



**VICTORIA JUNIOR COLLEGE
JC2 PRELIMINARY EXAMINATION 2025
HIGHER 1**

GENERAL PAPER

8881/01

Paper 1

1 hour 30 minutes

READ THESE INSTRUCTIONS FIRST

An answer booklet will be provided with this question paper. You should follow the instructions on the front cover of the answer booklet. If you need additional paper, ask the invigilator for a continuation booklet.

Write in dark blue or black pen.
Do not use staples, paper clips, glue or correction fluid.

Answer **one** question.
Note that up to **20** marks out of **50** will be awarded for your use of language.

All questions in this paper carry equal marks.

Answer **one** question

Answers should be between 500 to 800 words in length.

- 1 To what extent can an environmentally sustainable lifestyle be achieved in your society?
- 2 Do global challenges unite more than they divide?
- 3 'Fads are of no concern since most are so short-lived.' Do you agree?
- 4 Do schools still have a future in a technologically advanced world?
- 5 'Diplomacy matters more than military strength in today's world.' Discuss.
- 6 How important are the Arts in shaping national identity in your society?
- 7 Assess the view that the media should never withhold information from the public.
- 8 Is fear really a bad thing?

VJC 2025 JC2
GP Preliminary Examination
Paper 1 Answer Guide

Q1: To what extent can an environmentally sustainable lifestyle be achieved in your society?

Requirements:

Students should discuss the feasibility of living an environmentally sustainable lifestyle in Singapore, taking into account the various schemes, programmes and policies available from the government as well as NGOs and the private sector. In doing so, students should take into account and address the perceptions and motivations of the various stakeholder groups towards an environmentally sustainable lifestyle. Students can also consider a variety of characteristics of Singapore society to assess the extent of feasibility.

Keywords:

- **Environmentally sustainable lifestyle:** ways of living, social behaviours and choices, that minimise environmental degradation (e.g. use of natural resources, CO2 emissions, waste and pollution)
- **Your society:** taken to be Singapore unless otherwise identified – affluent, well-informed, technologically advanced, lacking natural resources, etc.
- **Can...be achieved:** feasibility, possibility of the goal being accomplished

Conceptual Understanding:

- **Time/Trend:** Students can consider the national and global trends regarding environmental sustainability (e.g. government campaigns, news coverage, consumer trends) and how much impact these have had on Singapore society. Students may also consider the current environmental state of the country and how it may act as an impetus to living in an environmentally sustainable manner.
- **Impacts/Implications:** Students can consider the effectiveness of efforts undertaken by various stakeholders to promote and sustain an environmentally sustainable lifestyle across different domains (economic, social, political, technological, etc.). Students can also consider the implications arising from living environmentally sustainable lifestyles and their desirability and feasibility.
- **Purposes/Perspectives:** Students can consider different perspectives of the various stakeholders in Singapore society (public, government, firms, NGOs) and how they view their efforts in achieving environmental sustainability, as well as why they undertake efforts to do so.

Possible approach:

Achieving an environmentally sustainable lifestyle is largely a struggle for Singapore. Despite continued efforts by individuals and the government, the prevailing attitude towards such a lifestyle is still not sufficiently supported by meaningful actions.

Arguments	Explanation / Examples
Opposing Argument <u>Changing attitudes</u> towards recognising the importance of environmental sustainability leads to a commitment to such a lifestyle.	There is greater awareness and education arising from improved access to information as Singapore has high internet connectivity, exposing Singaporeans to such issues. [T] This awareness thus leads to an increased motivation to live in a more environmentally sustainable manner. [I] Examples: ● Of over 1,000 Singaporeans polled by global strategic communications, advocacy and research group SEC Newgate, 75% have heard of the term “ESG”, higher than the global average of 53%, while 65% of Singaporeans surveyed have heard of the term “net zero”, compared to the global average of 54%. ● The National Youth Council’s sentiment polls in 2023 found that close to half of youths (45%) reported being supportive of sustainability initiatives regardless of potential

	inconvenience it creates in their daily lives. It also found that two in five youths agreed that Singapore should prioritise environmental sustainability even if it leads to slower economic growth.
Rebuttal Despite high levels of environmental awareness, <u>actual adoption</u> of sustainable behaviours among individuals and businesses <u>remains limited</u>.	Although there have been numerous efforts to educate the public and businesses about the need to live in a more environmentally sustainable manner, behaviours do not reflect an acceptance of such messages. Reasons for the difficulty in changing public behaviour include the inconvenience or higher costs of doing so. [I] Examples: • The household recycling rate in 2024 fell to a record low of 11 per cent, down from the previous low of 12 per cent in 2023 and 2022. This comes despite initiatives to encourage more household recycling, such as the distribution of recycling boxes to all homes in 2023. Contamination also remains a major challenge for domestic recycling in Singapore. • For firms, more paper and cardboard were thrown away because the business incentives for recycling these materials have weakened. Senior Minister of State for Sustainability and the Environment Janil Puthucheariy cited higher collection costs due to manpower shortage and rising transport costs, higher freightage cost and fluctuating offtake prices.
Opposing Argument There is a <u>strong government focus</u> on promoting and achieving environmental sustainability.	There is strong support for green options as the government is making the push to green technologies and green alternatives in a bid to reduce carbon emissions and achieve net-zero status. [P] This makes living in an environmentally sustainable manner an achievable goal. Examples: • Green Plan 2030 – Eco Stewardship Programme to enhance environmental education in schools; Planting 1 million trees by 2030; Enterprise Sustainability Programme to help local enterprises adopt sustainability practices. • Commitment to global emissions pledge by ratifying the 2016 Paris Agreement; national climate target to achieve net zero emissions by 2050. • Under the Enhanced Climate Friendly Households Programme, every Singaporean household receives \$400 in Climate Vouchers which can be used to purchase energy- and water-efficient appliances.
Rebuttal Even though the government has played its part in leading sustainability efforts, <u>it requires a whole of society effort</u> to make the change.	Singaporeans are generally passive as they are used to a top-down manner of governance. As such they are happy to stick to the status quo and do not initiate lifestyle changes even if it may be better for the environment. There is a heavy reliance on institutional leadership which hinders personal accountability in environmental sustainability. [P] Example: • Kantar Public Study – 83% of respondents expressed willingness to accept stricter environmental regulations yet many still perceive individual action as less impactful.

