain circumstances. Hence, the statement made is not an entirely fair or accurate assessment of the effectiveness of diplomacy.<br><br>(Kenme Lam, 19-E3)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | Shows precise meaning to meaning of "effective" by distinguishing it from "preferred"<br><br>Overall, stand is proven and conclusion is serviceable, though a bit perfunctory                                                             |

## 8 'We should always trust the experts.' Discuss.

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |                                                                      |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <i>A thoughtful response with a nuanced understanding of the benefits and potential pitfalls of expert knowledge, it presents an interesting thesis that recognises an interplay between experts and the public. This stand is well-negotiated throughout the essay, with layered arguments supported by appropriate examples, though these are sometimes inconsistent in their quality of development. On the whole, the essay presents a well-considered argument that by the end of the response feels comprehensive in the ideas that it has addressed, as key ideas on both sides have been satisfactorily discussed.</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |                                                                      |
| In light of the recent Covid-19 pandemic, there has been significant debate over whether one should always trust the advice of experts. Many Americans have accused scientists and doctors of overstating fatality numbers, leading to many completely rejecting recommended safety procedures by these experts. However, while America continues to struggle with Covid-19, other countries, like Singapore and South Korea, are quickly recovering after obeying the advice of the experts, ironically casting doubts on the American's distrust of the experts. Experts are commonly deemed to be highly-educated with sufficient experience in a certain field of study or action. They are entrusted with titles that supposedly indicate their credibility, like doctors in their field of medicine or even non-government organisations with issues like poverty. However, while one might be tempted to take their word as the be all and end all over all other issues, we cannot neglect the value of the common man. Furthermore, in this increasingly politicised climate, the word of the experts might not always be altruistic in nature. Hence, while the opinions of experts are important, they need to be heeded with | Definition of experts shows understanding of the nuances of the term |



|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| caution and can only be trusted after [taking in] the interests and views of the society.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | Overall stand is thoughtful and clear                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| <p>Undoubtedly, experts provide factual and logical assertions and recommendations which do tend to result in more success and effectiveness when compared to the knowledge-lacking common man. Hence, many place their blind faith in the word of the experts. Experts usually provide a more informed viewpoint that is backed by knowledge compared to the typically emotionally-driven society. Individuals as part of human nature also tend to display more selfish and impulsive behavior, especially when they are situated in times of crisis. Thus it would be foolish to completely trust the word of the common man over the experts. This is exemplified by the Covid-19 response in the US that clearly shows the dangers of rejecting the word of experts. People in the US have been seen to completely ignore the word of the experts in favour of their own individual rights to freedom and religion, with mass congregations in churches and movements to reject the wearing of masks. The Black Lives Matter movement, while no-doubt being a heroic feat against systemic racism, has also shed light on the emotional negligence of humans. Many protestors have been seen to forgo wearing masks and participat[ing] in congregations, quickly forgetting the ongoing pandemic ravaging their nation. Furthermore, experts also provide a lens to understand the complexity behind certain issues beyond an ineffective and shallow level of understanding. Most perennial issues in societies often are a result of intricate interplay of different factors that are invisible to the naked eye of the common man without the support of experts. Water shortages along the Mekong River in Laos and Cambodia were commonly misunderstood by the population as climate-driven. However, the issue was actually largely due to the transboundary issues surrounding river management that involved far-reaching upper stream nations like China. The issues were only resolved due to the help of river experts which facilitated the formation of the Mekong Integrated Water Resource Management to engender cooperation among all states which shared the Mekong River as a water resource. Hence, we cannot completely distrust the word of experts as they often provide the knowledge for us to achieve the best possible outcome.</p> | <p>The example does support the argument that the common man makes poor decisions when they do not heed the advice of the experts, but care must be taken not to assume the reader knows the result of such actions, so the impact could be pointed out</p> <p>Provides further depth to the argument by considering the complexity of the knowledge possessed by experts</p> <p>Example supports the argument. To strengthen the analysis, how such expert knowledge and intervention has been indispensable could be explained</p> |
| <p>However, this trust should not be blindly placed without regard for the value of the common man's opinions. Hence, we cannot always trust the experts as the conflicting opinion of the normal citizen may hold significance. While experts have extensive knowledge over their field of study, they tend to be more broad-based. In this diverse world, despite many similarities between nations, the problems faced are ultimately unique to their own country. Therefore, the views of the experts should still be balanced with the views of the people as they are the ones who can truly understand the characteristics of the locale and may be able to sieve out social-cultural implications that typical experts cannot. While the non-governmental organisation (NGO) Oxfam has been considered an expert in alleviating poverty in many less developed countries, they have failed numerous times due to their cookie-cutter approach. Their provision of cattle to the poor despite rising uncertainty amongst some farmers in Cambodia resulted in the trampling [of] soil and reduced soil fertility rates which actually worsened the farmers' poverty due to the NGO's poor understanding of the characteristics of the natural environment. Furthermore, experts are ultimately limited by their field of study which sometimes make them myopic to the multidimensional effects of their suggestions. These may cause trade-offs within societies where the solving of one issue can actually exacerbate another. Indonesia, a country that is experiencing huge issues with waste management, recently clamped down on the illegal importing of plastic waste as</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | <p>Without prior explanation, 'hence' does not make sense</p> <p>Good insight here, although it could be noted that the field research done by experts would furnish some contextual knowledge too</p> <p>Good use of relevant, well-explained examples to illustrate the argument</p> <p>Takes the point further by furnishing another common blind spot</p>                                                                                                                                                                        |



|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| recommended by their ministry and waste advisors. However, this unknowingly destroyed the only source of livelihood, recycling, from many poverty-stricken villages, leaving them even poorer than before. Thus, experts may not always have an edge over the [common] man due to social-cultural implications behind certain actions that are unique to the locale and out of reach of the typical experts, ironically making the common man the expert in some cases.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| In this increasingly politicised climate, the words of experts must also be taken with caution as they are often pressured or driven by agendas that are not necessarily benign in nature. With many issues like poverty and environmental conservation becoming intertwined with national interests and politics, many experts face pressure by states and other powerful bodies to frame their data in a certain way that would best shape the public view to align with their purpose. This is especially seen in dictatorial countries like North Korea which heavily control their media and prevent any anti-government information from both foreign and domestic experts from reaching the ears of the people. Notably, experts may have conflicting interests with each other as well across their fields of study, which thus requires discernment from the citizens to choose the view they align with, instead of blindly following them. The protected sage grouse lands under the Environmental Species Act in America have been threatened by the view of oil specialists who desire to reap the oil-rich lands of their resource, disregarding the views of environmental conservationists. Hence, conflicting interests with society prevents us from always trusting the word of experts blindly. | <p>This example is vague, and where exactly the expert knowledge is present should be explained</p> <p>By the end of the paragraph, it's not clear that the politicised climate is fundamental to the point, as it seems to transcend today's context</p>                                                  |
| Ultimately, trust is a two-way street. Only when experts trust the view of the common man, can their words truly be beneficial and thus respected in society. Experts need to temper their views according to the citizens' needs and opinions in order for their words to hold weight and truly be effective. Slum improvement in Favela Bairro, Jakarta, was only effective due to the collaborative nature between the advice of international organisations like American Bank and NGOs and also the community people who voted at their needs. Hence, while we should trust the experts, we can only do so when they listen to our views and opinions which do matter in the fight against the various issues plaguing our nations.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | <p>This is presented awkwardly, since there has been no mention of experts lacking trust in people, and it's not clear why this is seen as an issue of a lack of trust</p> <p>Example is connected to the second argument, so this point could perhaps follow that more closely</p>                        |
| Hence, while we should place faith in the world's experts, we cannot always blindly follow their advice without discerning their true intentions. As long as the experts act in the society's interest, and respect our views, they should and will get the due respect they deserve. However, we as individuals cannot remain myopic to the few misled and less benign experts who act in their own interest. As long as we act in the favour of all, we will get the trust and respect we deserve.<br><br>(Ho Yu Hao, 19-01)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | <p>Reiteration of overall stand is clear</p> <p>Assertion seems to be overconfident, given the example provided earlier of the American distrust of experts in Covid-19</p> <p>Odd to end on a note about trust and respect for everyone as the question is still fundamentally about trusting experts</p> |

## 8 'We should always trust the experts.' Discuss.

*A thoughtful response that provides good insight, particularly why it is crucial that we trust expert knowledge in the context of today's world, demonstrating a strong understanding of the different forces of work in the modern*



*context. It also has an uncommonly good understanding of the systems and structures that experts participate in and which affect their authority. However, it is slightly inconsistent: some arguments could be more clearly articulated and ideas should be more consistently supported by and exemplified by concrete examples. Language used is complex and appropriate, with the use of domain-specific vocabulary and complex sentence structures. While the flow of ideas is good, the organisation could perhaps be improved by chunking ideas into more manageable paragraphs.*

When President Donald Trump chose to ignore the head of the Coronavirus Task Force and not implement a mandatory mask requirement amongst other policies, the pandemic spiralled out of control in the United States. When President Scott Morison continued to deny the existence of climate change and refused to change climate change policies in Australia, the severity of the drought worsened leading to the devastating Australian bushfires early this year. When President Jair Bolsonaro ignored warnings from scientists and gave the green light for accelerated deforestation of the Amazon Rainforest, thousands of hectares of critical forest areas were irreversibly lost. The examples above are clear; when people, especially political leaders, ignore the research and advice of scientists and experts, it can often lead to significant harms. The reason for such declining public trust in science and research has mainly been a concerted political push by certain political powers, especially populist ones, to decrease the credibility and hence influence of science which has increasingly opposed the policies these parties push. However, the result of this has been a declining ability of experts to influence political and public opinion, leading to public policy decisions which lack any or even oppose scientific consensus. This, and the increasing harms they accrue, is all the more reason that people should largely trust the experts.

This trio of relevant concrete examples situates the discussion squarely in the current context and immediately establishes the significance of the discussion

Well-constructed introduction, but it may be somewhat limiting to only look at views from the angle of political resistance to trusting the experts

The most salient argument against trusting experts is the idea that experts can be bought over by external incentives and hence will publish research that is not truly neutral and non-partisan. The premise of this argument is the competitive and cut-throat nature of the research community, when researchers and scientists often lack the funds needed to carry out research. As a result, corporations and organisations have capitalised on this desperation by utilising conditional research grants to get scientists to produce the results that they want. This is especially easy to do in an inherently subjective field such as research. This is because when dealing with extremely large data sets, the way one chooses to omit certain data points or plot the data, much less the way one chooses to interpret the data can result in the same data producing a multitude of different conclusions. It is this inherent subjectivity which calls to question the true neutrality of experts and their research. In fact, such subtle manipulations can be seen in the supposedly 'independent' research Coca-Cola funded which concluded the drink did not pose significant health risks. It also looks like Johnson's and Johnson's funded study which concluded its talc powder did not result in cancer despite the eventual finding that it did in fact cause ovarian cancer in thousands of women. In the political sphere, this looks like how the Environmental Agency in the US did a one-eighty degree change in the form of the conclusion of their report on whether current environmental regulations were truly necessary, after President Trump threatened a budget cut for the department. All these examples show how science and experts can be beholden to external incentives which would likewise influence their work. Hence, the concern is then that when the public blindly trusts such experts, it can lead to severe social harms such as increased diseases or support for policies which will only serve to harm the people. Hence, the public should not always trust experts as they may not always be a truly neutral arbiter of truth.

The explanation of the nature of research and how it is open to manipulation shows a depth of knowledge of the system, but it is not the most natural argument following the focus on politics in the intro

In addition to this knowledge of how the system shapes the actions of researchers, the more personal, human angle of self-interest could also be considered

Strong choice of expressions here



However, while it is true that certain experts or scientists can be beholden to external parties and are not truly neutral, it is important to understand that these cases are few and far between. This is due to a few structural reasons. Firstly, there exists pre-existing checks and balances in the scientific community which prevents such manipulation, such as peer-reviews and reproducing data. Although the general public are generally unable to distinguish manipulations of data, fellow experts and scientists are trained and able to do so. This means that most researchers who carry out unethical manipulations of their data can be called out and their research debunked. Other scientific institutions also often seek to reproduce data done by others in order to verify their results. All of this means that it is extremely difficult for experts to falsify or manipulate data. Secondly there are already pre-existing governmental regulations which mandate researchers to disclose any funding they receive. This would mean that if a university receives funding from Company A to verify the effects of their products, they must state this contribution in their report. The impact of this is very simple. An average individual who sees that a study funded by Coca-Cola states that the product is healthy, will probably be reasonable enough to recognise the study may not be entirely true (which is exactly what happened with respect to the Coca-Cola study done). This means that it is not truly that easy to deceive the general public. Why is understanding this important? The above means that for the large majority of research or experts, they are incentivised to put out fair and unbiased research which is generally trustworthy. This kind of research is all the more important to trust in given the status quo. This is especially true due to two main societal trends. First, there is increasing misinformation with the rise of social media as a primary news source. This is especially worrying due to the increased accessibility and lack of effective fact-checking mechanisms to filter through the content on social media. The impact of this is the increasing prevalence of fake news which seek to misinform the public on a variety of issues. This is further worsened by the use of sorting algorithms which nicely and neatly shoeboxes people into different categories and echo chambers. The result of this is the increasing ability to specifically target the misinformation to certain groups based on their traits. This looks like spreading anti-vax information by targeting the 'Mommy Bloggers' or 'Yoga Mum' communities by playing on their concerns for their children. Hence, misinformation has worsened in recent years. Secondly, this misinformation is worsened by the increasing divide between country leaders and scientific consensus. This is especially true in many countries where populist parties are on the rise. This is because populist parties often play on the economic concerns of the people, especially of the growing middle class, and push for policies which 'promote' economic growth such as increased economic incentives and decreased environmental regulations. As such, this results in science and politics becoming increasingly in contention with one another. Hence political leaders in such countries seek to discredit science and spread even more misinformation. It is exactly because of such trends, that experts and the truths they hold have to be seen as neutral and non-partisan actors, as well as a unifying force of truth. When the people trust in the objective truths that experts bring to the table, it is far easier to discern what is important from the noisy and make truly informed socio-political decisions. Hence, it is important that the people should trust in experts.

This point balances the discussion by immediately evaluating the relative impact of the earlier criticism using other details about the system within which experts are certified and operate

While the paragraph is no doubt grounded in strong knowledge, to convince a reader it should seek to provide concrete evidence, such as by naming notable institutions or journals with a peer-review process, and some specific government regulations

The real-world context is very effectively unpacked, providing justification for the importance of expert knowledge

As the paragraph gets long, arguments could be more clearly reiterated to show that it is important to trust expert knowledge in these times given how most expert knowledge would be credible



|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>However, it is important to note that experts are not always the ones who are most well-read on the issue but also include those who have had the most experience with it. While the first definition is true for the examples in previous paragraphs, such as climate change, healthcare, etc..., the second definition is especially true for subjective social issues. For those subjective issues, such as gender or racial studies, the experts are often not only the conventional professor or researcher, but also the everyday woman or African American who has lived through the actual experience. This is true because although spending years on studying gender and the inherent power disparities for example can allow a person a more nuanced understanding of the issue, the intellectual knowledge often pales in comparison to the true authentic day-to-day experiences and struggles of a woman. In these scenarios, listening and trusting these everyday experts are all the more important as these issues often have no objective 'truth' unlike climate change for example. In fact, these scenarios, such as racial microaggressions, can be especially difficult for someone on the other side, who has no personal experience of it, to understand. Hence, trusting and believing these experts when they share about their experiences, for example, when many African Americans such as Lupita O Nyong shared the kinds of discrimination they faced during the BlackLivesMatter Movement, is important to garner social support and social change. Thus, in terms of subjective social issues, this trust in the authenticity of the expert's opinions is all the more important to change and impact society.</p> | <p>Shift to a different argument could have been better executed. It's not clear why this calls for a 'however'</p> <p>A thoughtful point with insight into the existence of important knowledge beyond objective facts. However, it may not be wise to include the everyman in the definition of expert, as it may mean other arguments are weakened, since these 'experts' come with no governing bodies (e.g. in the earlier paragraph) and don't possess many of their advantages</p> |
| <p>Ultimately, experts and the research they provide are valuable sources of truth that are in most cases truthful. Rebuilding the trust in scientific consensus and inquiry has never been more pressing and integral in ensuring public policy and opinion continue to be informed and will hence benefit society. Nevertheless, the public should still be discerning when consuming and trusting these experts and their research. This is especially true as scientific research has and will continue to be misrepresented by different stakeholders. Hence, we need to be rational in trusting them.</p> <p>(Emmanuella Li, 19-O2)</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | <p>Thoughtful conclusion but could be clearer in reiterating argument</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |

## 9 How far do you agree that technology is the solution to today's major problems?

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |                                                                                                                                                            |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p><i>A valiant attempt that has parts containing good insight. The arguments made are largely sound and cover a reasonable amount of ground on both sides with illustration. However, at some points the writer's own understanding of the issue seems to shift over the course of the essay, suggesting that the planning process could have been more complete, making space for greater synthesis and coherence between the arguments put forth and the thesis statement. The thesis statement does not seem to be fully aligned with the subsequent arguments because the ideas seem to be by and large more skeptical of whether technology really is the solution or not. Also, more work could be invested in constructing coherent balance that does not create the impression of a flip-flopping position.</i></p> |                                                                                                                                                            |
| <p>Many have coined 2020 as the worst year to have existed seeing as today's major problems seem vast and unending. Major problems persist in many forms, be they environmental, social, political, or even as a pandemic. Such problems have plagued the lives of people all around the world and their possible consequences leave scientists, governments and specialists fearful. However, with the rapid advancements in technology, many are hopeful</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | <p>The category could be health/medical crisis. Context can be taken further by examining what makes them major especially today, thereby engaging the</p> |



|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>that technology will be the solution to today's major problems. Hence, I agree to a large extent that technology is the solution to today's major problems, as long as it is in the right hands and regulated to seek the best outcome to [solve] today's major problems.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | <p>keywords more</p> <p>Thesis could have been more logically phrased, as it is not clear how something can be solved to a large extent.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| <p>Firstly, technology definitely has the potential to solve today's major problems due to its many developments that have bestowed it the ability to process information and analyse problems far beyond the ability of a human being. As we step into the 4th Industrial Revolution, we marvel that there has been exponential growth in the development of technology such as Artificial Intelligence (AI). Such complex technology has deep, extensive neural networks that enable it to process data, learn and develop optimal solutions. Evidence of this is shown through Deep Mind's recent invention, Alpha Zero, an AI program that has beaten all other human programmed chess game bots, sholgi bot programmes and even Alphagom the first prototype of the AI that beat the world champion at Go. All that Alphazero had was the rules of the game and through repetitive play with itself, it developed solutions to the games that were dynamic, out of the box and effective. Clearly, it seems that technology has the capabilities to in fact develop solutions and can thus solve many major world problems through running possible scenarios and weighing possible outcomes to develop the best solution. Such technology has proven useful in solving major problems such as cyber security. With the growth of technology it is no wonder that cyber security has become a growing problem as hackers and malicious groups take to online attacks. AI systems are useful at developing firewalls as they analyse infinite scenarios to truly develop the best possible defense. The capabilities and endless possibilities that technology offer truly attests to its ability to solve major world problems.</p> | <p>Well-said and engages the nature of tech in relation to why it is seen as potentially a solution</p> <p>The example of games and chess illustrates the ability of AI, but it doesn't go far in dealing with the question's subject matter of major problems</p> <p>What 'Go' is can be explained</p> <p>The fact that cyber security issues still exist raises doubt over this statement and the understanding of 'solving'.</p> <p>It can be insightful to point out that tech has the potential to be the solution; it is yet to be one but given time, it can be if the current trajectory of development persists. This would require replacing the example of chess with something that shows that AI is successfully tackling one major problem and that gives cause for optimism that it can eventually be a solution</p> <p>Worth noting that tech is simultaneously the cause of this major problem, for the insightful idea that it is both poison and antidote</p> |
| <p>However, some may argue that technology has many drawbacks that may restrict its ability to solve problems and indeed this is true. As advanced as technology may be, its use and value are still largely determined by its users and developers. In this case, is it really technology that is the solution or is it the person who develops it? Behind every great technological innovation is a person who has likely poured years of hard work and expertise into developing. Without these people it is unlikely that technology would have even progressed. Additionally,</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | <p>Where sensible, being more specific about who might hold such a perspective can lend credibility to the point</p> <p>Insightful observation</p> <p>Can be extended</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |



|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>technology can only be the solution to today's problems if placed in the right hands and used in the right manner. The world today is lagged by conflict and wars that consume countries, leaving their citizens in peril. Whilst technology can help save these people's lives with improvement in healthcare facilities, it can also aggravate the situation. Technology has been used by many countries to develop their military, from AI like FEDOR Russian robots with excellent shooting aim to nuclear weapons housed in the US and North Korea, capable of unimaginable destruction. It is clear that in many cases technology is not the solution and in fact is that problem that has resulted in today's major problems. This reinforces the point that people and not technology are the solution to today's major problems especially when the problem involves conflict between countries and concerns with intangible problems requiring diplomatic solutions.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | <p>beyond the individual</p> <p>Good awareness, but can be evaluated to answer the question more fully: is it usually in the right hands and used rightly?</p> <p>Flow of ideas can be clearer, as it goes from conflict to healthcare and back to conflict with no warning</p> <p>Contextualisation of why conflict and war remain major problems today is needed</p> <p>Paragraph seems to end with a new idea, affecting the focus of the argument</p>                                                                                                                                                    |
| <p>Additionally, the complexities of today's problems require far more than just technology, instead they require the delicate problem-solving ability of people. As much as technology has developed to encompass neural networks of thousands of layers and neurons, it is still not comparable to the intricacies of the human mind. Neural networks of AI still require a certain framework and can only function within certain borders. The state of technology today, albeit incredible, is not sufficient to take on the Herculean task of solving today's major problems. Take for example the most pressing problem in the world today, Covid-19. This pandemic has affected countries, large and small and people all around the world have felt its impacts. With the state of advancement of technology, one may be misled to believe that technology will simply be able to take a sample of the virus and develop a vaccine. However, the fact remains that we have yet to develop any solution even after 6 months. This is because technology is unable to fully grasp the nature of biological systems. While technology may confer AI the ability to win in chess, a game with a fixed number of rules and clear boundaries, technology is still unable to solve problems which require the understanding of concepts beyond numbers. This is not to discredit the part technology plays in developing a solution; indeed as much as it may be incapable of fully coming up with a cure for Covid-19, it has aided scientists in speeding up the process of finding a solution. Perhaps, in a few years' time, technology will truly develop to a point whereby it is able to solve problems outside of a game of chess.</p> | <p>This needs to be guarded to avoid contradiction with the earlier point that tech and AI have the capacity to do things beyond man's capability</p> <p>Good concession</p> <p>Technically this is exactly what was being done, and in time it has produced results! It also seems unfair to ignore the other ways tech has helped in the pandemic</p> <p>Valid insight but could be better explained: the idea here is that tech has yet to achieve singularity and it may never be able to. Note though that this is not strictly true, and tech has been used to solve more complex problems already</p> |
| <p>Additionally, technology does have its drawbacks but it is still the solution to many world problems that require a more tangible solution. This is because technology can easily be developed by engineers should there be tangible, manageable goals to be reached. This is highlighted in the view of the growing major problem of climate change, with the onset of industrialisation a few years back, levels of carbon emission and pollution have increased exponentially, leaving many in fear of what the future might look like if this problem is not solved. Technology will be the solution to this problem, seeing as other methods such as the Paris Agreement have failed to bear significant results, and the trend of growing consumerism,</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | <p>Intended meaning could be expressed more clearly: what is a tangible solution?</p> <p>Fact check: the industrial revolution began in the 18th century</p> <p>The key word in the question is 'IS': 'is and</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |



|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>changing the mindsets of people does not seem to be a feasible solution. Technology on the other hand, can provide effective and immediate solutions, as seen from the catalytic converters in cars that seek to reduce pollution of poisonous gases as well as technology with greater efficiency and less wastage being used in major factories. It is clear that technology can provide effective and immediate solutions to solve problems requiring more tangible problems such as climate change.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | <p>will eventually be' is a more relevant statement. Also, it is not convincing that climate change will be solved by tech</p> <p>Several solutions are mentioned and they no doubt each have their own effect, but how far they go towards a full solution of the problem should be considered</p> |
| <p>Indeed, technology has seen many great developments that have conferred it the ability to solve many of today's major problems. However, the nature of some problems simply require solutions far beyond the current capabilities of technology. Admittedly, this is likely to change in coming years as technology is continually being developed and knows no limits. Its growth is exponential and its capabilities may truly far exceed that of a human's one day. However, today, whilst technology is indeed the solution to many major problems, it is not the solution to certain problems requiring a greater understanding of the biological nature of humans as well as conflicts resulting from clashes in beliefs and ideas.</p> <p>(Pang Xin Hua, 19-E2)</p> | <p>Note that there may be limits imposed by mankind on tech development and use, considering the negative effects mentioned</p>                                                                                                                                                                     |

## 9 How far do you agree that technology is the solution to today's major problems?

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |                                                                                                                                                                                               |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p><i>This essay is thoroughly well-managed and thoughtfully argued, with incisive analysis based on an in-depth understanding of the nature of today's major problems as well as the capabilities and shortcomings of technology. The thesis it presents is a very nuanced one that recognises that technology may have the potential to be the solution, but also that in today's world this potential is hampered by human factors. The arguments are tightly constructed, with strong and specific evidence provided at almost every juncture. They are also ordered very logically, moving from more common and fundamental arguments that set up the problem to further considerations of how technology can impact the problems in other ways, ultimately making a highly fluent, coherent and convincing argument. The success of the argument is supported by the confident and sensitive use of language, evident in the well-chosen vocabulary, rich expression and complex sentences, allowing shades of meaning to be packed into every statement.</i></p> |                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| <p>Innovation has been heralded as the hallmark of Man's intelligence as a superior species, culminating in various groundbreaking technological advancements that have served us well to bring about progress. In today's modernised world that is flourishing in the benefits brought about by globalisation and the exponential rate of technological innovations, technology is still seen as the hope and solution to much of our world's major problems. Uncertainty, volatility and dynamism of the issues we face today make finding a panacea to these global-scale problems all the more difficult. Therefore, with the noble aspirations technology promises in charting the way forward with its incredible efficiency and accuracy, problems, such as poverty, inequality, climate change and inter-state tensions, stand to be improved or even rectified. Nonetheless, it is worthy to note that technology can also bring about the worsening of these issues when used irresponsibly, highlighting the complexity</p>                                  | <p>Clearly points out several major problems</p> <p>Unpacks the notion of a solution, though it could be clearer that significant rectification of the problem is implied by the question</p> |



|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>towards determining a straightforward answer to whether technology can solve today's major issues. Moreover, the multi-faceted nature of causes culminating in today's problems are what makes them major and complex. Hence, I strongly believe that while technology offers great promise to finding a solution to the world's major issues, it is not the be all and end all in fully tackling the dynamic and humanistic nature of these problems. Thus, I agree with the statement to a limited extent.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | <p>Intro develops the context and fleshes out the complexity of major problems today, allowing for a nuanced thesis that considers the potential of tech</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| <p>Regardless, one cannot deny the precision and accuracy technology wields that surpass our human vulnerability to making errors, foregrounding the indisputable fact that its efficiency in analysing and solving issues can solve the world's major problems in aspects that are logistical and administrative. As technology is created by our kind, it is intentionally enhanced in carrying out processes that we humans tend to falter in, given our limited capabilities. With this unrivalled skill, technology will thus be able to carry the burden of transmitting large masses of data and streamline processes. For example, the issue of the coronavirus pandemic that currently plagues us has been more efficiently tackled with the use of videoconferencing technology that enabled leaders to hone in on the ground realities of the outbreak. Coupled with advanced forecasting systems that are able to accurately track trends and predict the rate of spread of the virus, authorities were able to stem the sources of spread quickly and efficiently. These instances were also replicated through the use of drones in disaster-torn regions to get a sense of which areas required most attention and aid, such as in the case of Typhoon Haiyan in the Philippines, where conditions made it impossible for aircraft landings. Distilling the essence from these cases, it is obvious that technology has time and again proved itself in raising the efficiency of rectifying problems pertaining to providing aid, where humans lacked the ability to intervene. This signals an optimistic outlook in utilising technology to combat issues of disaster prevention and pandemic outbreaks the world is constantly plagued by, due to increasing volatility and ambiguity of our natural environment following climate change. Hence, technology presents itself as a solution to logistical and administrative aspects of global issues by lessening the damage.</p> | <p>Very clear analysis of the specific nature of the problems that tech is able to solve, given the qualities tech possesses</p> <p>How common this is in today's major problems could be clarified</p> <p>Relevant examples that are current and detailed in pointing out how tech has been used</p> <p>Well managed perspective, though it's not clear that lessening the damage by responding to it quickly is sufficient for it to be called the solution</p>   |
| <p>Despite this ability to present solutions to such aspects of global issues, technology is still unable to fundamentally tackle the root causes of global issues. This brings into question whether technology can present solutions that fully address our world-wide problems. The fact that the rate at which these global issues are tackled is significantly slower and almost negligible when placed in comparison with the rate of technological advancements makes me less hopeful. Today's major problems, like poverty and inequality, are extremely dynamic and heavily motivated by human factors, such as intolerance and susceptibility to greed. With technology's focus on providing convenience and efficiency, the jarring incompatibility between the root causes of many major problems and solutions offered by technology reduces its suitability to be the silver bullet. Lessons taken from our past have evinced this clearly. The 2015 cholera outbreak in Zimbabwe [saw desperate attempts at rectification] through the use of water-purification technology, which proved to be unsuccessful as it could not ensure a lasting impact on providing continued supplies of clean water in the long run. Ultimately, it was solved by complementing the technology with the passing of laws on companies, which prohibited them from dumping their factory waste into the water sources illegally. This example explicitly highlights the ineffectiveness of technology in solving humanitarian crises, such as poverty, because of the human-driven root cause. The long-standing presence of these major problems is inherently motivated by institutional and structural flaws in the systems of society, such as a lack of environmental and social</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                               | <p>Key consideration that problems still exist, and they don't seem to be abating despite the development in tech</p> <p>Strong awareness of the nature of many major problems today and how tech is unsuited for addressing them, demonstrated with an excellent example of how tech usage is insufficient and works best when complimented by legislation</p> <p>Some reference to the effects of systems and structures, which adds a layer of complexity to</p> |



|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>consideration displayed in the above case. Therefore, technology is not the sole solution to today's major problems as there are intrinsically human-motivated causes that [need] to be tackled [which] cannot be solved by technology.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | <p>the problems</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| <p>Furthermore, it can be said that technology in fact worsens the world's major problems today. While technology in its pure form cannot bring any malignant effects to humans, it can possibly systematically create a widening of divisions amongst people who use it. The worsening inequality that currently plagues our world is a telling example of how technology can [] exacerbate issues it once was made to solve. Despite the fact that mass online communication social media platforms have afforded us a greater exposure to the plethora of perspectives outside our society and supposedly helped to induce greater tolerance and appreciation for our differences, the facilitation of echo chamber creation has, in fact, widened divisions in our society. Self-learning algorithms utilised by social media feed our population what it desires to see, rewarding us for engaging with biased viewpoints and even misinformation or extremist ideas. This has culminated in a blocking out of diverse perspectives and views by technology and can be clearly seen through the bitter feud between American Republicans and Democrats that has been fuelled by such self-learning algorithms and mass communication networks. The presence of media technology allows for different news channels harbouring their own opinionated views to be broadcasted, allowing Republicans to subscribe to Fox news that aligns with their views and Democrats to CNN news, expanding their echo chambers and imbuing them [with a] sense of moral superiority over the other. As a result, a lack of acceptance has further widened chasms in our society as technology has amplified the inherent differences in our beliefs and values, failing to solve major issues that stem from conflicting perspectives, such as political and ideological conflicts.</p> | <p>Interesting idea on the social impact of some technology</p> <p>Balanced paragraph acknowledging that such tech could have been created with the best intentions and solved part of the problem, but also that it has led to unintended effects</p> <p>The example can be clarified: is it the public or politicians who are affected? How is enabling broadcasts related to algorithms?</p> <p>It could be pointed out that this effect of tech is insidious and not widely known by the public, so people often believe that the views they are seeing in their echo chambers are representative of wider society, when they are often biased and incomplete</p> |
| <p>Moreover, the proliferation of technology in the digital age has worsened income divides between tech haves and have-nots. Only those who are able to afford technology are able to reap its bountiful benefits, leaving those who cannot adapt quickly enough or afford it to be left in the dust. This was clearly seen during the rise of telework during the stay-home quarantine periods of COVID-19, where less than 3% of the lowest wage quintile were able to telework from the safety of their homes, compared to more than 75% of the highest wage quintile being able to telework, according to the World Economic Forum. This highlighted the digital divide brought about by technology and suggests a worsening of the financial and social inequalities within all societies. Therefore, technology is unable to present a solution to today's major problems with the lack of appropriate measures to moderate its impacts on society.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | <p>The example is more telling of inequality in personal safety and the sacrifices made by the poorest for economic survival than of income inequality. It needs to be clarified that this meant many of the poor either lost their jobs in shutdowns, or had to make the decision to prioritise their income over their health. Nevertheless, the point is valid</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| <p>In all, technology is unable to be the main solution to today's major problems because of the human-driven causes behind most of them that have led to these issues persisting despite the rapid advancements in technology. More importantly, without the regulation of the people who are in control of technology, the rampant misuse and failure to moderate its negative impacts will not only fail to solve these major problems, but also worsen them. Nonetheless, the potential of technology can be better harnessed with the right motivations and policies used by the government to rectify inherent institutional flaws. But first, we, as a world, have to change our mindsets and raise our awareness on these major issues to fully effect a</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | <p>Layering of the ideas is done successfully, showing the escalation of the problem</p> <p>Coherent conclusion that again reinforces the potential of tech as the solution while acknowledging the human factors keeping</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |



long-lasting and positive change.

it from being the reality

(Gan Wan Nee, 19-13)

## 9 How far do you agree that technology is the solution to today's major problems?

*In contrast to the other samples above, these two paragraphs take a domain-driven approach. The examination of different domains raises the possibility of covering a range of major problems comprehensively, but this opportunity was seized less effectively in the first paragraph and more effectively in the second. When the arguments are organised around domains, care must be taken to check that each domain raised adds distinct value to the analysis rather than merely repeating similar ideas, in which case the points made can often be organised more efficiently.*

Where the environment is concerned, technology offers a myriad of revolutionary solutions in theory, yet the practical constraints hamper its progress. Many forms of newly invented or remodelled innovations have been proven scientifically possible and successful in alleviating the impact of certain environmental problems, but few of these have made any impact capable of eradicating the issue around the world, either due to resource constraints or the difficulty in shifting attitudes to become accepting of the unconventional means. A prime example is the issue of global warming, where improvements in production technologies in solar panels have allowed efficiency of renewable energy reserves to increase exponentially over the past few years, potentially gifting mankind the ability to be free of self-destructive and pollutive unrenowable sources such as coal and oil. Yet the inability of less developed countries to make the switch in the present lies in a lack of government budget, while even developed countries like the United States of America face political pressures from energy company lobbying by powerful corporations such as Shell. Similar issues are mirrored in the areas of the implementation of electric cars or hybrid vehicles, which faces high costs of [purchase] or even in safeguarding water resources, where countries are reluctant to process and reuse water from human waste as drinking water despite its successes in smaller nations like Singapore due to how unconventional (and perhaps repulsive) it is. As seen in the mentioned examples, technology does not withhold its gifts, but there are many underlying problems at the root of many major global problems today that technology cannot solve for us, therefore severely impairing technology as the saviour to our problems.

