

Anderson Serangoon Junior College
General Paper
2025 JC1 P1A7
Suggested Essay Outlines

Question 1	
'The key obstacle to solving environmental problems is corporate greed.' How far do you agree?	
Question Analysis	
<u>Issue:</u> - Environmental problems and our efforts to solve them - The obstacles that hinder environmental efforts (and whether corporate greed is the chief of these)	<u>Context:</u> - Global context
<u>Conceptual Understanding:</u> There are many obstacles hindering environmental efforts, and corporate greed is often singled out as a major obstacle.	
<u>Key words:</u> - Key obstacle: the most significant roadblock - Solving environmental problems: attempt to address environmental issues - Corporate greed: companies/corporations wanting more (money, market share, publicity, clout, etc.)	
<u>Significant aspects/areas to be discussed (5W1H, Multiple Perspectives, Significant Trends, SPECTRAM):</u> Candidates have to address all the key words stated above. The main POC to be addressed is that of all the roadblocks to environmental progress, corporate greed is the worst.	
Possible Stands	
- It is largely true that corporate greed is the key obstacle to solving environmental problems. - It is only partially/not very true that corporate greed is the key obstacle to solving environmental problems	
Reasons why it is largely true that corporate greed is the key obstacle to solving environmental problems.	Reasons why it is only partially/not very true that corporate greed is the key obstacle to solving environmental problems
- TS1: The main cause of the misinformation campaigns that seriously hinder environmental efforts is corporations who obsessively desire profit. - e.g. The fossil fuel industry, exemplified by major corporations like Exxon and Shell, pursued higher profits while concealing internal research conducted in the 1980s that clearly linked their products to carbon emissions and global warming. Despite their awareness of potentially catastrophic consequences, these companies actively withheld this information from the public, prioritizing profit maximization over environmental concerns and hindering efforts to combat climate change. The misinformation campaigns orchestrated by these corporations wielded significant influence over the public's perception of the gravity of environmental issues, making them arguably the most	- TS1: In many cases, rather than hindering environmental progress, corporate self-interest serves as a catalyst for environmentally sustainable practices. This is because corporations aim to win over the growing number of environmentally-conscious consumers, driving them to adopt greener initiatives. - e.g. As consumers increasingly prioritize eco-friendly transportation options, automotive giants such as Tesla, BYD, and BMW have made substantial investments in electric vehicle (EV) technology. Their profit-driven quest for market dominance in the growing EV sector has not only resulted in reduced greenhouse gas emissions but has also accelerated the development of renewable energy infrastructure to support EV charging networks. This environmental benefit has the potential to be substantial; for

formidable obstacle to garnering public support for effective climate action. Source: https://www.theguardian.com/environment/climate-consensus-97-per-cent/2018/sep/19/shell-and-exxons-secret-1980s-climate-change-warnings	instance, according DNV, a Norway-based certification company, Norway's nationwide shift to EVs is projected to reduce global carbon emissions by nearly 400 million tonnes from 2010 to 2050. Source: https://www.dnv.com/energy-transition/how-norway-evs-have-cut-emissions-globally.html#
- TS2: While consumerism is commonly viewed as the main impediment to environmental progress, it is, in fact, corporate greed that fuels consumerism. Corporations, driven by the relentless pursuit of profit maximisation, have fostered the modern consumerist economy by shifting the negative environmental impacts of responsible production onto the environment itself, without taking full responsibility or bearing the associated costs. - e.g. For instance, fast fashion companies such as Zara, driven by corporate greed and profit maximization, prioritize rapid and disposable clothing production. These companies contribute to consumerism by manufacturing garments that don't last, resulting in extensive textile waste. The environmental impact of their practices, including the use of synthetic materials and the disposal of non-synthetic clothing in landfills, is often externalized, leaving society and the environment to bear the costs without adequate responsibility or accountability from the corporations themselves. The fact that these companies collectively form a \$2.4 trillion annual industry underscores that the great bane of consumerism is ultimately driven by the avarice of multi-national corporations, which should thus be regarded as the chief adversary of environmental efforts. Source: https://www.nytimes.com/2019/09/03/books/review/how-fast-fashion-is-destroying-the-planet.html	- TS2: The lack of viable alternative to fossil fuels is by far the more significant roadblock to environmental action than is corporate greed. This is evident from how ineffective carbon taxes have often proven. - e.g. For example, let's examine the case of Norway, which implemented a carbon tax aimed at fossil fuels in the early 1990s to reduce carbon emissions. Surprisingly, data from the World Bank indicates that on a per capita basis, carbon dioxide emissions in Norway actually increased slightly between 1990 and 2015. This illustrates that even when measures like carbon taxes address corporate greed by raising the cost of environmentally unsustainable production methods, companies may still rely on carbon-intensive practices because there are limited viable alternatives. In essence, the root challenge in resolving climate issues is not corporate greed per se, but rather the lack of green alternatives to fossil fuels. Source: https://www.forbes.com/sites/taxnotes/2021/08/13/the-case-against-a-carbon-tax/?sh=47698e7e18ba
-TS3: Consumers may not be aware of the environmental harm that they are perpetrating and even think that they are doing good by buying from seemingly sustainable companies who are, in fact, employing greenwashing tactics without any tangible environmental benefits. Corporations may present themselves as sustainable or friends of the environment when all they are doing is to chase the green dollar to deceive the growing consumer consciousness of environmental damage. e.g. For instance, Volkswagen promoted diesel vehicles as eco-friendly, but were later found to have installed "defeat devices" in their cars to cheat on emissions tests, significantly increasing pollution. H&M's "Conscious" collection has faced accusations of greenwashing, with claims suggesting that the collection was marketed as more sustainable than it	

actually is. A notable lawsuit filed by a New York resident alleged that H&M misled consumers into thinking the Conscious Choice collection was environmentally friendly, despite the products containing a higher percentage of synthetic fibers like recycled polyester, which critics argue is not truly sustainable Corporate greenwashing is counterproductive for the environment because it misleads consumers and stakeholders into believing that products or companies are more environmentally friendly than they truly are. Consumers perceive to be saving the environment by switching to “sustainable” products in the short term, but in the long term, actually support environmentally damaging products or practices, thereby increasing pollution, resource depletion, and biodiversity loss.	
Related recent examples	
- Shell and Exxon's secret 1980s climate change warnings: https://www.theguardian.com/environment/climate-consensus-97-per-cent/2018/sep/19/shell-and-exxons-secret-1980s-climate-change-warnings - How Fast Fashion Is Destroying the Planet: https://www.nytimes.com/2019/09/03/books/review/how-fast-fashion-is-destroying-the-planet.html - HOW NORWAY’S EVS HAVE CUT EMISSIONS GLOBALLY: https://www.dnv.com/energy-transition/how-norway-evs-have-cut-emissions-globally.html# - The Case Against A Carbon Tax: https://www.forbes.com/sites/taxnotes/2021/08/13/the-case-against-a-carbon-tax/?sh=47698e7e18ba	
Markers’ Comments	
- Most students failed to address “key obstacle”. They were able to convincingly detail how corporate greed contributes to environmental problems with concrete examples, but did not go on to compare corporate greed with other obstacles to show how that makes corporate greed the main hindrance to solving environmental problems. - Students who took the stand that corporate greed is not the main obstacle tended to list out other contributors to environmental problems without comparing it to corporate greed. - To answer the question, students needed to show the <u>cause-effect relationship</u> between corporate greed and other factors (e.g.: how consumer demands fuel corporate greed, or how government action can help control the excesses of companies’ actions VS how companies may bribe or pay off government officials to relax or block green policies and regulations)	

Question 2

Assess the view that the need for censorship is greater than ever in today's world.