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Q2: Do global challenges unite more than they divide? Requirements: Students should assess how far global challenges unite nations and communities through cooperation, and how far they create tension, conflict, and division. This involves presenting a balanced discussion of both unifying and divisive effects, taking into account the type and severity of the challenge as well as the broader context. Students should also analyse whether, over the long term, unity or division is more likely to prevail. Keywords: • Global challenges: Issues that cross national borders, affecting multiple countries and requiring collective responses (e.g. pandemics, climate change, cybercrime, terrorism, refugee crises). • Unite: Bring together in cooperation, shared purpose, or mutual support. • Divide: Create disagreement, competition, mistrust, or conflict between groups or nations. Conceptual Understanding: • Time/Trend: In today's world, globalisation and rapid advances in technology have made challenges more visible and more urgent than ever before. Because economies and communication networks are deeply interconnected, crises can spread quickly across borders, affecting countries far beyond their origins. While many of these challenges require coordinated international responses, they can also sometimes fuel nationalist sentiments, as countries prioritise their own interests over global cooperation. • Impacts/Implications: The impacts of global challenges are both positive and negative. On the positive side, it has enabled shared research efforts, the formation of treaties, and increased humanitarian cooperation across nations. However, it also leads to competition over limited resources, blame-shifting between countries, and tendencies toward protectionism. The nature of these impacts often depends on the specific challenge: for instance, pandemics typically demand immediate, joint action, while issues like climate change involve long-term disputes and negotiations. • Purposes/Perspectives: Different groups view global challenges through their own lenses. Governments often struggle to balance protecting their national sovereignty with the need to cooperate internationally. Non-governmental organisations (NGOs) tend to advocate for humanitarian and cross-border solutions. Businesses prioritise stability and open trade to maintain economic growth and maximise profits. Meanwhile, citizens' opinions can vary widely, often influenced by how fair they perceive the situation to be and whether they believe they benefit from global cooperation or not. Possible approach: While global challenges sometimes lead to bursts of cooperation, such unity is often short-lived and overshadowed by deeper divisions. Scarcity of resources, political blame, and competing national interests tend to dominate, making sustained collaboration difficult. In most cases, crises expose inequalities across countries and reinforce national self-interest more than they build lasting solidarity.	
Arguments Opposing Argument Global challenges can bring nations and communities together by creating a <u>shared sense of urgency</u> that encourages cooperation, resource-sharing, and collective problem-solving.	Explanation / Examples Common threats can push countries to set aside differences, collaborate on solutions, and work towards shared goals. Short-term unity is often visible during the immediate stages of a crisis, especially when cooperation is necessary for survival. [T] Examples: • The Paris Agreement in 2015 brought together 196 parties — including developed and developing nations with very different political systems — to commit to emission reductions and adaptation strategies. This demonstrated a willingness to acknowledge shared responsibility for climate change.

	The COVAX initiative, led by the World Health Organisation (WHO), Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunization (Gavi), and Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations (CEPI), was established to pool funding and resources for equitable vaccine distribution during Covid-19, with more than 190 participating economies.
Supporting Argument Global challenges frequently intensify <u>competition for limited resources</u>, with <u>nations prioritising their own populations over global needs</u>, thereby fuelling nationalism and undermining collective solutions.	Crises frequently intensify competition rather than foster cooperation. When resources such as vaccines, energy, or food supplies become scarce, nations often turn inward to protect their own populations. [I/P] Examples: - During Covid-19, “vaccine nationalism” emerged as a defining feature of the pandemic. Countries like Canada and the UK pre-ordered doses far exceeding their populations’ needs, leaving low-income nations with delayed or insufficient access. This widened the global immunity gap and prolonged the pandemic. - Climate finance negotiations have been mired in disputes for over a decade, with developed nations repeatedly failing to meet their pledge of US\$100 billion annually to help poorer countries adapt to climate change, favouring instead domestic economic growth goals. This persistent shortfall fuels resentment and mistrust in international climate diplomacy.
Supporting Argument Rather than fostering cooperation, <u>global crises are often politicised</u>, with governments using them to deflect responsibility or criticise rivals, eroding trust and hindering coordinated responses.	Such blame-shifting not only damages diplomatic relationships but also diverts attention from coordinated solutions. [P] Examples: - The Covid-19 origins dispute escalated into a diplomatic battle between the US and China, with both sides accusing each other of misinformation and lack of transparency. This politicisation hindered WHO investigations and delayed scientific cooperation. - During the 2008 global financial crisis, some countries imposed trade barriers and accused external actors of causing the downturn, leading to tit-for-tat measures that slowed economic recovery.
Supporting Argument Even when challenges are global in nature, <u>long-standing geopolitical rivalries and strategic competition</u> often prevent meaningful collaboration, as national security and political influence take precedence over shared problem-solving.	National security considerations, political influence, national pride and economic advantage frequently take precedence over collective problem-solving. [P] Examples: - The Russia–Ukraine war worsened global food and energy shortages, yet sanctions, counter-sanctions, and diplomatic boycotts dominated the global response. Both sides are not committing to lasting peace as neither is willing to accede to the terms of a truce seeing that move as a loss of national sovereignty. - In cybersecurity, major powers like the US, China, and Russia often withhold threat intelligence from one another, fearing that transparency would compromise national security. This secrecy persists even when coordinated action could prevent large-scale cyberattacks.

Q3: 'Fads are of no concern since most are so short-lived.' Do you agree? Requirements: Students should acknowledge the commonly held perspective that fads make little impact on society or do not warrant attention as they are fleeting. Students should consider the impact and significance of fads on various aspects of life and agree or disagree with the absolute statement. Students may also consider the view that fads may not be as fleeting as often thought and that they can have significant impact on society Keywords: ● Fad: a style, activity, or interest that is very popular for a short period of time. These are often in culture, fashion, technology, or the media ● Of concern: in a neutral sense, something that is important or worthy of attention; or in a negative sense, something that might cause worry ● Short-lived: There should be an awareness of the difference between fads that fade quickly and long-term trends or cultural shifts Conceptual Understanding: ● Time/Trends: beyond citing examples of fads, consider the factors that have allowed fads to rise and fall quickly – the pervasiveness of social media and its influence on the virality of fads, people's attention spans, cultural homogenisation; the pace of production today and businesses' responsiveness that can feed and fuel fads; the speed of regulation and extensiveness of oversight that affects how well authorities respond to dangerous fads. ● Impact/Implications: consider the impact of fads on various facets of society – culture, economies and businesses, the environment, societal norms or concerns, health. ● Perspectives/Purpose: consider the impact of fads on various age groups and whether age is a factor in determining the extent of impact of a fad. Consider whether the purpose or cause behind a fad affects its longevity and impact. Also consider the views of firms and the government as to whether fads are of concern to them (or not). Possible approach: While many fads fade with little consequence, some have effects that last beyond their brief popularity, for better or worse. Their compressed lifecycle is precisely what makes them potent. To dismiss fads as "of no concern" because they are short-lived is to ignore the reality of our hyper-connected world.	
Arguments Opposing Argument Most fads <u>disappear quickly without lasting impact</u>, whether economically or culturally.	Explanation / Examples Many fads are so fleeting that they have no enduring effect on culture or society. They may dominate attention for a few weeks or months, but once people lose interest, little remains to suggest they ever mattered. [T] Examples: ● The ALS Ice Bucket Challenge, popular in 2014, raised some money and awareness about ALS, but for most it was simply a temporary craze with no lasting personal engagement and soon enough people were no longer posting any more challenge videos, much less contributing to research into curing the illness ● The "15 minutes of fame" cycle is now much shorter than before due to algorithm-driven content. Many viral dance crazes like the Harlem Shake, Gangnam style or the Wednesday dance fad on TikTok were popular for a few weeks when new music videos or movies were released but were quickly replaced by new dance fads once new media was released.