The point seems more widely applicable, and need not be limited unnecessarily to environmental issues

Strong awareness of how other factors can be an obstacle to solving the problem even if on paper tech solutions exist

Need to clarify that these solutions are largely more costly to implement

Example is lacking in detail: what are they lobbying for, and how does it hamper tech? Nevertheless, a helpful consideration of contextual constraints

In-depth knowledge of these problems demonstrated with several illustrations, enabling a successful argument that tech alone is not enough. However, it makes little sense to limit it to the environmental domain as the constraints raised are relevant to other problems also.



|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>In terms of social problems, many forms of innovation have emerged and been cited as means to fix issues societies face. However, its implementation has had limited impact, or in severe cases, aggravated issues. Some of the most prominent social issues discussed include terrorism or radicalisation, inequality and discrimination, and proponents of the benefits of technology have proposed and used means to address these issues, such as online learning technology through Youtube or Coursera equipping lower-skilled workers with greater knowledge and relevant skills to rid themselves of poverty, as seen in how we can easily get a university degree from a online university, or how social media and mobile applications can be used to warn communities and allow authorities to detects terrorist threats or suspicious activites. Unfortunately, many of these technologies have had limited impact. The income gap is still high as never before and instances of terrorism are still more common today than in the past. Many social problems have a great depth of complex origins in more subtle social problems and undetected fragmentations in societies that technology alone cannot combat. The increased rates of terrorism stem from the polarisation of communities and the ostracisation of individuals, rather than an inability of people to report and detect terrorist threats, just as how inequality stems from the hoarding of wealth by the rich rather than the inability of workers to perform well at their work. As proposed uses of technology often combat the symptoms rather than the causes, it is unfair to claim that technology alone can save the human race.</p> <p>(Noah Ang Shi Hern, 19-U4)</p> | <p>Successful illustration, as this demonstrates the volume of applications of tech as a solution quite well</p> <p>Incisive argument that digs down to the causes and other factors. In this case, focusing specifically on social problems seems more valuable because of the unique social context that has led to them that tech is ill-equipped to solve, though the nature of these problems could be better articulated</p> |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

## 10 Does your society do enough to embrace diversity?

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p><i>This response offers a thoughtful and fairly insightful look at the landscape of diversity in Singapore. While it starts off somewhat shakily with a less-than-clear stand, it provides steadily more thorough evaluation of the point of contention as the essay develops. It would be better if the direct response to the question could be signalled more overtly earlier in the essay, and every consideration of how we embrace diversity here was tied to an assessment of adequacy. Nevertheless, it has strengths in its personal insight and perceptiveness of its well-developed ideas, which are supported with apt and generally wide-ranging examples that clearly support the argument, though they are not noticeably original. Structurally, the essay can be improved with a rearrangement of ideas as the fourth body paragraph seems to retread the same ground covered in the second body paragraph.</i></p> |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| <p>In the context of an increasingly globalised world today, societies are becoming increasingly diverse in every aspect from their actual demographics to their shared cultural identity. Singapore, a small, global, city-state is no exception to this trend, with diversity in talent and culture often seen as a general benefit. However, in many regards, Singapore can still be considered a conservative Asian society, often focusing on tolerating diversity rather than embracing it.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | <p>While it is important to recognise different perspectives, note that the question is not “Does SG embrace diversity” but “does SG do enough to embrace diversity”. It must be clearly signalled whether what we do is enough or not enough to answer the question</p> |
| <p>Singapore prides itself as a global city with the interaction of rich cultures from its British colonial roots to its migrant Chinese history. These migrant ancestors of ours indeed brought much of what still is Singaporean culture today, from our national narrative of Singapore being a self-made country, to the food we enjoy. Additionally, Singapore also knows it is small, when compared to its neighbours of Malaysia and Indonesia, and hence relies on foreign</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | <p>Contextual knowledge of Singapore used to set up the argument, supporting why Singapore seeks to embrace diversity</p>                                                                                                                                                |



|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>talent to increase our economic output. Because of these two reasons, Singapore does indeed embrace expatriates from all over the world, embracing the diversity such foreign talent can introduce to our workplace to create spillover effects to allow our locals to learn from these talents. It has also led to our embracing of the <b>global monoculture</b> which can be seen in Singapore's Clarke Quay at Central Business District - lined with western, tourist-centered attractions that showcase much of what one imagines would be found in Western megacities such as New York City. Such integration of global, western culture is not by chance, as our government has indeed made conscious decisions to redevelop our urban core to cater to those people from all around the world. <b>However, foreign expatriates are an exception to Singapore's treatment of diversity</b>, as perhaps a more insidious reason for its warm welcome of these foreign expats is because of the pragmatic outcomes they bring, upgrading our city workplace into a world- class, financial, healthcare and precision engineering hub. In this case, Singapore embraces diversity because of its needs to do so, capitalising on its image as the link between east and west and attracting expats by showing them how welcoming and beautiful Singapore can be. However, when economic outcomes are less direct, it often becomes clear Singapore is not as embracing as it may seem to be.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | <p>Whether this is an embrace of <i>diversity</i> or not needs to be more overtly addressed</p> <p>Could expand on how they became an exception, or why other cultures are not similarly embraced</p> <p>This paragraph more or less proves its claim, but less attention has been given to what "do[ing] enough" looks like. There is some awareness of what it means to 'embrace' but it could more clearly demonstrate embracing</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| <p>Race and ethnicity have long been a contention of sensitive issues in Singapore, with our long history of race and ethnic riots, the most recent of which took place in 2014. Although Singapore markets itself as a melting hot pot of various cultures, the "once-in-a-while" frictions of clashes between our races point towards a far deeper and complex issue, with tensions often far too high for comfort. In the 55 years since Singapore's independence, our government has constantly pursued a policy of ethnic and racial tolerance in order to maintain the delicate fabric of racial harmony. This can be seen in the Ethnic Integration Act, which set racial quotas for home ownership in a bid to racially mix public housing to prevent racial enclaves from forming. <b>This led to a culture of tolerating rather than embracing diversity</b>, as can be seen in many cases of racial clashes in Singapore today. Take the curry pot incident in the 2010s, when a Chinese family could no longer tolerate the smells and spices [wafting] from their Indian neighbors cooking curry - the conflict made national news which required a resolution to be mediated by the town council, one which <b>focused on tolerance</b> by asking the Indian family to only cook curry on certain days of appealing to the Chinese family <b>tolerate, not embrace, this part of Singaporean food culture</b>. Another key area that highlights this culture of tolerance is seen in [how we treat] our migrant labourers, which is night and day when compared to our treatment of expatriates. What culminated in the 2014 Little India Riots was the product of longstanding social exclusion and discrimination against these Bangladeshi at mainland Indian origin foreign workers who [are] still a key part in Singapore's success today. These workers are <b>undeniably less economically productive</b> than the majority of Singaporeans, leading to their ostracization with much less tolerance from Singaporeans, <b>let alone integration or embracing their diversity</b>. This is seen in our "Not in My BackYard Syndrome" where many residents opposed the construction of foreign workers dormitories near their residence, seeing the urban underclass as "dirty" and "dangerous" people. Comparing the treatment of expats and foreign labourers, it is clear that we are a people based on tolerance, often more tolerant of the economically more productive people or those who can create more pragmatic outcomes.</p> | <p>Transition between paragraphs could be better handled, to clarify for the reader the connection between the previous idea and this one about race and ethnicity</p> <p>Again, somewhat relevant commentary on what we do, but still not quite answering the question directly, as whether it is enough should be evaluated</p> <p><b>This establishes clearer relevance, as it is implied that we fall short of embracing diversity, and merely tolerate it</b></p> <p>Questionable assertion, as these migrant workers carry out many functions in our society that much economic activity depends on!</p> <p><b>Not too clear what 'their diversity' refers to</b></p> <p>Claim is proven although link to the question's evaluation of 'enough' could again be stronger</p> |
| <p>Secondly, with racial and socio-economic differences, Singapore has indeed tried, but failed disastrously, in creating a more embracing societal culture. Politically, Singaporeans are afraid</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | <p>Clear response to the question</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |



|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>to engage actively as [the] conservative, sometimes authoritarian, government has had a long, questionable history in its treatment of political exiles with ideologically diverse perspectives. Such a culture has spilled over into mainstream Singaporean lives, with most of us hiding our unique traits to fit in as much as possible rather than stand[ing] out and hoping for society to embrace us. This can be seen in our treatment of the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender community, where the majority of queer people hide the truth about themselves in view of the repercussions they may face from their parents and society. To address this, there have been some efforts, such as the Singapore Kindness Movement, Transient Workers Count Too and many community events focussing on local-and-foreigner bonding. There have also been increasingly frequent examples of Singaporeans families “adopting” or becoming close friends with foreign labourers, often a choice made consciously to break down the aforementioned social stereotypes that migrant labourers face. Yet our society is still very much behind in this aspect, as seen in the NETS Flashpay advertisement which inadvertently used Brownface to portray that everyone can use their service. The advertisement also brought out many stereotypes Singaporeans have because of a lack of embracing diversity, such as all Malays are Muslims. While I concede that these efforts do indeed show progress in embracing diversity by encouraging locals to break down these invisible barriers, one must accept that Singaporean are still far too often focussed on tolerance and suppressing our differences rather than embracing them. Be it in ideology or identity, Singapore may be diverse, but the truth is the majority of us would rather hide such diversity rather than embrace it - except when economic outcomes present themselves.</p> | <p>Not clear what mainstream Singaporean lives means</p> <p>The jump to foreign workers is very sudden and could be more clearly aligned to the racial and socio-economic differences mentioned earlier</p> <p>Reference could be clearer</p> <p>Thoughtful rebuttal, but guard is not as strong as the assertions that Singaporeans are too often focussed on tolerance or suppressing our differences is not supported with any evidence</p> |
| <p>Critics [of] my argument may argue that tolerating diversity is a step towards embracing it, but the fact of the matter is that while the former seeks to de-escalate tensions at the surface, the latter focuses on the root cause of these feelings of tensions. While our society may be doing very much to tolerate diversity, it does much less in embracing it. At our core, Singaporeans are conflict-averse and would rather take the easy way out to suppress their differences than to lay it out to create a common understanding of empathy for those who are different from us. In comparison to other people such as the Canadians who also pride themselves as a melting hotpot of cultures, Singaporeans are much less empathetic, especially when comparing our treatments of the socially marginalised; Canadians have legalised marriage equality while Singapore does not, and Canadians are much more embracing of diversity in their political cabinet as compared to Singapore, with not only a gender equal cabinet but a more racially mixed one. Such factors are key indicators because only when a country embraces diversity, it is able to make such [] changes, electing minority lawmakers and protecting and providing for people who are different from us even when there are no economic incentives to do so.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | <p>Some evaluation of the value judgement, showing sensitivity to the distinctions between tolerance and diversity, though it is not fully persuasive</p> <p>Repeated claim from the previous paragraph, but no more support is provided</p> <p>Claim also already made in BP2</p> <p>This final statement would have been a better way of opening this paragraph, as it clearly demonstrates limits to how much we embrace diversity here</p> |
| <p>Overall, it is clear that Singapore does very much to tolerate diversity, but far less and much too little to embrace diversity. In our conflict-averse, conservative and pragmatic culture, we are a people that would rather suppress feelings of difference than to seek understanding and appreciation of each other. This is further worsened by our pragmatic and conservative views on race, religion or family units only embracing diversity and undergoing the uncomfortable process of integration when there are economic outcomes to be gained.</p> <p>(Lucas Loh, 19-A4)</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | <p>To be more consistently relevant, this stand could have been stated in the intro</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |



## 10 Does your society do enough to embrace diversity?

*In spite of the challenges faced in communicating ideas, this essay presents a highly relevant and thoughtful response that shows a clear understanding of the question and provides depth of evaluation. Aside from consistently recognising the nuance of 'embrace' and the need to evaluate doing 'enough', it is notable for its rich knowledge of the local context, relevant policies and public sentiment, covering an impressive amount of ground in terms of types of diversity. It makes a strong effort to consider a range of perspectives and to represent balance thoughtfully, providing apt and detailed evidence for the most part with some sensitivity to considerations of the various domains. While the essay maintains on the whole that Singapore society does not do enough, the nuances of the stand change somewhat as the response develops, suggesting that it could have been better planned on a macro scale. However, it is also evident that language is a stumbling block in this response: while it is competent enough to convey complex ideas, meaning is occasionally affected. Many sentence structure errors have not been fully corrected to preserve the spirit of the piece. To the writer's credit, efforts have been made to use a variety of literary devices, and though it does not completely align with the introduction, the conclusion is well written, ending the essay on a thoughtful and persuasive note.*

"Regardless of Race, Language or Religion". That is the value enshrined in my society, Singapore. It is from the pledge that every primary and secondary school student recites daily. However, if one were to reflect [on whether] we have really done enough to embrace diversity, one will find that while Singapore [fares] relatively better [than her neighbours] in the region, where sec[essionist] movements are still rampant, there is still progress to be made. As such, while diversity among racial, linguistic and religious groups has been embraced, the ever changing economic landscape means that migrant communities and diversity between social economic status (SES) have not been embraced enough yet.

It is odd to speak of diversity between social-economic status, as unlike the other types mentioned earlier, it's not immediately evident that it is a type of diversity that should be embraced

Clear intro that answers the question, but the stand is narrow

To begin, some have the view that Singapore has done enough to embrace racial diversity. As a nation built by immigrants from around the world with different races, such as the Chinese and the Indians, one will soon realise that there are many racial groups in Singapore. As such, rather than forgetting these differences, Singapore officially recognises this diversity, and represents it through a Chinese, Malay, Indian, others (CMIO) model. This means that for everyone in my society, our identity is hyphenated, be it Singaporean-Chinese or Singaporean-Malay. While this may not appear significant, it has direct implications about where one can purchase government housing. With more than 80% of Singaporeans who own homes living in government housing, it shows the gravity that the CMIO model has. With a Housing Development Board (HDB) integration policy in the founding years of Singapore, there are set quotas of each race within every HDB block. This worked effectively, preventing the formation of racial enclaves that would have been seen, if housing was left on its own. [By] doing so, the increased interaction between the races has allowed for a stronger multiculturalism. With the commemoration of Racial Harmony Day on 21st July, the day that the last racial riots occurred in Singapore, [the importance of multiculturalism and embracing diversity] is etched into the hearts of many Singaporeans, for the lack of it will lead to bloodshed as seen in those riots. It appears then that my society has done enough to embrace diversity, but I would beg to differ. The CMIO model that Singapore champions can be seen as assimilating the different multitude of races into one of the four primary races (with others typically being Eurasian). With the majority race, the Chinese, there are different dialects and ethnicity, coming with different languages such as Hokkien, Teo Chew and Hakka. By pushing

Signposting can be more thoughtful

Some disconnect or disorganisation in the flow of ideas: the links between ideas and to the question can be made clearer

This phrase could be clarified

Good signposting and initiation of rebuttal

Not clear what this means due to phrasing

Need to justify such an intense term of phrase though, especially since



|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>these different ethnicities under the umbrella term of “Chinese”, it has destroyed the diversity among the Chinese. Its success can be seen from the lack of dialect speaking millennials today, as a result of the 1979 Speak Mandarin Campaign that led to the closure of radio stations broadcasting in dialect. In our pursuit of diversity, we have lost the diversity present within a racial group. If this were to happen to the Chinese, what more the Malay, Indian and others, races that come from all other parts of the world. As such, more can be done to embrace this racial and linguistic diversity.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | <p>many Chinese still identify with their dialect groups. Also, what ‘it’ refers to could be clearer</p> <p>Thoughtful idea supported by appropriate examples, though the idea could be expanded and developed further</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| <p>Others may then point out Singapore’s embrace of religious diversity. Despite being a secular state, all sorts of religions can be found here, and are tolerated by one another. As there is no one major religious group that dominates in Singapore, the majority of Singaporeans being freethinkers has allowed policy-making to be made from a rather unbiased position. This too, is a stark contrast to other nations in our region, such as the Pattari Muslims in Southern Thailand, Shan Christians in Myanmar and Mindanao Muslims in the Philippines. All these groups mentioned are under persecution for among other reasons, being the religious minority. This does not happen in Singapore, where minority religions such as Shintoism are protected by the constitution under the Maintenance of Religious Harmony Act of the 1980s. Moreover, through the interfaith talks held by the Ministry of Culture, Communications and Youth (MCCY), there are platforms for religious leaders to come together and better understand one another’s views. This diversity is so embraced that syncretism is taking shape in Singapore, with temples serving both Taoism and Buddhism. This then, is indeed a huge success of my society in doing enough to embrace diversity. Still, this does not mean there are no possessive impediments. One can look to parliament to understand it. While Singapore takes into account racial representation in parliament, there is a lack of religious representation in parliament. This means that there can be a disproportionate number of members of parliament that carry with them the views of one particular faith. While faiths can change, this lack of transparency means polarising social issues such as abortion, lgbt rights and capital punishment can have a religious input, and as a direct result overshadow the beliefs of others, disrupting religious diversity. Therefore, while Singapore has done enough, additional measures can be taken such that it can be maintained.</p> | <p>Note that it was not the point of these policies to promote religious diversity to the extent that syncretism actually flourished here</p> <p>Need to write this out the first time it is used</p> <p>Not the most effective claim, as it becomes questionable if what Singapore has done is enough if it cannot reasonably be maintained</p>                                                                                                                   |
| <p>Now, the direct group[] where diversity is not found will be that between Singaporeans and the migrant community, particularly the transient ones. With no minimum wage, Singapore draws foreign firms in by allowing them to employ cheap foreign labour, such as construction workers from India, Bangladesh and China. Also, local entrepreneurs also use that opportunity to bring in domestic helpers, who despite having a reasonable salary, have most of that taken away by the agent fees required to bring them to Singapore. This then leaves this transient migrant community, who actually take up around 20% of Singapore’s population, in an extremely vulnerable position. As such, they do have fears when interacting with the locals, and vice versa. Moreover, the sense of superiority Singaporeans have when compared to them means that interactions too are kept minimal. Furthermore, the Gurkha contingent of the Singapore Police Force, comprising 2000 Nepal men, are denied both citizenship and the advantage in the application for one. These men who serve Singapore for up to 30 years will have to be deported back to Nepal, despite doing a profession that requires them to be separated from their hometowns. This however, is an issue not many Singaporeans realise due to the lack of interaction with them. Moreover, despite HDB’s policy to prevent racial enclaves, there are still new enclaves thanks to globalisation. At Peninsula Plaza, one can find</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | <p>Possible claim, but it is unexpected as it was not signalled in the intro</p> <p>What do locals have to fear? Make it clear, as the reader cannot be assumed to have this knowledge</p> <p>Questionable if this is really an example of the migrant labour above</p> <p>This makes it sound as if these groups live in these shopping centres. Do pay attention to what a non-local reader cannot be expected to know, and explain the context where needed</p> |



|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>the Burmese. At Lucky Plaza, the Filipinos. At Golden Mile Complex, the Thais. This is something that the brightest minds of government did not conceive of. However, due to their nature as transient foreigners making a living here, no substantial efforts are done to embrace them into our society, possibly due to the pragmatic nature of Singapore. As such, I believe my society has not done enough to embrace diversity.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | <p>The most thoughtful part of this response as there is an attempt to explain why Singaporeans act this way, but it needs to be explained for the reader for its potential to be realised</p> <p>Slightly different from original stand, so it may be confusing</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| <p>Moreover, a perspective that my society fails to take into account is that there is a diversity between the [socio-economic] classes. While it is not that prevalent between high and middle income inherently, it is the case for the low-income earners of my society. Due to my society's belief in meritocracy, the failure of one to earn money is deemed as their own failure [of] merit. As such, it does not just imply a lack of money, but a loss of dignity. Along with a lack of unemployment benefits, it becomes extremely difficult for this group of people to stand on their feet again. They are also discouraged from the joy of childbirth. While Singapore carries a pro-natalist view, this does not apply to low-income earners in Singapore. Under the Home Ownership Plans Education (HOPE) scheme, low income earners are discouraged from having more children in order to enjoy government subsidies. This in a sense, is placing a subtle statement that a child's worth is not as high when it comes from a poorer family. Moreover, due to this meritocratic nature, there is a sentiment that a person's people's position in life is due to their own merits. This means that policies are targeted to nature and not to nurture. As such, policies toward class differences are done at a micro level, with different policies for each class, rather than looking at it as a whole and possibly finding a systematic problem. With the culmination of all these differences between the classes are forged stronger, and all the more difficult it becomes for the diversity of class to be embraced. At a young age, children are already networking in groups that are similar to their parents' income level, with a few exceptions here and there, due to branding of schools and tuition culture in Singapore, where money can buy opportunities. However, with a new streaming plan to group children, it is possible that this issue can be mitigated in years to come. Yet, looking at it now, the lack of conversation and interaction between classes means that this diversity is still not embraced.</p> | <p>This diversity could be explained better</p> <p>While this is no doubt one key effect of the scheme, it may be fairer to acknowledge that it seeks to encourage family planning - which would be less immediately suspect</p> <p>Why this is the case should be explained</p> <p>Why meritocracy leads to this is not clear and should be explained</p> <p>It's not clear why 'diversity of class' is something that ought to be embraced at all, since it would mean embracing inequality, which is largely viewed as a bad thing</p> <p>This lack of interaction between the classes seems to be the most relevant concern for the point of contention, but it is rushed</p> |
| <p>In sum, while Singapore should be credited for her success in creating a tolerant culture, I do not believe that tolerating is the same as embracing. Diversity among the different lines still remains a rather taboo topic, in which people find it easier to just pretend they do not exist. However, to truly do enough to embrace diversity, we have to dig out these differences and understand that what we are currently doing is still lacking. Even though we keep our feet anchored to the ground of reality out of pragmatism, we cannot afford to keep our eyes on the ground too. To move towards this goal, we have to be more idealistic and be willing to move towards there.</p> <p>(Li Sirui, 19-A6)</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | <p>Good observation, but it is not quite the same as the initial stand</p> <p>Unclear expression</p> <p>Interesting and thoughtful conclusion</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |



## 10 Does your society do enough to embrace diversity?

*This well-written, coherent piece explores a broad and interesting range of diversities in Singapore society beyond the usual racial and/or religious aspects and discusses sufficiency fairly consistently with a degree of depth. Throughout, there is a sensitivity to the nuances of the keyword 'embrace', and the writer valuably unpacks it to mean more than just mere tolerance, but active appreciation and celebration of differences. The arguments are largely and aptly illustrated, though not especially original, providing concrete evidence for the arguments. At several points there are glimmers of further insight, with references made to Singapore's specific context, but these are not sustained throughout the essay, and could often use further explanation to develop their potential, especially for audiences unfamiliar with the local context.*

In our increasingly stratified world today, Singapore's goal of building an inclusive, multicultural and multiracial society posits us as somewhat of an exception on the world stage. While most countries strive to achieve harmony and peace, Singapore has long propagated the importance of achieving this through embracing various groups of people who might be different, be it in race, education level or ability. While I concede that Singapore has made strides in achieving such a noble goal, I believe that our society has yet to do enough to fully embrace diversity. Our society is still home to many who are tolerant but not yet celebrating diversity, a reality that has been shaped by both our history as a nation and our present efforts which remain insufficient.

Clear thesis that shows recognition of different levels of acceptance, from tolerating diversity to celebrating it

Many would point to the presence of racial diversity as a sign that Singapore is accepting of and home to people from many cultural backgrounds. The celebration of Racial Harmony Day is an event that most, if not all, Singapore schools participate in. The donning of ethnic wear, the tasting of traditional foods from other cultures and the reiteration of how harmonious multiculturalism is one of the pillars of Singapore's social defence have encouraged open-mindedness in Singaporeans [from a young age]. Furthermore, the danger of letting racial diversity become a distinctive aspect of our identity has often been emphasised in the example of the racial riots that took place in Singapore's nation-building years. Years of anguish and fear have been enough to put forth the narrative that the consequences of communalism is something Singapore society cannot afford to bear again. This fear, some cite, is enough to convince people to love and celebrate our neighbours.

This point not only recognises what we commonly do that looks like embracing diversity, but also explicates some of the underlying reasons why we do so

However, this argument is flawed in a few ways. Firstly, the paradoxical notion of fear driving people to celebrate the racial fault lines that were once so very divisive is enough to show the gaps in this argument. It is because of this very fear that many Singaporeans today adopt an attitude of tolerance, preferring to silence any conversation that trespasses social boundaries of what is acceptable. The reality is that of present, racial diversity carries a connotation of fear, manifesting in emotional baggage that we have yet to chuck aside since our early days as a third-world nation. Hence, a clear distinction must be made between [the] embrace and tolerance [of diversity]. Secondly, while the racial riots are an important aspect of Singapore history, we must not forget that it was a time when pragmatism reigned in societal ideology. In the 1980s, Lee Kuan Yew, together with his government at the time, launched the Speak Mandarin campaign, aimed at unifying the different Chinese ethnic groups through speaking the common language of Mandarin. The campaign encouraged citizens to trade in their dialects for Mandarin instead, putting an end to most dialect television shows and forcing Chinese people to speak Mandarin at school and work. That is an example of a figment of our past that has incurred a butterfly effect -- the pragmatism-driven steamroll [caused] us to lose

Insightful evaluation, but it could be supported with illustration of why fear rather than goodwill or appreciation are the driving forces, and how it leads to tolerance rather than celebration of differences

Potentially insight reference to the context, but since the point of the Speak Mandarin campaign was not explained, a reader from a different context may not be able to see the connections

It's not very clear why



|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>linguistic diversity. At present, efforts have been made to encourage younger generations to pick up dialects again, such as the proliferation of dialect translation applications, but it is insufficient. A whole generation of native speakers have been lost, so current efforts that encourage but not enforce the speaking of dialects may mean that that linguistic diversity is not only not embraced, but may be lost forever.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | <p>this consideration of linguistic diversity has been appended to a discussion of racial diversity, but the criticisms are relevant to the question</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| <p>While I acknowledge that many strides have been taken in terms of city design to embrace diversity, current efforts may still be lacking as these architectural efforts have been catered to some groups. Singapore has a few statutory boards like the Urban Redevelopment Authority (URA) and Housing Development Board (HDB) that work closely together to make living spaces friendly to a diversity of people's abilities and education levels. Although Singapore is known for its world-class education system and its high literacy rates, there remain[] people who fall at the lower end of the education spectrum. The URA ensures common spaces are built with Universal Design principles, such as implementing a colour coding system for our Mass Rapid Transit (MRT) system to help illiterate people identify their destination. Popular MRT stations like Chinatown MRT also have beautiful oriental murals that make it easy for people who may not be able to read the signboards at the station. The ramps built in every bus, the wheelchair cubicles in every public toilet and even the magnifying glass sitting next to shelves of selected supermarkets are ways that design has allowed our society to be more accepting of people who have different needs. [G]oing the extra mile to ensure our city is liveable for all, [] is a testament to Singapore's embrace of those who are different.</p> | <p>Apt illustrations with relevant details</p> <p>Interesting point, but by the end of the paragraph the point made is that we have embraced diversity, which is at odds with the topic sentence</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| <p>However, we must also acknowledge that while these designs help some, they do not help all. Recent controversies over the overcrowding in migrant worker dormitories have pushed the Ministry of Manpower (MOM) to ensure better housing conditions for the migrant workers that help build the Singapore we know and love. 'Not in my Backyard' (NIMBY) sentiments have risen again, as many citizens resisted the move by MOM to rehouse workers into newly built dormitories near residential areas. In the newly built housing, the lack of effort to integrate workers into the residential area stands in stark contrast to the design efforts made for the disabled or uneducated citizens of our society. Hence, a lot more can be done to encourage Singapore society to embrace diversity.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | <p>This should be combined with the paragraph above so that the topic sentence of the earlier paragraph is more sensible</p> <p>Can consider why it is the case that citizens have resisted this move, and recognise in a more nuanced manner why there is a 'lack of effort' and who is responsible</p>                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| <p>Lastly, our society has yet to do enough to embrace the academic diversity in Singapore. The lack of diversity in Special Assistance Plan (SAP) schools that are known for their niche strength in the Chinese language and China studies is one such example. Such schools see a very low acceptance rate of people from non-Chinese ethnic backgrounds because of the mandatory learning of Mandarin and the vast number of Chinese cultural activities such as calligraphy and Chinese dance that students are expected to take part in. Additionally, at higher levels of academia, unofficial Out-of-Bounds (OB) markers make it difficult for a diversity in opinions to exist. Hence, this has resulted in a 'brain-drain', where many academics choose to go overseas instead out of fear of censorship from the government. Therefore, a homogeneity in academic cultures is created, both in the example of SAP schools and academia, where its doors are open only to a certain brand of citizen. While there have been efforts made by advocacy groups and independent publishers in Singapore who help to sell works by such academics, these are only efforts that have yet to make a big splash in society.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                  | <p>What has been done is understated. The evaluation can be refined by noting the wealth of discussions of the issue, suggesting a willingness to embrace. How responsive ministries have been to these criticisms can be evaluated productively to show how various stakeholders affect how diversity is embraced</p> <p>Can be illustrated more concretely (eg. Alfian Sa'at Dissent Module at Yale-NUS, though he's still in SG)</p> <p>Beyond judging the size of the impact, amore</p> |



|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |                                                                                                                                |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | explicit link back to the sufficiency of such action is needed                                                                 |
| <p>In conclusion, I believe that there is much to be desired about the way Singaporean society embraces diversity because more of us need to realise that embracing means accepting, understanding and celebrating others who may be different. While I concede that current realities do include some semblance of acceptance, at the very least tolerance, there are many segments of society where our efforts are not enough. It is my hope that together, we can build the harmonious, multicultural society we aspire to become.</p> <p>(Alayna Yap, 19-14)</p> | <p>Understand stock phrases before using them: much to be desired or much to be done?</p> <p>Clear and coherent conclusion</p> |