Question Analysis

Issue:

Developments in the world today (such as globalisation, the widespread use of social media, the ease of exchange of information on the internet, etc.) have resulted in the need for censorship being questioned.

Context:

Today's world
Global

Conceptual Understanding:

- Connections between censorship and other issues like politics and government and the use of technology
- How changes in time have led to changes in the need for censorship
- Censorship and its effect on the individual and society

Key words:

- Censorship: the action of preventing part or the whole of a book, film, work of art, document, or other kind of communication from being seen or made available to the public, because it is considered to be offensive or harmful, or because it contains information that someone wishes to keep secret, often for political reasons
- Need is greater than ever: That it is more necessary than before to have
- Today's world: Context of today

Significant aspects/areas to be discussed (5W1H, Multiple Perspectives, Significant Trends, SPECTRAM):

- How the world has changed and how that has affected the flow of information
- How censorship affects the individual and the society
- The social and political uses and impacts of censorship

Possible Stands

- The need for censorship is greater than ever in today's world.
- The need for censorship is not greater than ever in today's world.

Reasons why the need for censorship is greater than ever in today's world

- The rapid adoption of social media in the world today has transformed how people connect and share information. It is easy for anyone to broadcast information to a wide audience even if that information is offensive or harmful. As such, censorship has become more vital than ever to ensure that the information that people are exposed to does not cause harm. A top-down approach of censorship is needed more than ever as the spread of harmful information is too quick and people cannot be expected to critically evaluate each piece of information.

Example: During the COVID-19 pandemic, people worldwide turned to social media for news and updates about the pandemic due to its real-time nature and accessibility. However, misinformation and conspiracy theories about COVID-19 circulated widely on social media. False claims included

Reasons why the need for censorship is not greater than ever in today's world

- With globalisation today, people are more interconnected than ever. The free flow of information encourages dialogue and helps people make more informed decisions that allow them to thrive in a globally interconnected world. Censorship hinders that free exchange of ideas and is a problem in today's world. People should be allowed to decide what is best for them.

Example: Even North Korea is experiencing challenges hindering the flow of ideas into its borders. The limited yet expanding access to information, including via border trade with China, hastened subtle change in a country that only allows state media focused on building the prestige of leader Kim, said Mr Tae Yong-ho, the first North Korean defector to be elected as a South Korean lawmaker. In 2021, there were news that North Korea was imposing stiff fines or

miracle cures, denial of the virus's severity, and unfounded links to 5G technology. Social media platforms recognised the need to combat the spread of harmful misinformation. They implemented content moderation and censorship measures. Content flagged as false or harmful was often removed or labelled with warnings to provide context. Censorship aimed to prevent the harmful consequences of false information and protect public health.	jail terms for anyone caught enjoying South Korean entertainment or copying the way South Koreans speak. According to Mr Sokeel Park, of Liberty in North Korea, which supports defectors, the emphasis on South Korean material and the intangible elements like accents highlighted how worried the government was about the creeping influence of the wealthier, democratic South.
As digital devices and access to the internet become more prevalent today, more and more young people, in particular young children, are becoming internet users. As such, they are more easily exposed to online content, and there is a greater need for censorship to protect this vulnerable group. The young may have problems discerning what is appropriate, thus censorship is needed more than ever. Example: In 2023, Singapore introduced regulations for platforms like Facebook, Twitter, TikTok, Instagram and YouTube to take preventive measures to ensure online safety. The regulation gives authorities the power to direct social media platforms to remove online harms such as sexual and violent content, content that promotes cyber bullying, vice, organised crime, suicide or self-harm, and content that may incite racial or religious tensions or endanger public health. Each platform must also create separate community guidelines for younger users, along with moderating content and providing online safety information that they can easily understand. E.g. The UK's latest censorship law to protect minors is the Online Safety Act, implemented starting in 2025. This law requires online platforms to take strong measures to protect children from illegal and harmful content, including conducting age verification checks to prevent children from accessing harmful material such as pornography, suicide/self-harm content, eating disorder promotion, bullying, hateful or violent content, and dangerous challenges. Platforms that fail to comply risk severe penalties, including fines up to 10% of their global revenue or being blocked in the UK.	With the ease of communication and spread of information (or misinformation) today, even well-intentioned censorship may be counterproductive as the misinformation could still spread underground. Such censorship could also erode trust in public institutions. Example: After investigating the sources and impact of online misinformation, the Royal Society concluded that removing false claims and offending accounts would do little to limit their harmful effects. Instead, bans could drive misinformation “to harder-to-address corners of the internet and exacerbate feelings of distrust in authorities,” its report says. In response to calls to removing anti Covid-19 vaccine content, Frank Kelly, mathematics professor at the University of Cambridge who chaired the Royal Society inquiry said that removing content and driving users away from mainstream platforms makes it harder for scientists to engage with people.
Related recent examples	
https://www.straitstimes.com/tech/no-ads-on-younger-teens-social-media-accounts-platforms-to-update-users-on-action-taken-imda https://www.bbc.com/news/technology-60036861	

- <https://www.straitstimes.com/asia/australianz/aussie-plan-to-curb-misinformation-and-punish-tech-giants-prompts-censorship-fears>

Markers' Comments

- Weaker scripts described the problems with media and assumed that censorship would be the solution without clearly explaining why censorship is needed to address such problems.
- Some scripts gave examples where censorship would not be able to solve the problem presented. Others elaborated on the issue in detail, and then made a blanket statement that censorship would therefore solve the problem without really examining how it would help.
- Weaker scripts failed to recognise that the issue centres on the need for censorship in *today's world*. Such scripts failed to justify the need for censorship in the context of today.
- Many students did not understand censorship well, and assumed that any form censorship would result in a complete removal of information. As a result, they did not give adequate consideration of the benefits of (reasonable) censorship.
- Some better students elaborated on today's context by talking about changes over time (e.g.: technological advancements over time have led to the rise of social media today, whereas traditional media was the norm in the past). This was generally a good approach to help frame their argument.