Supporting Argument Some fads, though temporary in their peak, create <u>ripple effects that permanently alter industries or cultural practices</u>. Some fads evolve into lasting trends or industries.	Fads often serve as testing grounds for new forms of entertainment or style, and their popularity demonstrates pathways for future innovation that are eventually adopted into trends or industry norms. [I/P] Examples: • While individual TikTok dance fads come and go, their popularity and effectiveness at garnering views have transformed how the music industry markets new artists and songs. Songs are increasingly written or marketed around a catchy 15–30 second snippet that can be used for a TikTok dance or trend to gain attention for the full song. Doja Cat’s “Say So” exploded after TikTok creator Haley Sharpe choreographed a simple dance to it. Instead of only using radio or streaming playlists, record labels now pay or partner with TikTok influencers to choreograph dances or create trends around new releases, like in the case of influencer Keara Wilson choreographing a dance to Megan Thee Stallion’s “Savage” which eventually reached the top of the Billboard Hot 100. Labels now regularly seed songs to creators with large followings to replicate this effect. • Bell-bottom jeans were initially dismissed as a 1970s youth fad linked to hippie counterculture and disco fashion. At the time, many critics assumed they would vanish quickly. Yet their popularity grew mainstream, embraced by celebrities like Cher and John Travolta. Far from disappearing, they resurfaced in the 1990s as flared jeans, in the 2000s as boot-cut jeans, and again in the 2020s as part of the Y2K revival trend on TikTok. Over five decades, what began as a fad has become a recurring influence in fashion cycles, proving that some fads can leave a long-term legacy.
Supporting Argument While fads are short-lived, for that moment in time they have intense and widespread reach, which make them worthy of attention.	Unlike older trends that spread gradually through local communities, today’s fads can instantly go global through social media. Their reach across cultures and continents means they don’t just influence a small group — they can alter consumer habits, shape global conversations, and even blur cultural boundaries. Even if short-lived, their sheer scale of participation and visibility gives them influence over individuals and society. [I/T] Examples: • Gangnam Style was the first YouTube video to reach 1 billion views, showing how a dance fad from South Korea could capture worldwide attention almost overnight. The craze boosted K-pop’s global presence, paving the way for later groups like BTS and BLACKPINK to reach international stardom and making the world more open to Korean media in the form of K-dramas and the recent Netflix hit, K-pop Demon Hunters. Though the dance itself faded, the impact was long-term and widespread: it proved that non-English media could dominate global pop culture. • As a fitness fad, the rise of athleisure exploded into a global dominant dress code that challenged social norms around what was considered appropriate attire in many settings, championed by brands like Lululemon and influencers on Instagram. This fad blurred the lines between casualwear, workout gear, and professional attire. It shifted entire fashion

	industry strategies where companies scrambled to include an athleisure range in their offerings.
Supporting Argument Fads can have <u>dangerous consequences</u> despite being short-lived.	Not all fads are harmless fun; some encourage risky, wasteful, or damaging behaviour. These consequences often persist long after the fad ends, showing that short-lived popularity does not always mean short-lived effects. [I] Examples: - Companies like Shein and Temu can now mass-produce micro-trends due to improved production speeds and capacity, exacerbating environmental waste. When such fads arise and inevitably fade, these companies are left with tonnes of products that end up as textile waste. The rise and fall of various trending drink receptacles, whether it be Hydro Flasks, Owala bottles or Stanley cups, have led to overconsumption and overproduction of these trendy items, resulting in great amounts of waste when they are discarded in favour of the next trendy item. - NFTs became a mainstream topic, with celebrities and major brands launching their own projects, and stories of massive sales dominating news cycles. While the craze drew in billions of dollars in investment, when the market crashed, it resulted in catastrophic financial losses for many speculators. - Dangerous Internet challenges like the Tide Pod challenge popular in 2018 spread like wildfire primarily on platforms like YouTube and TikTok, reaching a vast, young, and impressionable audience. The short-lived nature of the trend did not make it "of no concern." During its brief peak, U.S. poison control centres reported over 100 intentional exposure cases in just the first month of 2018. The potential for severe poisoning, long-term health damage, or even death was very real. The fad required an urgent public health response from authorities and platforms, proving that even fleeting trends can have immediate and severe physical consequences.

Q4: Do schools still have a future in a technologically advanced world?	
<u>Requirements:</u> Students should examine whether traditional schools (as physical institutions with structured curricula, teachers, and peer interaction) will remain relevant and necessary in a future where technology such as AI, VR/AR, and online platforms can deliver personalised, flexible, and interactive learning experiences. The question demands an evaluation of the continuing role of schools versus technologically enabled alternatives, weighing educational, social, economic, and cultural functions. Students should not merely be listing all of the functions of a physical school, but should discuss why these functions are still better played by schools than technology (e.g. needs in-person attendance, a mature adult for pastoral care, socio-emotional development). Students who largely discuss the functions of schools in general with less or no links to a 'technologically-advanced world' may fall into band 3. <u>Keywords:</u> - Schools: Formal, structured institutions for education, usually involving face-to-face teaching, a set curriculum, and social interaction among peers. - Still have a future: <u>Continued</u> existence, relevance, and effectiveness over time in meeting the needs of society.	

- Technologically advanced world: A society where digital tools (AI tutors, VR classrooms, adaptive learning platforms, online assessments, etc.) are pervasive and sophisticated enough to replace traditional schooling.