## 11 To what extent is an appreciation of the arts essential for the individual today?

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p><i>This is an engaging, original and insightful response that shows attention to all aspects of the question and navigates different meanings and perspectives in the question with ease and flair. The writer conducts a thorough evaluation of issues contained within the question, raising several perceptive ideas, including careful and sophisticated critique of her own claims before deploying equally nuanced counter-argumentation, thereby aptly demonstrating a clearly balanced discussion. The value judgement of essentiality is consistently negotiated, though it is less consistent in clarifying what counts as appreciation of the arts. While the linking falters in the third body paragraph due to uneven articulation of the ideas, the point made remains largely relevant. The argument is richly supported with appropriate and wide-ranging examples, that are often original and contemporary, with most being clearly linked to the claims set out in the topic sentences and serving to enhance the quality of the argument. It has been conducted in sophisticated language and demonstrates a strong sense of organisation with the bookending achieved through the introduction and conclusion. However, while the writer's personal voice is a confident one, there is a tendency to overuse extremely long sentences punctuated with many commas. In some cases, these can be chunked to improve readability and provide greater variation.</i></p> |                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| <p>Founding Prime Minister of Singapore Mr Lee Kuan Yew once said, 'poetry is a luxury we cannot afford', aptly echoing the sentiments of several pragmatists in society today, who argue that an appreciation of the arts, through learning about and participating in the creative process, is superfluous, and thus unnecessary in today's fast-paced, quick developing world. In addition, given the state of the world today, [and] being in a pandemic, the essentiality of the appreciation of the arts may further be rendered moot. However, it is precisely [] the fast-paced, angst-ridden state of the world today, that bolsters the need for an appreciation of the arts. As such, I largely feel that an appreciation of the arts is essential for the individual today, as it benefits the individual's well being, anchors one's worth and sense of belonging, as well as broadens one's horizons, which are factors that are necessary for human life and development.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | <p>Engaging, thoughtful and fluid use of quote as hook</p> <p>Stand is clearly established with aptly summarised reasons</p> <p>Lucid and engaging intro that clearly sets the stage for the rest of the essay</p> |
| <p>Pragmatists may argue that given today's fast-paced, helter skelter context, the necessity of an appreciation of the arts is rendered moot, given that doing so seemingly brings no tangible benefits or worth to the individual. Given the need to continuously keep up with the times, racing against global crises such as the Covid-19 pandemic, an appreciation of the arts for the individual is seen as a waste of time, due to the perception that an appreciation of the arts provides no tangible benefit and is seen to be for the elite, who have the luxury of time to</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | <p>'Pragmatists' and 'rendered moot' are somewhat repetitive considering their use in the intro</p>                                                                                                                |



|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>indulge in slow-paced hobbies like these. For instance, Banksy's newly-painted work at the Southampton General Hospital in England, to some, could barely be seen as essential. While the visual portrayal of a child holding on to a nurse toy, flying it around like a superhero does serve as an ode to the healthcare workers in the midst of the global health crisis, many have ventured the argument that the creation or the appreciation of such works do nothing to solve or alleviate the health crisis, given that it seemingly does not provide tangible solutions in the form of monetary or medical benefits, hence rendering an appreciation of the arts unnecessary for the individual.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | <p>Opposing perspective is developed with awareness of common perceptions, contextual justification and a suitable example.</p> <p>Here the evaluation of essentiality is premised on the tangibility of the outcomes</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| <p>However, I would venture to argue that the essentiality of more tangible benefits can, in fact, coexist with the necessity of an appreciation of the arts as well, seeing as it allows one to develop and improve one's mental wellbeing in the pursuit of such successes and achievements. The maintenance of mental health is undeniably vital in today's world, given the increasing high-stress environments that individuals are situated in today, thus rendering an appreciation of the arts through participating in art creation all the more vital. For instance, art therapy through the visual arts and music has been proven to improve individuals' mental well being, allowing the individuals to better cope with the demands of society. An appreciation of the arts is especially vital as a moral booster for those under extreme states, such as frontline health workers, who are able to be galvanised by an appreciation of poetry, such as Yayoi Kusama's 'Hope For the World', which serves as a beacon of light, to motivate workers, alongside other individuals in the world, to persevere and press on in times of difficulty. Thus, it can be seen that an appreciation of the arts is vital for the individual today, providing intangible benefits necessary for human development. The essentiality of an appreciation of the arts is further exemplified from how it keeps one occupied and rooted during periods of crisis, as demonstrated by the high viewership of online theatrical productions such as the Phantom of the Opera, which can be seen as an outlet to anchor oneself to a hobby in the midst of a high stress time context.</p>                                                                                                                                       | <p>Thoughtful and complex claim, though it still comes off as a little narrow in focus, being tied to the context of these crises</p> <p>Consistent attention to situating the essay within the contemporary context</p> <p>Examples have potential but seem to prove that art is good to have, rather than essential, which the question is looking for, and is not especially successful in proving that art is essential for human development</p> <p>As there are other possible outlets, the essentiality of art is not convincing</p>       |
| <p>In addition, an appreciation of the arts instills a sense of self worth in individuals, inculcating a sense of belonging, something extremely necessary, considering the need for individuals to survive and function in communities and societies. This very benefit and function manifests itself in the form of appreciating the arts through in-depth studies, or even casual appreciation. This is a view taken by the majority of governments in the world, who have commissioned musicians to compose national anthems for their respective nations, to be sung by individuals, so as to cultivate a sense of identity in individuals thus contributing to the individual's sense of worth and belonging to societies. For instance, in places such as China and Singapore, students sing the National anthem everyday as a constant reminder of their respective senses of purpose, which are to strive to work hard for the betterment of their respective nations. Formally learning about the arts further bolsters the essentiality of appreciating the arts, given that it allows one to learn about one's community's historical context, instilling a sense of rootedness and belonging necessary for human survival and progress. For instance, a formal visual arts education in Singapore comprises learning about works such as National Language Class by Chua Mia Tee, instilling in students a sense of national pride from learning how far society has progressed, and further generating a sense of purpose to elevate this progress. Learning about Literature in the form of Shakespeare's plays such as Measure for Measure helps to cultivate an understanding of universal human nature and moral values that are essential for the functioning [of society], even in today's societies.</p> | <p>This claim provides a better sense of essentiality</p> <p>Attention is paid to different levels of appreciation<br/>Suitable and thoughtful example, though how the individual's appreciation of the music contributes to this can be explained</p> <p>Essentiality should be emphasised, as the word choice suggests permission instead</p> <p>What art form this is could be made clearer for the reader who may not share the context</p> <p>Example can be more developed: What values does MFM exemplify?</p> <p>Claim mostly proven,</p> |



|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>As such, an appreciation of the arts is necessary due to the function it serves, to integrate and anchor individuals in their respective societies.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | <p>though some of the examples could be developed more effectively</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| <p>However, some may argue that it is precisely due to the above-mentioned reason that an appreciation of the arts is deemed more a luxury rather than necessity, seeing that it seems to be essential for the elite and for those already thriving, in whole societies replete with resources that already ensure the basic needs of one's well being are fulfilled. While I do concede that these may be true in certain cases, this is contingent on the forms of art one is appreciating. An appreciation of the arts, contrary to popular belief, is necessary for individuals who are not as well-off or well provided for. The arts encapsulates several art forms that not only serve intangible purposes to benefit the elite but also the marginalised, who are provided with a voice, which may very well be their only way to survive in the world. For instance, Chinese film 'Letter from Masanjia' depicts a Chinese Falun Gong Practitioner's life in persecution by the Chinese government for the practice of his religion. By participating in the creation of the art through filming his own life going about in China and self-illustrating his life in the labour camp, Mr Sun, said practitioner, has created a lifeline for himself by showcasing the detriments experienced in his life. By watching such films, the individual gets to learn about such marginalised persons in society, and is in a better position to effect change to save lives. This, of course, would be contingent on the individual's own impetus to reach out to his nation's authorities as non-governmental organisations, but nevertheless, demonstrates the necessity of an appreciation of the arts in facilitating such a purpose. Shocking works such as Josef Ng's 'Brother Cane', a performance art work which involved him cutting off his pubic hair in public to provide a critique on the harshness of Singapore's penal discrimination towards homosexual men in Singapore and serves as an eye-opening expose on the circumstances that the marginalised have been confined to, further highlights how an appreciation of the arts is all the more vital, engaging minds about different perspectives, even of the marginalised in society, a factor which is crucial in helping one ascertain one's own take and moral stance, given the increasing plurality and polarisation of perspectives in today's world.</p> | <p>Very thoughtful navigation and perceptive critique of own arguments</p> <p>Suitable guard in the same vein</p> <p>Clear claim backed up by a suitable reason that pays strong attention to essentiality</p> <p>The example is interesting, but it is not immediately evident that creation of art is appreciation of it. It is possible, but the link must be made clear - show how this is appreciating art</p> <p>This example deals with a different kind of discrimination than is highlighted in the argument, which limits its value. Furthermore, it should be clarified if his work actually reached the subjects of his work, as well as where this fits in the earlier concern of creation versus appreciation</p> |
| <p>In conclusion, it is understandable that pragmatists may argue against the necessity of an appreciation of the arts for the individual due to today's fast-paced society. However, it is foolhardy to assume that the pursuit of the material for one's physical well being and existence cannot coexist with the necessary cultivation of the mind and soul, especially since such harsh demands of today's world render an appreciation of the arts even more vital for the individual, alongside other benefits and functions served that are needed for human survival and development, such as the cultivation of a sense of belonging, and the broadening of perspectives. Thus, Mr Lee Kuan Yew may have been right in deeming an appreciation of the arts as a non-necessity in the past, but an appreciation of the arts has definitely asserted itself to be crucial today and into the future.</p> <p><i>(Koh Ning, Marilyn, 19-E1)</i></p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | <p>Strong attention to essentiality renewed in final paragraph</p> <p>Lucid conclusion, resulting in a thoughtful bookending of ideas in the intro and conclusion and effective framing of the essay</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |



## 11 To what extent is an appreciation of the arts essential for the individual today?

*This is overall a largely successful response. While it covers relatively little ground, it makes up for it in depth and detail, with care taken to make the arguments quite solidly. The second body paragraph is especially strong, showing awareness of the concerns of the modern context and how they affect the needs of individuals, a clear recognition of the need to determine the essentiality of an appreciation of the Arts, and very well-formed and insightful illustrations which show how different forms of art and our appreciation of them come together to convey a fuller picture of social issues. However, it must be noted that the response is somewhat lacking in breadth, and could have benefitted from more points that would help to anchor the extent of essentiality of the arts more convincingly. The writing is fluent and confident, but some slips and errors which alter the intended meanings significantly are present, so more care must be taken to convey the desired ideas more effectively.*

Today's state of society can be said to be one of the most chaotic, uncertain and messy periods in our history. With crises and emergencies coming our way from so many angles, many have begun to grow tired of the never-ending slew of bad news. In a world where people battle all sorts of wars ranging from a new, foreign virus to social justice for marginalised groups, the concept of art and art appreciation is lost on many. At first glance, the Arts is a term that holds little weight, yet it encompasses so much more than people realise. In modern society, the Arts has moved on from what seems like the far detached luxury of fine visual art, classical plays and operas and has come to embrace and include that and much more. From content creation on social media sites to the countless online shows constantly fed to us in this digital era, the Arts have come to encompass various forms of video, music and poetry-making as well as the idea of storytelling. With all the uncertainty and doubt that exists in today's world, it is only natural that the appreciation of the Arts, even in the everyday individual grows to be even more essential than it was before. Hence, it is to a large extent that an appreciation for the Arts remains essential for the individual today.

Some modern context, but it largely seems to show that the Arts have taken a backseat, and could more clearly relate to the individual's appreciation of art

A wide definition of the Arts is taken

Stand is clearly taken, but without the benefit of clear reasoning at this point.

As aforementioned, the world now lives in times of chaos. It would seem natural that art and appreciation of the Arts has become unimportant and unnecessary, taking a backseat to other priorities in maintaining stability in society. A prime example is the Covid-19 pandemic that has unexpectedly gripped our world and spread with unprecedented speed to catch even the world's greatest powers off guard. With that, issues such as maintaining the wellbeing of citizens by stemming the spread, buoying people who were laid off financially and resuscitating a rapidly improving economy took the front line. In the Straits Times, an infographic even showed the top few essential and non-essential jobs in this pandemic. Unsurprisingly, 'Artist' took first place on their nicely designed infographic, ironic to say the least. Many found this understandable, and it hence may seem like an appreciation for the Arts would take the lead in being unessential as well. However, this is largely untrue for the individual. As many have subsequently pointed out, artists and an appreciation for the Arts have become pivotal and essential for the individual to remain hopeful and encouraged in this time of crisis. In times of uncertainty and doubt, it is inevitable for individuals to find it difficult to cope. All paths might seem like dead ends to those who think life can continue as it was before. However, one path always remains to connect and link people to one another to provide a means for them to seek hope. During the period where most of the world went into lockdown during the Covid-19 pandemic, many resources opened to the people because an appreciation of the Arts was what kept people going. Scholarly journals and writings on the website JSTOR and 10 books on the popular application Audible became freely available for

Point is clearly tied to the modern context

Could be more clearly expressed: On the essential or non-essential list?

Informal

Logic here is not quite water-tight

Could be clearer that this means following the release of the list

Convolutd, either in logic or expression, so this section is hard to understand

While it is reasonable to point out that people did turn to the arts for comfort, it is not clear how these examples of



|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>the people to access. As stated by these companies, such resources should be made available to everyone given the Arts is to allow people to fully exercise their appreciation for the specific art forms. Singapore's theater company Pangdemonium also did similarly by making the streaming of a few of their plays free, allowing many to access and appreciate their plays. People actively sought out the sources to keep themselves occupied, the appreciation of the Arts playing an integral role in uniting and maintaining hope in these trying times. Hence, an appreciation for the Arts is essential to the individual today to maintain a sense of hope.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | <p>materials being released online prove that the arts is essential in any way</p> <p>Besides Covid-19, it would be good to take a step back to note that it is not the only crisis that has led to stress today. The point could be better with explicit illustration of how the Arts has brought hope to people and how that makes it essential</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| <p>An appreciation of the Arts is also essential for the individual in today's society to allow one to be more aware and informed of the society and greater world around them. Due to the advent of globalisation, the transmission of ideas and stories have become increasingly fluid. The Butterfly Effect, which states that something as small as a butterfly flapping its wings could cause something as big as a tornado elsewhere, is compounded in our increasingly shrinking world. It now hence makes the understanding of ideas, issues and mindsets around us ever so essential to remain well informed. While there may seem to be other methods that can better inform an individual, an appreciation of the Arts can never be fully divorced from the concept of educating one on the various issues in society. Art making has become one of the best and most effective methods to deliver a message to an audience with both contextual and emotional impact. The issues in society will always concern humanity in one way or another, and any issue concerning humanity has to be retold with emotion and impact. Appreciation of the Arts gives individuals a myriad of sources to understand these narratives from, be it from film to poetry to music. An example is illustrating the complex history of racism and discrimination of the African Americans in the United States. Starting with film and storytelling, movies such as Hotel Rwanda go back in time to a period in history many might be unfamiliar with. Instead of stating, the movie shows the development of the divide between different ethnic groups in Rwanda as perpetuated by their colonisers. The roots of hatred, comparison and divide sowed into these Africans was only the beginnings of discrimination that would occur similarly in the US. Moviegoers viewing this film are given a first hand view of the stories and narratives of some one they might not even come close to understanding. This impact on viewers is the understanding offered to those who have an appreciation of the Arts. This is further continued in music, especially the song titled 'This is America' by African American music maker Childish Gambino. In his catchy song, he demonstrates the gun violence, systemic discrimination and oppression that the African American people suffer daily. The audience of his music began to realise the message of his lyrics and even the cinematography and choreography of his music video and dance, allowing them to understand the narrative from his perspective. Hence, it can be seen that various forms of art offer a wide range of perspectives for one to consume. An appreciation of art is hence essential for us to actively seek out such sources and understand the greater world around us beyond our own troubles. The issues elsewhere allow us to rethink and reflect on our own situation, and an appreciation of the Arts is one of the most effective gateways for the individual to place oneself in another's shoes to do so.</p> | <p>Keen awareness of the need to justify essentiality in today's context</p> <p>Not convincing: How widespread is this sort of communication, and why does that make it essential?</p> <p>Could be clearer as this makes it seem as if audiences are still unable to understand these others even through movies</p> <p>Well developed and detailed example demonstrating how the Arts leads to such socio-cultural insight</p> <p>Excellent illustration of how art of various kinds expands our insight. However, the point can be strengthened by establishing why it is so crucial today, such as by drawing connections to the Black Lives Matter protestors to recognise that the issues are widespread</p> |
| <p>While the chaos and uncertainty of society rages around us, the simplest acts of appreciation</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |



|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |                                                                                                                      |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>and gratitude become ever so important. The narratives of others are full of value to teach us lessons we should learn, and the various art forms that we can appreciate link us to one another this way, prodigy a network of support, understanding and dialogue. In these trying times, this is exactly what the world needs to try to recover from the trauma it has seen. Therefore, an appreciation of the Arts is largely essential today.</p> <p>(Neo Lisuen, 19-05)</p> | <p>Coherent and effective conclusion that summarises the arguments and ties them together to make the point well</p> |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

## 12 How far is state intervention in matters of language acceptable?

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p><i>This thoughtful response demonstrates a good amount of niche content knowledge of the matter of language intervention. The contention of the question is deftly unpacked and a complex stand is taken, reflecting a depth of evaluation and awareness of the issues raised by the question. Throughout, it is consistently argued and well balanced, with examples that despite being fairly standard are also of a good range and developed to a level of detail that demonstrates genuine understanding. In terms of the range of arguments, the focus on matters of identity is a little narrow. It is possible to consider aspects such as one's freedom to express themselves through language and how language intervention often occurs where there are conflicts. Language intervention also need not only be negative, as there are cases in which governmental intervention has been to preserve or protect these languages, though these are admittedly fewer. Overall, the fluent argumentation and thoughtfulness make this an enjoyable and fluid read.</i></p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| <p>To quote Ralph Emerson, "Language is a city to the building of which every human being brought a stone". Indeed, the unique diversity of mankind all over the world has led to the conception of a multitude [] of different languages, where each and everyone of them holds the potential to tell a story that may only be fully expressed through the use of one's native language. This has increasingly come under conflict with the interests of governments running nations and states worldwide, where state intervention in the form of mandating popular and neutral languages and outlawing others is deemed justifiable considering the need to share national identities. It seems that only through homogeneity can peace and harmony be achieved. However, it ought to be considered that preserving a strong sense of culture and diversity is arguably equally as important as the rather pragmatic goals listed above, and that diversity and national unity are not mutually exclusive. I am therefore of the opinion that state intervention in matters of language is only acceptable insofar as a country desperately requires it to forge basic peace and stability, and that it should not come at the expense of marginalising the unique identities forged by different communities worldwide.</p> | <p>Good awareness of a common motivation for state intervention in language</p> <p>Stand clear and intro conducted with some nuance and are generally effective, though the focus is mostly on issues of identity</p> |
| <p>In the past, state intervention in matters of language was not only deemed as acceptable, but [could even be seen as] crucial due to the need for ruling governments to establish a foundational sense of national unity within their respective nation-state. Such a trend was prominent in Western countries across the 19th and 20th centuries, and became especially prominent across Southeast Asia in the late 20th century due to the plural nature of different societies as a result of mass migration stemming from colonialism. Newfound independence coincided with a tumultuous era of bloodshed and conflict which can be attributed to the lack of a common national identity and sense of belonging which citizens then did find important, and it was up to different governments to intervene through standardising and mandating the education and [the] use of common languages. To them, it seemed that it was necessary for a common language to be used within their own country in order to facilitate basic</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | <p>Navigates value judgement while also setting up context</p> <p>Detailed contextual information that sets up the sense of necessity for language intervention</p>                                                   |



|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>communication amongst citizens, economic stability, as well as to smoothly render government policies to their citizens, all of which [was] done with minimal misinterpretation. It proved to be successful in the case of Singapore, where British English was chosen as a common language that was taught across all schools, and used as a primary mode of communication amongst citizens. This is [also] not unlike Indonesia, where Suharto's decision to outlaw ethnic languages in favour of Bahasa Indonesia, a language that was not attributed to the majority Javanese group [] hence did not make the masses feel threatened or disregarded. It proved to be widely accepted by his citizens. Success was immeasurable in both cases, as both countries saw rising literacy rates as well as a fall in social conflict, thanks to the standardised educational policies that could now be easily rolled out by the respective governments, while Singapore's ability to strike ties with the West led to its immense economic growth that saw it become an Asian Tiger in the 70s. Under the Social Contract theory, governments owed it to their people to establish basic forms of stability and prosperity within their countries, and using constitutional powers to standardise languages appeared to be necessary for a nation state to forge a common identity amongst her people.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | <p>Not strictly accurate until much later than the late 20th century</p> <p>Well illustrated in striking detail, providing effective support for a claim that is very carefully and thoughtfully unpacked</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| <p>Yet, such intervention will quickly be deemed as unacceptable if carried out excessively, especially if it leads to the marginalisation or even erosion of unique identities. This may occur if governments force communities to abolish certain forms of languages by outlawing them. In the process of nation building, it is convenient for governments to ban the use of ethnic languages in the form of dialects and slangs in favour of using common languages that I had described in the earlier paragraph. This appears to be justified considering the potential misunderstanding that may occur and ensue when users of different languages come into conflict. Yet, it is equally important for governments to preserve a distinct assortment of different cultures, and that recognising and remaining rooted to such ethnic or racial identities may not always compromise [] their states' struggle for national identities. The Malaysian 'Bumiputera', otherwise known as sons of the land, Policy has led to the erosion of the Chinese culture that had very much been prominent not only within Malaysia, but also in its neighbouring countries. This is due to the ruling party's decision to turn Malay into the first language of all schools, thereby significantly reducing the opportunities for future generations to learn and use Mandarin as well as to be familiarised with its basic cultural practices. Just across the Causeway, the 1973 Bilingual Policy launched by Lee Kuan Yew, perceived to be the Founding Father of Singapore, outlawed dialects used by more than three quarters of the populace then in favour of Mandarin Chinese, even when there were 56 different ethnic groups in China. This led to the subsequent loss of interest in distinct Teochew, Hokkien and Cantonese cultures that future generations now lack knowledge of, which has given rise to a homogenous Western culture on the Asian island where Singaporean Chinese are termed as "bananas" - yellow on the outside but white on the inside. Amidst the growing homogeneity of the world, governments should therefore intervene less in language matters, so that current and future generations remain rooted to their respective culture. This may possibly give rise to more informed citizens who will be able to forge understanding and appreciation for the external community.</p> | <p>Valid consideration</p> <p>Where possible, it is advisable to show rather than tell</p> <p>This example does not truly demonstrate 'abolish[ment]' of Chinese, as even today there many well-subscribed Chinese medium schools in Malaysia</p> <p>This could be clearer, as the dialects were not outlawed in all aspects of life</p> <p>Seems to be an exaggeration</p> <p>While it is not entirely cogent in the intensity of the language policies and their effects, the para's claim that identities are eroded has been proven</p> |
| <p>Beyond the cultural context, the changing context of our world today also makes it undesirable for a nation's prosperity if governments choose to intervene in matters of language today. Given that acceptance and accommodation are traits central to many states today, conflict arising from verbal and visual misunderstanding is less likely to occur between</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | <p>Desirability is not the same as acceptability, and the evaluation must be tied back to how acceptable intervention is</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |



|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>different groups of citizens. Rather, diversity has proven to be valuable in an increasingly globalised and advanced world. The ease of air and naval travel has led to the influx of migrants with the intent of conducting business or education, as well as tourists with growing global affluence into the boundaries of many countries. Given that languages are mostly standardised within and not between nations, it is important that there is a diverse range of citizens that specialise in a wide variety of languages and dialects in order to maximise the economic potential of a state, and make it appear more amiable and well-rounded to foreigners. The Dutch and Belgians are largely multilingual given that they have been educated in both languages as well as English, and it has proven to be highly beneficial for both the states and their citizens given the popularity of Netherlands and Belgium as a tourist and commerce destination, where foreigners can easily work around the minimal language barrier. This is only possible if citizens are free to choose languages which they wish to pick, rather than being restricted by a mono-language in light of state restrictions.</p> | <p>Thoughtful development of the point based on the modern context</p> <p>Whether the Dutch and Belgium governments allow their citizens to learn languages freely should be clarified, and it could also be considered whether the governments have intervened in language in any other ways here, such as by promoting multilingualism</p> |
| <p>All things considered, I must reiterate that state intervention in the forms of language is fundamentally acceptable, given that it will be able to forge basic stability and identity to a country which is the expected role of a government. Yet, there ought to be a fine balance struck between such pragmatic reasons that will constitute state building, and preserving a strong sense of culture and identity that is very much needed in an increasingly polarised world today. Given that most states have already fulfilled their nation building role, I believe that in time to come, state intervention in matters of language should be left to the minimum to <i>[illegible]</i> the freedom of citizen choice.</p> <p><i>(Clement Hooi, 19-01)</i></p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | <p>Overall stand has been maintained from intro</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |



# 2020 JC1 Term 3 Timed Assignment Paper 1

## 2 How far can religious beliefs and scientific knowledge be reconciled?

*This essay presents a strong attempt on the question with an impressive awareness of the opposed arguments. The good depth of knowledge, especially of the alignments and divergences in the philosophies of the two enable sophisticated and well-crafted arguments that cover a good range of ground. It is well-balanced, recognising both the ways in which religious beliefs and scientific knowledge have been aligned, and when they are deeply opposed, such that attention is paid to the question's demand that the extent be determined coherently and consistently. Illustration is largely very successful, showing both breadth and depth of knowledge. To be even more effective, the response can consider the modern context and how it has affected the relationship between religion and scientific knowledge.*

One of the most defining characteristics of human nature is arguably our intense desire to figure out and explain the world around us. This has led to the explanation of such phenomena through two different schools of thinking - science and religion. The people who stand rooted in these schools of thought often come into conflict with one another, which begs the question - how far can religion and scientific knowledge be reconciled? While I do agree that they can work in tandem with one another sometimes as one can inspire the other, I believe that they largely cannot be reconciled. This is because they stem from different views on our universe, promote different ideas and do not get developed at the same pace.

The opening hook is relevant, but could expand on why humans have this intense desire to find out more about the world around us before linking it to the question

Effective overview of the arguments for and against the question

It must be first acknowledged that religion and scientific knowledge do not always come into conflict and can be reconciled as religious beliefs can, in fact, inspire the discovery of new scientific knowledge. Sometimes, people can gain interesting perspectives of the world around them from their religions and use these stories or ways of thinking as starting points on their journeys of scientific discovery. For instance, early Islamic figures were responsible for the very rapid progress in a number of scientific fields, such as algebra, trigonometry and chemistry, as well as major advances in medicine, astronomy, engineering and agriculture. These Islamic figures hence showed that their faith in their religion and their pursuit of scientific knowledge could be reconciled as their religious beliefs had motivated them to make such great leaps in their respective fields. Such is true for modern-day scientists as well, with many notable Christians making groundbreaking developments in science, including Andrew Pinent, who contributed to the creation of the Large Electron-Positron Collider at CERN, and Mike Hulme, who has been a leading Christian voice on the reality of climate change. These great figures hence aptly illustrate that faith in their religion can indeed aid them in their pursuit of scientific knowledge and discoveries, elucidating the possible coordination of the two. As such, I do acknowledge that scientific knowledge and religion can sometimes be reconciled.