Question 3

How effectively can migration solve population problems?

Question Analysis

Issue:

Migration – the movement of people to a new place to live – seems to be the most direct solution to population problems. However, the limitations of migration call into question how effective migration can be.

Context:

Global

Conceptual Understanding:

- Connections between migration and other issues like inequality and politics and government
- How different countries may view migration differently depending on the context of the country
- How migration may affect the individual and society differently

Key words:

- Effective: successful or achieving desired results
- Can: to be able to
- Migration: the process of people travelling to a new place to live
- Population problems: problems associated with the people living in a particular country or place (e.g. ageing population, underpopulation, overpopulation)

Significant aspects/areas to be discussed (5W1H, Multiple Perspectives, Significant Trends, SPECTRAM):

- How migration affects the population
- The effectiveness of migration in solving population problems from a political, economic and social perspective
- Trends related to migration and population (e.g. ageing population and lower birth rates in richer countries)

Possible Stands

- Migration can effectively solve population problems.
- Migration cannot effectively solve population problems.

Reasons why migration can effectively solve population problems

- Migration provides a quick solution to population problems by directly supplementing the local population with workers.

Example: According to a report by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), migrant workers make important contributions to the labour market in both high- and low-skilled occupations. In 2012, OECD found that migrants accounted for 47% of the increase in the workforce in the United States and 70% in Europe over the previous ten years. It was found that migration boosts the working-age population.

This is a significant short-term advantage, as migration can rapidly increase the working-age

Reasons why migration cannot effectively solve population problems

- Migration tends to be a short-term solution. Many migrants move to find work, and they might not stay for the long-term. As a result, the root of the population problem is not addressed, and the problem will resurface when the migrants return to their home country.

Example: In 2021, it was reported that foreign workers were leaving Britain at the fastest pace since the second world war, presenting a challenge to an economy already roiled by Brexit and the coronavirus. EU citizens once drawn by the prospect of better pay and jobs have found their home countries faring far better than Britain during the pandemic. This may have resulted in fewer migrants to Britain. According

population and address labour shortages, thereby supporting economic growth and sustaining public finances, especially in aging societies.	to Professor Jonathan Portes, a King's College London economics expert who estimates well over a million foreign-born workers may have left, "The risk is that people don't come back, so we have skill and labour shortages and we lose some output, growth and tax revenue permanently". This limits the long-term population stabilization effects of migration. If migrants leave after a few years, the demographic problems, such as an aging native population and shrinking labour force, can re-emerge.
There are fears that as a population ages, the falling number of educated young workers entering the labour market will reduce innovation, sapping economic growth across the board. Migrants, with their different perspectives and foreign connections, provide significant impacts on their host country's society and economy by driving innovation. Example: A National Bureau of Economic Research study by economists found that immigrants produce a significant percentage of innovations in America and make U.S.-born individuals more inventive. According to the researchers, "Immigrant inventors are more likely to rely on foreign technologies, to collaborate with foreign inventors, and to be cited in foreign markets, thus contributing to the importation and diffusion of ideas across borders". This is a strong positive impact, as migrants bring new perspectives, skills, and networks that stimulate innovation and productivity which are key drivers of long-term economic resilience.	While migrants may provide a boost in population numbers which may seem to address population problems related to ageing and the lack of workers, these migrants may face difficulties in the labour market, undermining their contribution to the host country. Example: Foreign-born workers in the OECD area are concentrated in low-skilled occupations, despite their relatively high educational level. On average one-in-three tertiary-educated migrant is over-qualified. This is about 12 percentage points greater than for natives. The development of assessment and recognition systems of migrants' qualifications remains a priority in many OECD countries. This undermines the potential benefits of migration if foreign-born workers are concentrated in low-skilled jobs despite higher education, as happens across OECD countries. High rates of overqualification signify lost economic potential and can breed frustration and social exclusion.
	While migrants may solve quantitative problems like manpower shortfalls and talent gaps, they might have the unintended side effect of social friction when migrants are unable to integrate into society. Example: In Japan, social friction arises from cultural and language barriers, with migrants often unable to fully integrate due to limited Japanese language skills and unfamiliarity with social norms. Some factories have reportedly segregated bathrooms and locker rooms for Japanese and foreign workers, reflecting social divisions. Casual racism and xenophobia are common experiences among migrants. For example, some local Japanese avoid sitting next to Black foreigners on public transport ("gaijin seat"), and there are frequent reports of verbal harassment. Migrant care workers, particularly from the

Philippines and Indonesia, often suffer physical strain and isolation, and they face difficulties accessing social welfare and community support.

This highlights that migration is not just a demographic solution but a complex social process requiring inclusive policies, community support, and anti-discrimination efforts to avoid backlash and ensure harmonious population growth

Related recent examples

- <https://www.straitstimes.com/world/europe/biggest-foreign-worker-exodus-since-world-war-ii-adds-to-britains-woes>
- <https://www.forbes.com/sites/stuartanderson/2023/01/12/highly-inventive-immigrants-also-make-natives-more-innovative/>
- <https://www.channelnewsasia.com/commentary/declining-birth-rate-ageing-population-immigration-policy-3481296>

Markers' Comments

- Weaker scripts described migration policies without evaluating how effective migration has been as a solution
- Some students thought that problems within a population (e.g. poverty, racial discrimination) are population problems.

Question 4

‘Professional sport is all about making money.’ Is this a fair comment?

Question Analysis

Issue:

- Professional sport and the money involved in it.

Context:

- Global

Conceptual Understanding:

- There are many motivations for professional sport. But given how much money is involved in today's professional sport, there is reason to question the nature of professional athletes' ultimate aim—it is about sporting achievement, or does it all boil down to money?

Key words:

- Professional sport- paid athletes only
- All about- utterly focussed on
- Making money- as a motivation, the desire to maximise income

Significant aspects/areas to be discussed (5W1H, Multiple Perspectives, Significant Trends, SPECTRAM):

Candidates have to address all the key words stated above. The main POC to be addressed is that the ultimate or primary aim/function of professional sport is making money.

Possible Stands

- Yes, professional sport is primarily about making money.
- No, it is unfair to say that professional sport is all about making money.

Reasons why professional sport is primarily about making money.

- TS1: Only during the fleeting period of their physical prime can professional athletes engage in their career; thus, the transitory nature of athletic careers often leads them to prioritize income-generating choices over solely sporting achievements.