Conceptual Understanding:

- **Trends/Time:** Education has shifted from basic online resources (*Khan Academy, Coursera*) to adaptive AI tutors (*ChatGPT, Squirrel AI*). Covid-19 sped up remote learning worldwide, showing both the potential and limits of tech-based education. EdTech now includes AI that tracks progress in real time, VR/AR for immersive learning, and blockchain for secure records.
- **Impacts/Implications:** Benefits include wider access to knowledge, personalised pacing, global classrooms, and reduced geographical barriers. Downsides are loss of socialisation, technology access gaps, and erosion of shared cultural experiences. Impacts may differ: developing countries still rely on physical schools for infrastructure and community, while advanced economies can explore hybrid or virtual models.
- **Perspectives/Purposes:** Students need both personalised learning and social-emotional growth. Parents may worry about discipline, moral education, and screen overuse. Governments could see schools as tools for nation-building and equitable access. Employers value soft skills like teamwork and adaptability, often best learned face-to-face.

Possible approach:

While technology will increasingly shape how education is delivered, schools will still have a future as crucial spaces for socialisation, holistic development, and equitable access to learning. However, their form and function could evolve into hybrid learning hubs rather than disappearing entirely.

Arguments	Explanation / Examples
Opposing Argument Advanced technology could <u>replace traditional schools entirely</u>, making them obsolete.	Adaptive AI platforms can already analyse student weaknesses, design customised learning plans, and give instant feedback — something a single teacher with 40 students may struggle to achieve. Virtual classrooms can connect students with global peers and top educators, removing geographical limitations. [I/T] Example: • In China, Squirrel AI has created AI tutors that can predict knowledge gaps and customise lessons for each student, claiming better results than traditional classes.
Rebuttal Despite the prevalence of technology, the role played by teachers in <u>providing the human connection</u> cannot be ignored.	While technology, particularly Artificial Intelligence (AI), has advanced rapidly and can handle tasks such as grading, data analysis, and even generating explanations, teachers remain irreplaceable because they provide human judgment, empathy, and moral guidance that AI cannot replicate. In an increasingly technological world, these uniquely human qualities are essential for education to remain meaningful. Example: • In Singapore, when students face stress during high-stakes examinations such as the GCE O-Levels or A-Levels, AI might detect patterns of burnout but cannot comfort, encourage, or inspire resilience. Teachers, however, can notice subtle non-verbal cues - such as a student's withdrawn behaviour - and offer personal support, reassurance, and motivation. This human connection fosters not just academic success but also emotional well-being, something AI cannot authentically provide. • AI excels at providing information, but it struggles to guide students through ethical dilemmas or value-based debates. For instance, in General Paper lessons, teachers encourage

	students to think critically about issues such as privacy versus security in AI surveillance. They encourage open discussions, challenge assumptions, and model respectful disagreement. AI may present arguments on both sides, but only teachers can facilitate the growth of judgment, empathy, and civic responsibility which are skills essential for navigating complex societal issues.
Supporting Argument Education is not solely about content delivery. Schools are still essential for <u>social development and character building</u>, which technology cannot fully replicate.	Beyond academics, schools are places where students learn teamwork, empathy, conflict resolution, and leadership through daily interactions and co-curricular activities. In addition, physical presence fosters a sense of community and belonging, which online forums struggle to sustain over the long term. [P] Examples: • In Singapore, school programmes like Values in Action (VIA) and CCAs (e.g., sports, debate clubs) deliberately develop character, resilience, and collaboration — skills less easily cultivated in a purely online format. • A 2023 UNESCO report noted that remote learning during the pandemic led to increased feelings of isolation, reduced peer relationships, and worsened mental health for students worldwide.
Supporting Argument Schools are vital for developing a <u>shared cultural identity and civic values</u>.	Governments still use schooling to transmit values, shared history, and national identity — which may be diluted in decentralised, purely online systems with fragmented curricula. Physical schools allow ceremonies, assemblies, and national events to be part of the educational experience. These are in addition to consistent and continuous reinforcement of shared values through deliberate curriculum design. [P] In today's tech-driven world, however, students are constantly exposed to diverse, and sometimes conflicting, influences from social media, online communities, and global content platforms. Without the anchoring role of schools and teachers, young people may struggle to distinguish credible sources from misinformation or to reconcile globalised perspectives with local cultural identities. [I] Thus, schools serve not only as sites of knowledge acquisition, but as crucial stabilisers that safeguard national values in an era of rapid digital transformation. Examples: • Singapore's National Education (NE) lessons and commemorations (e.g., Racial Harmony Day) are conducted school-wide, fostering unity and shared memory. • In Japan, school rituals such as daily greetings, cleaning classrooms, and collective sports festivals instil discipline and community spirit from young.
Supporting Argument Schools also ensure <u>equitable access to good quality education</u>.	Not every student will have equal access to technology at home. Schools help bridge the digital divide by ensuring that all children, regardless of background, get access to resources, devices and learning support. In this way, schools maintain their social role in promoting equity and opportunity. Examples:

	• Singapore's Ministry of Education provides students with digital access through schemes like the <i>Personalised Digital Learning Programme (PDLP)</i>, which equips every secondary school student with a personal learning device. This ensures that students from lower-income families are not left behind when lessons move online or incorporate digital tools. • On the other hand, when schools closed during the pandemic in countries like Philippines and China, many students living in rural areas lacked devices and internet access. While public schools rolled out online classes, rural children still struggled as some households only had one smartphone and poor connectivity in mountainous regions made online classes almost impossible. This shows how schools continue to play a crucial equalising role, instead of digital learning opportunities only being limited to urban and wealthier families.
Supporting Argument Hybrid models will <u>redefine, not eliminate</u> , the role of schools.	The future of schools is likely to blend face-to-face and digital learning, using technology to enhance, not replace, in-person experiences. [T] Schools could shift from being primarily sites of content delivery to becoming hubs for mentorship, collaborative projects, and experiential learning. [P] Examples: • Finland's education system integrates digital tools into lessons while maintaining strong emphasis on small-group collaboration and teacher guidance. • Singapore's Student Learning Space (SLS) allows teachers to assign interactive online materials, freeing classroom time for discussion, problem-solving, and group work.

Q5: 'Diplomacy matters more than military strength in today's world.' Discuss.	
Requirements: Students are expected to compare the relative significance of diplomacy and military strength in securing national interests, influence, and stability in the 21st century. They should analyse contexts where each tool is more effective, explore how they interact, and evaluate whether diplomacy truly outweighs military strength in today's interconnected, multipolar world. A <u>comparative approach</u> should be maintained throughout the essay, rather than treating the two separately.	
Keywords: • Diplomacy: The practice of managing international relations through negotiation, dialogue, and peaceful engagement between states or other actors. • Military strength: The capacity of a state to use armed forces, technology, and strategic capability to defend itself or project power. • Matters more: Carries greater weight or impact in achieving objectives such as security, influence, and stability. • Today's world: The contemporary context is characterised by globalisation, multipolar power structures, economic interdependence, and transnational challenges.	
Conceptual Understanding: • Time/Trends: Students can consider the proliferation of the rise of multilateral organisations, multilateral agreements and growing economic interdependence. In this light, even with increased reliance on multilateral diplomacy, regional conflicts show that military strength is still relevant. Technological advancements have also changed the nature of warfare, making hybrid and cyber capabilities part of national strength.	