Paragraph introduces the idea that science and religion can complement each other. Good use of examples to show how these 2 can be linked

However, this paragraph could have concluded with the statement explaining why such cooperation, while possible, is becoming rare so that it does not contradict the overall stand

Another argument for the harmonious coexistence of scientific knowledge and religion is that people are sometimes able to come to a consensus on scientific theories and religious beliefs. This is because people are sometimes able to adapt their religious beliefs to go in accordance with scientific discoveries, hence allowing them to work in tandem with one another to explain the world around us. It is not unusual for people to be persuaded to change their

Thoughtful argument



|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>viewpoints or see their religious teachings in a different light when presented with another perspective. A prominent example of this would be Pope Pius XII, who wrote in his encyclical “Human Genesis” in 1950 that Catholic teachings on Creation could coexist with evolutionary theory. Moreover, Pope John Paul II went a bit further in 1996, calling evolution “more than just a hypothesis”. When even prime leaders of religions can accept and find an agreement between scientific theory and religious beliefs, there is indeed some hope for the reconciliation of the two schools of thought. However, I would argue that this not only represents merely a minority of the issues between science and religion, but more importantly, it presents an even greater contention between the two as scientific knowledge has led to the doubting, or even abandonment of, the beliefs of religion. This would mean that they cannot be reconciled, simply because the embracing of one leads to a sacrifice of the other, hence it would be hard to reconcile the views of science and religion. In the case of the Popes, their acknowledgement and acceptance of the scientific theories on evolution led them to compromise the fundamental Catholic belief of divine creation being the root of all modern existence. In this light, scientific knowledge and religion cannot be reconciled since attempts to come to a compromise on the two can often lead to one being abandoned, showing how there just might not be enough room in the world for both.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | <p>Good examples, with some awareness shown of the influence these religious leaders can have on the beliefs of the followers of their religion</p> <p>Rebuttal of the opposing idea</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| <p>I believe that scientific knowledge and religion cannot be reconciled most of the time because they are fundamentally rooted in different claims of reality, and disagree on some of the basic workings of the universe. Scientific knowledge is based on logical deductions from sound proof, where scientists spend years, or even decades, testing and proving their scientific theories. However, religion is largely based on stories and practices passed down from generation to generation and contemplations of moral and aesthetic values. People who choose to follow science largely do find importance in explaining the universe as accurately and in the most reliable way possible, while those who turn to religion see the world through the lens of the faith that they hold themselves loyal to. This results in conflicts between the explanations of the fundamental workings of our world as the thinking behind these explanations are entirely different. For instance, scientists such as Alexander Friedman and Georges-Henri Lemaitre have proposed that all the matter and energy in the universe rapidly expanded into our universe today from a point of infinite density, also known as the Big Bang. This, however, completely goes against the Christian belief that God created the universe. Consequently, the clash of explanations from science and religion on even the most elementary issues such as the beginning of existence can be extrapolated to greater happenings and existences which both attempt to account for. To illustrate, Ashley King, the daughter of two well-off Christian Scientists in Arizona, developed a lump on her leg, which turned out to be bone cancer. Rejecting the science behind what was occurring, instead of taking her to a doctor, her parents took her out of school and tried to treat her with prayer. The lump eventually got to be as big as a watermelon and child services finally took her away from her parents. As such, the fundamental belief of religion that the existence and creation of everything falls in the hands of a higher-order being, a god, can come into conflict with the scientific explanations of such events in molecular and biological terms, since the two are fundamentally rooted in completely different interpretations on how everything came to be. Hence, due to the incongruence between faith and scientific discovery, they are on a path to</p> | <p>Relevant explanation using a historical context between the claims to truth by science vs religion, and comparing and contrasting the 2 different philosophies insightfully to establish why it is difficult to reconcile science and religion</p> <p>Good examples</p> <p>Argument could have been extended to consider today’s context and explain how these differences in thinking have been further consolidated with societies’ preference for evidence-based explanations</p> |



|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>conflict most of the time with little room for reconciliation.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| <p>Additionally, scientific knowledge and religion cannot accommodate one another when scientific knowledge promotes new ideas and developments that are not in line with the moral values promoted by religion. Science is innately amoral, whereas there exists a clear moral compass laid out by the various teachings of religion, which those of faith navigate their lives with. These conflicting characteristics between the two can hence lead to the use of science challenging the morals of religion. Other than explaining how our universe works, scientific knowledge also equips us with the tools to make new inventions which serve different purposes. However, these inventions could come into contention with religion when their function goes against the morality of some religions. One instance is the infamous abortion pill. Scientists found that by blocking the body's progesterone, they could hinder the development of a pregnancy in its early stages. This led them on to develop the abortion pill, which allowed many women gaining access to safe abortions should they require it. However, this goes against the Catholic anti-abortion teachings, which often leads to national debates on abortion. Traditional Hindu teachings also condemn abortion because it is thought to violate the religion's teachings of nonviolence. As such, since scientific knowledge had sparked or promoted the development of such products that are not in line with religious morals, religion and scientific knowledge cannot be reconciled in these circumstances. It would indubitably be difficult to find a common ground between the two when science has so rashly spun the needle of religion's moral compass, upsetting and threatening the values they uphold. Therefore, I would argue that scientific knowledge and religion cannot be reconciled to a large extent.</p> | <p>Interesting contrast</p> <p>Similar as above – the contrast between different views of morality does explain why these 2 systems of thought may be difficult to reconcile. However, this paragraph can also be improved through the consideration of the modern day context when it comes to morality</p> |
| <p>Moreover, the development and discovery of new scientific knowledge occur faster than the changes people are willing to make to their religious beliefs. Hence, new scientific findings of our world today may not hold true in the many contexts presented by religion, thus challenging the beliefs of religion. The constant pursuit of finding answers on how the world works in a scientific manner is happening at an extremely rapid rate as people are willing to search for better or more ways to explain our universe or find greater extensions in life that the knowledge can be applied to. This is contrasted to religious teachings that find great importance in being preserved, and although it is hard for such beliefs to remain completely unchanged after centuries, people are reluctant to change their religious ways of thinking as it means compromising their loyalty to their religion. Hence, for the vast majority of issues of conflict between the two, scientific knowledge and religion cannot be reconciled. For example, species were once widely believed to be fixed products of divine creation in accordance with creationism. However, since the mid-19th century, evolution by natural selection has become established as an empirical scientific fact, but Christian fundamentalists still repudiate the evidence of common descent of humans and other animals because it goes against their beliefs that God created living creatures as they are today. As such, when scientific knowledge and religion were once seen to be consistent with one another, the new discoveries in scientific fields have occurred much faster than people are willing to alter their beliefs, which has led to people of religion rejecting these new developments in scientific knowledge. Therefore, I believe that religion and scientific knowledge largely cannot be</p>    | <p>Another relevant and interesting consideration. However, it would have been better if the paragraph could have considered why there is a necessity of change and why religions find it so challenging to accept such changes, or how these changes challenge religious beliefs</p>                        |



|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |                                                                                                                       |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| reconciled as their rates of development and change are not congruous with one another.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |                                                                                                                       |
| <p>Ultimately, while there are some circumstances where religion and scientific knowledge can work in tandem with one another, it is virtually impossible to imagine a world devoid of conflict between the two, because of their different claims of reality and unharmonised developments. I would hence assert that the extent to which the two can be reconciled is a small one. And, with the natural curiosity of our human minds begging for more answers to questions we have on our universe, this gap between developments in scientific knowledge and religion could be seen as unable to be closed anytime soon.</p> <p>(Nadia Sun, 20-U4)</p> | Simple summary of ideas raised in the essay that reinforces the main ideas, allowing for a projection into the future |

## 7 'Developed countries have the responsibility to accept refugees.' Do you agree?

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p><i>A well-planned and eloquent essay that applies conceptual understanding of responsibility, the social contract between a state and its citizens, and the notion of morality, enabling it to evaluate the overarching notion of obligation/responsibility with insight and rich content knowledge. The insightful ideas on both sides of the argument are adequately illustrated, though the context can be substantiated at some point to further strengthen some of the argument links. In terms of its construction, the skillful interweaving of arguments reflects a clear logical development, with most connections being well signposted. The arguments are also well framed with the reference to a book on moral philosophy in both the introduction and conclusion. While the reference in the introduction is brief, by the end of the essay the ideas are coherent and the alignment to the book can be seen.</i></p> |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| <p>T.M Scanlon's book on moral philosophy titled 'What we owe to each other' aptly summarises the debate on the refugee crisis. Should economically developed countries have the obligation to accept refugees? Some may argue that given every developed country's varied land mass, current economic situation and ethnic landscape, it would be unsound to give the responsibility of accepting refugees to every developed country, especially if doing so leads to the deterioration of [the] quality of life of its own citizens. However, I argue that the moral obligation to preserve [the] sanctity of life and developed countries' higher ability to accept refugees transcend the need to maintain quality of life and presents justification [for] developing countries having a responsibility to accept refugees.</p>                                                                                                   | <p>The potential of this hook can be accessed by adding a sentence to clarify briefly why it is an apt summary. A little more contextualisation of the refugee crisis would also be helpful</p> <p>Clear outline of the evaluative criteria used to generate your arguments.</p> |
| <p>Some may bring up the concern that sovereign nations should not be under any obligation to share their resources and products of their labour freely with people whose plights are wholly unconnected to their nation. However, it would be incorrect to assume that every countries' development is completely devoid of other countries' influence. While developed countries enjoy sky-high Gross Domestic Products largely due to outsourcing manufacture of goods to developing countries to enjoy higher profits without wasting land mass and people on factories, many developing countries like Iraq and Iran suffer the impacts of large superpowers like the United States meddling with their state affairs, supplying a never-ending stock of weapons to prolong a war that common citizens bear the brunt of. Another</p>                                                                                              | <p>Why might they have such a perception? Consider a country's responsibility to its own people</p> <p>#interdependence is a possible idea to bring up, but here the economic prosperity of rich nations and the prolonging of war do not seem to be directly connected</p>      |



|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>prominent example would be the effect of European countries colonising the previously prosperous African continent for diamonds and oil, while leaving the continent with redrawn demarcations that led to racial unrest and strife that have lasted till today. Thus, developed countries may not have become developed solely on their own, but rather, on the backs of the less fortunate, current developing countries that suffer long-standing repercussions leading to refugees emerging. Developed countries hence have a responsibility to lend a hand to aid struggling countries that they had a hand in creating, and one of the best ways to do that would be to accept refugees.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | <p>Responsibility based on culpability</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| <p>On the basis of ability, developed countries simply have a higher capacity to accept refugees with less impact on their current situation. Most developed countries enjoy a stable political landscape, high GDPs and adequate infrastructure to support a large influx of newcomers, making them suitable candidates for relocating refugees. Compare this with developing countries such as India, where the majority of the native population already lives in sub-par slums and the political situation is fraught with corruption and unrest, or Venezuela and Columbia, where citizens are unable to buy even bare necessities due to astronomical inflation. Even with a globally acknowledged ideal that all countries should play a part in aiding the refugee crisis, developing countries such as these nations would be unable to accept refugees without severely affecting citizens' already decrepit living conditions, or providing refugees with inadequate facilities which would be a loss-loss situation. Thus, in line with the United Nations' statement that all countries should have responsibility in helping refugees, capable developed countries should be at the forefront of the movement of accepting refugees and providing them with sufficient resources and infrastructure for sound relocation.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | <p>Responsibility based on ability - able to take on the burden without compromising their own citizens' welfare</p> <p>Logical development and well substantiated paragraph</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| <p>However, some may argue that even developed countries will suffer a strain economically and culturally when accepting refugees, and that this would lead to unsatisfactory outcomes for the livelihoods of citizens. Thus, developed countries should not have the responsibility of unconditionally accepting refugees on the basis that their own citizens come first. Indeed, it is undeniable that a country's infrastructure and financial situation will take a toll when accepting refugees, as seen in Germany spending over six billion dollars on 800000 refugees. Many, especially the lower income class, would surely be unhappy with the government spending such great sums on non-citizens when they themselves receive little to no government aid. These sentiments could even snowball into xenophobia across the country, causing internal unrest if refugees are accepted, which could lead to detrimental effects on the country's economy and stability. Another example would be the Gulf Nations' refusal to accept refugees even from neighbouring countries, in a bid to keep terrorism and opposition political ideals from infiltrating what is already a precarious political situation. Furthermore, accepting refugees could be seen as infringing on the social contract that a developed nation's government has with its citizens. [As citizens give up certain rights in their countries], they expect the government to serve them first and ensure an acceptable quality of life and national security, which cannot be guaranteed if the country accepts refugees. Thus, it can be argued that developed countries should not have the responsibility of accepting refugees if it worsens life for citizens in any way.</p> | <p>Good awareness of a possible condition for agreement</p> <p>This argument can be better contextualised by first establishing the presence of vulnerable/poor communities even within developed countries</p> <p>The example is a good one, but it could be elaborated on and linked back to the argument better</p> <p>The social contract is an important idea here, but it could be more convincingly developed: why are governments unable to guarantee the safety and prosperity of their citizens when they accept refugees?</p> |



|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |                                                                                                                                                                                              |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>However, this raises the moral question of whether maintaining quality of life is more important than the mere preservation of life. Developed countries will have to grapple with the moral implications of their actions, should they choose to refuse boatloads of refugees who have crossed dangerous expanses of oceans and no-man's land just to [be] faced with the insurmountable obstacle of a government's resounding 'no'. This sentiment about the preservation of life being of the highest importance has also been reflected in current media, in the forms of a dead Syrian child lying face down on European soil making the rounds around magazine covers and stories about boatloads of refugees drowning after being turned away, inciting many to criticise their government's inaction to accept refugees, causing preventable loss of life. Combined with the fact that over 140 countries, many of which are developed, signed the Refugee Convention in 1951, thus agreeing with the statement that all refugees would not be turned away at their borders and that everyone, regardless of refugee status, deserves the right to live, it becomes clear that developed countries have the moral and legal obligation to accept refugees.</p> | <p>Good claim that follows on well from the previous idea and casts a judgement regarding importance</p> <p>Awkward and convoluted sentence that could have been broken down for clarity</p> |
| <p>In conclusion, it is telling that Scanlon's book is titled 'What we owe to each other' rather than 'Do we owe something to each other'. Developed countries simply are the most capable of all nations to accept refugees, and also possess a moral and legal obligation to aid those whose situation they had a hand in creating. Perhaps a cosmopolitan community of all human beings has primacy over nations demarcated by arbitrary lines, and nationality should be a morally irrelevant factor for accepting people in need, especially for those who have the best capability to do so.</p> <p>(Clarice Pui, 20-03)</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | <p>A thoughtful and thought provoking conclusion with a brief but effective summary of the supporting arguments</p>                                                                          |

## 7 'Developed countries have the responsibility to accept refugees.' Do you agree?

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |                                                                                                                                                                                 |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p><i>This essay addresses a good range of ideas, but could do with more consistent exemplification for each point. To meet the question requirements better, it should also have a stronger sense of why the arguments raised mean that developed countries have a stronger responsibility. On the whole, for this question there must be an awareness of the relationships between developed and less developed countries, as well as the way countries are interdependent when it comes to global issues such as refugee crises. While this essay raises several different considerations that no doubt play a part in deciding responsibility, often the explanations can be taken to further depth in order to truly realise the potential of the arguments.</i></p>                                                                                                                                                                 |                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| <p>The displacement of people from their homelands has been a perennial issue in the 21st century. In fact, the location to which these refugees are transported to often sparks controversy, bringing to light the conundrum of whether developed countries have the responsibility to accept refugees. This statement, however, is hinged on the assumption that the degree of responsibility of a country to accept refugees depends on its level of development. It is a practical and realistic assumption, and it is admittedly very true. Developed countries do have the responsibility to accept refugees as they are financially and possibly geographically capable of doing so. Furthermore, strong developed countries have the moral obligation to help the vulnerable, referring to the refugees in this case. If developed countries turn a blind eye to the refugees, they are denying them of a life and indirectly</p> | <p>Somewhat odd statement that strips refugees of both their agency and the struggles they encounter in seeking refuge</p> <p>Good overview of the existing views regarding</p> |



|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>paving the way for the refugee's inevitable and devastating deaths. On the contrary, it would be unreasonable to adopt an absolute stand where developed countries are obligated to accept refugees at all costs, as the government of these countries have to first consider the interests of her people, who might unfortunately be apathetically xenophobic. All in all, I agree to a large extent that developed countries have the responsibility to accept refugees.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | <p>the question. Clear stand given, but it is provided quite awkwardly following the opposing perspective</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| <p>First and foremost, developed countries have a greater capacity to accept refugees than other developing countries. While it is not all economically fine and dandy in developed countries, their economies are deemed to be very stable and prosperous as compared to those of other countries. The task or role of housing refugees in one's own country necessitates financial assistance, which developed countries possess in abundance. Residential areas and essential items have to be provided to these refugees, thereby highlighting the importance of having a high fiscal authority on the part of the host country. Besides, these developed countries are more capable of providing these refugees with a higher standard of living and enhanced occupational prospects as compared to other countries. This is because wealthier countries often have booming economies with a multitude of job opportunities and offer higher standards of education, which are ultimately able to provide refugees with a better quality of life. As such, developed countries have the responsibility to accept refugees as they are more economically capable of doing so than others, and they tend to guarantee a better way of life in these affluent countries.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                             | <p>Topic sentence and elaboration relevant to the question. The paragraph can be improved with a side-by-side comparison with regard to developing countries, and a specific example to back up the point made</p>                                                                                                                    |
| <p>In addition, developed countries have the moral obligation to host refugees. Over the last few decades, the number of people who have gained awareness on the preservation of human rights have been growing and magnifying. The decision to reject [hosting] refugees is likened to denying them a new chance to live, which ultimately leads to death. As such, the rejection of refugees by rich countries is arguably perceived to have indirectly caused the death of refugees. This violates the most fundamental human right, which is the right to live. Furthermore, it is widely believed that the sanctity of human life should take precedence over all other problems in the country, such as xenophobic sentiments or high rates of unemployment. As such, developed countries should not eschew from hosting refugees due to domestic issues which do not threaten the lives of its people. Moreover, developed countries have a moral obligation to accept refugees as they are better able to secure a better quality of life for the refugees than other countries. If refugees were accepted by developing countries, the financial instability of the host country might be exacerbated, which translates to the worsening of the economic status quo of the country. This results in a situation where both host countries and the refugees are detrimentally impacted. Hence, developed countries have the responsibility to accept refugees.</p> | <p>The idea of moral obligation, while relevant, could have been further developed on why there is this greater moral responsibility with developed countries.</p> <p>This seems to deviate back to economic reasons, which can be a repeat of the previous paragraph</p> <p>A specific example is needed to support the argument</p> |
| <p>However, the level of development of a country should not be the only criteria used to determine if it should offer refugees with asylum. In the case of Singapore, while we are a developed nation, we are incapable of hosting refugees due to our small geographical size. Extending out our limited geographical space will lead to overpopulation, which is unfavourable and impractical. On the other hand, the United States (US) has allowed numerous refugees to cross its borders because they possess an abundance of land to host them. Besides, it is critical that the government of the host country considers and prioritizes</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | <p>While the point is relevant, the development of the argument can be more focused on determining factors which help determine whether all developed countries possess responsibility</p>                                                                                                                                            |



|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>the interests of their people. This stems from the principle that the government of any country should always make decisions in the interest of her people, as they were elected into parliament by the general public. Under circumstances when the local population is xenophobic, the government has to follow through with the interests of the majority. A failure to comply or practise this governing principle would undoubtedly lead to social unrest and if escalated, treason.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | <p>the same way</p> <p>Logical, but seems to be a poor defense against the moral argument</p> <p>How this affects a country's responsibility to accept refugees can be clarified for greater relevance</p>                                                                                                                                                                             |
| <p>Nonetheless, despite the aforementioned circumstances, developed countries should not entirely reject their responsibility of accepting refugees. For instance, a significant proportion of the US population harbour xenophobic sentiments and eschew the idea of hosting refugees from Syria and Rohingya. In order to represent the people's beliefs and offer assistance to the refugees simultaneously, the US government imposed a quota on the number of refugees it can accept into its country. The striking of such a balance is paramount as it reassures the domestic population that the government still has their best interests at hand. Therefore, developed countries still have the obligation to accept refugees.</p>                                                                                                                                                            | <p>The rebuttal paragraph seems to have no clear point, and could be better constructed by explaining how the size of the country does not absolve the country of responsibility to accept refugees. Consider how the responsibility, in reality, would have to be shared with all countries, with the developed countries perhaps shouldering the bigger burden</p> <p>Inaccurate</p> |
| <p>All in all, the contention of whether developed countries have the responsibility of hosting refugees seeking asylum mainly lies in the impediments stemming from within the host country. These impediments range from the xenophobic sentiments of the local population to geographical limitations. Nevertheless, these obstructions should immediately be sidelined when the lives of refugees are endangered, as the protection of human lives transcends all other issues at hand. Against the backdrop of increasing globalisation in the 21st century, the world is getting increasingly interconnected. As such, it is arguably impossible for countries to escape from the responsibility of accepting refugees, especially developed countries. Therefore, I believe to a large extent that developed countries have the responsibility to accept refugees.</p> <p>(Nerys Koh, 20-U4)</p> | <p>However, is this not most often the case with refugee crises?</p> <p>Good summary of the ideas presented in the essay, and the hope for the future</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |

## 10 'The study of literature serves little purpose in society.' Discuss.

*This essay clearly answered the question in a considered manner, with each point succinctly and effectively explained with clear logical elaboration. Though of the three samples here this piece is the most consistent in making reference to the needs of society, it could still benefit from a clearer explanation of contexts. It manages to cover a good range of arguments, but is less richly supported with illustration when relevant specific examples (particularly of pieces of literature in this case) go a long way in helping to elevate the elaboration and accuracy of arguments. The good use of transitional phrases helps paragraphs flow, and a good organization of points has*



|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <i>helped in the clarity of the essay.</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| In our world today, people nowadays do not place much importance on the arts, particularly studying literature, as they believe that it is no longer relevant and serves little purpose in society. However, I believe that studying literature can benefit society, and it does serve great purpose in society.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | <p>Introduction is brief but clearly states the stand. It can have a more interesting hook and give a quick overview of some differing perspectives</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| Some may argue that the study of literature serves little purpose in society today as they believe that the context that these texts were written in are irrelevant in today's context of society. The world has changed greatly over the years, with recent developments and advancements in technology improving our standard of living. These people think that this renders studying literature useless as they would rather quickly search up the information they need conveniently with the help of the internet than take additional time and effort to study literature, trying to understand and interpret the author's words. Additionally, with new developments over time, the information written in literature may not be exactly accurate. Hence, some may see no use for studying literature as it would not effectively help them to gain the knowledge they need as compared to relying on technology. Therefore, in their opinion, since literature is something remote that they cannot relate to due to the differences in time and context, studying literature would seem useless to them and serve little purpose in society.                                                                                                                                                                                           | <p>Topic sentence clearly states the reason why some do not believe in the relevance of Literature, though it should be noted that there is also modern literature!</p> <p>Context and elaboration help explain why such a view exists</p> <p>Paragraph would benefit from a specific example to illustrate the point and more specific mention of who might hold such views</p> |
| However, the assumption that the purpose of studying literature is to gain the same knowledge as from reading and studying from textbooks is false. Instead, literature still serves a purpose in society as a source of knowledge, but in the form of skills. Although it is true that times have changed and some of the ideas and information presented in certain literary texts may not be directly applicable, it does not necessarily mean that it is completely rendered obsolete. Studying literature can still allow us to see the world and its happenings through a different lens at a particular point in time that we ourselves were unable to experience before. It is also able to facilitate the learning of language skills, with studies showing that studying literature exposes students to a wider range of vocabulary, sentence structure and narrative than traditional textbooks do, which in turn boosts their creativity and encourages them to pursue new lines of reasoning and a deeper thought process. These skills allow one to understand things from different perspectives as well as develop other critical thinking skills that are essential in today's society. Hence, studying literature does have purpose in society as it allows students to learn skills that would benefit them later on in life. | <p>Simple but effective transitional phrase to signal shift into rebuttal</p> <p>Simple but efficient explanation of why the detractors' views are wrong</p> <p>Paragraph could be improved with greater clarity in explaining the context and a relevant specific example to justify the rebuttal</p>                                                                           |
| From a social perspective, studying literature also can bring attention to social or political issues that one may not have bothered to think much about before. These issues are usually told from the author's point of view, which may not necessarily be what the reader agrees with. By studying literature, [one's perspective is broadened] to incorporate other world views that may not be presented in textbooks as the content in traditional textbooks are generally controlled by the government and do not depict the full picture. In literature, authors are free to express their views and opinions about anything and studying what they wrote back then                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | <p>Clear and effective topic sentence</p> <p>Elaboration succinctly explains why there is a need for Literature to help us pay attention to social or political issues, though it should be noted that literature is</p>                                                                                                                                                         |



|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>can give alternative perspectives on the same situation. For example, George Orwell's Animal Farm was written to satirise the authoritarian USSR, showing how revolutions born from good intentions can mislead the people they are meant to serve. Reading such literary works can deepen one's understanding of human nature and the complexity of the human condition. Such understanding is useful to society as it allows us to understand how and why different people behave the way they do and better work with them. Therefore, studying literature does have purpose in society as it provides commentaries on social or political issues from different perspectives not typically shown in mainstream media.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | <p>also subject to censorship sometimes</p> <p>Not clearly supported by the example</p> <p>Paragraph could be improved by explaining further why in this time and age, we need Literature to do this role more</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| <p>Studying literature can also facilitate bonding between different generations. As society evolved over time to where we are today, the mindsets of the different generations of people would also differ. Studying literature can open up space and opportunities for discussions about the different interpretations of the author's words and allow people of different generations to bond over their shared appreciation for literature while at the same time broadening their perspectives. Moreover, reading literary works can facilitate bonding via common nostalgia and the teaching of timeless values as well. For example, in the French novel 'The Little Prince', it shares values about having a pure, innocent and compassionate worldview, which are values that are commonly not prioritised in a world that places a premium on academic and economic success. It reminds us to slow down and not be constantly caught up with the hustle and bustle of life, which is what most people can relate to especially in the context of our society today. People can bond over reading such literary works and the values learnt from them. Thus, the study of literature has great purpose in facilitating bonding as well as passing down timeless values that are important reminders especially in today's society.</p> | <p>This paragraph follows the same pattern as above. It could benefit from tighter exemplification (When do people in society read The Little Prince together?) and more elaboration into why we need Literature's help to facilitate bonding in today's context</p>                                                                                                                                                      |
| <p>Lastly, studying literature can also benefit an individual's health. When one reads books when studying literature, it can take their mind off from other things and allow them to be temporarily transported to another world. It also allows one's body to subconsciously relax by lowering one's heart rate and easing the tension in one's muscles. Moreover, a study conducted by the University of Sussex found that reading can reduce stress up to 68%. In our fast paced life today, literature can help us slow down our pace of life and temporarily relieve us of the stresses of life. Studying literature can also help improve brain health and one's emotional intelligence as it induces the brain networks involved in empathy and understanding others during reading. When one has more empathy, it benefits society greatly as people are now able to understand each other better by stepping into their shoes and see where they are coming from, more effectively preventing and resolving conflicts. Hence, since the study of literature serves a purpose in benefiting the individual who can also benefit society in the future, the study of literature does serve great purpose in society.</p>                                                                                                                | <p>In terms of organization of ideas, it is appropriate that the final supporting point be taken from the individual's point of view, though there is perhaps a difference between mere reading and studying literature</p> <p>This paragraph can be improved with a clearer mention of today's context that makes the individual's mental health important, and how the study of Literature fits into such a context</p> |
| <p>In conclusion, although studying literature may seem to serve little to no purpose in society due to the differences in context, I still stand firm to my view that studying literature serves great purpose in society as it is a reflection of the past from different perspectives, and can</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | <p>Conclusion can be more impactful by including a mention of how the study of Literature could gain more</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |



|                                                                                                                  |                                                      |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>teach us skills that would benefit both the individual and society as a whole.</p> <p>(Jolie Chen, 20-U2)</p> | <p>relevance in the future as society progresses</p> |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------|

## 10 'The study of literature serves little purpose in society.' Discuss.

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p><i>Overall, this essay addresses the question's concerns and clearly demonstrates a genuine affection for the study of literature through rich exemplification and persuasive elaboration. However, reference to the modern day context and related societal needs can be more consistent. Both these societal needs and the value of literature are needed to truly show the necessity of the study of literature in society, especially today.</i></p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| <p>As P.T. Barnum once said, "Literature is one of the most interesting and significant expressions of humanity." To study literature, analysing and unpacking written works to uncover their meaning, is to study what it means to be human. As such, it serves to open our eyes to pertinent social issues, reflect on human nature and cultivate empathy or understanding of others. Although it may seem to contribute little to humanity's progress through tangible means such as science and technology, studying literature can be important in the cultivation of soft skills. Therefore, I believe that studying literature is an extremely valuable and meaningful asset to society.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | <p>Interesting and relevant quotation that is usefully unpacked to segue into a quick overview of the OAs/SAs</p> <p>Clear stand given, but the transition from the OAs to the stand can be a bit smoother</p>                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| <p>Studying literature functions as an important tool in unpacking social commentary, which can in turn lead to social reformation. Authors oftentimes use literature as a medium to give critique on political or social issues, which can sometimes put them at odds with those in authority whom they are criticising. A manifestation of this in the modern context would be Beijing's library burning books that were not aligned with the Communist Party's ideology. This only goes to show that studying literature is necessary in order to provide alternative perspectives on political issues, as without it, governments could proliferate their ideologies without opposition which could lead to biased or skewed policies. Social commentary is pertinent in the book 'To Kill a Mockingbird', which expounds on issues that plague society such as racism, prejudice and enforcement of the law. It uses literary devices such as metaphors and imagery to vividly and convincingly portray the importance of tackling such problems, evoking an emotional response from readers and tugging at their heartstrings. Thus, it uses its unique literary platform to not only inform readers on the injustice minority races may face or the cruelty of punishing the innocent, but expose their root causes — be it systemic prejudice or human selfishness. Studying literature can therefore act as a call for action to change oneself or advocate for a better system of governance, addressing flaws that we may have otherwise overlooked. Thus, the study of literature is meaningful in promoting social reformation and the betterment of society.</p> | <p>Clear topic sentence that directly addresses question requirements</p> <p>Logical explanation of how and why the study of literature can lead to social reforms, supported with good, richly explained examples</p> <p>Including suitable modern day context to explain the need for social reformation and the value of Literature in promoting social reforms would make this paragraph better</p> |
| <p>Studying literature is also meaningful, helping us reflect on human nature and thus, possibly avoid mistakes from the past. Power struggles are certainly not unique to the modern era, having been a consistent theme throughout human history. Many works of literature attempt to address it, one of the most prominent being the play <i>Julius Caesar</i> by William Shakespeare. The play, which described the conspiracy to overthrow a possible dictatorship of Julius Caesar</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | <p>While the topic sentence does address the question requirement with good examples that clearly show how the study of literature can help us</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |



|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>by his friend Brutus, was commonly referenced in political studies to uncover the reasons behind revolutions, be it the power-hungry, selfish nature of humans or a narcissistic sense of altruism. Such works help give us a better understanding of how human nature can contribute to devastation and give us hints on how to avoid it. Furthermore, war poems are a striking example that shows the raw, unadulterated expression of humanity even at its lowest. They give insights into the corruption of humanity when we are reduced to war-hungry animals, or the hope that humanity can be retained in spite of devastating events such as a war. An example would be Wilfred Owen's poem 'Dulce et Decorum est' which describes the irony of patriotism being branded as the reason to participate in a war, whereas Owen who was in the midst of one saw it as fruitless pain and suffering. Studying such literature can give us better understanding of the human experience and serves as a warning for us to avoid falling into the same traps. It also encourages introspection, helping individuals better understand their reasons for certain actions and to learn to avoid those that lead to devastation.</p> | <p>avoid the mistakes of the past, there is a lack of explanation of why we need Literature to do this for society, especially in the modern world</p>                                                                                                                                |
| <p>Additionally, literature is important in teaching people to be empathetic, learning how to appreciate other cultures and beliefs. The unique platform of literature allows for in-depth characterisation, allowing readers to immerse themselves in the character in order to decipher their thoughts and make sense of their experiences. As such, it is an effective medium to break cultural barriers and promote the understanding of cultural differences or new perspectives. <i>The Joy Luck Club</i> by Amy Tan follows four mothers who have travelled from China to America for a new beginning, and their struggles in raising their American-born daughters who seem indifferent or condescending towards their Chinese roots and heritage. The flexibility of narrative perspective allowed for impactful characterisation which allows the reader to not only be educated about the many facets of Chinese culture, but also learn to empathise with the characters, learning how to be more understanding of those who go through similar circumstances in the real world. Studying literature is thus meaningful in promoting social cohesion through inculcating empathy in readers.</p>                           | <p>The topic sentence is relevant to the question. However, the importance of appreciating other cultures and beliefs in today's world could be explained more clearly</p>                                                                                                            |
| <p>However, in a practical world, where scientific and mathematical fields are seen as the driving force behind humanity's progress — through technological inventions — literature seems to contribute little to no tangible value towards the advancement of society. Furthermore, literature requires interpretation which is oftentimes subjective, leading to differing or even polar opposite conclusions. As such, it is difficult to derive tangible or objective instructions for improvement of society from literature. To such a utilitarian point of view, literature may be seen as merely an expression of one's opinions and thoughts, a personal interest and hobby that serves little to provide improvement to people's standard of living. Especially compared to the supercomputers and artificial intelligence that were a result of scientific innovation, literature does not seem to have much to offer.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | <p>Relevant paragraph to show why some people would consider the study of Literature to be unnecessary. It can be improved with a clearer example of who these people might be and further explanations of why the current epoch seems to favour science and tech over literature</p> |
| <p>Although it is true that studying literature may seem to not have obvious fruit, it serves to inculcate important soft skills. The rigour of literary analysis allows for the honing of critical thinking skills, sharp analysis and looking beyond the surface, all of which are crucial in innovation. Schools from Singapore to the US to Korea integrate literature into the curriculum in order to equip students with these skills, encouraging creativity. These soft skills are not only important for learning, but also in the workplace where problems in need of solving are</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | <p>A suitable response to the previous point</p> <p>More relevant examples showing how the study of literature directly leads to critical thinking. Also, it would</p>                                                                                                                |



|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |                                                                                                                              |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| commonly encountered. Thus, studying literature is useful in equipping students with these transferable skills that can have practical uses in school and when they become working adults.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | be good to include a description of the modern world and why critical thinking is needed.                                    |
| <p>In conclusion the study of literature has a range of purposes, from social commentary and reflecting on the human experience to teaching empathy. Though some may dismiss the study of literature as of little use to society, they fail to recognise the soft skills that literature teaches, which are crucial to other facets of life and society. In the post-apocalyptic novel <i>Station Eleven</i>, a travelling troupe performs Shakespeare to the survivors of a pandemic. On the side of their caravan are the words 'because survival is insufficient'. Practical means of survival are not enough for humanity to flourish. The quality of life includes the intangible but important needs of peace, harmony, self-actualisation and understanding humanity. As such, the study of literature is essential as a form of appreciation of culture, a critique of society and a window into what being human is all about.</p> <p>(Jamie Ng, 20-U2)</p> | Interesting conclusion with the use of a story to wrap up the discussion. Good overview of the points discussed in the essay |