-e.g. According to a study by the RBC Sports Professionals group, the average playing career ranges from five years in Major League Baseball (MLB) and the National Basketball Association (NBA) to six years for the National Hockey League (NHL), and seven years for National Football League (NFL) players, while the Guardian estimates that the average length of a professional soccer career is 8 years. Thus, it is not an uncommon phenomenon for world-class professional athletes to make purely financially-motivated choices even if they effectively reduce the likelihood of achievement. For example, Brazilian footballers have something of a reputation of making big-money moves to clubs in less established leagues, with Neymar Jr famously moving to Saudi side Al Hilal in 2023, and Oscar Dos Santos Jr even more notoriously moving to China's Shanghai Port when he was only in his mid-20s. In each of these cases, a professional player sacrificed his place in a highly established and successful team with real prospects of winning trophies in order to

Reasons why it is unfair to say that professional sport is all about making money.

- TS1: In sports that are not particularly lucrative or well-supported, numerous professional athletes have to undertake self-funded training endeavors, which clearly indicates their motivation transcends mere financial gain.

-e.g. In the realm of para-sports in Singapore, dedicated athletes like para-shuttler Tay Wei Ming and para-table tennis player Edwin Tan exemplify the challenges faced by professional athletes in less lucrative sports. Tay Wei Ming, ranked #15 in the 'Race to Paris' global rankings, had to seek corporate sponsorships and raise funds to finance his training and international competitions after his government-funded scholarship ended, emphasizing his struggle to fund his endeavour to represent Singapore at the Paris 2024 Paralympics. Similarly, Edwin Tan, a national para-chess player, personally covered expenses for overseas competitions, including adaptive equipment, due to limited funding and sponsorship opportunities, highlighting the financial burdens para-athletes are willing to shoulder for the love of the sport. For athletes in similar situations, given how sporting career seems to be a financial liability rather than a cash cow, it is evident that the pursuit of a sporting career is not driven primarily by money.

enjoy a much higher salary (it's estimated that Neymar Jr's new salary package is a staggering €300m over two years), albeit in a much less established league and team. This proves that in many cases, professional sport is primarily driven by money.	
-TS2: In today's sports landscape, television rights, sponsorships, global fanbases, and the vast world of advertising have collectively bestowed elite teams and promotions with significant financial capabilities. This has given rise to a prevalent culture of extreme financial ambition among top-tier athletes. -E.g. For instance, boxing and mixed martial arts (MMA) stand as prime examples of industries awash with wealth, which in turn has fostered a strong profit-seeking ethos among athletes. Take, for instance, the highly anticipated 2017 clash between Floyd Mayweather Jr. and Conor McGregor, a bout dubbed "The Biggest Fight in Combat Sports History." This spectacle drew an estimated 50 million viewers and generated a staggering \$600 million in total revenue. Notably, both fighters, Mayweather (the victor) and McGregor, reaped substantial rewards, pocketing \$280 million and \$130 million, respectively. It's emblematic of the financial orientation of these athletes when one considers Mayweather's chosen nickname, "Money," which aptly encapsulates his public persona as a money-savvy entrepreneur-athlete. Likewise, McGregor has cultivated a similar image as a globetrotting multimillionaire and has earned a reputation as the Ultimate Fighting Championship's most reliable cash cow, consistently drawing significant viewership. On more than one occasion, he has mockingly reminded his opponents of the role he plays in generating the revenue that ultimately contributes to their earnings. Clearly, certain sports have become so financially endowed that their athletes have fully embraced the pursuit of profit.	- TS2: Elite professional athletes, due to their heightened public profile, frequently assume the role of activists, even when they anticipate potential financial consequences. In these instances, it becomes evident that professional sports transcends mere financial gain; it also becomes a platform for effecting positive change in the world. -e.g. A famous example of an elite athlete who sacrificed financial gain to engage in activism is former National Football League (NFL) quarterback Colin Kaepernick. In 2016, he started kneeling during the pre-match playing of the US national anthem in order to protest police brutality against African-American males. He surely must have known that such a bold act of subversion would be met with a severe backlash, which it did. In fact, Kaepernick's actions were so strongly frowned upon that, even though he had led his team to the Super Bowl just five years prior, he was soon unable to land a back-up role in any of the teams, whose owners wanted nothing to do with him. This demonstrates that there are indeed professional athletes who are willing to risk their career and the money that comes with it in order to advocate social causes.
	-TS3: While money plays a critical role, professional athletes often have intrinsic motivations like passion for the sport, personal achievement. In such cases, athletes turn professional because they wish to further their passion for the sport by playing and competing at higher levels amongst others with similar love for the sport. e.g. For example, Joseph Schooling and Michael Phelps share a special relationship that evolved from idol and fan to competitors and now friends. Schooling first met Phelps as a 13-year-old in 2008 when the American swim legend was training in Singapore. Phelps was Schooling's childhood idol, and Schooling aspired to one day compete against him. Their relationship took a significant turn at the 2016 Rio Olympics, where Schooling bested Phelps in the men's

	100m butterfly final, earning Singapore its first Olympic gold medal. Therefore, people become professional athletes primarily due to intrinsic motivation rather than just financial gain. Professional athletes obtain personal satisfaction from accomplishment and growth. This internal drive fosters persistence, engagement, and high performance, encouraging athletes to develop their abilities to professional levels.
Related recent examples	
Professional athletes need a retirement game plan: https://www.rbcwealthmanagement.com/en-us/insights/professional-athletes-need-a-retirement-game-plan#:~:text=According%20to%20a%20study%20by,Football%20League%20(NFL)%20players. Career by numbers: Footballer: https://www.theguardian.com/money/2010/mar/20/professional-footballer-career	
Markers' Comments	
- Students do not know the difference between sponsorships/endorsements and ads (e.g., Ronaldo being featured in a Shopee ad was frequently used as an example of a sponsorship deal). - Most students were able to explain that professional sport generates large amounts of money for countries, corporations, and athletes. However, they were unable to show how this is excessive, therefore not fully addressing the POC, and were unable to move to upper Band 3. - Students that only focused on individual athletes, instead of corporations, countries, etc, demonstrated a limited understanding of professional sport. - Better students were able to provide a range of concrete examples from different sports. Better students also examined professional sports from a range of perspectives – players, countries, sports clubs and associations, etc.	

Question 5	
'The government should ensure there are no inequalities in society.' Discuss.	
Question Analysis	
<u>Issue:</u> Inequality has negative impacts on society and the marginalised groups of people. However, is it fair to expect the government to eliminate all inequalities in society?	<u>Context:</u> Global
<u>Conceptual Understanding:</u> - The government has its roles and responsibilities to protect the welfare of its citizens, regardless of their income, ethnicity, gender, and other contexts. - At the same time, the government is operating with a set limit of resources and manpower, and needs to prioritise its efforts appropriately for optimal social welfare	
<u>Key words:</u> - The government – the group of people who officially control the country - Should – moral obligations vis-à-vis practical reasons and considerations - Ensure - to make something certain to happen - No inequalities in society – All forms of inequality that exist in society, such as income inequality, gender	

inequality, and racial inequality, are completely eliminated

Significant aspects/areas to be discussed (5W1H, Multiple Perspectives, Significant Trends, SPECTRAM):

- What are the government's roles and responsibilities?
- How will a government be able to eliminate inequalities? How feasible is it?
- What are the issues caused by inequality?
- Are these issues significant enough to justify the effort and resources needed to eliminate inequality?