- **Impacts/Implications:** Students should consider various contexts where diplomacy or military strength is more effective (security, economic policy, environmental issues, and crisis management). Diplomacy can create enduring stability and cooperative frameworks; military power can act as a deterrent or means of last resort. Overreliance on either has drawbacks as diplomacy without deterrence may lack credibility, while military power without diplomacy can lead to costly and unstable outcomes.
- **Perspectives:** Students should consider countries' relative military strength and international standing. They can also consider governments' inclinations towards use of force as a result of their contexts and circumstances - contexts of war, peace, and hybrid threats. Non-state actors and global institutions can be empowered by diplomacy but have little recourse to military force.

Possible approach:

While military strength is crucial for deterrence in high-threat situations, diplomacy plays a more decisive role in addressing today's complex global challenges. Diplomacy offers sustainable, cost-effective solutions through negotiation and cooperation, preventing escalation and enables states to influence global affairs. Credible military power can strengthen diplomatic leverage, but diplomacy remains key to lasting peace and cooperation in today's interconnected world.

Arguments	Explanation / Examples
Opposing Argument Military strength matters more in high-threat scenarios, as <u>it deters aggression and defends sovereignty</u>. It provides a critical backup when diplomacy fails or urgent action is needed to protect national survival.	In situations where a nation's survival, sovereignty, or territorial integrity is at stake, military capability becomes an irreplaceable safeguard. Without credible armed forces, a country risks having its diplomatic positions dismissed or manipulated by more powerful aggressors. [I] Military strength not only deters hostile action but also provides the immediate capacity to defend national interests when diplomacy fails or time is critical. [P] Example: ● For example, Ukraine's defence against Russia's 2022 invasion has relied heavily on its military's ability to resist territorial advances, supported by weaponry and training from NATO allies. Without this capacity, negotiations would likely have been forced on Russia's terms, resulting in significant territorial losses and diminished sovereignty. ● Another case is the complex security environment in the Middle East, where military capabilities play a key role in shaping diplomatic interactions. Countries such as Israel and Iran maintain significant military strength, which influences negotiations, deterrence strategies, and regional power balances. This military dimension ensures that diplomatic efforts are conducted with consideration of the underlying security realities.
Rebuttal While military strength matters more in high-threat situations to provide security, overreliance on it can hinder lasting peace and diplomacy <u>by escalating conflicts and overlooking the root causes that peaceful solutions address</u>.	Military power, though crucial in existential scenarios, often escalates tensions and provokes arms races, which can destabilise regions and complicate diplomatic efforts. The emphasis on force can create an atmosphere of distrust and hostility, making it harder for diplomatic channels to open and for peaceful negotiations to succeed. [I] Example: ● The prolonged conflict in Afghanistan showed that despite nearly two decades of international military involvement, a stable political resolution remained elusive. The persistence of deep-rooted political and social challenges highlighted the limitations of military force in securing lasting peace.

	• For example, the ongoing conflict in eastern Congo between the Congolese army and the M23 rebel group has seen both sides accusing each other of violating peace agreements. Despite military engagements, peace talks have been delayed, highlighting the complexities of achieving stability through force alone. • Similarly, in the Korean Peninsula, decades of military buildup and threats have coexisted with limited diplomatic progress. While military deterrence prevented open war, it also entrenched divisions and delayed meaningful dialogue.
Supporting Argument Diplomacy matters more in preventing conflicts from escalating by <u>fostering dialogue and understanding</u>. This is particularly important in an age of diverse perspectives and interests, where achieving consensus is paramount.	Diplomatic channels play a crucial role in averting war, de-escalating crises, and mobilising alliances to maintain regional and global stability. Contemporary issues now involve multiple parties with competing interests. Through dialogue and negotiation, diplomacy offers peaceful alternatives to military confrontation, reducing the risk of violent conflict and fostering cooperation. [I] Example: • For instance, ASEAN's diplomatic efforts have helped manage the recent border conflict between Cambodia and Thailand. Despite occasional flare-ups over disputed territories near the Preah Vihear temple, quiet diplomacy and mediation by ASEAN member states prevented the tensions from escalating into full-scale armed conflict, maintaining peace in the region. • Another example is the Abraham Accords, signed in 2020, which normalised relations between Israel and several Arab states such as the United Arab Emirates and Bahrain. This landmark agreement was achieved without any military confrontation and represents a significant diplomatic breakthrough that opened avenues for cooperation in the Middle East.
Supporting Argument In today's world, where the rules of engagement have shifted to favour diplomacy, states with limited military strength are no longer disadvantaged. These states can now reliably depend on diplomacy to <u>secure their interests, build alliances, and navigate international relations</u>.	States that lack significant military power often rely heavily on diplomacy, trade agreements, and adherence to international law to safeguard their national interests and ensure security. By leveraging multilateral frameworks and strategic partnerships, these smaller states can punch above their weight on the global stage. [P] Example: • For example, Singapore, despite its small size and limited military capabilities, has effectively used ASEAN's regional frameworks, bilateral free trade agreements (FTAs), and defence partnerships such as the Five Power Defence Arrangements (FPDA) to maintain its security and promote economic prosperity. Through active diplomatic engagement, Singapore secures alliances and access to international markets that bolster its resilience and influence. • For example, countries like Norway and Sweden, despite limited military capabilities, exert significant global influence through their commitment to peace mediation, humanitarian aid, and leadership roles in international organizations. Their soft power enables them to shape diplomatic agendas and mediate conflicts effectively.