## 10 'The study of literature serves little purpose in society.' Discuss.

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |                                                                                                                                                                |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p><i>This piece, like the previous one, shows good content mastery through its close reference to specific examples of literature and the value they bring to society. Also like the previous one, it is somewhat lacking in closer reference to why these strengths of literature are needed in society, especially today, and it would be best if the topic sentences were more tightly tied to this question requirement. The main arguments are reasonably well constructed and detailed, featuring elaboration that is rich but occasionally borders on being rambling, backed up with interesting and original examples. The counter-arguments, on the other hand, could have been more detailed. The essay is written with much imagery and flair, though care must be taken in such a style to not go overboard into self-indulgent writing.</i></p> |                                                                                                                                                                |
| <p>A famous author once said "The decline of literature indicates the decline of a nation". True to his words, the power of words should not be looked down upon in society. Those mere leaflets of text [bound] together [are] chock full of information, knowledge, and details regarding different aspects of life. Words have the power to influence us [and] change our perception of the society. Reading an insightful literary text would often leave us frazzled, and suddenly the world we thought we knew seemed so foreign again. As such, I do not think that the study of literature serves little purpose in society. In fact, society cannot do without it. We would start living backwards, trapped in our little worlds of ignorance.</p>                                                                                                   | <p>Interesting quotation from Goethe used</p> <p>While it is engaging, the introduction paragraph could be improved with a clearer overview of OAs and SAs</p> |
| <p>Literature is the window to the past. It connects men to a past we have not physically experienced ourselves, via emotions and feelings. Literature serves as the bridge which helps us traverse time and space. In order to succeed in the future, we have to learn from the past. If not, mankind will continue making the same mistakes, causing us to be trapped in a loop of our own failures. History consists of the best and the worst leaders, but even the worst leaders had something worth picking up from. Even though Hitler was a dictator, he commanded the reverence of many. If we pick up where they excelled and corrected what</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                    | <p>Clear topic sentence</p> <p>The elaboration is a good mix of weaving example with explanation on why having this window to</p>                              |



|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>they erred at, we can become better versions of ourselves. The best way to gain insight about the past is through a book. One example would be 'The Tattooist of Auschwitz'. The book was based on a true story set during World War 2 during Hitler's reign of terror. The author spared no effort in depicting the cruelties the prisoners of war were unjustly subjected to. From this book, one can learn about the irrevocable repercussions of blindsided trust in leaders, racism, as well as brutality towards one another. The indiscriminate killing of Jews allows us to realise how racism can be deadly. Jews [were] killed based on the very fact they were Jews and that only. If we do not want our society to be torn apart by such cruelty, we should not water the roots of racism in our own society. Thus, the study of literature is useful as it not only allows us to improve ourselves but also opens our eyes to the mistakes the people of the past made, reminding us not set onto the same path as them. Through literature, we are able to learn and grow and prevent society from falling apart into shambles like it did before.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | <p>the past is important for mankind, but it's not made very clear why literature in particular is the best way to encounter such insight, when there are other means of learning about the past, perhaps even more factually</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| <p>Literature links the heart and souls of people from all walks of life. It made us able to sympathise with people we may not necessarily have the same experiences as, allowing us to be more empathetic individuals. We are able to see things in the eyes of others, think for them. This shapes a more cohesive and understanding society, which is needed for a country to advance together as a whole. Without it, we would be trapped in our own little bubbles, living our lives with a narrow point of view, being judgmental individuals, who could not be bothered about the suffering of others. Some books are filled with the raw emotions of the author, as they spill out what they are unable to convey through words [from] the mouth to paper. Their anguish, sorrow, fear, anger, happiness were all translated into text. Through reading these texts, we get a sense of how their lives are, how they think, why they act in a certain way. These may just be mere words, but as readers, we are able to feel the emotions they pour out on these pages, allowing us to sympathise with them. Through these, individuals who were so different were able to connect emotionally, creating an invisible string which binds us as humans. This is especially important in non-homogenous societies, where people are different- brought up with different mindsets, cultures and practices. If we do not learn to think for one another, we will not be able to coexist properly. One example would be 'I will survive,' by Leow Yangfa, a Singaporean author who compiled the voices of different people from the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) community. Literature gave them a voice and when people read it, their voices are heard. People who are not in the LGBT community are able to sympathise with them and change the way they view them. This shapes a more inclusive and accepting society. Thus, the study of literature is important in our society.</p> | <p>Interesting idea of literature helping us to understand and sympathise with others. However, the argument could have developed further by explaining why it is necessary to have the study of literature to teach us this</p> <p>This explanation borders on rambling, and could have been supplemented with choice examples to support the ideas and break the monotony</p> <p>A sensible pronouncement given the example, but care must be taken to not convey the idea that the argument is limited only to one's society when the scope of the question is not</p> |
| <p>Literature acts as a helping hand, reaching out to those who need it. Each fictional book contains meaningful messages which allows the readers to feel less alone. Literature allows us to think for and about ourselves, increasing our sensitivity to our own emotions. In our hectic society, we tend to brush our feelings away in order to perform at work or at our own studies. We dismiss our feelings and inconsequential or something that will go away. We judge ourselves, berate ourselves, and hate ourselves for feeling a certain way. However, literature can tell us it is okay to feel that way and that you are not alone. Some authors who went through or saw someone experience a tough moment in their lives want to reach out to those who feel the same way too. They convey their emotions and experiences through a book.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | <p>The topic sentence could have responded more clearly to the question by stating that the study of literature is useful for helping us to understand and manage our own emotions and thoughts, as the question is not only about the benefits of literature, devoid of context. The paragraph</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |



|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>Even though they may be miles apart, words have the power to transcend borders and reach into the hearts of those who need it. One example would be “Thirteen reasons why” by Jay Asher, a book on depression and suicide. In today’s society, the mental health of teenagers are declining as they are faced with not only academic stress, but also social stress, and some may not be able to handle it. When people with depression read it, they are able to understand their emotions better and gain some semblance of hope that they might get through it. Literature allows us to heal ourselves and feels less alone. Thus, literature serves purpose in today’s society.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | <p>could also have developed this idea further by exploring why it is important for us not to brush these feelings off and how the study of literature is imperative to help us avoid this</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| <p>However, some may argue that literature is just fictional works that have little relevance to today’s society. This may be true for dystopian books, which are set in a world which does not exist. This leads to the belief that literature serves as mere entertainment which lacks purpose in today’s society. One example would be Harry Potter, a bestselling novel on the world of wizardry. Since magic does not exist in today’s world, one may find it hard to believe that such a fictional book would have meaning in the science and technology- driven society today. However, despite the [fictional] setting of the book, it still touches on subjects such as child abuse, elitism and friendships. The book mirrors the society as it is, where those with power oppresses those who are weaker in nature. Even though the books may be fictional, it does not mean that it does not bring up prevalent issues which are reflected in our society. This allows readers to gain awareness of the possible conflicts in our world.</p> | <p>The ideas here are relevant but could have been developed further</p> <p>Harry Potter is not dystopian</p> <p>Also, this counter-argument could have explored the timelessness of the ideas presented in these fictional works and their continual importance for human societies</p>                                                                                                                                                                             |
| <p>Some may argue that literature gives people a false impression of how the world works. I agree that literature tends to be more idealistic and portrays a more desirable side of society. Sometimes, censorship prevents authors from narrating the events of the world as it is, causing them to need to sugarcoat the more ugly looking side, giving readers a false outlook on life. Some American novels on high school life portray school life to be more exciting than it actually is, and its contents may not be relevant to the school life of another country with different culture. This may give the reader a distorted perception of how school life should be, which causes them to yearn for something they cannot obtain or does not even exist. In this case, literature serves not much purpose than to mislead readers.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                      | <p>This opposing idea is under-developed. It could have considered how idealism and the false portrayal of reality can bring harm to the modern world</p> <p>It’s not clear what censorship has to do with this</p> <p>To end on a note more aligned to the stand taken, the argument could have concluded by mentioning that these literature texts could be the minority, or that readers are generally aware of the false portrayal of reality in these books</p> |
| <p>In conclusion, literature holds more power and influence than one can imagine. Sometimes, authors find it easier to pen down their thoughts than to vocalise them. Reading literature is like opening a treasure chest of different information and perspectives, which can be relevant to today’s society. Literature can allow people to understand one another in a society filled with different kinds of people. Thus, literature holds purpose in today’s society.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | <p>Simple conclusion that summarises the main ideas. The conclusion could have ended stronger by considering future implications and importance of the study of literature</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |



|                       |  |
|-----------------------|--|
| (Teo Rui Yuan, 20-U4) |  |
|-----------------------|--|



# 2020 JC1 Promotional Examination Paper 1

## 1 'The only thing that social media has done is divide.' How far do you agree?

*This essay displayed a strong command of language with an effectively written introduction and conclusion. While there was an appropriate and diverse use of illustration and evaluation, balance was handled in a rather awkward manner and could have been less contradictory.*

In 2019, a picture of an egg took Instagram by storm, receiving over 40 million likes and emerging as the social networking platform's most 'liked' picture. Such an incident highlighted one of social media's key characteristics - its ability to unite people over almost anything. While social media may have fueled some existing social biases and divides, it cannot be argued that social media has done nothing but cause such divides, as social media's defining trait is the way it enables people to come together. I believe that social media has united people rather than [sowed] discord, allowing us to form connections at the individual, societal and global level.

Clearly addresses the absolute nature of the question.

Skeptics may argue that social media causes division, as it furthers pre-existing biases in people who were already prejudiced against others. Social media has been described as a 'petri dish' for bias to flourish and thrive in. This is due to the 'echo chamber' effect of social media, where one is generally surrounded by those who have the same beliefs as them, trapping people in a bubble of insularity, rather than exposing them to the diverse opinions of others. As a result, people with pre-existing hateful, discriminatory biases tend to find and interact with others with the same worldviews as them. For example, Facebook groups are being used to form communities of neo-Nazis, anti-semitics, religious extremists, and more. By providing a platform for such people to meet, Facebook has allowed them to feel a greater sense of solidarity, and this inflames their preconceived social norms, generating more hate and stronger prejudice. This is also demonstrated in the case of the shooting of a mosque in Christchurch, where the shooter was an already Islamophobic man who gained his inspiration from supremacist right-wing memes on social media, and was encouraged by his online friends who shared his opinions. Hence, detractors will argue that social media will worsen and exacerbate people's existing problematic views, allowing them to sow more discord in the world.

However, the unprecedented and indubitable ways in which social media has unified the world surely redeems its exacerbation of hate. While acknowledging that social media can cause division, I argue that the scale of social media's impact has strengthened our social fabric, rather than torn it apart.

While this serves as a stylistic separation of the OA and SA, it does little to rebut the OA itself.

Social media has managed to allow individuals to come together based on common interests, hence creating unity at an individual level. Social media platforms are mainly governed by algorithms that strive to accomplish the goal of such platforms, which is to allow people to meet like-minded individuals in the online sphere. For example, TikTok's 'For You' Page, known as the 'FYP' to the TikTok community, is specifically engineered to group users together based on their interests. As such, creators and viewers alike can meet people with similar interests,

Directly contradicts OA - could have been better couched/ qualified.



|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>and hence form connections over virtually anything. From political opinions, to hobbies, to music taste, the commonalities between people are endless. As such, individuals can form friendships with other individuals through social media, uniting us based on what we share. Regardless of geographical, or even language barriers, social media enables us to connect with others at the individual level.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| <p>Beyond the individual level, social media prevents division within society by reducing certain inequalities, hence bridging the gap between those that are more privileged, and the less fortunate. To the underprivileged, the lack of access to physical and mental healthcare may seem like an unbridgeable chasm. Social media helps close this gap, as healthcare professionals take to social networking platforms to share their expertise. For example, '@lisaoliveratherapy' on Instagram is a certified therapist who shares mental healthcare resources and tips on her page, and allows people to 'direct message' her for short, online therapy sessions. For those lacking access to proper mental health care facilities and resources, social media can help alleviate some of their pain. Beyond mental healthcare, luminaries are also taking to social media to educate people. From medical students' Instagram pages to TikTok's Dr Magnolia and Professor Chris Sutherland, those with hindered access to education can now use social media to keep up with experts of their field and learn from them. Thus, social media is a unifying force for the less privileged, serving as a stepping stone in reducing inequalities.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | <p>Clear link back to the question.</p>                                                                                                                                                           |
| <p>Finally, on a global scale, beyond the individual or the community, social media is an unprecedented force for unity, uniting people fighting for social justice to create international movements that have impacted the global community. Most of the recent global societal movements have begun with social media, and continued because of strong social media support fanbases. The #StrengthHasNoGender campaign was launched on social media to challenge toxic masculinity, and the fight against traditional gender norms still continues on social media today. Similarly, the #MeToo movement began with celebrities sharing experiences of sexual assault online, and many other survivors have since come forward to share their stories. The Black Lives Matter movement became even more popularised in 2020, as the killing of George Floyd was shared through social media, manifesting its effects in how many countries around the world started to hold the issue of systemic racism in higher regard. Social media has hence served as a tool for social movements to grow and develop. Not only does social media ignite the spark that begins the movement, it inspires others to fan the flames, fighting for what they believe in too, hence creating a cycle of empowerment that has allowed the international community to take a stand against injustice together. Hence, social media has not just unified us internationally, it has even unified us to strive against division in the global fight for equality.</p> | <p>Good that various examples of social media movements were raised, though more EX of the commonalities between them in bringing people together would have allowed for a stronger argument.</p> |
| <p>In conclusion, I believe that social media has done the exact opposite of divide. At every level of society, social media has brought people together like never before. The scale of social media's impact definitely proves its far-reaching and widespread influence, and the strong extent to which it has unified people. Arguably, social media does not create new divides, it only strengthens existing societal fault lines. The problem then lies in our inherent biases against others, not in social media. Hence, this problem can be eroded through changing</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                   |



|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |  |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|
| <p>mindsets and using our platforms for good. Therefore, let us all fight for unity and equality in the online sphere, and use social media not to exacerbate injustice, but to bridge gaps and build bonds.</p> <p>(Kee Yan Tong Yanisa, 20-05)</p> |  |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|

## 1 'The only thing that social media has done is divide.' How far do you agree?

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |                                                                                                                                                                  |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p><i>This is a well-considered and balanced essay which has addressed the question. Argumentation is strong in the 1st 2 content paragraphs but less so in the next 2 — perhaps due to time management issues. Apt use of examples throughout, although not always evaluated for insight. Good introduction but incomplete conclusion. Organisation of ideas is clear, though the student can strive to write with a distinct personal voice.</i></p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |                                                                                                                                                                  |
| <p>In a Netflix documentary “The Social Dilemma”, which highlights key individuals who played a huge part in the creation and designing of the most popular social media platforms such as Twitter, Facebook and Pinterest, many expert speakers proclaimed that the original intent of these social media platforms was to bring people closer together. However, has social media really effected this benefit upon society? While optimists would agree that the original intention of social media has been met, which can be supported by the fact that social media brings the masses together to rally for positive societal reforms, as well as brings to people information which raises awareness about the vulnerable in society, pessimists would criticise that the proliferation of fake news on social media as well as the presence of extremist views which compromise harmony have wedged a deep divide in society. Although there may be some truth in the opinions of pessimists, I opine that it would be way too absolute to claim that social media has only resulted in divide within society. As such, I disagree [with] the statement to a large extent as I believe that social media has also forged stronger bonds within segments of society even though it may have cause[d] divide in some.</p>                                                                                                    | <p>Apt broad opening</p> <p>The introduction has contextualised the qn well and addressed the point of contention explicitly.</p> <p>Clear thesis statement.</p> |
| <p>Critics of social media hold the belief that social media perpetuates divides within society as it is a platform which promotes the spread of misinformations, some of which could lead to the discrimination of marginalised or oppressed individuals becoming further entrenched in the mindsets of individuals. They make reference to the research study conducted by the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) on three million Twitter posts, which found that Twitter posts containing falsehoods were far more likely to be “retweeted” (an expression for the sharing of information on Twitter) than posts which consisted of accurate information. Furthermore, due to social media algorithms, users who clicked on false information more often on social media sites tended to be recommended even more articles supporting the falsehoods they had read. As such, for instance, if an individual clicks on posts that are prejudiced against African Americans, they would be recommended more similar articles, potentially resulting in their entire social media feed portraying negative African-American stereotypes. Hence, critics of social media believe that social media causes divide due to the fact that its propensity to exacerbate the amount of fake news a person receives is extremely high due to the way its algorithms function. Another case in point would be the video which</p> | <p>Clearly-written opposing argument</p> <p>This is so important!</p> <p>Good use of examples to illustrate and substantiate your argument.<br/>Good content</p> |



|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>suggested that Muslims around the world were celebrating after their “victory” in the 2015 Paris Terror Attacks that was widely circulated around social media platforms. In reality, the video featured Pakistani men celebrating their country’s victory at a cricket match in 2009. As this video was widely circulated through social media, it caused Muslim people to be portrayed in an even worse light and resulted in heightened Islamophobia amongst communities. Therefore, given that social media encourages the spread of misinformation which could lead to discrimination against marginalised groups in society, critics argue that social media has resulted in much divide.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | <p>paragraph.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| <p>Personally, I can understand their concerns, but I believe that they are too critical and fail to see the good in humanity. As much as social media has wedged divides within society due to the spread of misinformation, it has also raised awareness and brought to peoples’ attention information on the inequalities the marginalised face, leading to people being better able to empathise with the marginalised, bridging the gap between them. This is evident from the recent #BlackLivesMatter episode, whereby a video of George Floyd, an African-American individual being unfairly killed due to police brutality was published on social media sites such as Instagram, Facebook and Twitter. In light of this, many also took it upon themselves to share information about how African Americans are being unfairly treated in America on their profiles, greatly increasing awareness of those who were previously ignorant and unaware of the harsh reality faced by African Americans. This also led to a spike in donations to causes pertaining the support of African-American individuals as well as the #BlackLivesMatter movement. Thus, the case of #BlackLivesMatter clearly demonstrates how social media can increase awareness on the problems faced by minority groups, leading to greater understanding within society and thus forging stronger bonds and less divide between the marginalised and the general public. On top of this, the #MeToo movement is another case in point whereby social media was able to raise awareness on the sexual harassment issues that women faced, thus [bridging] the divide through promoting gender equality. The #MeToo movement a successful social media movement where women shared their experiences with sexual harassment, something that had been swept under the carpet for long on social media. This not only brought women together and empowered them, but also increased awareness amongst men on the plight of women, leading to many of them standing in solidarity with women to fight against sexual harassment. Therefore, as the #MeToo movement was able to bring people closer together through the sharing of information to increase awareness amongst the ignorant, it highlights how social media has resulted in greater social cohesion and equality especially for the marginalised, showing that social media has not merely caused divide.</p> | <p>Is this a rebuttal? Does it address the OA?<br/>Yes precisely, social media can do both &amp; it might be more sensible to concede the point raised in the previous paragraph.</p> <p>Apt examples, evaluated to further your argument &amp; linked back to the question.</p> |
| <p>Conservatives believe that social media causes divide because it provides a platform for the malicious to spread extremist views which could harm the notion of harmony within societies. They cite the fact that in Germany, the government had to go to the extent of passing anti-hate laws whereby social media outlets were required to remove extremist posts within 24 hours due to the fact that there was a rise in anti-Holocaust claims on social media. They further support their claim citing the Amy Cheong saga in Singapore. Amy Cheong, a member of management staff in the NTUC corporation posted on Facebook comments which lamented</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | <p>A valid opposing argument</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |



|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |                                                                                                                            |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>Malay weddings as well as promoted anti-Malay sentiments. Given that Singapore is a multicultural society, where people of different ethnicities live harmoniously together, Amy Cheong's comment was seen to be extremely destructive for the Singaporean society, potentially destroying social cohesion and driving divide. Hence, conservatives believe that as social media provides a platform for extremist views, it drives divide within harmonious societies.</p>                                                                                                                                                                      |                                                                                                                            |
| <p>However, I believe that the extremist views being portrayed on social media are often well-controlled on social media platforms, often removed even without the need for government intervention. Even more so, I believe that social media results in the forging of more interconnected societies due to its ability to bring people together. This is evident from the fact that organ donors have been sourced many times through social media. Furthermore, programmes such as Pink Dot SG bring together members of the LGBT community in a society where they are usually frowned upon, thus creating a wider support group for them.</p> | <p>Does this rebuttal address the premise of the OA?<br/>Rebuttal relies heavily on examples instead of argumentation.</p> |
| <p>On the whole, I disagree to a large extent that social media has only caused division in society because I see that social media, in actuality is like a double-edged sword and has also brought about cohesion in society.</p> <p><i>(Cher Shining Clara, 20-E6)</i></p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | <p>Ineffective &amp; incomplete conclusion — better time management required.</p>                                          |

## 1 'The only thing that social media has done is divide.' How far do you agree?

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |                                                       |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------|
| <p><i>This strength of this essay was the candidate's command of language - demonstrated both through his wide-ranging and appropriate use of vocabulary as well as the clarity of his insights and evaluation. Relevance of the question was sustained throughout and response, although credible evidence outside the candidate's own experiences and anecdotes were lacking.</i></p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |                                                       |
| <p>Since the prodigious advent of globalisation, catalysed by cutting-edge technologies such as the world wide web and the smartphone, humans have been advancing at unprecedented speeds in terms of communication and collaboration, among other things. Breakthroughs in technologies have led to the birth of social media into the 21st century, and its use became widespread throughout the world as fast as light, spreading even to the far reaches of the globe. However, many debates revolve around the topic of social media- is it a boon or a bane? Does it divide us , or bring us together? This essay posits that the claim that social media does nothing but divide is false to a certain extent, via two points of contention- namely, the spreading of ideals and ideas.</p> |                                                       |
| <p>The extremist proponents of the counter-argument may postulate that social media is a bane to society, dividing friends and family as they cloud minds with "following the trend", neglecting their loved ones and their friends, ironically in their bid to be "socially" prominent on social media platforms like Instagram. Prima facie, such a notion seems quite legitimate – social media is indeed the cause of some familial and "social" problems as victims obsess over the latest trends. However, this argument is myopic as it fails to consider the flip-side of this</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                         | <p>This assumption is not backed up by evidence -</p> |



|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |                                                                                                                                                |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>issue. Social media causes problems in a minority of friendships and families and serves as a bridge to the majority. Families, especially those who live oceans apart, connect through social media, sharing their lives with others, including their family members and appreciating their loved ones when they share beautiful memories in their social media pages. Many friendships can be made through social media as well, as this common plane allows us to easily find people who share the same interests as us. Thus many strong friendships are formed in this way- in fact, that was what social media was created for- to form and strengthen bonds. Indeed, in some cases, social media causes some diametrically differing outcomes from its original purpose, but this forms the minority.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | <p>could be a troublesome claim.</p>                                                                                                           |
| <p>However many critics may further argue by harping on the fact that social media could also divide us from ourselves- our personal identity, in a bid to cast aspersions on the tangible benefits of social media. This could, as a whole, bring negative effects to society as it leads to the lack of diversity. Although this [argument] may seem true at first glance, deeper analysis reveals a massive hiatus - the majority of social media users do not, in fact scramble to follow the trend for one main reason- they wish to have a presence on social media. That is, if everyone follows the same trends, it would be a Herculean task to be prominent on social media as everyone is doing the same thing! Hence, they instead flaunt their uniqueness and individuality on social media, sharing their unique styles or stories that captivate online audiences - garnering them the so-called “presence” on social media. This actually encourages “togetherness in our differences”- quite the opposite from our opposing argument- bringing people around the globe together to celebrate our uniqueness. This sheds light on the power of social media in tying people together, hence the negative connotation regarding social media is debunked.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                  | <p>Argument could have been better scoped, rather than making a sweeping statement that this would apply to ‘everyone’.</p>                    |
| <p>Firstly, social media brings people together via the spread of ideals. These platforms act as a voice for millions of people and could be used to spread awareness of a certain issue happening in a country that demands attention and support. This has been extremely prominent on social media pages, where chains of support are commonplace, acting sometimes as the catalyst for change in some contexts. We substantiate our postulation by bringing up the “#blacklivesmatter” movement, which has sparked much support from people from all around the globe as we witness the unfair treatment of the blacks in countries such as the United States, which also placed pressure on governments to end police brutality in light of the murder of George Flyod this year. Supporters from all around the world have even engaged in peaceful marches to spread the word and encourage fair treatment to all races. This very support from all over the globe, due to social media, has put pressure on the judiciary in the USA to charge the policemen involved in the murder, who would have gone scot-free (due to cover-up efforts by the police department) if it wasn’t for social media. Thus the power of social media and its potential as a catalyst for change is indubitable as it brings citizens of the world together in support of a common ideal, fuelled by our morality and the desire to advance as one people, to build a better world.</p> | <p>While valid, what other illustrations (of a similar nature, perhaps around the world) could have been used to strengthen this argument?</p> |
| <p>Secondly, social media has eroded the walls between countries, bringing seas together on a virtual plane by making cross-border communication and thus, the spreading of ideas and trends, possible. This is not as trivial as “talking to a friend from another country”- this</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |                                                                                                                                                |



|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |                                                     |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------|
| <p>actually served as the springboard for globalisation in the social sector. Being able to communicate without words but via ideas is what makes social media such a phenomenal creation. Ideas can be spread through, created and improved on via social media as it expands ones audience indefinitely, rather than confining it to a home country. For example, many entrepreneurs today such as Jack Ma, the creator of Alibaba, have ridden on the waves of social media to spread their product ideas around the globe, lubricating their paths to success by flaunting the uniqueness of their ideas through social media, hence garnering and attracting billions of consumers which have made them successful. Of course, these are not only limited to business ideas but to trends as well. Even something as small and seemingly insignificant as a “bottle flip challenge” has brought together people of all ages to engage in this fun trend of flipping bottles by tapping into their competitive spirit- some even try to beat the high-scores of people around the globe. Thus, it can be seen that it is not only the big and impactful ideas that tie people together, it is the small ones too. Hence, this provides the most sensational grist for the fact that social media brings us together via the spread of ideas and trends.</p> | <p>HOW he has done so is conspicuously missing.</p> |
| <p>In retrospect, the birth of social media has brought about an infinite of boons to society - this is an irrefutable fact. To say that social media does nothing but divide is to vastly understate the good that it brings. However, the fact remains that social media is still indeed a double-edged sword- like fire, it can either be your servant or master. One must be able to control their social media usage to prevent getting engulfed in the flames of obsession and loss of self. All in all, it all boils down to how one uses social media- for good or for bad. Otherwise, I would disagree [with] the myopic claim that social media does nothing but divide.</p> <p>(Luke Yeo, 20-14)</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |                                                     |

## 2 Are the Arts merely for entertainment?

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |                                                                                                      |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p><i>This essay has addressed the value of the Arts, beyond that of mere entertainment value, although the balance is not handled well with the OA and Rebuttal coming across more as an afterthought. It would be more logical to address the OA first since it is the perspective in the question. A good range of examples, evaluated for insight, illustrate and substantiate the points raised. In terms of language, the candidate could have been more deliberate in differentiating the Arts from Art and not use the terms interchangeably.</i></p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |                                                                                                      |
| <p>Many see the Arts as an escape, a distraction from the outside world that demands so much from us, And that it only provides joy and pleasure to those who need it. Little do they know that the Arts is so much more than just entertainment. The Arts, which, is in this case, refers to any audiovisual or literary work, is not only a medium that gives temporary solace or joy, it also is a platform for change and an agent for change precisely due to its potential to form an intimate relationship with its viewer and maker. Thus, I am of the contention that the Arts should not be seen as a superficial source of entertainment, but also an outlet for creative expression, to voice out on social issues and is an indispensable part of any society.</p> | <p>Why do you think people associate the Arts with entertainment?<br/>Thesis statement is clear.</p> |



|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |                                                                                                                                                                          |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>The Arts help people make sense of the world and become critical thinkers. Humans have the innate ability I want to create things, things that carry meaning, things that bring along the artist's hopes and messages, be in the form of clay or words on pulp or through audiovisual means. With the creation of the Arts, comes the appreciation and interpretation of the Arts which can be a liberating activity. It requires viewers to be critical thinkers and emphatic viewers that discern and critique work carefully, uncovering the infinite meanings of the artist or author. Because of this, many expose their children to works of art at a young age to allow them to hone their critical thinking skills early and to develop more perceptive minds through the exposure to different genres of music or musicals. The Arts is the manifestation of how people understand the world around us. To appreciate the arts is to view the different lived experiences through different lenses. To read George Orwell's '1984' is to see how a man viewed society back then, to watch BBC's acclaimed documentary series 'Planet Earth', is to marvel at and explore our own home, to listen to Nat King Cole's songs is to wish and realise how simple life can be. All artworks have their inherent agenda and meaning that is up for interpretation. While viewing them brings some form of entertainment, it also allows people to form a deeper connection with the world around us, allowing us to think critically in a world where there are countless truths.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | <p>The Arts and Art should not be used interchangeably in your essay.</p> <p>To consider how the value of entertainment can coexist with other purposes of the Arts.</p> |
| <p>Underneath the veneer of fun and entertainment, the Arts also has a serious and/or satirical side that aims to raise awareness on social issues and phenomena in society. Many artists use different forms of medium for their unspoken critique of society, letting their artwork do the talking. Indonesian artists, Affandi, has produced countless artworks showing the erasure or blurring of his identity as an Indonesian Chinese during Suharto's rule and it was a lamentation of society at that time, the bold lines painted across the canvas signifying his displeasure. The Singapore government's initial decision to not support Sonny Liew's 'The Art of Charlie Chan Hock Chye' shows the power of a 'simple' comic book, which actually touched on sensitive political affairs that happened during Singapore's political past. Art can allow us to be more aware of the happenings in society and engage us in a fun way, encouraging us to not be mindless people who accept the world around us at face value and allowing us to be more open minded persons in the process. The power of the Arts being a Messiah of the problems in society is such a strong one that some governments have found the need to ban or remove works from the screens, shelves or stage. One such example is the Chinese government removing scenes depicting the Cultural Revolution in Chen Kaige's 'Farewell, My Concubine' as the Tiananmen Massacre had occurred not long ago. This shows the power of film, which can fan the flames of social movements. While the Arts can be used for social commentary, it can only do so much under an authoritative government, but this does not negate the other function of the Arts, which is to educate the masses on issues happening in society that could affect them.</p> | <p>Examples are evaluated to draw out the insights about the functions of the Arts.</p>                                                                                  |
| <p>Many cities around the world have established themselves as art capitals of the world, such as Paris, Venice, Tokyo and New York. These places have set a name for themselves as the go-to places if one wishes to immerse themselves in the Arts. As a result, these places have their own branding when it comes to tourism and many flock to the Louvre or the Metropolitan Museum of Art, generating tourist dollars for the economy. The Arts does not</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | <p>The focus on the economic value of the Arts does not allow you to examine the essence of the Arts - many things contribute to our</p>                                 |



|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |                                                                                     |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| only bring those interested in the Arts to a place, but it also brings more people who want to be associated with the Arts. One such country who rode on the waves of the benefits of Art is Singapore, who started the Singapore Biennale as an attempt to market the city as a progressive and 'hip' city after seeing the other Art capitals flourish. As a result, Singapore, together with its economic powerhouse status, is seen as a place to go for the Arts in Southeast Asia. The income that the Arts attracts from tourists is not just from the consumption of the Arts, but other aspects as well, it ensures the economic benefits which can be spent on funding other domains of society and thus it is not merely for entertainment. | tourism industry and economy.                                                       |
| Critics may argue that even if the Arts have good intentions, they are branded and made enjoyable forms of media in mind first, thus this shows that they are for entertainment. However, I would like to argue that this does not negate the deep messages that artists would like to send to their viewers, readers or listeners. Many of them still wish for the viewers to have an enjoyable experience when viewing the work, but this does not mean that they do not wish to get their message across. While being an entertaining experience, they also seek to empower and educate the viewer.                                                                                                                                                 | Consider the sequence of your OA. Rebuttal is not fully developed or substantiated. |
| The Arts are not oil on canvas, graphite on paper or a performance on stage merely for entertainment. It offers a place for people to learn about our world through multiple perspectives and is also an agent for change, only for those who wish to seek it.<br><br>(Tan Kai Teng, 20-E6)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | Incomplete conclusion - do keep on eye on the clock next time!                      |