Possible Stands

- While the government should do its best to minimise inequalities in society, it is unrealistic for it to ensure there are no inequalities at all.
- The government should largely avoid intervening to resolve inequalities in society.

Reasons why the government should minimise inequality	Reasons why the government should <u>not</u> minimise inequality
Simply put, those at the disadvantaged end of the spectrum often are deprived of opportunities and even basic human rights. It is thus the government's moral duty to ensure the welfare of its citizens, especially if these communities are unable to do so themselves. Example: To this day, in India, the caste in which one is born determines their social status, job and marriage under unofficial social guidelines that Hindu Indians follow. Dalits still experience segregation from other castes and are severely disadvantaged in terms of access to education, healthcare, worship, and even refuge in times of crisis. Poverty disproportionately affects the Dalits, or untouchables, in comparison to the other castes. About half of the Dalit caste are living in poverty, compared to 15% of the upper castes, and 60% of Dalit children are chronically malnourished. Granted, the Indian government's efforts to abolish caste-based discrimination in 1950 has failed to address the issue. However, subsequent affirmative action policies to reserve education and employment opportunities have helped increase literacy and employment rates amongst the Dalits. A report by IndiaSpend, a data journalism initiative, in 2013 found that there has been an overall increase of 51% in literacy rates. This, in turn, has empowered the Dalit communities to fight for their own rights, as seen from the 2016 and 2018 protests against the abuse of Dalit rights. This highlights the importance of government intervention to help uplift marginalised communities that have faced a historic and systemic system of discrimination.	From a pragmatic and utilitarian point of view, inequality is an inevitable aspect of human society. Attempting to ensure there are no inequalities whatsoever in society is merely an egalitarian pipedream that would be a waste of government effort and resources. Example: Economists and historians who have charted economic inequality throughout history have not found a single society without it, suggesting that inequality is inevitable. Furthermore, economic inequality is typically tangled up with other forms of inequality in power and class, determined by complex factors unique to each society, such as the caste system in India, citizenship in the case of refugees in EU countries, ethnicity in racially diverse countries, and even gender in patriarchal societies. Granted, in the 20th century, some countries, notably China and the Soviet Union, switched to communist or socialist political systems, partly due to the desire to reduce income inequality. This move did reduce income inequality, but at the cost of economic growth, causing everyone to receive an equally low pay. This was one significant factor in the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991. https://ed.ted.com/lessons/is-inequality-inevitable
Those who are on the disadvantaged end of the inequalities in society are powerless to effect change and improve their situation, and thus it is up to the government to make systemic changes to minimise inequalities.	Government intervention to reduce inequality may inadvertently lead to unintended consequences, such as disincentivising hard work. Example:

Example: In the World Economic Forum's Inclusive Development Index 2018, which showed income inequality has risen or remained stagnant in 20 of the 29 advanced economies, and poverty has increased in 17. To further understand this phenomenon, the UN has recently taken up investigations on poverty levels in the UK. Despite rising employment levels, economic growth and pockets of wealth, a fifth of Britons remain in poverty. A lack of inclusive growth has been cited to be one of the biggest problems that lead to the persistence of poverty in advanced economies. This points to the need for a more human-centric approach to improving the cohesion of increasingly fractured societies. Example: From birth to death, African Americans face systemic disadvantages in American life even more than 150 years after slavery was abolished. From basic survival-related issues such as high infant mortality rates, food insecurity, and low life expectancy, to quality of life issues such as poor access to higher education, high felony rates, and low home ownership rates, African Americans consistently grapple with inequalities that leave them unable to improve their lot in life. Throughout American history, significant improvements to African American lives have only been possible with policy changes such as the 13th Amendment that abolished slavery in 1865, the abolishment of Jim Crow laws that previously legalised racial segregation, and the 1965 Voting Rights Act which dramatically increased African American voter participation and political representation. More recently, the Affordable Care Act (known colloquially as Obamacare) introduced in 2010 helped narrow the racial gap in health insurance coverage, ensuring that more African Americans have financial access to healthcare.	Over thirty years, changes in the UK's tax and benefit system affected work incentives. Taxes and withdrawn benefits often meant that, on average, workers could only keep about half of what their employer paid out in additional income. After 2003, work incentives weakened, partly due to more progressive reforms that increased support for low-income families but also raised effective marginal tax rates, reducing the incentive for some to increase their earnings. https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/6518508.pdf Unemployment benefits can create a disincentive to find work by reducing the financial urgency for job seekers to accept new employment. More generous or extended unemployment benefits are associated with longer periods of unemployment. For example, a study of New York State found that a significant increase in weekly unemployment benefits led to a measurable decrease in the rate at which recipients exited unemployment, indicating that higher benefits reduced the incentive to find a job quickly. During the pandemic, expanded benefits (such as the \$600 weekly supplement in the U.S.) slowed employment recovery in low-wage sectors compared to high-wage sectors, as the relative generosity of benefits made some workers less likely to accept low-wage job offers. https://harris.uchicago.edu/files/shortreview.pdf
Having persistent inequalities would harm the social fabric of society, sowing discord in a time of volatility when unity is crucial. It is thus crucial for governments to tackle inequality to preserve trust and harmony in society. Example: A 2016 paper by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) found a direct causal link between income inequality and social trust. Data from the United States of America and other advanced economies show that individuals in societies with high levels of income inequality reported lower levels of trust in political institutions as well as other people. https://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/wp/2016/wp16176.pdf	

Example: Unequal societies, where the poorest and wealthiest in society tend to live separately, create conditions where inequality is more likely to be accepted, new research from the London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE) has found. The research shows that belief in meritocracy, the view that success depends on hard work rather than social structures, strengthens with rising inequality. Additionally, concerns towards levels of inequality are also shown to be much lower in societies where popular belief in meritocracy is high.