	For instance, the World Trade Organization (WTO) allows smaller countries to protect economic interests and resolve disputes through negotiation. The WTO's dispute settlement mechanism has enabled developing nations to challenge unfair trade practices, demonstrating how diplomatic engagement in multilateral forums can lead to equitable outcomes without military force.
Supporting Argument Diplomacy matters more in addressing today's <u>increasingly transnational global challenges</u> . Cooperative action, negotiation, and long-term solutions are far more effective than what military force can achieve.	Global issues such as pandemics, cybercrime, climate change, and international economic instability are complex challenges that cannot be effectively addressed through military action alone. These problems transcend national borders and require collective efforts for coordination, negotiation, and enforcement. Hence, multilateral diplomacy becomes indispensable in bringing countries together to cooperate on shared solutions. [T] Example: - For example, the 2021 Glasgow Climate Pact saw nearly 200 nations committing to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and tackle climate change collaboratively. No military force could have compelled such widespread cooperation; instead, it was sustained diplomatic dialogue and negotiation that led to this global agreement. - Similarly, the equitable distribution of COVID-19 vaccines was achieved through COVAX, an international initiative that relied on diplomatic agreements between countries and global health organizations. Armed intervention played no role in facilitating this vital collaboration, highlighting how diplomacy is essential in managing global health crises. - In 2023, more than 70 countries participated in the Global Forum on Cyber Expertise to enhance cooperation against cybercrime. This diplomatic collaboration is crucial because military force cannot effectively address cyber threats that easily cross-national borders.

Q6: How important are the Arts in shaping national identity in your society?	
Requirements: Students are expected to examine the degree of importance of the Arts in shaping national identity in Singapore. Students can compare the relative importance of the Arts to other factors that might shape national identity. They should not merely list the functions of the Arts in shaping national identity without evaluating their significance. Neither should they list other factors that are important in shaping national identity in their society without weighing them against the arts.	
Keywords: The Arts: The arts refer to pieces of work through which people express or apply creative skill and imagination. These include the performing arts, literature, paintings and sculpture. They do not include entertainment or popular culture. It can also be taken to be work acknowledged by critics as having artistic merit (i.e. judged to have perceived quality or value as works of art) Important...in shaping: how much influence or impact the Arts has in the creation of national identity, or affecting how it grows, develops or evolves over time. National identity: national consciousness in the sense of a people possessing a shared image of the nation as well as the idea that this people identify with and feel a sense of belonging to the nation	
Conceptual Understanding: Time/Trends: consider the changing composition of people that make up Singapore society and how much they resonate with an identity of what Singapore is or means. Consider also the	

changes that might threaten the strength of a national identity or narrative (e.g. migration, cultural homogenisation) and how the Arts might or might not help to strengthen it. Consider any changing trends in the proliferation or accessibility of the Arts that might affect its power to shape national identity in one's society.

- **Impact/Implications:** consider the effectiveness of the Arts vis a vis other factors in shaping national identity.
- **Perspectives/Purpose:** consider distinguishing characteristics of Singapore and how they affect the perceptions and reception of the Arts (e.g. prioritisation of economic imperatives or the effectiveness of) as a tool or strategy to create, maintain or reinforce a national identity. They should consider the perceptions of the Arts among members of the society and the resultant impact of the Arts on national identity. They can also consider how the government intentionally utilises or leverages on the Arts as a means of creating a shared image of what Singapore is.

Possible approach:

While the Arts may not resonate equally with all, thus affecting its ability to impact the masses, it is nevertheless an important tool in shaping national identity due to its accessibility and familiarity to the people.

Arguments	Explanation / Examples
Supporting Argument Part of shaping national identity relies on <u>familiarity and resonance</u> with national narratives. The Arts are a <u>more engaging and relatable way to tell common national stories</u>, as opposed to top-down campaigns.	While National Education curricula and shared universal experiences can be effective in conveying common core narratives, when these are conveyed through the Arts, emotions and connections are made more tangible and resonate more to drive home the intended messages. [I] Examples: ● Activities like National Day or the commemoration of SG60 are collective rituals have lost their impact due to the perception of the message being forced upon the population. These do not resonate as strongly as they did before as there is little or no representation of the perspectives of the common man. ● Conversely, artworks deal with tensions that Singaporeans face in relation to government authority, a concern that resonates more with a more mature population that now looks more critically at government action, but which is simultaneously aware of the benefits of living in a peaceful nation. For example, The Necessary Stage's upcoming play "SG Insecure" grapples with the paradoxes between our individuality, belonging and community – as active citizens under the watchful eyes of the state. In watching such plays that address uniquely Singaporean issues, these plays build empathy and deepen a collective reflection on what it means to be Singaporean. ● Chua Mia Tee's iconic painting "National Language Class" shows two students learning Malay with the chalkboard words, "Siapa nama kamu?" ("What is your name?"). It emotionally conveys the nation's 1950s effort to forge unity through Malay as the national language. While history textbooks can describe this, the painting captures the hopes and anxieties of that moment in a way that words cannot.
Supporting Argument Part of building national identity also includes fostering pride in a nation. The Arts <u>humanise</u> Singapore and <u>build emotional</u>	The Arts add depth and provide a fuller view of Singaporean society's hopes, dreams and struggles in attaining our various achievements. This "humanisation" increases the pride we feel in our ability to persevere and exceed expectations. [I] Examples:

<u>pride in our local talents and local stories.</u>	• Anthony Chen's "Ilo Ilo", a film about a Singaporean family's relationship with their Filipino domestic helper, won the prestigious Camera d'Or at Cannes. His success gave Singaporeans pride because it showed that local, everyday stories could resonate on a global stage and local talent had achieved such a prestigious honour. This kind of recognition appeals to emotions more than GDP rankings. • Many around the world know of Lee Kuan Yew and his trusted group of ministers led Singapore to economic prosperity. Productions such as "The LKY Musical" allow Singaporeans to connect personally and emotionally to such figures, giving citizens pride through identification with them as ordinary people rather than just by virtue of shared citizenship.
Opposing Argument A national identity is strongest when all segments of society subscribe equally to it. Some contend that the Arts can be <u>elitist or limited in reach</u> and hence are less effective and important in shaping national identity.	It is expensive to produce art and mount plays in Singapore, making ticket prices expensive, though many arts practitioners lament that ticket prices often do not cover operating costs. [P] Many also often view online alternatives such as streaming videos on Netflix to be more convenient and content easy to understand, shunning participation in the Arts as it is viewed as too highbrow and esoteric. [T] Example: • While audience numbers at performing arts events have recovered gradually after COVID-19, arts and performing groups hope the new \$100 SG Culture Pass credits that will be disbursed to Singaporeans will entice more audiences to attend performances. Currently, many performances at arts venues like the Esplanade and the Singapore Repertory Theatre tend to attract middle-class audiences.
Rebuttal However, there is increasing effort to launch <u>community-based arts initiatives</u> and to <u>include more communities</u> in creating and enjoying art as a means to foster sense of belonging to the nation.	The Arts are inclusive and participatory, bridging social, ethnic, and generational divides. There is also greater governmental awareness of the importance and value of the Arts in creating physical spaces which can provide contexts for positive interactions and serve as anchors of identity and community bonds. [T/P] Examples: • The People's Association's PAssionArts programme transforms everyday community spaces into vibrant art showcases. Community Art Galleries are set up in accessible locations such as HDB void decks, coffee shops, and marketplaces, allowing residents to display and appreciate art close to home. These galleries feature works from local artists and residents, fostering a sense of ownership and pride in the community's cultural expressions. • The Esplanade, for example, provides year-round performances in the realms of music, dance, theatre and visual arts. Seven in ten shows are free, allowing everyone to enjoy the arts. Its cultural festivals such as Huayi, Pesta Raya and Kalaa Utsavam are timed to coincide with key cultural celebrations—including Chinese New Year, Hari Raya Puasa at the end of the Muslim holy month of Ramadan, and the Hindu "Festival of Lights", Deepavali.