## 2 Are the Arts merely for entertainment?

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |  |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|
| <i>A thoughtful and insightful response with depth of evaluation. Intro-conclusion pairing was deftly handled by this candidate as well. Language used was sophisticated and appropriate, strengthening the clarity of argumentation in this essay. Nonetheless, one should be wary of the fact that films/movies may not constitute 'Art' in all circumstances (unless they are independent/arthouse films) and thus, examples of those in this piece may not have been of the greatest relevance.</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |  |
| Most of us can agree that Van Gogh's Starry Night is an artistic masterpiece — swirls of different shades of blue amidst the navy sky speckled with splashes of vibrant yellow, white and blue that represent little eddies of wind rushing through the clam, peaceful night, among the foliage nestled so comfortably in nature. Our eyes are able to feast on such aesthetic beauty, allowing us some sort of entertainment as we marvel at the wondrous skill of the painter. However, what sets the difference after this stage is whether or not we choose to delve into the hidden themes intricately woven into the artwork, or simply accept it for what we can see at surface level. Those who select the former option merely see it as nothing more than a piece to temporarily entertain us, walking away before being able to acknowledge the message of the psychological freedom Van Gogh wanted to convey as he painted the Starry Night when he was constrained by the shackles of a mental illness. This reflects the plight that the Arts are in today, as many deem it nothing more than merely for entertainment. However, I disagree with this notion. |  |



|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>Cynics may opine that the Arts only exist to provide an avenue for fantastical escape from our mundane lives. Undeniably, the humdrum nature of our fast-paced lives today leaves us feeling empty at times, unable to extract any sort of pleasure from our dull reality so bound by the constraints of physics. In order to soothe our languid souls and minds, many of us turn to the Arts for relaxation and entertainment. For example, the burgeoning Hollywood movie industry is irrefutable testimony to the fact that many seek pleasure in watching such movies. Many people choose to indulge in movies in cinemas to escape from their plain and boring lives, fuelling the box office with huge sums of revenue, such that the movie industry is currently worth trillions. Owing to the quick tempo of modern day life, many are unable to excavate the often deeper theme and implications of films that lie under the surface of what seems like merely just an action-packed or sci-fi movie, which in turn leads them to watch such movies for entertainment. This therefore causes the Arts, in the form of movies and films, to seem as if they are only there to entertain. However, I disagree with this mindset. There are indubitably many films that seek to do much more than entertain, such as to convey an important message or even to challenge a stereotype that plagues our society. It is only a shame that the fast-pace of contemporary life heavily erodes the possibility for many to slow down and appreciate the subtle contexts and content presented in movies. For example, one of Disney's top-grossing movies, Frozen, may be seen by many to merely be an action-packed and fantastical film where disorder and chaos is resolved into peace and order once again through a tumultuous journey that the protagonist experiences. Many may lack the time to watch the movie again to unearth the touching message of sisterly love that the movie portrays or to realise that it challenges the societal stereotype of love at first sight. As such, they gain no knowledge of these themes from deeper analysis, hence causing many to regard the Arts as merely a form of entertainment.</p> | <p>Not all movies are considered art - candidates should be aware of this.</p> <p>Evaluation noted</p> <p>Frozen was only marginally acceptable as art due to the digital art/ music/ plot.</p> |
| <p>Moving aside from movies, the Arts also include theatrical performances, plays and literature texts. These serve as a conduit for the Arts to flow through to incite significant social change in our world. As such, the Arts are able to change societal perspectives, moulding them into those that would benefit society to a greater extent. For example, theatrical performances like Dear Evan Hansen and plays like Normal by Pangdemonium both strive to raise awareness about mental health disorders in a bid to combat mental health stigmatisation that is very prevalent in today's context, where a lack of understanding and empathy plagues our society in our blind dash towards scientific development and advancement, leading us to neglect the more touchy and sometimes even taboo topics surrounding such subject matters. Much more than mere entertainment, the Arts, through theatrical plays, are able to deconstruct our prejudices towards these sensitive topics and shape them into more empathetic ones. Of course, they do not contort and twist our views towards them, but rather, tweak them to eradicate the judgmental aspect they may be imbued with, championing a change in society and paving the way towards a more inclusive future.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | <p>Are/ were they merely for entertainment? Link to the question could be more explicit.</p> <p>Valid example</p>                                                                               |
| <p>Moreover, it would be inaccurate and myopic to assume that the Arts serve only the role of entertaining in our world, as there are many who work in the Arts landscape that rely on creating works of artistic value for income. For example, the lucrative anime industry in Japan is built on the foundation of animated films and comics, otherwise known as manga.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | <p>Like Frozen, this is another grey area as to whether it can/</p>                                                                                                                             |



|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |                                                               |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>For the artists who create these cinematic pleasures and detailed stories, the Arts are not seen as a trivial topic capable of only entertaining to them. It is a serious line of work in which they use to convey their personal messages to their audiences. Additionally, they may use the Arts as an avenue to express their passion in life. There are a multitude of art communities and individuals who use the Arts as an outlet for creativity, like the Urban Sketchers community in Singapore, as well as Japanese artists like Kawano Chihaya, who uploads his artwork on popular social media platforms. Both of these examples elicit the fact that the Arts are an economic activity and realm of passion that many people take pride in, which deconstructs the notion that the Arts are merely for entertainment.</p> | <p>should be considered art or not.</p> <p>Valid example.</p> |
| <p>Indeed, the Starry Night is a visual masterpiece, but it carries with it the hope that those who chance upon it may look past its external appearance of artistic beauty, as well as what they see on surface level and instead, see what the artist wants them to see — passion. Similarly, I hope that the Arts would not fall prey to the stereotype that it is merely for entertainment. I wish for society to unearth and acknowledge its possibility to effect social change, to convey important messages and wisdom and to serve as outlets of creativity, which will no doubt add a splash of vibrancy to our lives.</p> <p>(Amandel Seow, 20-14)</p>                                                                                                                                                                         | <p>Full circle - references made to the introduction.</p>     |

## 2 Are the Arts merely for entertainment?

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |                                                                   |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p><i>This candidate displays great subject knowledge in the Arts, demonstrated by the clarity of argumentation and personal voice throughout this piece. Evaluation and insight were presented with elegance, and vocabulary was highly sophisticated. However, there remains a need to stay relentlessly relevant to the question's requirements, particularly the key term 'merely'.</i></p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |                                                                   |
| <p>A room huddled in the warmth of an unadulterated wilderness; detailed patterns riddling the floorboards, where a tree peeks in with jejune cheeriness. So vicariously pleasing is Henri Matisse's 'The Window', that it is almost shocking to admit that the artist had crafted it during the Battle of [Somme] in the first World War. This schism between his art and the ubiquitous gloom of the outside world has even elicited the view of naysayers that Matisse was ignorant of the crises and suffering of mankind; that art was merely a form of entertainment to him. However true these critics may be of the adroit craftsman, I believe that the Arts cannot be a mere object that satisfies our craving for hedonistic pleasure.</p>              | <p>Reference to the classics was apt for setting the context.</p> |
| <p>As early as from the 17<sup>th</sup> century, art was generally favoured as a form of affluent entertainment that merely served to keep many in good spirits, and this was exemplified in the relationship between Joseph Haydn and the Esterhazy family. Like many musicians at the time, Haydn was commissioned by the wealthy family to produce music for their enjoyment, and though they gave him sufficient freedom to compose in his own style, he was dogged by their preferences for instruments and desire to hear only tuneful melodies. Similar to Haydn, other commissioned artists who had to become, to a certain degree, 'slaves' to their art, instead of 'wielders' of it, were only tools of producing entertainment for others. Art was</p> |                                                                   |



|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |                                                                                                                                                                                        |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>devoid of expression and personal identity, and only meant to humour others for pleasure.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| <p>However, this assumes that artists, such as Haydn, had no life outside of their commissioned work. As time progressed, a greater portion of artists began to produce music and put them out in the world under their own name. This was not only due to the lessened emphasis on commissions, but also the need for expression and distinctive identity, and it goes without saying that such a desire is innate and timeless. Singaporean street artist Zul Othman uses spray painting as a medium to express his identity, and to share and form precious memories with the people he holds dear. In a modern world where we are constantly being subjected to the monotony of a pedestrian life, art is a pop of colour that we can take pride in. Moreover, while the Arts can contribute to the personal identity of an artist, it can also allow an entire national identity and culture to flourish as well, as seen by Othman's addition of spray painting into the Arts scene of Singapore. As such, the Arts are not merely for entertainment, but a visceral medium for personal identity and expression.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | <p>Link to 'merely for entertainment' more explicitly.</p> <p>Point on contributing to national identity is still debatable.</p>                                                       |
| <p>The Arts are also a powerful tool for activism and social change, wielding the power of thought, and inciting it. Simone de Beauvoir was one of the youngest of her peers to have taken a university Psychology examination, and even had some of the most remarkable ideas pertaining to the way of life, and how we can live more authentically. However, despite her ingenious capabilities, she was rarely taken seriously by her male counterparts, leading to the beginning of one of the most well-known books, 'The Second Sex'. Her exploration of feminism, sexuality, as well as a woman's role in society were unconventional, and even provocative at times, and yet without such controversial discussion, modern society would be far from considering the importance of gender equality. The power of art is in its ability to transcend the boundaries of time, to weave into a person's consciousness, to incite small contretemps regarding differing opinions, but most importantly, to spark change. De Beauvoir's art in the form of her words was exciting, and so contrasted to the world and context of society at the time. It was not purely for entertainment that her misogynistic male peers had already regarded her as. It was for her desire, and her need to provide a new perspective worth fighting for, and without it, society would be without a fervent sense of meaning beyond survival and livelihood. Therefore, the Arts can be an essential catalyst for social change, and allow many to be more exposed to different sets of beliefs and values [beyond mere entertainment].</p> | <p>Point taken, but philosophy is often referred to as neither Art, nor Science. As much as my soul loves the work of Simone de Beauvoir, this example does not constitute as Art.</p> |
| <p>Finally, the Arts, rather than entertaining, can induce reflective qualities in a person, allowing us to be more introspective, and understand the most convoluted individual in our lives—our self. American painter Edward Hopper is most well-known for his themes of isolation, solitude and contemplation in his works such as 'Automat' and 'Gas'. However, his images are presented in such a subtle poignant manner, that it is difficult to denounce it as hopeless sorrow. Rather, he used his art to convey and encourage those as introverted and alone as he was to accept themselves, and not shun the veracity of their character so carelessly. Similar to how he believed that there was nothing shameful in enjoying solitude, his artworks are so poignant that they allow viewers to appreciate the still moments in their lives, and dig deeper to a greater understanding of themselves. With the increasing pace of development in modern society, such introspection is absolutely salient, and without it, we</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | <p>Apt use of original illustration was demonstrated in this paragraph.</p>                                                                                                            |



|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |  |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|
| would be lost and detached; surviving without living. When we reach a better understanding of ourselves through art, we will be one step closer to learning how to appreciate ourselves for who we choose to be, and like Hopper, there is no shame in being who we want to be, no matter how strange. Thus, the Arts allow us to reflect upon our lives, engendering greater acceptance towards ourselves, as well as others, [and should not be dismissed as merely for entertainment].                                                               |  |
| <p>Despite the accusations of Matisse's apparent ignorance and lack of awareness of human suffering, he continued to paint beautiful works of art that celebrated the lack of dogmatism, and his unbridled love for the natural beauty of nature and mankind. As opposed to rendering him glum, the war made him see the greater beauty among us, amidst the suffering, and perhaps, if we all take a closer look, we may find something just as valuable and worthwhile, [outside of facile entertainment].</p> <p>(Pang Hui Bin Gabrielle, 20-14)</p> |  |

### 3 How far is a university education still important in today's world?

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p><i>This response demonstrates a good awareness of the issue of higher education, and makes a good attempt at addressing 'today's world' &amp; 'still' consistently. The modern context is referred to quite successfully, and both mindsets and features of higher education today are engaged with. Balance is achieved: although the opposing argument was descriptive at times, it is still relevant &amp; the rebuttal responded very clearly to it. This response falters in its use of examples. While they are reasonably consistently used, the generic and vague quality of most led to less effective arguments that did not do justice to the validity of the points. As you read, you may want to consider what specific examples could be used to support the arguments better.</i></p>                                     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| <p>Education has seen a vast amount of improvements and changes leading up to the 21st century. In this day and age, education can be seen as one of the greatest engines propelling society towards a new era of progress. Many countries in this globalised world are trying to, or already have, harnessed the powerful tool of science and technology. However, to what extent should people in this modern society prioritise education now? I strongly agree to a large extent that despite the importance and emphasis a university education gets, it is no longer as important in our society. This is due to the changing needs and requirements of citizens, how the education system is becoming more flexible as a whole, and the fact that a university education simply no longer has a high relevance in today's world.</p> | <p>Context is quite generic and can be more targeted to the question's point of contention</p> <p>Stand is clearly indicated with reasoning, though it would make more sense if context had been set - Is it no longer as important relative to the past?</p> |
| <p>Realists argue that as more people attain university degrees, it is essential and almost compulsory to obtain one in order to stay relevant in our increasingly competitive society. With a greater emphasis on education in many countries, university degrees help to sieve out the elite from the average, and can serve as a form of judgement of one's skills and ability to perform in the workforce. Countries like the United States and China have seen citizens competing for university applications, as their livelihood is tied to these degrees. In China, a university degree can determine one's quality of life — and those without one might have to settle for a less than average lifestyle. This is because the requirements and criteria for the</p>                                                               | <p>Relevant claim</p> <p>Consideration of 'today's world' can be more in-depth - Why is education being emphasised in many countries? Why is society increasingly competitive?</p> <p>Example of China is generic</p>                                         |



|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>workforce are now increasing. New technological skills and specialisation [are] now needed to further improve the quality of work in our modern society, as jobs such as simple, repetitive, laborious factory jobs are now shifting out. Thus, a university education is arguably now more important than ever due to the integral role technology plays, in addition to the progress society has made, in staying relevant to the 21st century.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | <p>Paragraph addresses some modern-day trends</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| <p>However, I beg to differ. The advent of technology is the exact reason why university education no longer has a high priority. The requirements of today's society are no longer the same as the past. What was once treasured, hard skills, has now seen an overwhelming defeat to soft skills in the 21st century. To utilise and wield the powerful tool of technology, citizens now need to have more adaptable, behavioural and social skills. With the rise of globalisation, many countries and cities around the world are riding this wave of globalisation, and thus reaping the benefits together. This has resulted in the fast-paced progression of the world, accelerating the urbanisation and integration of technology in our world today. Studies have shown that at the rate of progression of society, many skills learnt in university education might become obsolete upon completion of the degree. For example, knowledge learnt in medicine and skills learnt in surgery might become outdated, rendering what was once cutting-edge to "traditional" in a mere matter of years. This has also greatly affected the stability of many other jobs, as speculated by experts. This means that soft skills are actually more important in regards to staying relevant in this society. Skills such as communication and teamwork are timeless, and can give an advantage with the coming of globalisation. Being able to learn quickly, and being able to stay well-versed with technology now holds a higher priority over university education in many aspects in the world such as job applications. Thus, the quick progression of our modern society has now required citizens to pick up soft skills to stay relevant, and to become more adaptable to change, skills which are not necessarily taught in university.</p> | <p>Rebuttal to the point above</p> <p>Could be clearer what 'the past' refers to - whether it means the recent past, or a pre-industrial past will make a difference to the argument</p> <p>Modern world context is developed</p> <p>Example could be more specific</p> <p>Evaluation links back clearly to 'today's world' &amp; 'still'</p> |
| <p>Changing mindsets and the need for change [have] not only shaped our education system towards a new horizon, but also the generation's mindset of education. University is no longer the ultimate goal of many students. Countries like Singapore are revolutionising the scene with alternative education pathways, such as polytechnics. Students in Singapore can choose from many different pathways based on their interests and learning styles, and are no longer confined to the rigid expectation of only being able to achieve success through university. Polytechnics in Singapore are based on the practical side of jobs and train students to excel in their respective fields through hands-on learning and internships, as opposed to the more theoretical university education. In addition, countries in Europe like Finland and Sweden are changing their education systems to fit the needs of students, and are redefining education as a whole. The changing mindsets of the new generation also act as a catalyst for change, with many students now more willing and daring than ever to pursue their dreams instead of opting for a university education. The misconception that a university education is needed for success is also being dispelled. What could be once seen as survivorship bias through university dropouts Mark Zuckerberg and Bill Gates, is now instead turning into a reality for many. The idea of influencers and jobs in the internet sector is now seeing a rise, with platforms available for users to showcase their talents and personalities, or to share</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | <p>Relevant claim made with some reference to mindsets today</p> <p>Example demonstrates changing systems in today's context</p> <p>Example is quite generic and not developed in detail</p> <p>Awareness of changing mindsets in today's world</p> <p>Suitable example that demonstrates the changes</p>                                     |



|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>information, all the while earning money. This has changed the conditions citizens needed to acquire a job, as this showcases that university educations are no longer needed, and illustrates the perfect example of soft skills coming into play. However, it should also be noted that many influencers or celebrities on the internet do still possess university degrees. These university degrees serve as a backup for when people fail to pursue their dreams, through the old but reliable university education. Unfortunately, for those who succeed, their university degrees usually go to waste, bringing up the question of them being more successful if they had not taken that degree. Thus, changing mindsets and the need for change have given rise to a more elastic education system, and a more flexible career pathway that no longer needs a university education when done right.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | <p>Attempt made to concede that this trend is complex and that many still do pursue degrees, followed by evaluation that some of these degrees are wasted</p>                                                                                                                                 |
| <p>Lastly, in today's world, it is undeniable that education is now almost prevalent globally, and can even be said to join the basic commodities of humankind such as water and food. Efforts are being expended to educate the less fortunate, with schools being set up in countries in Africa, especially since education is now being made more affordable to many. However, an increase in education due to advancements in technology and progress is a dual-edged sword. As more schools are set up, more people will receive university degrees, diminishing the quality and relevance of university education. Studies have shown that universities in the United Kingdom and the United States are giving out too many degrees. This oversaturation fills up the job market quickly. With the amount of degrees on the rise, its exclusivity and prestige disappears, so much so that it is no longer favourable to consider it a factor of judgement. This has led to the predicament we are currently in in this modern society, where even degree holders stand a chance to fail in achieving a job. How is it that the top-scorers, high-achievers, supposedly the future generation, fail to secure a job? This can be used to truly question the validity of university degrees now. It is almost as if a quaternary level of education has to be implemented to further sift out the concurrent large pool of degree holders. Thus, the boom of education in the 21st century has backfired to some extent, and only further invalidates the need for a university education due to its deteriorating value.</p> | <p>Topic sentence is descriptive and unclear as it is not linked to the question</p> <p>Reference made to today's world, but it can be extended to discuss academic inflation</p> <p>By the end of the paragraph the point is clearly derived but no concrete examples have been provided</p> |
| <p>In conclusion, a university education can still be a viable option to join the workforce in today's world, just not necessarily being the best way as opposed to the past. The constantly changing needs and mindsets of citizens now instead put forth a bigger priority on adaptability and soft skills, coupled with a greater variety of options to join the workforce, unfortunately reduces the importance of university education. Thus, this new age of society has only led to a lesser emphasis on a university education compared to the past.</p> <p>(Phua Wei Jie, 20-02)</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | <p>Clear summary of points made</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |

## 5 Can racial equality ever be a reality?

*This is a well-written, well-argued and balanced essay in response to the question about the possibility of racial equality. The question is addressed throughout all the content paragraphs, with a good grasp of the issues central to the question. While the insights drawn from the examples are deep, the over-reliance on the US as a source of evidence might present a more western/US-centric view of racial equality both in theory and in practice. Racial*



*equality is endemic in many countries and could have been examined to deepen and broaden the analysis of the issue beyond the US. Racial equality in institutions (manifested in legislation and policy) and that in individual decision and choices in our lived experiences, could be explored with greater distinction. Organisation of ideas is clear, with introduction and conclusion written with much conviction.*

“A door received more justice than Breonna Taylor”. This prominent caption surfaced on social media recently, after jury members charged police officers not for the reckless and racially motivated house break-in which resulted in Breonna Taylor’s tragic death, but for a damaged neighbour’s door from the shooting. The shooting of Breonna Taylor is just one of the many instances of racially discriminatory police brutality incidents in the United States (US), which sparked massive outcry among those in the African American community. This beckons the perennial debate - can racial equality ever be a reality? Racial activists and liberals point to the growing international spotlight on racial inequality as significant progress to welcome an age of racial equality. While international recognition is indeed laudable, I opine that it would not be the silver bullet in solving racial inequality due to entrenched institutionalised racism and lack of political willpower continuously undermining any progress made by humanity in this aspect. Thus, unless these ingrained societal systems are reformed, true racial equality will yet to see the light of day.

Introduction contextualises the question well within the current context and utilises recent events to bring the reader into the context

Clear thesis statement

Liberals worldwide like to point to the growing international recognition and awareness of racial issues in the past year. They commonly cite the #BlackLivesMatter (BLM) movement, catalysed by the George Floyd incident - yet another instance of racially motivated police brutality - as an archetypal example of how major social media influencers worldwide have put into action awareness campaigns to their followers worldwide. Admittedly, these efforts are laudable, as awareness and education is the first step to any revolutionary change. This can be seen in how racial protests have been sparked in Brazil, where a significant proportion of her population has roots linking to imported African slaves. This has led to the issue of decades-long subtle cultural and racial oppression being brought to the limelight in Brazil, as those with African ties were seen as secondary to those who identify as “White” Brazilians. Thus, humanity then seems to make strides towards racial equality. Nevertheless, such a viewpoint is unfortunately misguided and can be regarded as idealistic at best. Although significant strides in raising awareness have been achieved in this age of social media, they have been regularly undermined by exiting racist institutions in achieving true racial equality - where one is not unfairly discriminated against due their race in society. Racially divisive and racist acts committed by an individual are ultimately a product of a faulty education system, as individuals shape their beliefs that there are races superior to other races, and see others of a different race as “inferior”. This is then inherently linked to countries’ historical roots, where western colonialism and European superpowers have shaped societies worldwide to paint a picture of “White Supremacy”, a Global World Order where the “White Man” is superior to other races. Racist mindsets then ironically have been ingrained through the passing down of such ideology, and fed to staunch conservatives in today’s world. Many instances of “White Supremacy” are still seen worldwide, even in an age of technology that promised higher literacy rates among an increasing educated populace. For example, the stoning of Chinese individuals in the United Kingdom amid the

Opposing arguments presents a clear alternative perspective

Concession presents the underlying, perhaps longer-term approach to addressing racial inequality

Rebuttal addresses the gap between intent and consequence - real barriers to addressing racial inequality

Can be more nuanced in the argument of the education system - ideological and institutionalised racism is not perpetuated by education itself, but by the systemic biases inherent in legislation and policy

Do we expect developed countries to be more



|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>coronavirus pandemic can be seen as how even in developed nations, historical notions that guide traditional mindsets prevent change from occurring and thus acting as major hindrances to achieving racial equality.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | <p>enlightened?</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| <p>Moreover, bottom-up approaches of grassroots protests and activism rarely fulfil their purpose if not complemented by top-down action by governments and politicians, which regrettably, may still hold racially discriminatory views. This may then translate to inaction of the subject matter and has a knock-on impact in further influencing individuals to disregard the issue of racial inequality. Going back to the Breonna Taylor incident, even amidst heavy pressure by those on social media and even mainstream media, the <u>Jury</u> involved in the trial ultimately did not cave in to the demands for racial justice by the activists, possibly due to inherent racial biases. Higher up the chain of command, US President Donald Trump has also disregarded the #BLM movement and even repeatedly made racist comments. When such a populist figurehead has made such a stance in disregarding and even perpetuating racially discriminatory ideology, those who subscribe to his personality will then further be influenced to be racially biased, forming a feedback loop as they assume positions of power in the future. One apt illustration is how Donald trump repeatedly attacked “The Four” - a group of non-white Democratic congresswomen, consistently mocking their “radical” and “extreme” ideology. While commentators may assume such attacks to be one of party partisanship, the fact that Donald Trump specifically target a chracteristically non-white goup of congresswomen makes it racially discriminatory. This has then led to many racist attacks against “The Four” on social media platforms. Additionally, <u>partisan political structures</u> have made it exponentially difficult for tangible progress to occur. Although the #BLM movement gained huge traction and sparked massive protests across the country, calls for police reform and more racially inclusive policies were not heeded by the Trump administration. Thus, tangible change in the form of racially progressive policies is the piece de resistance of humanity’s strides towards racial equality, but this is ultimately undermined by existing racist political structures and those in power who disregard and even perpetuate racial inequality.</p> | <p>Good awareness of how change happens in the real world</p> <p>Would this be a good example to illustrate government/ politicians in perpetuating racial inequality?</p> <p>How representative is this of affairs in most countries? How representative is the example of Trump, given his extreme views? (as a political leader) - paragraph could acknowledge this and explain his influence because he is the President of one of the most influential countries in the world</p> |
| <p>Fundamentally, human nature innately leads to individuals sticking close to others who look like them. This has evolutionary purposes and benefits as those who look to the same are thought to be friend, not foe. Such a theory can thus explain why individuals tend to group with those of the same race. While this does not constitute racial inequality, the natural echo chamber hinders one’s mindset to accept alternative perspectives on race, making it a tad bit harder to escape such an inherent trait of favouring their own race against the other.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | <p>The purpose of this content paragraph can be made clearer</p> <p>Insightful point but not fully developed.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| <p>Today, while racial protests may have died down in the US, Breonna Taylor’s legacy and the fight for her justice never ceased. Many social media influencers have started raising awareness of this issue on various platforms, and grassroots support of the Black Community has never been stronger. Although undermined by existing racist institutions and politicians, there exists a light at the end of the tunnel - more porgressive leaders stepping up in this fight against racial inequality worldwide. Let us be more open-minded individuals and one day, racial equality may perhaps occur.</p> <p><i>(Lennon Chua Ree Hung, 20-E6)</i></p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | <p>The reference to the broad opening would be more impactful if it was made at the ending of this concluding paragraph - the sense of closure and symmetry would be that much stronger</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |



## 5 Can racial equality ever be a reality?

*This essay presents a balanced discussion with great depth of evaluation. While there was a clear chain of logic throughout, the paragraphs could have done with more concrete evidence (rather than just general observations and personal anecdotes) to better support the overall argument.*

‘Regardless of race, language, or religion, to build one democratic society based on justice or equality...’ These words, solemnly uttered by Singaporean students everyday, exemplify the ideal that Singapore and many other countries seek to achieve. Racial equality has been a dream of many throughout history, exemplified from Martin Luther King’s famous ‘I have a dream’ speech, to the current youth’s most popular Black Lives Matter movement. Given the attention towards racial equality for the last century, one would justifiably expect much progress to be made to achieve racial equality. However, to this day, racial equality remains not much more than a mere dream. Due to the deep-rooted systemic racism around the world and the unwillingness of people in power to change anything significant in the status quo, I believe that racial equality cannot ever be a reality, at least in the foreseeable future.

Good, clear introduction.

Optimists’ most prominent argument for how our fight for racial equality has been successful would be the trend of more people being aware of discrimination against racial minorities, and thus fighting to make a positive change. Indeed, it is heartening to see hundreds of thousands of protestors taking to the streets in solidarity with racial minorities, demanding that their government change laws to protect the rights of vulnerable racial groups. The most prominent example of this would be the Black Lives Matter movement, which is the most recent campaign in the long history for racial equality in the United States. Incited by the general public’s anger from seeing Black Americans continuously mistreated and even killed by institutions, people protested and demanded for reform in the systems and structures that have consistently discriminated against Black people and made racial equality unattainable. The movement proved to be effective in inciting much needed change, with politicians promising to cut back funding for police departments that displayed unjust treatment of Black people. Furthermore, laws have been passed to more actively protect the rights of the marginalised Black people, and with more human rights activists being heard and listened to in governments, people in power and the general public have seemingly taken a large step towards making racial equality a reality.

Concrete evidence for this point could have been provided.

However, I believe that this is too idealistic and facile of a stance towards truly achieving racial equality. While it looks like there has been a significant positive change, much of it has been largely superficial and wholly performative. Actions such as naming a simple ban on no-knock raids ‘Breonna’s Law’ after a victim of a no-knock police raid suspected to be fuelled by racial bias, instead of having a deeper look into the actual cause of the alarming disproportionate amount of Black people being targeted for such police scrutiny, reveal the people in power’s reluctance to open any ‘can of worms’ and invite uncomfortable discourse to make significant change to the status quo. This is further exacerbated by top officials such as president Donald Trump actively being against such a reform and unabashedly ridiculing protestors, going so far as to calling them ‘thugs’ and threatening to call the National Guard on peaceful, majority Black protestors, while encouraging and turning a blind eye to the largely White protestors wielding guns. With such a blatant public show of ignorance to the racial inequality that



|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |                                                                                                                         |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>plagues America, it is not surprising then to see Donald Trump not instigating a deeper look into the systemic racism embedded in the his country's structures, instead choosing to allow only superficial changes that are unlikely to impact racial inequality in the long run. This superficial treatment of a complex inequality issue is not an isolated event. Instances of performative change can be seen throughout the world, from Canada's feeble apology for long standing crimes and prejudice against indigenous people without reparations, while still invading previously set boundaries into indigenous land, to Myanmar's hostile treatment towards the Rakhine State, with the government pretending the vast divide of treatment between the majority population outside the Rakhine State and the racial minority is simply not there. Thus, when people in power refuse to delve into the root causes of racial inequality or make a significant change, no amount of dissent from the people can clear any roadblock preventing us from attaining racial equality.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | <p>Good that examples from countries other than the US were cited.</p> <p>Clear and effective link to the question.</p> |
| <p>Furthermore, even in societies where racial equality seems more achievable than not, where everyone, regardless of race, lives together in harmony, this facade has time and time again been torn down by a simple racial disagreement, illustrating just how fragile this show of racial equality is for most nations, and how easily it can be exposed to shed light on how the horrors that minority races face and the preferential treatment of the minority race has been so ingrained into every facet of our lives that it is perceived as normal. Take for example Singapore, where we pride ourselves on the long standing racial harmony all citizens enjoy. Racial harmony day is celebrated every year, and our meritocratic system ensures all achievements are solely merit-based, preventing any racial discrimination from happening. However it seems as though we have rested on our laurels for too long, with complaints from minority races about inequality of treatment and casual racism increasing, while systemic discrimination against race in workplaces and schools have come to light. While lessons on racial equality are shoehorned into civics and moral lessons in school, and experiences of racial minorities such as migrant workers are used as debating points in classroom discussion, people like Ms Khan of the Workers' Party are publicly targeted and ridiculed for calling out racial inequality in reality. Many Singaporeans fail to realise that the Chinese speaking requirement for many jobs is a form of racial discrimination, and that racial tolerance is not synonymous with racial equality. In many countries, not just Singapore, racial tolerance is touted as the government's success in welcoming different races into their society, however the increasing number of racially charged acts of violence without punishment for the usually majority race perpetrator says otherwise. With so many nations possessing only the bare minimum of tolerance it is questionable to assume racial equality can become a reality.</p> | <p>What are some examples of societies like this?</p> <p>Again, evidence would have strengthened this point.</p>        |
| <p>Furthermore, many citizens refuse to see people of other races fundamentally as equal, with many holding the perception that other racial groups are 'dirty' and wholly uneducated, leading to the subsequent high barrier to entry for any racial minority to enter the job market. This is exemplified by social experiments where job applicants apply for the same job with the same qualifications, the only difference being their name. Unsurprisingly, the applicant with a racially different sounding name was rejected almost all the time, while applicants with traditionally English sounding names were accepted. This alarming show of blatant preferential treatment for majority races, while preventing racial minorities for enjoying the</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | <p>Concrete evidence for this would have made the argument more convincing.</p>                                         |



|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |  |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|
| <p>same benefits without substantially more effort raises the question of whether it is even possible to tackle such a deep rooted system of inequality of opportunities due to race, when it is so entrenched into the world's systems and culture, and ingrained into everyone's minds as the norm. With so many instances of racial inequality going unnoticed and unaddressed, and most people being completely unaware of them, it would be far too optimistic to say that racial equality can become a reality when many either falsely perceive the current situation to be equal for all, or are ignorant of the inequality that surrounds them.</p> |  |
| <p>In conclusion, while it seems cynical and pessimistic I believe to a large extent that racial equality can not become a reality, at least in the foreseeable future without substantial change to the majority's mindsets and a total upheaval of the world's largely accepted systems that govern law enforcement and employment. As long as people in power decide to not look at racial inequality as the complex issue that it is, racial equality will remain a utopia for a long time.</p> <p><i>(Clarice Pui Mun Sian, 20-03)</i></p>                                                                                                              |  |