<https://www.lse.ac.uk/News/Latest-news-from-LSE/2019/01-Jan-19/Divided-societies-more-likely-to-accept-inequality>

Example:

Almost half of the 1,036 citizen respondents felt that income inequality is the likeliest to cause a social divide here, according to a study that Dr Janil Puthuchery, the chairman of OnePeople.sg – the national body promoting harmony – worked with Channel NewsAsia to commission in 2018. Low-wage workers who were interviewed consistently reported class-based discrimination against them, with prejudicial attitudes extending even to schoolchildren. More concerning, this has affected individuals' sense of connection to Singapore: 70 per cent of the higher classes felt a strong sense of belonging, compared with 46 per cent of the lower classes. To address this issue, the Singapore government has implemented a slew of schemes such as the Progressive Wage Scheme and Workfare Income Supplement that boost the wages of low-income workers as well as train them for higher-skilled jobs. These schemes are partly funded by the progressive income tax system, in which the top income bracket earners are slated to pay increased taxes from 22% to 24% in 2024. The Singapore government's conscious efforts to bridge income inequality has contributed to the success of the 'SG United' national directive that was first introduced during the COVID-19 pandemic which rallied Singaporeans to the common cause of getting through the pandemic together.

<https://www.channelnewsasia.com/cnainsider/regardless-class-race-religion-survey-singapore-income-divide-760506>

Related recent examples

- <https://ed.ted.com/lessons/is-inequality-inevitable>
- <https://www.lse.ac.uk/News/Latest-news-from-LSE/2019/01-Jan-19/Divided-societies-more-likely-to-accept-inequality>
- <https://www.channelnewsasia.com/cnainsider/regardless-class-race-religion-survey-singapore-income-divide-760506>

Markers' Comments

- Students were able to explain why having inequality is undesirable, and that there should be some attempt to eradicate or alleviate it. However, most of them did not address the POC “should”, and ignored the government’s role in addressing inequality. Moral and pragmatic reasons for the government to intervene was rarely addressed.
- Weaker scripts talked about inequality in general terms, without exploring the nuances of different types of inequality and how the government might be limited in intervening in some instances. A number of candidates also misinterpreted the question, talking about why the government should treat everyone equally.
- Better scripts were able to challenge the absolute terms, to argue that there are downsides to having no inequality in society as it would affect citizens’ perceptions of fairness and motivation to work.

Question 6	
'Too much faith is placed in politicians.' To what extent is this true of your society?	
Question Analysis	
<u>Issue:</u> We Singaporeans seem to be confident that Singapore politics is largely corruption free, and that our political figures are largely competent. But is our confidence justified?	<u>Context:</u> Singapore
<u>Conceptual Understanding:</u> - Politicians are ostensibly acting in the interest of the people, but they also have their own private agenda. - Politicians exert some control over the media, and thus are able to create narratives that we uncritically accept regarding their credibility and competence.	
<u>Key words:</u> - Too much- excessive - Faith- trust/confidence - Politicians- those in power, and those not in power, as long as they are in politics	
<u>Significant aspects/areas to be discussed (5W1H, Multiple Perspectives, Significant Trends, SPECTRAM):</u> Candidates have to address all the key words stated above. The main POC to be addressed is that Singaporeans are too trusting of our politicians. Good scripts would examine this accusation in light of Singapore characteristics.	
Possible Stands	
- It is quite true that we place too much faith in politicians in Singapore. - It is largely untrue that we place too much faith in politicians in Singapore.	
- Reasons why it is quite true that we place too much faith in politicians in Singapore.	- Reasons why It is largely untrue that we place too much faith in politicians in Singapore.
- TS1: In Singapore, we willingly give up certain democratic freedoms to ensure stable economic management, but often this leads to us having too much trust in our politicians, automatically assuming they're making choices that benefit everyone. - e.g. Singapore, which ranks poorly at 139th out of 180 countries on Reporters Without Borders' press freedom index, enforces strict regulations on the media. A considerable portion of mainstream media outlets is either state-owned or under the control of government-linked entities. Journalists often practice self-censorship to avoid legal consequences. This restriction on press freedom is perceived as a compromise for preserving political stability and economic growth, but it can lead to a lack of critical reporting and public discourse, creating an environment where citizens might excessively trust that government decisions are always	- TS1: Renowned for our propensity to voice complaints and adopt a discerning stance, Singaporeans extend this disposition to our political figures; far from embracing unquestioning confidence, we have made it into a national pastime to subject our leaders to rigorous evaluation, often perceiving elements of controversy and wrongdoing even in the absence of substantial evidence. -e.g. Singaporeans have a longstanding tradition of closely examining the salaries of political leaders, especially Cabinet members. In 2012, when the government proposed alterations to the ministerial salary structure, and even when it was made known ministerial pays would be significantly reduced, it sparked a fervent public discourse and substantial criticism. Despite the government's assertion that competitive salaries were essential for attracting top

in their best interest. Source: https://mothership.sg/2022/05/singapore-press-freedom-ranking-2022/	talent, numerous Singaporeans raised concerns about the high remuneration of political leaders. This episode serves as a clear illustration that, rather than unquestionably accepting our politicians' assertions as fact, we frequently subject our leaders to rigorous evaluation, even on sensitive matters such as their compensation. Source: https://www.theguardian.com/world/2012/jan/04/singapore-prime-minister-lee-loong
- TS2: The Singapore government promotes the narrative that our government politicians are incorruptible. This may have been true in the past era dominated by singular leaders who had the steel to root out any and all forms of corruption within their ranks. It is naive to assume things are the same now, and yet that is what we do, naively thinking that our politicians are somehow resistant to corruption and scandal. - e.g. Over the years, there have been allegations of impropriety involving high-ranking government officials. For instance, convictions and allegations of impropriety and even corruption have been raised in cases involving former Speakers of Parliament Michael Palmer and Tan Chuan-Jin, and even Minister for Transport S Iswaran. These incidents have challenged the narrative of incorruptibility and the assumption that politicians are resistant to scandal. Yet, many Singaporeans continue to embrace the myth of the incorrupt People's Action Party, indicating a worrying discordance between public perception and seedy political reality. Source: https://www.straitstimes.com/singapore/govt-has-to-address-questions-raised-over-tan-chuan-jin-cheng-li-hui-affair-observers	- TS2: Despite the imperfections inherent in Singaporean politicians, their garnered public trust is justified by their status as extensively qualified individuals, consistently demonstrating a track record of delivering favorable governance outcomes. - e.g. For example, during the COVID-19 pandemic, Singapore's government garnered widespread praise for its efficient and transparent response. They swiftly implemented measures such as contact tracing, testing, quarantine protocols, and vaccination. Notably, Singapore achieved one of the world's lowest overall COVID-19 case fatality rates, at less than 0.1 percent, compared to the global average of approximately 1 percent. This successful management of the crisis underscored the government's capability to navigate complex challenges, further justifying the deep public trust it enjoys in its political leadership. Source: https://www.straitstimes.com/singapore/vaccination-strategy-kept-covid-19-death-rates-low-migrant-worker-outbreak-could-have-been-disastrous#:~:text=The%20overall%20Covid%2D19%20case,virus%20was%20fraught%20with%20challenges.
	TS3: While detractors argue that the government is heavy-handed and controlling, citizens are actively encouraged to contribute towards the policy-making and public affairs of the country. e.g. for example, the government facilitates platforms on multiple levels to listen to the views and proposals of Singaporeans. This includes meet-the-people sessions held by politicians where residents can air their gripes and grievances. The government also holds discussions at a national level, such as the Forward Singapore Conversations, where they actively seek feedback about what Singaporeans aspire towards so that the government can recalibrate the direction of policy-making. Through consultative approaches, citizens feel heard and feel that their opinions are taken into consideration instead of being condescended upon. This stake in citizenry justifies the trust that Singaporeans place in their government.