	• Our Gallery at Taman Jurong fosters appreciation in the visual arts through artist-led community participation projects. A total of 15 artworks, co-created by artists and residents, have been installed in various parts of Taman Jurong town since the node's inception in 2014. These co-creations help to enhance the environment and instill a strong sense of community and belonging.
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Q7: Assess the view that the media should never withhold information from the public.

Requirements:

Students should consider the conditions under which the media might choose to withhold certain information from the public and discuss if these conditions are considered reasonable. Students need to take note that this is an absolute proposition ("never") – whether they choose to agree or disagree with the absolute proposition, they need to be careful not to contradict themselves.

Keywords:

- **The media:** The media companies and their employees who manage the content that is presented on the various media platforms. If social media is referred to, "the media" would conventionally refer to the companies rather than the individual users. Even if it is the users producing the content, the companies that own the platforms are the ones that set rules on what is permissible.
- **Withhold information:** Generally, this refers to self-editing or self-censorship of certain information or messages by the media. "Withhold" indicates a deliberate decision by the media to omit some or all of the details of a story, even though there is likely to be public interest in the story. Where the media make an editorial decision to cut content due to time, space or budget constraints, it does not necessarily mean they are withholding information.
- **The public:** refers to readers, ordinary people in society.

Conceptual Understanding:

- **Time/Trends:** Current prominence of social media and citizen journalists who may report on stories that the media withhold; increasing spread of misinformation; increasing scrutiny of the media by the public, especially in societies where the media might have a close relationship with the government; the rising popularity of conspiracy theorists who spread cynicism about actions of the media. There is also a trend of polarised media outlets that students can consider.
- **Impacts/Implications:** The publication of certain details might lead to or worsen tensions in society. Certain vulnerable groups might be adversely affected by what is published. Information published might affect national security.
- **Perspectives/Purpose:** The media's role in keeping the public informed vs trying to minimise harm - who or what is the media trying to protect or advocate in deciding whether to publish certain information? Stakeholders include: the media companies and their investors; advertisers; the government; the public; vulnerable groups such as children; individuals, businesses and other organisations directly involved in the stories.

Possible approach:

In theory, the media have a responsibility to keep the public informed, especially when it involves public interest, and they should be transparent in what they report. However, some information can harm public interest and it would be better for the media not to publish it.

Arguments	Explanation / Examples
Opposing Argument <u>The public has a right to be informed</u> and the media has a responsibility to keep them informed.	Especially in democratic societies, the public needs to be informed so that they can make decisions and hold those in power or who are responsible to account. When an issue affects public interest, such as the integrity of public officials or the use of taxpayers' money, the people have a right to know and to be informed of how these issues are being addressed. Withholding such information, especially if it is to cover up for those in power,

	would betray the public's trust and reliance on the media to be its watchdog. [P] Example: • The release of the Pentagon Papers in 1971 is a landmark case in this issue. The papers detailed the deception of the US government in the Vietnam War but were initially withheld from the public under the guise of national security. Their release by The New York Times and The Washington Post was subsequently ruled constitutional and served the public interest. • In 2018, two journalists in Myanmar exposed a massacre of 10 Rohingya Muslim men by military forces. Their report led to international calls for further investigation into the scale of the bloodshed in Myanmar. The two journalists were subsequently arrested and charged with revealing official secrets, apparently with planted evidence to frame them. This example justifies the need for transparent reporting, especially of a government that might be misusing its power.
Rebuttal Still, it cannot be denied that withholding certain information from the public might be justified if disclosing the information could be <u>harmful to individuals or even national security</u>.	While the media should seek to be as transparent as possible, the publication of some information could compromise national security or the safety of some people. Information such as the movement of armies during wartime or the identities of the people involved in certain types of court cases could bring about severe harm or damages if publicly known. [I] Example: • In 2011, USA planned a high-risk covert operation to enter Pakistan and assassinate Al-Qaeda leader Osama Bin Laden. While several major news agencies, including the New York Times and the Washington Post had already found out about the outcome through their own sources, they agreed to hold the news back before the formal government announcement as public knowledge could have triggered a violent backlash against US interests and personnel around the world. • When Prince Harry was deployed to Afghanistan with the UK forces, details of his deployment were withheld to protect him and the troops with him since he was a high-risk target. • In Singapore, court cases involving children as victims often come with a gag order on the names of all the parties involved to avoid identifying the children to avoid future psychological trauma.
Opposing Argument We also have to concede that, even if some information is shocking or upsetting, there is value in the media publishing it because it might be what is <u>needed for social reform or action</u>.	While an argument can be made for withholding information that society might find uncomfortable to grapple with, it is also undeniable that looking hard truths in the face might be what brings about much needed change. In such situations, the media should not shy away from revealing the truth. [P] Example: • Reports on the sexual abuse within the Catholic Church were undoubtedly a shock and dismay to many. Yet it was something the Catholic Church and its followers needed to address and fix. • Iconic images of the victims of conflicts have been crucial in sparking awareness and calls for action to stop atrocities.