## 5 Can racial equality ever be a reality?

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |                                                                                                                      |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p><i>The candidate responded to the question with extremely salient points that were consistently and succinctly argued with relevant to the question requirements. Organisation of these arguments were clear, with cogent use of language (though maybe lacking personal voice). That said, certain arguments lacked a link back to the broader issue as they were example-driven, with many of the illustrations limited to the US as well.</i></p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |                                                                                                                      |
| <p>The fight towards racial equality is long drawn and has been ongoing for many years. Globally, many people have come together to protest against the unfair treatment of different racial groups, fighting for equal rights and treatment. Unfortunately, this battle has not been won as racial groups worldwide are still suffering and struggling to improve their situations. Therefore, I disagree to a large extent that racial equality can ever be a reality, due to fixed mindsets of people, poor governance and the role race plays in society.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | <p>Good contextualisation of prevailing viewpoint 'ever'.</p> <p>Clear stand with reasons. Simple yet effective.</p> |
| <p>Racial equality cannot be fully achieved in the future as people hold fixed mindsets and biases, that were shaped by events, towards certain racial groups that are challenging, or near impossible to change. As humans, we tend to form our own opinions and thoughts on the events that take place around us and these views shape and influence our perception of the world and groups of people around us. When we are constantly exposed to negative scenarios pertaining to certain groups of people, it forms the impression and bias in our brains that link this group of people to the negative scenario. During the developing years of the United States of America (USA), a large percentage of African-American people were enslaved to work for the upper class, White people. This slavery persevered on for many years before being banned by the law. Because of this, many people have since formed a negative impression that the Black people are inferior due to their role of slavery in history. Youths and children in the USA have grown up surrounded by this mentality that certain races are associated with inferiority while others are superior. This exposure shapes the beliefs of many</p> | <p>Such a simple yet effective summary of the history of racism in the US!</p> <p>Link could be stronger</p>         |



|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>people and causes them to treat races differently. This deeply-rooted mindset is difficult and challenging to change and if people continue to believe in this mindset of linking races to superiority and inferiority, racial equality cannot be achieved.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | <p>by linking to the wider context</p>                                                                                                                                                               |
| <p>Racial equality is unable to become a reality in the future due to subdued efforts and poor governance that fail in supporting and ensuring racial equality. Governments have an important and pivotal role in the fight for racial equality as they have the power and ability to set laws to ensure fair treatment of races in their country. As more attention is given to racial equality worldwide, many countries have already adjusted their laws that may have promoted and exacerbated racial inequality in the past. However, there are still major countries that have not adjusted their laws to support fair treatment of races and have not implemented new laws to protect vulnerable races from unfair treatment. In the USA, Black people are often discriminated against and subjected to a greater proportion of violence, especially due to police brutality. In recent months, there have been a shockingly high amount of cases of police brutality against Black people where the police kill or injure innocent, unarmed Black people. Case in point would be the killing of George Floyd, who was killed despite being unarmed and not threatening, which sparked large protests and riots for the government to 'defund the police' and implement laws that protect the vulnerable black community from unjustified police brutality. However, since then, nothing has been done to change laws in USA and more and more Black people are being attacked and harmed. The government's role in ensuring all races are being treated equally is crucial and without their assistance and efforts, racial equality cannot be achieved in the future. Moreover, the Chinese government has recently taken a step that has increased racial inequality in China by constructing massive camps to house Uyghur Muslims, trying to change their beliefs to be more like that of the majority Chinese population. It is with these steps that powerful governments take that block the road to racial equality, further increasing inequality.</p> | <p>Example? What is stopping these 'major countries'? Explain.</p> <p>Again, what is the root cause? Link back to the idea of people in power not wanting to take action and explain the impact.</p> |
| <p>People have a natural association and belonging to their race as a part of their identity which causes them to view other races differently, not allowing racial equality to be achieved in future. Race is a unique part of every person's identity and is one that represents different people and sets them apart from everybody else. Many people are strongly associated with their racial community and the bonds within the community, allowing them to feel a special sense of belonging that divides them from other races. Giving rise to racial inequality where other races are perceived to be inferior and different from their own races. With this constant marker of identity that segregates humanity, racial equality is challenging to achieve.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | <p>Seems to overlap with the idea of superiority in SA1.</p> <p>Good evaluation!</p> <p>Need more explanation to get here!</p>                                                                       |
| <p>Opposers could state that racial equality can be achieved in the near future due to the increased global awareness that sheds light on the issue of racial inequality that pressures change towards racial equality. As the world progresses and we, as global citizen, become more aware of and enlightened of the issues and problems of racial inequality, we have the ability and power to motivate change in different countries. The interconnected nature of the world and the introduction of social media has shed light on issues of racial inequality as there is increased media coverage for such issues. This growing awareness has prompted activists and protestors to stand up for the unfair treatment of racial groups, pressuring local and international governments to take action and make a change. Social media has also had a role</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | <p>What grants us this</p>                                                                                                                                                                           |



|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |                                                                                                             |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>to play in gathering like-minded people who are fighting for the rights of certain racial groups, using hashtags like ‘#BlackLivesMatter’ and ‘#ICan’tBreathe’, to raise awareness on such devastating issues. Artists and celebrities have also shown support for these causes and have rallied global support, demanding governments of these countries to take action. The pressure from this awareness and protests has led to the increased investigations of police involved with cases of Black deaths and have led to charging and firing of these police from the force, showing positive change in improving the situation and gaining justice for the unfairly treated. However, these steps are merely stepping stones to achieving racial equality in the future. The mere implementation of laws and [the] punishing of those who promote racial inequality does little in changing the mindsets of people, communities and countries. It is difficult and near impossible to be ensuring that there is no prejudice, bias, or unfair treatment of racial groups internationally. As a deeply rooted issue, racial inequality cannot be solved so easily and in such a short amount of time.</p> | <p>ability and power to make change? Explain.</p> <p>Again, limited to the US.</p> <p>Repetitive of SA1</p> |
| <p>The fight for racial equality has just begun and we still have a long way to go. Obstacles like the deeply-rooted mindsets, poor governance and the role race plays in our lives make it difficult to achieve racial equality. Moving forward, we can work together with communities and governments to make little changes that can improve the situation and continue this uphill battle of achieving racial equality.</p> <p>(Tan Wei Yee Ashlyn, 20-13)</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | <p>Good attempt at call to action.</p>                                                                      |

## 8 ‘A nation cannot be considered successful if its citizens are unhappy.’ How true is this of your society?

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p><i>A very balanced and incisive piece of writing, responding consistently to the claim that Singapore cannot be truly successful if happiness is not achieved by her citizens. It explores different factors that can be considered key to being successful, aside from happiness, and its effective negotiation of the conditions that will render this ‘happiness’ necessary or inconsequential is especially commendable. Throughout, very close attention is paid to the specific and unique context of Singapore, which is used to help define success here, showing not only good knowledge, but also maturity of thought.</i></p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| <p>Maslow’s hierarchy of needs defines the basic needs of a human to be physiological needs and security, while love and belonging, esteem and self-attainment are classified as needs that should be obtained afterwards. [A] country’s level of success could be measured based on an extremely similar set of qualifications; the citizens’ basic physiological needs need to be fulfilled first before their individual happiness can even be considered. It is thus perhaps unfair to solely base a country’s success on whether or not its citizens are unhappy when that is, in some sense, the ‘last need’ to be fulfilled. In the case of Singapore, it is true that the happiness of Singaporeans has risen in recent years to become a significant topic of discussion, however we must consider that such debates are becoming more relevant precisely because Singapore has already achieved a basic level of success.</p> | <p>Good use of Maslow’s Hierarchy to provide a structure for understanding needs, though it is less clear why people cannot be happy when their basic needs are met</p> <p>Very refreshing perspective though this view could be highly subjective, so the thesis could be made more explicit by adopting a firmer stance</p> |



|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>Some may argue that a nation cannot be considered successful if its citizens are unhappy, especially with Singapore in mind. Admittedly, unhappy citizens can not only be viewed as a damning indicator of the dark sides to a country's society, but also be a potential trigger for alarming trends. This is extremely relevant in Singapore as citizens here are famously stressed and live extremely hectic lives due to the harshly competitive nature of our systems. For example, students in Singapore are among the most stressed in the world, with the average level of anxiety related to school in students here being quite above the global average. This serves as a significant reminder of how scarily competitive our education system is, with the significant presence of meritocracy as a defining driving factor of how our society runs pushing parents to pressure their children to excel and stand out in school and students to do the same to themselves. Other than being a reminder for the flaws in our education system, the unhappiness of students in Singapore has also led to the alarming trend of rising suicide rates in young students who succumb to the immense levels of stress from school. Such a trend is horrifying and haunts our society, as young children's lives are lost simply due to a poor grade. Thus, this is one example of how unhappiness in Singapore serves as an indicator of our failures and also worsens our failures.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | <p>The notion of unhappiness needs unpacking - which aspects or sense of unhappiness is relevant here?</p> <p>More specific explanation required</p> <p>While the stress faced by students is relevant, it should not be left at that, since it raises questions of whether this trend is limited only to students or if it can be extended to the adult population</p> <p>Hyperbolic and can be clearer why it is horrifying</p> |
| <p>However, it must be considered that in different, more dire times, happiness ultimately cannot be the priority, and success then would probably be defined as success in terms of ensuring the livelihood of citizens. Upon independence, Singapore was thrown into a state of uncertainty and instability as the merger with Malaysia unexpectedly failed. Thus, emphasis was placed on survival, be it in terms of improving our economy or putting together a military force. Arguably, this survivalist attitude is indeed what birthed the competitiveness that has now resulted in unhappiness, however it is undeniable that that same attitude is what gave us initially just survival, but then success and prosperity. Such an attitude was what allowed Singapore to rise to be one of the Asian tigers in economy, as we did whatever was necessary to let our economy flourish, like purposefully welcoming and attracting foreign businesses and investors instead of protecting local business, which had been the trend in Southeast Asia at that time. Thus, survival was at the forefront instead of happiness, allowing us to achieve economic success that has blossomed into prosperity today. In fact, it can also be argued that until today a focus on survival and our economy is still more necessary than happiness as we continue to strive to forge an even deeper state of stability for ourselves and an even deeper place in the global economy to simultaneously uplift social groups that are still struggling economically and fulfil citizens' increased standards for their quality of life before we consider the happiness of our citizens. From this perspective, success in terms of ensuring the livelihood of citizens cannot be discredited merely by their happiness as it is fundamentally necessary to the development of a country.</p> | <p>Context is not clear in this topic sentence</p> <p>Excellent perspective!<br/>The relationship between success and happiness here is quite ironic, and could be leveraged for a more vibrant discussion of Singapore's unique situation</p> <p>It can be acknowledged that the quality of life brings about another form of happiness</p>                                                                                      |
| <p>Additionally, a nation considered successful in regard to how it stands on the global stage also cannot be easily discredited by its citizens' unhappiness. Indeed, Singapore is one such nation, as our excellence in terms of economic and educational achievements as well as the political roles we play has ensured us some level of respect on the global stage. Meritocracy and our drive to excel have allowed Singapore to become recognised in terms of our academic achievements, as students here have been ranked as one of the highest performing in</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | <p>Interesting consideration of how success may also be determined by external perspectives</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |



|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>subjects like Mathematics and Science worldwide. Such recognition of our education system allows Singaporeans an image internationally that aids efforts to establish oneself in other countries, for example as a scholar or when applying for professional jobs. Besides that, our flourishing economy that relies on extensive economic ties globally allows Singapore to have connections all around the world, cementing our place in the global economy and by extension on the global stage. Finally, we have also found similar success on the global political stage as other countries respect and acknowledge us and our government. For example, Singapore was chosen to be the location for the monumental Trump-Kim summit, indicating that we have indeed secured a role for ourselves on the global stage. In our increasingly connected and globalised world today, such success can be considered extremely significant, more so than success measured in terms of the happiness of our citizens, as international relationships and the level of acknowledgement and respect we command on the global stage [are] vital to our continued survival and prosperity. Especially to a small country like Singapore, which, with a lack of natural resources and military might, relies on its global standing and relations with other countries to survive, such successes on the global stage are all the more important and significant, and cannot be discredited by the unhappiness of our citizens.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                           | <p>Good awareness of the further implications of how success is perceived</p>                                                                                                                                                      |
| <p>Lastly, success measured in terms of basic security and social harmony is also arguably more significant than the happiness of our citizens. In Singapore, security is tight, with the multiple CCTVs we have installed in public spaces as well as the vigilance of our police force through the SGSecure mobile application or initiatives such as the Community Policing System, COPS, that ensures sufficient police patrols around communities to fight crime. Though some may consider these to be restrictive and overbearing, they do ultimately improve the level of security we have in Singapore and thus reduce crime rates and instances of people getting hurt. This has let Singaporeans gain a sense of security, even when walking around at late hours. Such restrictive measures have also been used to ensure social harmony in racially diverse Singapore, for example through the Sedition Act, which ensures citizens do not do or say anything potentially offensive targeted at any racial group to reduce instances of racial tensions or even conflicts. Again, though some view it as an infringement on our right to freedom to speech, it does effectively reduce instances of insensitivity or a lack of consideration causing one to lash out with racist comments, instead keeping society in check and thus in general peace and harmony. As shown by the various examples used, though Singapore could be seen as a restrictive society, its success in finding security and peace for its citizens is undeniable, and such elements could even be considered fundamental for happiness to then be achieved, making it difficult to discredit such internal success with citizens' unhappiness.</p> | <p>Also our penal code that governs people's behaviour and deters crimes</p> <p>Can consider what effect this has on happiness also, as it will help to clarify to a non-local reader why people here are deemed to be unhappy</p> |
| <p>Admittedly, Singapore has experienced some failure in ensuring its citizens' happiness. However, this does not automatically translate into the failure of the nation as a whole. The word 'success' in itself must be defined; is it success in terms of fulfilling all aspects of what a country can achieve or to a general degree? The latter is arguably more realistic, as though it is hard to then define a degree, it is more ridiculous to expect a country to fulfil all aspects of success. Just like how a person cannot achieve all of the rungs in Maslow's hierarchy of needs</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | <p>Coherent and effective conclusion</p>                                                                                                                                                                                           |



at once, a whole nation simply cannot be magically perfect. Thus, it is unfair to say that one aspect—the happiness of citizens—can decide whether Singapore is successful as a whole. Rather, one must look across all the successes and achievements that have been made and evaluate areas for improvement as well as achievements to make an accurate estimate of how successful a country is. Alternatively, it is perhaps more relevant to consider the factor of happiness as a deciding one of whether or not Singapore is successful at a later time, when our more basic needs have been more firmly established and our standards for what is considered success can be realistically raised to individual self-attainment in terms of happiness.

(Lim Pei Han, Amanda, 20-01)

## 9 Should nations prioritise their own interests in times of global crisis?

*This is a fairly competent response that makes consistent attempts to address the contention. Most paragraphs were well-developed, though there might be some overlap between the rebuttal to the opposing argument and the first supporting argument, and the second supporting argument's reason has not been clearly flushed out and seems to be more focused on what countries are capable of doing rather recommending what they should be doing. It shows awareness of how nations interests may conflict as well as align with global interests, and covers a range of national interests and global crises, though not in a particularly structured manner.*

It is the twenty-first century, yet the world is still [full] of civil wars, environmental emergencies, escalated tensions and even protests. In our history of two world wars and a long cold war, it is undeniable to say that mankind has fought hard and long to reach where we stand today. However, global crises still plague our world today, ranging from global pandemics to climate change, from civil wars to tensions between countries. In the face of these problems, countries are questioned whether they should prioritise their own interest, or work for the global stage. On one hand, some argue that nations should keep their own interests in mind during times of global crisis, since they have a moral obligation to their people first and have to solve their problems first before helping the rest of the world. On another hand, others argue that nations should prioritise the global interest especially in times of global crisis since it is a problem that is afflicting the entire world. In light of this debate, it is my opinion that nations should prioritise their own interests in times of global crisis.

Reasonable relevance to crisis from the start, though it could perhaps have made a distinction between those that affect a nation's interests and global ones

Clear stand taken, but no immediate reasoning is provided for it

Nonetheless, I concede that the global crisis is a problem that the entire world faces, hence when countries are responsible for the impacts of the crisis and work together to solve the problem, it could benefit themselves as well. Currently, the world is [] fighting against the coronavirus pandemic which originated in Wuhan, China, but has since spread to all corners of the world. In this case, helping other countries and prioritising the global interest could help to prevent further outbreaks within their own nation. For instance, during the initial stages of the pandemic, Singapore sent medical supplies and equipment to the epicentre in Wuhan and other locations in China. By mitigating and providing support to help control their outbreak, this has also helped to reduce the impact the pandemic could have on Singapore's society if



|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>left ignored. By lending a hand to countries in distress, other countries will be able to benefit themselves in the long run. Hence prioritising global interest could potentially bring positive impacts to the donor country, so countries should act to help the world.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| <p>However, the nations should prioritise their own interests despite being in times of global crisis when nations are badly affected by the crisis [themselves]. Although countries are able to benefit if they provide aid to others, nations [which] are badly hit by the impacts of the global crisis should focus on rebuilding first, since the nation's government has a moral obligation to its people. Bangladesh is one example where the global refugee crisis has struck hard on. Rohingya refugees cross into Bangladesh to avoid persecution in their nation. Despite taking in large numbers of refugees, Bangladesh continues to accept more, because they feel that this is their responsibility. Yet, this has resulted in declining hygiene conditions for locals and refugees alike, exacerbating the problem of resource scarcity and overcrowding within the nation. As Bangladesh continues opening their doors to refugees, living standards will only continue to drop and it will bring about adverse social and economic impacts. Evidently, when countries do not prioritise their own interests, they run the risk of causing further harm to their own citizens. During the pandemic, countries such as China provided relief and benefits for those who had lost their jobs during the disease. This has allowed China to quickly return to normal after battling the disease for months. As such nations should deal with their own problems before tackling others since they have a moral obligation to [their] people.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                | <p>Reasonable condition that limits the validity of the opposing argument</p> <p>This was not developed or illustrated in the paragraph. It was only established that doing so would reduce the impact of the crisis on its citizens</p> <p>The notion of the government's obligation to its people can be further developed</p>                      |
| <p>Furthermore, only when nations focus on their own interests can they have the ability to lend a hand to others. After dealing with the problems the nation is facing themselves, [they are] better equipped and prepared to act in the interest of the world. Countries with underlying financial and social problems can only contribute when their economies are stable and when their community is satisfied. Climate change is a global problem faced by the entire world. While some countries have taken a step forward to save the environment, other countries are not able to do the same because they are economically unstable and investing more resources in saving the environment would mean their internal social issues would go unaddressed. In this case, countries should focus on solving their issues in their own interest first before moving to contribute to the global interest. Developed countries such as Denmark, Sweden and Germany are able to cut down their emissions and switch to more environmentally friendly but costlier alternatives such as wind and solar power, since they are financially able and their communities are stable. But doing the same in less developed countries such as Africa would be unimaginable since resources should be used to solve the crippling issue of poverty and hunger before moving on to help the rest of the world. It is [because of] this idea that the G20 countries [was] created. It consists of the most developed countries in the world and they are mainly responsible for providing support for solving the world's issues. Hence, nations [should] have a certain financial standard before they are able to contribute to global causes.</p> | <p>How this makes them unable to lend a hand in global issue as claimed in the topic sentence should be clarified</p> <p>Africa is a continent, not a country</p> <p>This is a different argument from the one in the topic sentence</p> <p>A much narrower conclusion than the topic sentence, and the point seems to have wandered in this para</p> |
| <p>Of course, ultimately, nations need not separate their own interests from the rest of the world, and countries still can contribute whilst safeguarding their own interests. Hence, nations can choose to do both, and this is a win-win solution for both the country and the</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | <p>A helpful consideration, but it should still be linked ultimately to the question of whether</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |



|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>world. During the refugee crisis, Japan did not allow any refugees to be accepted due to its cultural restrictions. However, this did [mean] Japan [neglected] the world's problems as Japan donated thousands of dollars to countries housing refugees, enough to feed 350,000 of them. As such, Japan managed to protect its own cultural interests while helping the world. Moreover, Singapore also actively contributes to environmental conservation to uphold [its] reputation of [being a] "Garden City", which has attracted millions of tourists to the country to experience the lush tropical greenery. Ecotourism in other countries [is] also based on the same theory. Therefore, the line between the interests of the nation and the interests of other countries or even the world during global crises is blurred, and might not be separated, so, countries can prioritise both.</p> | <p>and why they should</p> <p>To avoid missing the point of the question, it should be noted that not all countries are able to do so</p> <p>Specific details would strengthen this example</p> <p>Establishes that both can be balanced, but the question's focus, the root of why this should be done seems to be the reasons discussed earlier</p> |
| <p>Looking forward, global crises might never end, but only if countries are willing to work together to solve the problems while not neglecting the issues faced by their own citizens. Global issues affect everyone, and nations should help others mitigate the damage [they have] on their countries. Yet, nations should keep in mind their own interests of fulfilling their promises to their citizens and solve their own problems before moving to help others. In the end, only when nations learn to balance their priorities and use their resources effectively, can they meet the interest of both the world and their own. The world might never be free of the shackles of wars or environmental devastation; however, nations have the ability to reduce [their] impact for everyone.</p> <p>(Lim Ying Xin, 20-02)</p>                                                                    | <p>Not clear what this is meant to mean</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |

## 10 How far is the commercialisation of sport desirable?

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |                                  |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| <p><i>This essay presented arguments that were consistently relevant to the demands of the question. The candidate used a wide range of examples that were well-explained and linked effectively to the main argument. Language and structure were clear throughout, although some paragraphs could have benefitted from more explanation to ensure a more consistent chain of logic.</i></p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |                                  |
| <p>Sport has been around for centuries. From the kicking of rolled up newspapers in villages to the widely popular and prestigious Olympic Games today, sport has evolved greatly. With the increased interest in sport by many worldwide, sponsors have taken advantage of the popularity to promote their brands, offering large sums to athletes. Such commercialisation of sport, where athletes are profit-driven, has greatly undermined the value of sportsmanship that sport should cultivate and also shifted the focus of athletes from sport to one of profit. However, some may argue that commercialisation of sport provides athletes the means to carry out altruistic acts, though it is highly debatable if this is the case for the majority of the athletes. As such, I believe that commercialisation of sport is desirable only to a small extent.</p> | <p>Clear stand with reasons.</p> |
| <p>The commercialisation of sport is largely desirable as it undermines sportsmanship of athletes</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |                                  |



|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>who fall prey to the attraction of enormous profits, thus turning to underhanded means to win. As the monetary rewards of winning a championship or a gold medal at the Olympic Games grow, athletes who become overly obsessed with the idea of winning to obtain these rewards may lead them to a path of no return. Some athletes may be induced with performance-enhancing drugs in order to guarantee their win, taking the risk of drugging themselves in order to obtain the monetary rewards. Furthermore, as winning a title at the Olympics or world wide competitions can boost the popularity of an athlete, these athletes are aware that sponsorships will be rolling in with their growing popularity, which will further boost their desire for a win. This was evident when Michael Phelps, a world-renowned swimmer took performance-enhancing drugs at the Olympic Games in desperation to win the title. When such acts are committed, it goes to show that the true function of sport, which is to build and encourage sportsmanship, has taken a backseat for these athletes. In addition, these popular athletes are often role models to young children who may have been inspired by them, and such acts may bring about the wrong idea to the impressionable children, influencing their actions negatively in the future. Therefore, the commercialisation of sport is undesirable due to its ability to undermine sportsmanship and morals of the athletes, a complete spin from the true function of sport.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | <p>Very clear and well explained reasoning for why it is undesirable and undermines the original intent of sport</p>                                                                                                                                  |
| <p>Additionally, the commercialisation of sport is undesirable as it shifts the focus of athletes away from improving and enjoying the sport to the profits that they gain, thus failing to achieve the goal of sport, which is to provide a platform for athletes to unleash their sport talents and ability. When profits of athletes come mainly from sponsorships or bonuses, the athletes no longer focus on improving their ability and skills of the sport and being truly passionate about the sport. Rather, athletes become overly engrossed in the sponsorships as that is where most of their income is generated from. For example, world-famous basketball player LeBron James makes 61 percent of his income from sponsorships from brands like Nike and Cola. Similarly, tennis player Roger Federer has 84 percent of his income generated from sponsorships with Credit Suisse and Rolex. As seen from the two athletes, the idea of perfecting their skill at the sport is no longer of key importance when the sponsorships are their main source of income. This was evident when the 2004 Cameroon World Cup squad refused to board the plane to Rio De Janeiro due to disputes over the monetary bonuses that the government was willing to give them. Only after the government had folded in to their requests of higher bonuses did the squad head for the World Cup. Their actions clearly illustrated the concept of athletes being overly obsessed with the monetary benefits rather than truly having the passion in the sport. Thus, this draws to attention the deleterious impact the commercialisation of sport has on attaining the goal of sport of allowing athletes to unleash their talent. Hence, the commercialisation of sport is largely undesirable due to the shift in focus to profits that reduce the effort athletes put into improving their skill.</p> | <p>Clear and effective TS that addresses all contentions of the question succinctly</p> <p>Explain how this has has an impact on their skills/passion</p> <p>A bit of a leap - are 'the desire for money' and 'passion' truly mutually exclusive?</p> |
| <p>However, opponents argue that the commercialisation of sport allows athletes to carry out altruistic acts that can benefit the less fortunate and the impoverished in the world, thus proving it desirable. With the supernormal profits that the athletes earn, it provides them the means to help out the less fortunate in the world, passing on their profits to those living in unsustainable environments. For example, NBA CARES is set up in hopes of using their profits</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | <p>Is this only possible through the commercialisation of sport? While valid,</p>                                                                                                                                                                     |



|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |                                                                                                       |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>to benefit the impoverished as they regularly donate food and hold campaigns for them. This would not have been possible if not for the profits of NBA, which stands at about \$614 million. Similarly, the Toronto Raptors also often helps out in the African countries by donating food and holding basketball camps every summer in hopes of growing the children's basketball talents that can potentially grow into a career for them. As these children are less educated and have little opportunities for a career, the basketball camps are a source of hope for them to turn their lives around if they can manage to grow a basketball career from there. These charitable acts are made possible only with the profits the athletes earn and such acts can be a source of hope for the less fortunate, providing them an opportunity to dictate their future, breaking free from the vicious cycle of poverty. At the very least, these altruistic actions can help to sustain the impoverished for a while which will allow them to carry on with their lives a little better. Thus, the commercialisation of sport is desirable as it provides the means to carry out charitable acts.</p> | <p>argument could be more specific to the nature of sport.</p> <p>Good link back to sport here!</p>   |
| <p>Such a view is however, parochial as it only exaggerates the kindness of the minority. Majority of the athletes do not partake in charitable acts and are only self-serving, using their profits to serve their desires. In many cases, we rarely hear about athletes carrying out charitable acts or giving back to the community. Rather, many of the times, athletes spend their money to purchase expensive cars and houses to satisfy their desires and unending wants. Some even possess a private jet which is merely to meet their desire and is completely unnecessary. Hence, it is evident that despite having the means and financial ability to give back to society, many of the athletes rather spend on themselves, oftentimes excessively.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | <p>Why is this so? Explain!</p> <p>Rebuttal is valid but a little simplistic - could be stronger!</p> |
| <p>In conclusion, commercialisation of sport has impacted the sport arena in multifarious ways that may not have been the best effects. To add on to the undermining of sportsmanship, it has made athletes profit-driven and lacking in passion for the sport. With some charitable acts from athletes, there is hope that commercialisation of sport can develop into one that brings about more benefits than harm. However, as of now, commercialisation of sport is still largely undesirable.</p> <p>(Cherilynn Yeo, 20-13)</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |                                                                                                       |

## 11 Assess the view that young people in your society have no reason to complain today.

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |  |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|
| <p><i>This piece was a good attempt at addressing the various key terms in the question - 'young people', 'in your society' and 'today'. Clear contextual understanding of Singapore was demonstrated consistently, with appropriate examples used. Some attempt to balance arguments, but this could have been more sustained and consistent.</i></p>                                                                                                                                     |  |
| <p>What defines Singapore today is its successful narrative of evolving from a fishing village to a developed first world country. A mark of its success can be seen as Singapore continues to have a voice in the global arena, despite being just a tiny red dot. It is such developments from the past that leads to the statement that young people in my society have no reason to complain today. However, this is an absolute statement that states that Singapore's society is</p> |  |



|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |                                                                                                            |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>without flaw, and there is no reason as to why young people would express their discontent. Despite the advancements of Singapore's society till this date, such developments have led to the issue of widening inequality, as well as contempt regarding our conservative and traditional society. Additionally, with the rising issue of climate change that has been unprecedented, it is justifiable that young people complain so as to enact change in this society. Thus, I disagree with the stand that young people in Singapore have no reason to complain today.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |                                                                                                            |
| <p>As more young people get educated today, they are more aware of the rising inequality due to the education system in our meritocratic society, which was what enabled Singapore's successful development in the past. In the system of meritocracy, citizens receive rewards in proportion to what society perceives as their merit. In the case of Singapore, one's academic prowess often translates into better qualifications and careers, and thus a higher income leading to an overall successful life. This system of education has worked well in the past to sieve out scholastically-inclined students to produce prominent leaders and captains of industries. However, such a system fails to take into consideration other factors that might affect one's ability to perform in standardised nation-wide examinations. While in the past many had the same starting point and challenges in life, with increased development and affluence, people today are placed at a disadvantage when their social economic status is not on par with the majority. Thus young people are increasingly aware of this new unintended consequence of a system that has brought upward social mobility, and yet produced structural and cultural issues of inequality and elitism, as portrayed in Teo Yeo Yenn's "This is What Inequality Looks Like". Nonetheless, young people have less reason to complain about this issue as the government has been increasing its investment in education, and 90% of education fees have been subsidised for primary to pre-university students in disadvantaged families. Such benefits given to less affluent households serve to level out the playing field to allow students a higher chance of success in schools. However, complaints from young people remain necessary to place pressure on the government to ensure that this issue is minimised in our society today, if this system of meritocracy is to remain in Singapore.</p> | <p>Clear context that explains the challenges youth face today</p> <p><a href="#">Link to question</a></p> |
| <p>Due to globalisation, young people today have become more liberal than in the past, and hence discontent may arise when young people disagree with certain conservative and traditional mindsets still expressed in society today. Singapore is a country with many upholding traditional Asian values and beliefs regarding the veneration of elders and continuing the traditional family structure. Therefore, it is not uncommon to see young people complaining about such archaic mindsets be it in real life or on social media, comparing such ideals to Western beliefs and cultures. For instance, PinkdotSG is a movement that was established by young people just a few years back, and it allows for citizens to express their support towards the LGBTQ+ group in society. As young people complain about discriminatory attitudes toward such groups in society by the older generation, they attempt to make changes and develop Singapore into a more welcoming and accepting society. Such complaints can be seen through the annual protest at Hong Lim Park as well as the on-going debate to repeal 377A, a constitutional law. Thus while such beliefs and actions are transgressive, and can be seen as disruptive complaints by young people, trying to disrupt the</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | <p>Differences in mindsets in Singapore</p> <p>Evaluation of Singapore</p>                                 |



|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| governance of Singapore, they are needful to further develop Singapore as a nation, to provide everyone in society with equal rights and similar positive living experiences.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| <p>Finally, young people today are faced with a new challenge of <b>worsening climate change</b> which previous generations did not have to deal with, as such they have reason to complain as they are dealing with the after-effects of the actions of the previous generation. Citizens today enjoy more comfortable lives due to the rising income levels and affluence, and might not be as concerned towards the pressing issue of climate change. However, young people are the ones standing up for environmental issues and speaking out to make Singapore more environmentally-friendly. One example will be the straw-free movement that was founded by a student from Hwa-Chong Institution. She led a nation-wide initiative to get businesses and companies to reduce plastic straw usage and encouraged the use of metal straws. This is because straws that wash into the oceans pose a risk to marine life that can get pierced by them. This movement has resulted in long-lasting change in the food and beverage industry. However, this solution remains a small one in comparison to the large number of non-environmentally friendly practices, such as support of fast-fashion and excessive use of fuel. Hence, young people today have to complain as not enough is being done by the Singapore government to combat climate change. Singapore's smart nation drive only serves to exacerbate the issue as more energy that is required to power technology often leads to air pollution. Therefore, young people have even more reason to complain as this lack of effort to target climate change will result in detrimental impacts to their lives in the future.</p> | <p>Topic sentence is example-driven</p> <p>Explanation is descriptive. Why do the people of different generations have such different views in Singapore?</p> <p>Despite recent environmentally-friendly policies?</p> |
| <p>With all the above points in consideration, I stand to believe that young people in my society have a reason to complain, as more flaws and gaps in our society emerge. By saying that young people have no reason to complain, we are shutting down those that know the 21st century best, and are most able to continue developing and sustaining Singapore's success in this new age. As such, complaints should be heard and thoroughly considered in the governing of our society to maintain progress as a nation.</p> <p><i>(Felynn Chua, 20-02)</i></p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |



# 2020 JC1 Promotional Examination Paper 2

## Response 1

*This response made several relatable and valid claims about how Singapore functions as a nation and the values we hold, be they constructive or not. Overall, a structurally sound and complete AQ response with an insightful and forward-looking conclusion.*

In paragraph 7 line 2 and 3, Burton claims that 'idleness need not amount to laziness'. I agree that the act of not doing anything that is classified as "productive" does not equate to one being lazy. Singapore is a fast-paced society with a highly stressful living environment. Oftentimes, the act of not doing anything is neither a form of procrastination nor a lack of drive, rather, it is a way for Singaporeans to unwind and relax before returning to their many responsibilities. For example, commuters are often seen with their headphones or earpieces, heads bent and scrolling through their phones. Time taken to commute is a Singaporean's rare respite from the demands of work, school and home, thus, idling while commuting provides a form of mental break and rest for Singaporeans. Moreover, as an Asian society that values family time, Singaporeans do not get time to be alone when they reach home, instead having to fulfill their role as a sister, mother or daughter. Therefore, what society may deem "laziness" is actually a form of self-care. Additionally, there has been an increase in mental health issues with a record-high number of teenagers suicides in the past decade amongst Singaporeans and such idleness may prove to be beneficial by relieving the stresses and pressure of a day. Thus, I agree that in Singapore 'idleness need not amount to laziness'.

Why do you believe so?  
Having a reason here would lend insight to your claim.