Related recent examples

- S'pore's press freedom ranking jumps from 160 to 139: <https://mothership.sg/2022/05/singapore-press-freedom-ranking-2022/>

- Govt has to address questions raised over Tan Chuan-Jin, Cheng Li Hui affair: Observers: <https://www.straitstimes.com/singapore/govt-has-to-address-questions-raised-over-tan-chuan-jin-cheng-li-hui-affair-observers>

- Singapore snip: prime minister takes big pay cut: <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2012/jan/04/singapore-prime-minister-lee-loong>

- Vaccination kept Singapore's Covid-19 death rate low; outbreak in dorms could have been disastrous: <https://www.straitstimes.com/singapore/vaccination-strategy-kept-covid-19-death-rates-low-migrant-worker-outbreak-could-have-been-disastrous#:~:text=The%20overall%20Covid%2D19%20case,virus%20was%20fraught%20with%20challenges>

Markers' Comments

- Many students did not properly define the key concept of "too much faith".
- Weaker scripts merely described how there are high levels of trust in politicians in Singapore.
- Stronger scripts unpacked the concept of "too much faith".
- Stronger scripts also directly addressed SG characteristics, thus engaging with the key phrase "your society".

Question 7

‘Security is more important than freedom.’ Do you agree?

Question Analysis

Issue:

In the modern world, security and freedom are seen as being at odds. In many cases, individual freedoms need to be sacrificed in exchange for greater security, and vice versa. Yet, individuals and governments must determine what their priority is.

Context:

Global

Conceptual Understanding:

- Individual freedoms often need to be curtailed for the collective safety and security of their society, which is a key principle in the Social Contract theory.
- Prioritising security to the extreme extent of depriving individuals of freedoms can lead to devastating consequences; the same applies the other way round.

Key words:

- Security: idea of stability and safety
- More important than: students must explicitly compare security and freedom to explain why one is of greater value than the other (another possible approach is to explain why one is necessary while the other is a luxury).
- Freedom: the condition or right of being able or allowed to do, say, think, etc. whatever you want to, without being controlled or limited

Significant aspects/areas to be discussed (5W1H, Multiple Perspectives, Significant Trends, SPECTRAM):

- What are the benefits of security/ freedom?
- What are the problems caused when we sacrificed security/ freedom for greater freedom/ security?
- Do the benefits outweigh the problems caused by sacrificing one for the other?

Possible Stands

- Security is more important than freedom to a large extent
- Security is equally as important as freedom
- Security is not as important as freedom to a large extent

Reasons why security is more important

Without basic safety and security, having freedom is pointless as we would be living in fear for our survival – security is a prerequisite in order for us to be able to enjoy whatever freedoms we might have.

Example: According to the social contract theory, each person agrees to surrender some (or all) of his or her originally expansive rights and freedoms to a central authority on the condition that every other person does the same. In exchange, each person receives the benefits that supposedly only such a central authority can provide, notably including domestic peace. This manifests in modern society as laws that every citizen must abide by, trading in their freedom to enact violence in exchange for safety from violence enacted by others.

Reasons why security is not more important

While security is undoubtedly important, freedom is equally as important, as it is key for innovation and creativity which are necessary for individuals and societies to thrive and grow.

Example: The goal of a successful democracy is to have a plural and tolerant society. For this to happen, citizens should be able to speak freely and openly about how they would like to be governed and criticize those who are in power. As such, in 2000 freedom of expression was enshrined as a fundamental right in Article 11 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union. However, the definition of free speech does not protect every kind of speech. Like all fundamental rights the right to freedom of expression is not absolute, with one key condition being that

Example: Researchers from the University of Ottawa found a direct co-relation between self-reported safety and self-reported happiness in a 2021 study of women across 11 low to middle-income countries. Respondents who reported feeling very unsafe in their neighbourhood, such as in Iraq, also reported worsening life satisfaction. The reverse held true for respondents who felt safe, illustrating that safety is a basic ingredient for happiness and life satisfaction, through which individuals can also enjoy their freedoms in life.	whatever is expressed is necessary and genuinely fulfils objectives in the interest of the general public or is needed to protect the rights and freedoms of others. This highlights the need for freedom which is moderated and balanced against safety and security. Example: Throughout history, civil disobedience has been critical in enabling individuals to exert pressure on governments to make policy changes to improve society. Defined as an intentional breach of law for a social purpose, the success of civil disobedience movements hinge upon individuals exercising their freedoms, temporarily disrupting peace and security in their communities to bring about long-term change. From Nelson Mandela bombing military installations and power plants in his fight against apartheid, to the various sit-ins, roadblocks, protests, and even public vandalism by environmental activists, individuals intentionally breach laws, even at risk of personal safety, to make a public statement about social injustices.
It is precisely in societies that idealise freedom that people selfishly prioritise their individual freedom over all else, compromising the safety and security of the rest of society. Example: The First Amendment, which grants American individuals the right to free speech, and the Second Amendment, which grants the right to gun ownership, are quintessential examples of the problems of providing blanket, unconditional freedoms to individuals in society. Both freedoms have been rampantly abused by citizens to enact violence – both through verbal abuse and gun violence. As a result, over half of Americans feel like they are in imminent danger at least once a day, according to a 2022 survey published on Newsweek. Even when they are at home, 42% of respondents reported feeling unsafe when they are alone. A Pew Research Center survey of U.S. adults in 2020 found that 41% of Americans have personally experienced some form of online harassment. While the overall prevalence of this type of abuse is the same as it was in 2017, growing shares of Americans report experiencing more severe forms of harassment, which encompasses physical threats, stalking, sexual harassment, and sustained harassment. These statistics indicate the severe extent to which individual security is compromised when freedom is prioritised.	Under the guise of protecting society's security and stability, governments may in fact seek to cement their power by enforcing unnecessarily restrictive measures that infringe upon the people's basic rights and even their safety. In such cases, it is more important to prioritise individual freedoms. Example: The Uighur Muslims and Rohingyas have been routinely discriminated against, facing outright deprivation of human rights by the Chinese and Burmese governments respectively. Both governments have justified these abuses as being strictly necessary to maintain the country's security, portraying the Uighurs and Rohingyas as terrorists or terrorist sympathisers who threaten the stability and safety of the nation. With such justification, the international community is rendered powerless, unable to take concrete action about the widespread abuse of human rights in the Xinjiang internment camps where over a million Uighur Muslims have been detained and 're-educated'.
Related recent examples	
• https://www.cfr.org/background/china-xinjiang-uyghurs-muslims-repression-genocide-human-rights • https://www.bu.edu/sph/news/articles/2023/again-and-again-mass-shootings-continue-unabated-in-the-united-states/	