	Many would be familiar with the photo of the Vietnamese girl whose clothes were burned off during a napalm attack. Equally shocking but important was the 2015 photo of the body of three-year-old Syrian refugee, Alan Kurdi, lying on a beach. He had drowned when the boat his family was in capsized as they attempted to flee to Greece.
Rebuttal Sometimes, it is better for the media to withhold certain information because publishing it could be distressing or considered distasteful.	A picture tells a thousand words – images and videos undeniably play an increasingly central role in what the media shares. Sometimes, the media may choose to publish information that is deliberately provocative or sensational, but this can be considered distasteful due to the vulgar intent. In such cases, it might be better for the media to withhold the information instead of publishing it. [I] Examples: • In 2015, Fox News came under fire for showing the full unedited video of terrorist group ISIS executing Jordanian pilot, Moaz al-Kasasbeh. Fox News defended its decision by saying it wanted to let its viewers draw their own conclusions. Most other news networks decided not to show the video due to how brutal and disturbing the content was. • In 2018, influencer Logan Paul drew criticism for publishing a video at Japan's Aokigahara forest, often dubbed "suicide forest". The video showed the body of an apparent suicide victim, which Paul and his friends made jokes about. Youtube took down the video and subsequently cut some business ties with him.
Supporting Argument While it is the job of the media to report on information in a timely manner, responsible journalism requires time for thorough verification.	Publishing rumours, speculation, or unconfirmed reports prematurely can severely damage reputations, spread misinformation, and cause unnecessary fear. Example: • Immediately after two bombs exploded at the Boston Marathon finish line in 2013, reporters and citizens on social media scrambled to identify suspects and understand what happened. Major news agencies like CNN reported on developing but unconfirmed information. Worse, some news outlets and countless social media users misidentified a young man, Sunil Triparthi, as one of the suspects. His family was bombarded by vicious accusations and harassment even though he was not the bomber.

Q8: Is fear really a bad thing?	
<u>Requirements:</u> Students should evaluate whether fear is as bad as people perceive it to be, or whether there may be positive impacts and implications arising out of fear. Students should take note of the word "really" in questioning the common view that society has towards this emotion.	
<u>Keywords:</u> • Fear: The thought that something unpleasant or harmful may happen, or that one is in possible danger. • A bad thing: an undesirable situation that causes negative impacts, harm, pain or unhappiness to oneself.	
<u>Conceptual Understanding:</u>	

- **Time/Trends:** Students may highlight salient characteristics of modern society to assess whether fear always creates problems and harms to individuals and society. Students may also consider whether the impacts of being fearful are long-lasting, and how these impacts may develop over time.
- **Impacts/Implications:** Students may consider the severity of impact on self and society across multiple areas (e.g. economic development, social norms and behaviours, personal development) and levels (self vs. society vs. global).
- **Purpose/Perspective:** Students may consider how different individuals and societies perceive and tackle fear. Students may also consider how younger age groups may deal with fear less successfully, or how fear (in moderate amounts) can serve important purposes, e.g. physiological, psychological, emotional, deterrence etc.

Possible approach:

While fear is generally seen as something to be concerned about because of the possible harms which may befall an individual, upon deeper inspection, it can also be a catalyst or an impetus to confront that which makes one uncomfortable in order to grow. In some cases, fear itself is more harmful than the actual expected negative outcome.

Arguments	Explanation / Examples
Opposing Argument Fear <u>acts as a handicap</u> when one cannot decide on a path of progression.	As there are too many options available, individuals get stuck as they cycle through and imagine all the various possibilities. They fear missing out on a better outcome if they were to settle on one specific choice, causing “analysis paralysis” which prevents one from moving forward. This is especially so when individuals think that they have much to lose. [P] Examples: • According to Baymard Institute UX Research, when online shoppers are faced with too many product filters, shipping options and payment methods cart, abandonment rates exceed 70% as shoppers get stuck overthinking and comparing between delivery speed, payment type, or whether they’re getting the best deal. • The concept of “FOMO” (fear of missing out) arises when there are multiple choices one can make, and each option is equally desirable. In the course of deciding, one may lose out on some of these options as they expire, or one may not even arrive at a decision and just give up.
Opposing Argument Fear may cause individuals to <u>react in a disproportionate manner</u>, causing harm.	As individuals try to exert control over situations which they may not have any real control over they may do so in an excessive manner. This may come about as they overcompensate as a means of trying to feel as if they are in control. [P] Examples: • ‘Kiasuism’ – the fear of losing out – among parents is a big factor in their over-enrolling children in a myriad of enrichment classes in a bid to be as diversely talented as possible. Children are sent to academic and non-academic classes (e.g. football, ballet, piano, drama) in order to maximise their chances of successfully applying to the school of their choice through the Direct School Admissions (DSA) exercise. These children may then experience physical and mental strain or even harbour resentment towards their parents over the intensity of such programmes. • Individuals diagnosed with obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD) are plagued by various fears, driving behaviours

	which attempt to alleviate intense anxiety but end up causing physical harm to them (e.g. excessive handwashing due to fear of germs leading to broken skin)
Supporting Argument Fear may actually be a strong motivator as one <u>seeks to outdo their competition</u>, leading to growth and development.	While fear may seem to hold one back from trying new things, it may conversely serve as a strong motivating factor to change. [P] This is especially pertinent in today's competitive and dynamic environment, in which nothing is for certain other than change. [T] Example: • Singapore as an open economy is continually working to position itself ahead of regional and global rivals. The fear of being left behind or becoming irrelevant weighs heavily on the mind of the government, which continually seeks new ways to maintain Singapore's competitiveness. This was expressed in the 2025 National Day Rally by Prime Minister Lawrence Wong when he said the "[w]e may not be able to match other countries in size or scale. But we will stay ahead in ideas, in innovation, and in our collective will to move forward."
Supporting Argument Fear is actually good for individuals as it <u>pushes them to go beyond their perceived limits</u> when they confront it, leading to personal growth.	Although fear may initially hold individuals back from progress, when they confront their fears, they realise that they are better or stronger than initially perceived. Such personal development is valuable as it develops greater resilience and enhanced self-confidence in individuals. [I] Example: • Tennis player Rafael Nadal faced persistent injuries throughout his career, including chronic knee and wrist problems. Because of long layoffs, returning to top-level competition came with fear of reinjury and losing his ranking. However, he accepted that failure was a normal part of competitive sports and changed his training regime while also focusing on mental resilience. He went on to continue to dominate the sport for many years.
Supporting Argument Fear is a sign of discomfort but at the same time <u>acts as a signal about what needs to be addressed</u>.	While fear is usually perceived as a signal about what to avoid, it can actually spark introspection or discussion about what needs to be addressed in order for progress or growth to occur. [I] Examples: • The notion of race-based conversations in Singapore, while potentially sparking fears about offending ethnic groups, is actually a starting point for Singaporeans to consider how to tactfully and respectfully engage other communities in order to engender greater understanding and harmony. • After her husband's sudden death in 2015, Sheryl Sandberg, COO of Facebook, felt fear and anxiety about speaking publicly about grief, vulnerability, and resilience. Instead of avoiding public discussion, Sandberg noticed that her fear was signalling a gap in public conversation about grief and coping. This led her to write her book, <i>Option B</i>, to address an important social need by turning her personal discomfort into meaningful impact on society.