Extremely perceptive claim!

In paragraph 9 line 61 and 62, the author highlights a contradiction claiming that we 'dream of being idle' but 'always want to be doing something'. While I agree that Singaporeans do dream of having free time, I disagree that Singaporeans desire to be actively completing tasks. Singapore is a highly competitive society with an ingrained culture of "kiasuism", referring to the fear of losing out to others. This can be seen from the ridiculous queues of Singaporeans who wished to get the latest 'Hello Kitty' toy from McDonald's - simply because they did not want to feel left out. In such a society, it is ingrained into Singaporeans from a young age that they must constantly strive to out-do others or they will be left behind. This is evident from the flourishing tuition and enrichment centers in Singapore, feeding on the endless demand from parents for more, so that their child will be able to stand out amongst the crowd. Such a demand to constantly be doing something is also something that I have experienced as a student in Singapore's education system. As a result, Singaporeans feel the need to constantly be on the go and doing something productive with their time so as not to lose out or be left behind. Being idle is an unattainable dream as Singaporeans are wired to feel guilty once they stop being productive or stop doing work. They are constantly in fear that whatever rest they enjoy will cause them to lag behind. This is evident from how 70% of Singaporeans continue to respond to work calls in order to ensure that they are constantly on task. Thus, while Singaporeans do fantasize about being idle, I disagree that Singaporeans desire to be busy, instead they are forced into a mindset that condemns whatever rest they take, thus creating a need to stay occupied.

Once again, a poignant but nonetheless accurate speculation you've made here.

Source?



|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |  |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|
| <p>In conclusion, the fast-paced and competitive society in Singapore has highlighted their need for Singaporeans to be idle and to be able to take time away from work. Society has to change its mindset that being idle is the equivalent of being lazy and start viewing idleness as beneficial to one's mental health. It can be observed that more emphasis is being placed on one's mental health nowadays. This can be seen from Instagram accounts promoting mental health awareness and posters around schools encouraging students to seek therapy if necessary. Thus, I am optimistic that one day, Singaporeans will commend each other for one's ability to be idle and Singaporeans will no longer feel the need to constantly be busy. Yet, as of right now, the fixed mindsets of Singaporeans result in a very negative portrayal of being idle, despite the benefits it brings.</p> <p>(Joyce Ong, 20-05)</p> |  |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|

## Response 2

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p><i>While succinct, this response presented effective arguments based on apt references to the Singapore traits relevant to the issue. To enhance this response, evaluation could have been deepened by elaborating on the points of limitations/possible alternatives which were laid out in this response, and examining the underlying factors/implications that account for the tension between these points and the argument.</i></p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| <p>In paragraph 6, the writer posits that 'some people are 'lazy' because they understand their situation as so hopeless that they cannot even begin to think it through, let alone do something about it.' This can hold true when it comes to extreme poverty or when one is in a terrible state of life and has given up hope. However, I believe that this is largely inapplicable to Singapore due to it being a 'land of opportunities'. Inclusivity was placed at the forefront of the government's agenda for SG50 and across the years, the government has rolled out subsidies and bursaries such as the Financial Assistance Scheme (FAS) in order to assist the poor. The government has also introduced programmes such as the subsidies SkillsFuture lessons, allowing citizens to pick up new skills at no cost, thereby improving social mobility. While these policies can be rendered ineffective in cases where one grows up in extremely bad conditions, they definitely prevent Singaporeans from getting into 'hopeless' situations, as compared to countries with poor governance, where citizens receive no assistance in times of crises. Therefore, I believe that it is inapplicable to my society as one can always reach out for help.</p> | <p>How does it improve social mobility?</p> <p>Why?</p> <p>What about other situations that might seem hopeless?</p> <p>Reinforce the link to the claim by explaining the implications of hopelessness and laziness</p> |
| <p>In paragraph 8, the writer claims that 'we find even short periods of idleness hard to bear', which indicates a constant urge to be productive and guilt accompanying idleness. This is largely applicable to Singapore as it is well-known for its lack of work-life balance both in schools and at work. According to The Straits Times, Singaporeans work an average of forty-five hours a week, a number higher than the global average, and Singaporean students ranked third in the world in time spent on homework. The statistics emulated above highlight the competitive culture of hustling in Singapore. As Singapore is a small country with no natural resources, our founding father Mr Lee Kuan Yew has emphasised many times the importance of our hard work as our people are the greatest resources. This has allowed</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |



|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |                |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------|
| <p>Singapore to achieve excellence in many areas. However, the culture of overworking to achieve excellence has been deeply inculcated in us. This has resulted in Singaporeans, especially students, feeling guilty for taking breaks from work. While this mindset is gradually being pushed aside, it still remains a big part of Singaporeans' identity. Thus, I believe that his claim is largely applicable to my society.</p> <p>(Yeo E-Xuan, 20-U3)</p> | <p>How so?</p> |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------|

### Response 3

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p><i>A systematic and original discussion. This response explored the features of the Philippines and was careful in addressing the question requirements throughout.</i></p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| <p>Burton discusses how "some people are 'lazy' because they understand their situation as being so hopeless that they cannot even begin to think through it, let alone do something about it." He says that this perception of laziness stems from the unfortunate and unthinkable circumstances that someone is living through which is too overwhelming to even contemplate, thus rendering them gravely unmotivated to work to solve the issue. I do not agree with what Burton has stated, especially in the Philippine context as Filipinos are known to be resilient in facing hardships and massive roadblocks, thus we are able to work against such circumstances so as to bring back normalcy into our lives. Due to the Philippines' geographical nature, with 7,107 islands in the tropics — also part of the Pacific Ring of Fire — the Philippines has faced so much environmental hazards across the years, even to the extent of having more than 20 typhoons per year. However, despite all these hazards and calamities, Filipinos still bounce back from it strong and resilient. The most prominent instance is when the super typhoon Haiyan (or Typhoon Yolanda, as it was locally called) hit the central region of the Philippines, leaving dozens dead and families homeless. Churches, schools, infrastructure, and recreational centers are similarly damaged. The scene looked so hopeless, not only for the ones affected, but also those who were living away from the critical point of the disaster. However, they all rose up once more and tried to ameliorate the damages, with the help of international and domestic aid. Filipinos also displayed 'kabayanihan' (a word to describe the action of helping out your community members in times of need) by running numerous fundraisers and donation drives for those affected. This clearly showcases how, despite the hopeless picture left by the super typhoon, Filipinos still rose and worked through it. However, it is important to note that it does not necessarily mean that Filipinos do not feel the effect of laziness when faced with such hopelessness. The neverending poverty cycle renders some Filipinos to find climbing the socio-economic ladder to be hopeless, thus reducing themselves to staying idle in their current state, and it does not help that the government is not doing enough to aid them. Thus, although the Filipino community indeed is resilient, it does not erase the fact that idleness may still be borne due to appalling circumstances in the Philippines.</p> | <p>This is a timely link back to the terms of the TR.</p> <p>It might be strategic to link this, to argue how instead of wallowing in despair (and appearing lazy), Filipinos take initiative to turn the situation around + how such resilience is reinforced by social factors such as the spirit of 'kabayanihan'.</p> <p>Hmm, what would be the distinguishing factor then, given these different responses to different situations that seem hopeless?</p> |
| <p>Burton also discusses how "Today, laziness is closely connected to poverty and failure that a poor person is often presumed lazy, no matter how hard he or she actually works." This</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |



|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>illustrates how the poor are seen by the general public as lazy, although they are doing something to get them out of poverty. I agree with this statement, especially in the Philippine context. There is a false belief that the people in poverty are in such conditions as they refused to work hard enough for their quality of life to be brighter. However, this may not be always true. Some are in such conditions as they are born into it and they could not get out of this relentless cycle. There had always been social classes in the Philippine society, even before the Spanish colonization. Thus, it has been ingrained into the society that there should always be class divisions, thus justifying the reasons why those in poverty are less able to get out of it. Thus, with the Spanish and American colonisation — even after independence — exacerbating this class divide, more people are in poverty and are unable to get out of it, no matter how many jobs they take or how many hours they may work, and this effort may not be clearly recognized by those in the higher socio-economic classes, especially when they are blinded by their own privilege. Thus, this fake pretense of laziness being closely related to poverty is present in my society as this idea still is prevalent among those not in poverty. However, it is important to note that although the chances are slim, some had been successful in getting out of the cycle, but a vast majority still do not have that ability or sheer luck, thus still stuck in a system chaining them to the ground.</p> <p><i>(Santiago Patrice Gabrielle Trinidad, 20-E6)</i></p> | <p>This perception of justification could be paired with systemic factors that hinder social mobility.</p> <p>Link this back to the selected claim. How do these rare successes affect how hard work/laziness is perceived?</p> |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

## Response 4

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |                                                   |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------|
| <p><i>Good insight shown in the evaluation of the point and text reference in relation to the Singapore context, showing quite a deep understanding of our Singapore socio-cultural landscape. Some slight gaps in reasoning and examples could be more detailed and concrete.</i></p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |                                                   |
| <p>Burton first claims that ‘laziness is so closely connected with poverty and failure that a poor person is often presumed lazy, no matter how hard he or she actually works’. Here, the author presents the common mindset in today’s world, where one’s efforts are closely linked to the success gained. In today’s increasingly globalised world, it is only natural that countries and hence individuals prioritise and associate the financial status with success, and one is only given credit after having achieved that goal. In the context of Singapore, I strongly agree with the writer’s claims as it is highly applicable to my society. Singapore is renowned for its meritocratic system, where its citizens are rewarded based on their achievements such as job security, or even excelling in their academics. As such, there is a definite mindset ingrained in each individual to work hard in order to be recognised by society. However, this is sometimes refuted as an ineffective measure of hard work as some agree that the meritocratic system is unfair due to the lack of a level playing field. For example, elitism is a prominent issue in the race for success, where countless have claimed that the rich definitely possess greater resources into helping them achieve their goal. A wealthy family may be able to afford tuition for their child in contrast with a student from a less affluent family, allowing for them to gain an advantage in their studies. As such, while such a measure is present in Singapore society, it is not necessarily widely accepted or perfect.</p> | <p>How is this associated with globalisation?</p> |



|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |                            |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| <p>Burton also argues that ‘we find short periods of idleness hard to bear’, with the tendency to ‘make up justifications for keeping busy’. The author posits that one usually associates productivity with time, and feels the need to be doing something at every waking second. In the context of Singapore, I strongly agree with Burton’s claims. With respect to an increasingly competitive world, countries place huge importance on economic growth to remain at the top of the game. As a globalised first world economy, Singapore is inevitably roped into the rat race, with the people striving to achieve that goal. Due to our small geological size, Singapore lacks the natural resources like oil or land as a means of economic advantage. As a result, its main and most vital resource would be none other than its citizens. On top of this, our values as an Asian society promotes hard work, with Singaporeans even possessing a “kiasu” mindset—a Singlish term used to express how paranoid and competitive Singaporeans are in every facet of our lives. As such, it is more than common to find each person working hard at every point of their lives, be it a student studying for their national exams, or an adult working towards a promotion. All this leads to the common goal of contributing back to the economy of the nation, with another prominent Asian value of gratitude and loyalty. This is hence a certain level of obligation to give back as much as what has been provided, be it the high levels of education or the safety and security of the country we live in. This only adds fuel to the determination to achieve a perfect socioeconomic standing in order to survive the high standards of living in such a small country. Hence, pointing towards the competitive nature of Singapore, needing to preoccupy oneself with work.</p> <p><i>(Isabelle Lim Wenrui, 20-14)</i></p> | <p>Generic</p> <p>Good</p> |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------|

## Response 5

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |                                                                                         |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p><i>Personal voice shines through; the candidate organically evaluated these claims in a way that showed deep awareness of Singapore’s context. Nonetheless, the candidate could adopt a more convincing approach with more concrete illustration and evidence.</i></p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |                                                                                         |
| <p>Burton posits that laziness can be derived from ‘fear and hopelessness’, the ‘fear [of] success’ or of ‘failure’ entails how we may, due to our self-abasing habits, rather not attempt to put in our best efforts into doing a task so that the barrage of failure, disappointment, or shaky success will not afflict us as strongly. I agree with his description of how laziness may act as an escape due to our fixation on the end result. In the context of Singapore, we are highly competitive, and this ‘kiasu’ behaviour has infiltrated our lives significantly. Students from as young as the age of seven are sent for tuition or enrichment classes so as to rise above their peers, ace their tests, and most importantly, survive in the working world. However, whether this is due to the need to survive by maintaining a livelihood, or satisfying a traditional Asian pride of bringing up successful children, there is no doubt that such pressure in early adolescence can lead to the beginning of a toxic cycle of needing to be better than others, and if successful in doing so, become even better than your current self. As such, the end result is ironically endless, and students, dejected and dogged by the fear of failing, or falling from grace after doing well can lead to them being divested of hope, and decidedly less likely to put in any effort, since there is no end result that they can take pride in. Conversely, the exact</p> | <p>Good insight!</p> <p>Any way this could have been illustrated with apt examples?</p> |



|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |                                                          |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>opposite may occur, where due to this fear, students may become more anxious to please, work harder, and achieve greater heights. However, even this cycle of achievement is born out of a similar fear, and there is no doubt that its toxicity benefits no one.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |                                                          |
| <p>Burton believes that ‘strategic idleness’ is a chance to ‘observe life [and] gather inspiration’, and therefore is an ‘intelligent way of working’. Though described as being idle, his suggestion tends towards appreciating unadulterated nature, and moments of humanity, that may be tantamount to a greater inspiration in the work that we do, providing us with new perspectives. I disagree with his view in the context of Singapore, as we have a very strong workaholic culture, where working hard, instead of daydreaming, is venerated. In our conservative and highly pragmatic society, our actions and choices are adumbrated by our traditional Asian heritage and beliefs. As such, we tend to avoid what is abstract and intangible, and opt for more secure and safe paths to our future. For example, this is exemplified in our entrenched preference for more mathematical and scientific courses of education and job options, as they provide a more stable income and livelihood, as opposed to the arts and humanities, which may not directly correlate to the most well-paying job. Of course, the younger generation of Singapore tend to shake off this platitudinous way of living due to the greater freedom and perspectives they have, especially since they were not present during the tough times of Singapore’s pre-independence. However open-minded to this abstract and intangible method of appreciating what is around us, there is still no doubt that their parents' influence on them reinforces the importance of survival, and until that is attained, all idleness or inspiration for the abstract will have to wait.</p> <p><i>(Pang Hui Bin Gabrielle, 20-14)</i></p> | <p>How so? Any examples of professions?</p> <p>Nice!</p> |



# 2021 JC2 March Common Test Paper 2

## Response 1

*A highly insightful response, especially in the second paragraph. Specific and original applications to Singapore society were included, and these were clearly linked to the ideas from Lee that you were responding to. That said, paragraph 1 could have done with more development.*

Benson asserts that ‘automation is reaching a point where it will be able to replace people in many higher-paying positions’. I think that his statement holds much truth as we see artificial intelligence taking over many tasks that used to be completed by humans, therefore rendering humans unnecessary when artificial intelligence can complete tasks more efficiently. This can be seen in the way artificial intelligence is used in the finance industry in Singapore, in which humans are no longer required to manually input or calculate numbers -- the machines do it for them, and they are simply made to press a button. Similarly, pilots are no longer needed to drive airplanes, as auto-pilot uses artificial intelligence to steer the aircraft. This illustrates the power and influence that artificial intelligence has, in which it is taking over human jobs to a point where automation will do more harm than good to Singapore society, and the rest of the world. Of course, artificial intelligence does create jobs such as programming occupations for the development of artificial intelligence, but ultimately, there are more jobs being destroyed than created. Therefore, I agree with Benson that automation is taking over white-collar jobs.

Para ref?

Potential for development -- why is A.I. able to make this progress? Include the above so that it won't be a repetition of Benson's ideas in the passage.

Not specific to SG though. Would be good to flesh out the specific implications for SG.

Lee argues that ‘in many service industries, human labour is a mark of luxury’. While it can be acknowledged that human labour and touch can never be fully replaced by robots and artificial intelligence, I disagree with Lee as I believe that human labour is not as luxurious as it seems. It is true that the human touch is more personal and therefore more desirable than that of automation, however, it cannot be denied that automation is far more efficient than humans, to the extent where the human touch might not be as valuable as the efficiency and convenience that automation brings us. For instance, where therapy in Singapore might cost hundreds of dollars for a single one-hour session, free or inexpensive mobile applications such as ‘MOODA’ and ‘Sayana: Daily Self-Care Guide’ provide a solace for people that simply need advice without having to pay a dime. Furthermore, in order to keep up with robots, humans are forced to become more efficient, compromising the “human touch” in the process. Where baristas used to chat with patrons in the way artificial intelligence cannot provide human interaction, they now draw tokenistic doodles on coffee cups in order to be more efficient, due to long queues that pressure employees to be more efficient. Therefore, with the need for efficiency, the personal human interaction is compromised, and thus loses its significance. While it is still more personal than artificial intelligence, it is no longer as valuable due to the compromises that are made in the process. Therefore, I disagree with Lee that human labour is a mark of luxury in many service industries.

Relevant idea -- must remember to link to jobs.

This is insightful! The nuance is well-executed too!

Relevant details that support your point. It's an original example too!

Another original insight!

Overall, I agree with Benson that automation is beginning to take over white-collar occupations, and disagree with Lee's argument that human labour is a luxury in service industries. While it is important to acknowledge the benefits of the human touch, it is far



|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |                                                                     |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>more important to address the concerning rate at which automation is taking over the jobs of humans, and that our never-ending quest for efficiency will inevitably result in a conflict between preserving these human occupations, and letting artificial intelligence and robots take over.</p> <p>(Zoe Kam, 20-U1)</p> | <p>Would be great if para 1 had developed this more thoroughly.</p> |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------|

## Response 2

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p><i>A satisfying response to the authors' ideas. The candidate got to the crux of their writing and correctly identified their reasoning. The application to Singapore society is apt and accompanied with relevant details that support your response to whether the authors' ideas are applicable/inapplicable.</i></p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| <p>Lee and Benson have differing views on the role of automation, but I am more inclined to agree with Benson's view in my society.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | <p>Relevant idea!</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| <p>Benson observes that robots and automation "will completely replace human employees" in many cases (lines 32-33) as they are now able to complete "more and more complex tasks", which would lead to their replacing of people in the services of agriculture and retail etc. Benson reasons that with the numerous advancements in technology today, automation and robots are able to carry out tasks that are labour-intensive and have traits of humans in terms of hospitality and charisma, thus being able to complete many jobs that humans undertake with similar or a higher level of efficiency. This is also seen in Singapore, such as the automation of labour-intensive jobs. For example, sportswear outlet Decathlon automates their paying system, having no one to man the cashier counter but instead a virtual system that instructs you on how to pay by yourself. Furthermore, instead of having people to carry out the process of delivery, there is an automatic pulley system that runs throughout the store that places the items needed in the bag, which is then packed for delivery. Furthermore, with the government moving towards a SMART nation, the process of urban planning is too, being gradually taken over by robots as seen in the creation of the 3D virtual SG algorithm that encapsulates the whole demographic of Singapore and advises on ways to increase sustainability. Singapore especially relies on automation because of our limited manpower, with many people not wanting to do labour-intensive jobs anymore, hence evincing the need for robots to take over to maintain our economy.</p> | <p>Good to see that you correctly identified Benson's reasoning.<br/>R1: Do you agree with this?</p> <p>Relevant details that clearly show automation replacing manual jobs! Also capturing the point about even advanced jobs being automated.</p> |
| <p>There is merit, however, to Lee's observation that "people will increasingly shift their spending to goods and services where a connection to a human provider is seen as a key benefit" (lines 16-17), as he reasons people still do appreciate and prefer the aspect of goods being hand-made as compared to machine-made, because of the notion that it might be of low quality or uninteresting. However, this only applies to a small section of my society. Most Singaporeans, working an average of 44 hours per week, prefer having a quick cup of coffee or do not mind purchasing machine-made things or food. This is the reason why, often, organic food places such as Scoop or local brands that are handmade like Rehash are usually less frequented, and bigger stores like Cotton On are more popular, as the product outcome and quality is still the same. Ultimately, Singapore is a capitalist society that values productivity, borne out of the fact that we are a country with limited natural resources. Thus in order for our economy to survive, we must be efficient and maximise our profits. In the</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | <p>Key idea selected.<br/>Good!</p> <p>Rightly identified Lee's reasoning.</p> <p>Specific examples. Most importantly, they support the point you are making!</p> <p>EV on this would be</p>                                                        |



|                                                                                                                 |       |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------|
| long run, handmade, personally crafted goods will be less beneficial economically to our country.               | good. |
| In conclusion, in the context of my society, I am more inclined to agree with Benson.<br><br>(Joanne Ho, 20-U1) |       |

### Response 3

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <i>This was a refreshing and insightful response with specific illustrations that highlighted the context of Singapore society in reference to the issue at hand. The response was also balanced, with nuance effectively employed in evaluation.</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| We now reside in an era of technological advancements that occur at a rapid and unprecedented rate, especially with growing trends such as automation and the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) at its forefront. As a focal point for trade and commerce, Singapore's position as a financial hub in the global community enables it to be well-positioned to absorb the influx of the newest developmental trends. This enables us to maximise utility, especially for a country such as ours that fixates and prides itself on a utilitarian approach to governance and state-building. As such, automation and other forms of technology are welcomed with open arms and are perceived to be powerful tools that possess the ability to boost growth and elevate the prestige of our country at the international level as an efficient nation choosing to fully embrace such technological feats. Despite both authors putting forth convincing stands arguing for the extent of impact on human labour caused by the dawn of automation, I am more inclined to agree with the author of passage 1, Timothy B. Lee over the importance of human residing in the service industry when referencing the context of our Singaporean society.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | Relevant insights into SG. Could link insights more closely to the author's ideas.                                                                                                                                     |
| Timothy B. Lee makes the assertion that "as automation makes everyday products cheaper and more plentiful, people will increasingly shift their spending to goods and services where a connection to a human provider is seen as a key benefit." This is undoubtedly true, whereby us Singaporeans still value and cherish the "human touch" in our daily interactions and consumption of goods and services. While our country may be developing at an increasingly fast pace and has seen the influx of new trends within our society, we still tend to keep and value traditional notions and ways of thinking that can be clearly reflected in our society. This is especially evident in the Chinese community, which is a predominant segment of our local population, there is always the argument and belief put forth that a handmade good or one that is produced with the dedication of an individual embodies sincerity and love, values that we cherish and hold by dearly to in our society, causing us to deem such goods to be of a higher value and importance over simply mass-produced goods. In the case of Singapore, we have the unique hawker culture, whereby most of the local delicacies offered are handcrafted by masters of their trade with years of practice and experience in the culinary fields. While there have been notable attempts of imitating the rich and distinct flavors presents in our local fare by mass-production companies, such as the | <p>Good evaluation, Be more mindful to tie in the EV more closely with the ideas of the TR for a tighter response.</p> <p>Link to beliefs and values?</p> <p>Link to human touch and connection to human provider?</p> |



|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |                                                                              |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>production of instant noodles that take on the representation of a local favorite, the Laksa dish, these attempts are often lacklustre in nature and enjoy minimal success and recognition from the local populace. This is evidently shown by the continued willingness of locals who are more inclined to queue for hours in line just for a hearty bowl of their favorite local delicacies, which they consider to be authentic and of a superior quality when compared to the mimics attempted by mass-production companies. As such, I would be more inclined to agree that the importance of humans in the service industry are still highlighted and valued in the Singaporean society, in spite of the growing presence of automation in various service industries.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |                                                                              |
| <p>However, Thor Benson claims to argue that automation negatively impacts humans in their jobs. Although I do recognise the validity of such a statement to a certain extent, I am still more inclined to disagree with such an assertion when considering the Singaporean context. Thor Benson states that “In many cases, they will completely replace human employees.” Such a statement warrants doubt and is definitely questionable upon closer inspection and when considering our local context, such a sweeping statement is simply erroneous. As mentioned previously despite Singapore's adoption of a more utilitarian approach whereby we place emphasis on efficiency in the utilisation of resources, which is something that new forms of technology such as automation and AI have granted us the ability to do, the extent to which such technological advancements have encroached into the human realm and negatively impacted local industries and human labour is minimal and is unlikely to become so significant as to present itself as a due cause of concern in the near future. While the Singaporean government has introduced automation at a growing pace in numerous industries, it poses an ideal situation whereby both the human labour and such machinery co-exist to maximise efficiency and rely upon the other for their inherent lackings. One such example is the NEWater treatment plant in Singapore, whereby certain forms of reusable waste is collected and filtered down to collect clean drinking water. While much of the processes are definitely automated and there is indeed a significant reliance on technology, there is still a sizable presence of labour involved in the production process that have been able to enjoy alleviations in their workload over the introduction of efficient technology. Moreover, the decision-making process is still primarily helmed by humans in the case of most local industries over the fear of complications in the systems of technology employed, possibly leading to irreversible damage. On the other hand, the human element presents a counteracting measure to this potential problem by possessing the adaptability to nimbly adjust themselves according to different situations presented as compared to machines that are more rigid in their operations. This clearly refutes the claim presented by Benson that the “automation of white-collared jobs that require decision-making” is apparent. As such, I am more inclined to disagree with the views posited by the author as the negative impacts on human labour brought about by automation appears to be overshadowed by the benefits brought about by its incorporation into various local industries.</p> <p><i>(Eyu Kai Jie, 20-A1)</i></p> | <p>Paragraph is effectively argued and evaluation is nuanced throughout.</p> |



## Response 4

*This candidate succeeded in weaving the evaluation & explanation in this response smoothly, while maintaining a relevant argumentative response to the selected claims. While succinct, the Singapore context was still evaluated in a variety of ways, with relevant illustrations used as well.*

Timothy B. Lee posits that people are more willing to spend money where a personal touch is a “benefit”. There are ground in the author’s claim and it is applicable to certain demographics of Singapore. Being a time-scarred nation, in part due to our 44-hour work weeks and being ranked the second most overworked nation according to the Kisi’s index, Singaporeans are generally fueled by instant gratification. This mundane and routinized work-life cycle that many Singaporeans adopt pushes Singaporeans to be more lavish in spending particularly doing so to feel a human connection, perhaps for self-actualisation, which is very much lacking in the imbalanced work-life cycle of Singaporeans. This can be seen in hot-pot industry giant, Hai Di Lao, who often see long queues due to the excellent and highly personalised service provided in the form of birthday celebrations and live noodle-making demonstrations. Such human labour struck a chord with many Singaporeans who are generally deprived of personalised human connections that can bring joy and awe. However, it must be noted that being ethnically Asian, many Singaporeans still subscribe to Confucian beliefs of frugality, choosing the cheaper alternatives, at the expense of a connection to a human provider. This is evinced when most middle-class citizens choose 3-in-1 coffee by Nestle rather than a coffee brewed by a barrister with a story to tell about the coffee, such as that in Habitat cafe. Notwithstandingly, most Singaporeans are getting more overworked and more affluent. The culmination of both factors give rise to a society fueled by instant gratification in the form of personal touch, thus Lee’s opinions are true in my society.

This part about self-actualisation seems a hasty addition? More specific explanation might be required to make it more convincing

Since both cases involve ‘mainly Singaporeans’ perhaps it is also time-dependent?

Thor Benson believes that it is probable that automation will destroy more jobs that it creates and most will be unable to cope with such changes. While this may be true in other nations, it is not largely applicable in my society. Singapore is technologically advanced, progressing as a country towards being a SMART Nation since 2015. This relatively early identification of artificial intelligence and automation as potential threats to the labour market means Singapore can have more time for us to transition towards a different job landscape. Also, the nation’s steadfast approach in creating more jobs even in the midst of an ongoing pandemic evinces that the government does have the capacity to embrace unfamiliar situations and create new opportunities, building on the basis of equality by ensuring all get opportunity to work in the future. Furthermore, policies such as Skillsfuture can ensure citizens are constantly up skilled and able to cope with the changing job landscapes. Thus, it will be rather short-sighted of the author to say nations worldwide cannot embrace automation.

Singapore context evaluated in relation to time

How so?

Add some evaluation related to how far automation might destroy jobs? (Vs creating them)

(Lim Tian Le, 20-A2)



## Response 5

*This is truly a valiant response but it is rather long and could afford to have been more focussed and concise. BP1 could be “tighter” and more coherent in the sense that you could afford to make your intended point with more concision and focus on the issue at hand. As for BP2, consider, more attentively, the actual effects of AI and automation have had in white collar jobs. There actually has been job displacement locally - could have afforded a more balanced perspective.*

Lee states, ‘as automation makes everyday products cheaper and more plentiful, people will increasingly shift their spending to goods and services where a connection to a human provider is seen as a key benefit.’, which aptly expresses his stance that the greater incorporation of mechanisation that has increased efficiency, will only make customers crave the sense of authenticity that comes with a human touch in their goods and services even more. In a globally and digitally-connected society in Singapore, where automation is all around Singaporeans, whether we shop online or in malls, I disagree that such technological development has jaded us to the point of seeking services that have purely human service. For example, most fast-food chains now have touchscreen machines that essentially substitute the worker at the counter who takes your order. I find that most people welcomed the change, citing how it frees up the workers to improve on food quality, reduces the chances of misheard orders, and seemingly allows the orders to be fulfilled faster. These are merely observations, with no real statistics, but they accurately reflect most Singaporeans’ desire for efficiency. My society is intensely pragmatic, moulded by a history of being governed in a most utilitarian fashion, where the economy and the general standard of living for the people trumps all, even if it means sacrificing the traditional for faster, better and more practical socio-economic pursuits. Such a pragmatic mindset would thus align strongly with the reasons for automating and mechanising services, which is ultimately for greater efficiency for the customer to enjoy their goods and services without wasted time or human error. While it can also be seen that these same fast-food chains, like McDonald’s in particular, have implemented the table service option that seems to be exactly what Lee calls a ‘personal touch’, it is rarely selected as an option, due to the extended time that a server needs to walk around. It is used mainly for large orders, which may still, ironically, be in order to conserve the customer’s energy and strength, again pointing towards pragmatism. Even when Lee thinks that the cheaper and abundant products that are likely mass-produced may be a repellent for customers, I have mostly observed people embracing them in shopping more and more on wholesale websites like Shopee and Lazada; all due to the practical fact that they spend less and get convenient shipping. Therefore, Singaporeans’ pragmatic mindset clashes too much with Lee’s observation for me to agree with it.

Good choice of TR

Sound explanation though it is not just about efficiency created by automation.

How so in malls? By way of? Don’t assume your Cambridge examiner will know what you are referring to.

Instead of going straight into the example, consider engaging the reason first.

Made the deeper underlying reason the focus instead of the issue Lee is commenting on.

Make link between wholesale rebates and the automation and lack of a human connection

Next, Benson states ‘artificial intelligence (AI) is now being incorporated such that automation is reaching a point where it will be able to replace people in many higher paying positions’, using the amorphous entity of AI to perhaps scare the readers into contemplating the security of their job, even for the seemingly invincible well-educated white-collar workers. I do not agree with his statement, as Singapore has yet to reflect the dystopian picture Benson has painted of AI and its ability to substitute us. Indeed, the state is interested in developing AI for productivity purposes, a natural part of the government’s Smart Nation plan aimed at greater integration of the digital into our physical world, including the way we work. However, it is rarely to such an extent where it entirely replaces

Avoid expressions like ‘Next’ that are of informal register.



the human, as it is difficult to create an AI that can replicate the wide and often irregular jobscope of a typical higher-paid worker. For example, a part of the digital initiatives include the launching of many more Data Analytics degrees and courses by higher education to let us tap into Big Data. All that can be gleaned from such a move is that we are simply embracing the potential of machines in augmenting our productivity. If these data collecting machines and AI could simply replace workers, then it begs the reason as to why a slew of schemes for working as human interpreters and appliers of data have been encouraged, especially by the pragmatic government. Singapore is known to have a paternalistic government that interferes in all aspects of society, especially in the economic aspect to ensure optimal growth. The fact that the government has thus encouraged so strongly members of our society to gain a greater technical education in these fields of AI and data signal that rather than seeing it as a threat, they only see opportunity. Therefore, Benson’s point about AI and automation posing as threats to higher-paying positions is simply inapplicable to Singapore where educational schemes and workers’ initiatives like Skillsfuture teach the working society how to work alongside such technology, as they are really our boon rather than bane.

*(Nicole Lim, 20-O1)*

Beyond it being difficult or not really possible at present, do you think the SG government would be comfortable with such widespread job displacement?

Could you follow with concrete exemplification?

Are you sure it is simply inapplicable? Has there been no job displacement at all?