Markers' Comments

- Students did not understand security or freedom well. For some strange reason, many scripts focused solely on security online or on social media.
- Some weaker students only elaborated on one aspect but not the other. For instance, they would talk about the challenges of having freedom of speech, but then simply state that security is therefore needed, without really unpacking what security meant in that context.
- Some students offered issues or problems where freedom and security could not be applied equally. For instance, students might talk about freedom of independent thinking, but it would be unclear how security could even be applied in that context.
- Stronger students were able to make consistent and clear comparisons in every paragraph, with some scripts offering insightful analyses of how, contrary to the question assumption, security and freedom need not be mutually exclusive

Question 8

8. 'People today are incapable of independent thought.' To what extent is this true of your society?

Question Analysis

Issue:

The ability of Singaporeans to think for themselves.

Context:

Singapore in modern times.

Conceptual Understanding:

For all our education, we seem to lack in the department of thinking for ourselves. Are there modern trends in Singapore that have contributed to this intellectual complacency?

Key words:

- People – self-explanatory
- Today- today's world (scripts should use contemporary examples and make reference to modern trends/developments)
- Incapable -unable to do something
- Independent thought- exhibiting critical/original thinking as opposed to being a passive—worse still, manipulated—recipient of ideas. Creative/innovative thought also counts as independent, since it necessarily involves departing from the standard way of thinking.

Significant aspects/areas to be discussed (5W1H, Multiple Perspectives, Significant Trends, SPECTRAM):

Candidates have to address all the key words stated above. The main POC to be addressed is that there are certain modern trends in Singapore that are reducing ordinary people's ability to think for themselves.

Possible Stands

It is largely true that people in Singapore today are incapable of independent thought

It is not very true that people in Singapore today are incapable of independent thought

Reasons why It is largely true that people in Singapore today are incapable of independent thought

- TS1: The high level of trust enjoyed by the Singapore government means that our society's instinctive reaction to the threat of misinformation has been to defer to the authorities as the arbiters of truth, resulting in ordinary people outsourcing much of their reasoning and critical thinking to government officials and experts.

- e.g. Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, a substantial portion of the Singaporean population heavily relied on information and guidelines disseminated by government agencies, notably the Ministry of Health (MOH). The government's daily briefings and updates regarding the pandemic enjoyed widespread viewership and trust among citizens. Notably, during the initial stages of the pandemic, many Singaporeans adhered diligently to the government's counterintuitive advice that mask-wearing was unnecessary—a directive later revealed to be a strategy aimed at ensuring an adequate mask supply for frontline health workers. This trend of deferring to government-endorsed sources for information underscores a concerning reliance on

Reasons why It is not very true that people in Singapore today are incapable of independent thought

- TS1: As the threat of misinformation grows, the government has started to emphasise developing critical thinking, which is a key component of independent thought.

- e.g. The Singapore Ministry of Education (MOE) has implemented critical thinking programs within the education system, including initiatives like the Better Internet Campaign, which are designed to cultivate students' abilities to distinguish credible information from misinformation, and encompass a range of lessons and activities that instruct students in source evaluation, fact-checking, and critical thinking skills—all crucial elements of independent thinking. In addition to educational efforts, the government has launched public awareness campaigns such as the National Library Board's (NLB) S.U.R.E program, which aim to raise awareness about the significance of critical thinking in the digital era. They offer practical guidance and tips for assessing information reliability, identifying potential biases, and avoiding the pitfalls of misinformation.

official guidance, oftentimes at the expense of individual critical thinking and common sense. Source: https://www.theonlinecitizen.com/2020/01/31/singapore-government-no-need-to-wear-mask-if-you-are-well/	Source: https://sure.nlb.gov.sg/about-us/sure-campaign/
- TS2: The advent of social media in Singapore has acted as a deterrent to the emergence of original thought, as it propagates meme culture and standardized communication formats, consequently predisposing individuals towards regurgitating established concepts instead of fostering independent ideation. - e.g. The prevalence of YouTube channels like NOC (Night Owl Cinematics) and Ryan Sylvia in Singapore, which actively engage in creating content aligned with popular trends and challenges on social media, exemplifies how the rise of social media has discouraged original thought. Instead of fostering independent ideation, these channels often capitalize on existing trends, such as viral challenges and meme culture, thereby perpetuating established concepts to attract a broader audience. NOC has gained significant popularity by creating videos that tap into trending challenges, such as viral food challenges, internet challenges like "Try Not to Laugh," and popular trends on social media platforms, while Ryan Tan and Sylvia Chan produced content related to viral challenges like the "In My Feelings" dance challenge and parodies of trending songs and music videos, closely aligning their content with what was currently popular on social media.	- TS2: Especially in Singapore, where there has not always been the greatest freedom of information, the internet's proliferation of information in recent decades has led to greater exposure to diverse narratives and perspectives, liberating individuals from ideological constraints and enabling them to form a broader spectrum of personalized viewpoints across various subjects. - e.g. One notable example of this phenomenon is the rise of independent news websites and blogs such as New Naratif and The Independent Singapore. These platforms have provided an alternative source of news and analysis, allowing Singaporeans to access a wider range of perspectives beyond traditional media channels. As a result, individuals have gained more freedom to explore and form nuanced viewpoints on various subjects, from politics to social issues, and escaping the overwhelmingly pro-government bias that infects the state-controlled mainstream news media. Social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram have facilitated open discussions and the sharing of opinions among Singaporeans. This connectivity has allowed people from diverse backgrounds and with varying ideologies to interact, contributing to a more pluralistic landscape of perspectives, and in particular facilitating interactions with western liberal ideas. This shift towards a more diverse range of viewpoints may, in part, explain the emergence of increasingly socially liberal attitudes—especially those pertaining to LGBTQ+ issues—that diverge from the traditionally conservative Singapore mindset.
Related recent examples	
- Singapore Government: No need to wear mask if you are well: https://www.theonlinecitizen.com/2020/01/31/singapore-government-no-need-to-wear-mask-if-you-are-well/ - About the SURE campaign: https://sure.nlb.gov.sg/about-us/sure-campaign/	
Markers' Comments	
Weaker students had problems juggling two contexts simultaneously in every body paragraph (i.e.: today's world + SG characteristics). Those students would focus on one, to the exclusion of the other.	