

P1A5 questions for reference

1. 'Too little attention is paid to environmental conservation today.' Do you agree?
2. 'Singapore is an island paradise meant only for the elites.' Do you agree?
3. To what extent is raising the retirement age a necessary evil in today's society?
4. Should governments be blamed for the ineffectiveness of efforts to conserve the environment?
5. Is singlehood desirable in your society?

Question 1	
'Too little attention is paid to environmental conservation today.' Do you agree? (AJC JC1 MYCT 2014)	
Question Analysis	
<u>Issue:</u> The issue being discussed is the extent to which environmental conservation is being prioritised in today's world.	<u>Context:</u> Today Global
<u>Conceptual Understanding:</u> • Demonstrates an ability to make observations about global/regional/local trends in environmental conservation efforts and critically evaluate the sincerity and effectiveness of these efforts in adequately addressing current environmental challenges. • Demonstrates an ability to analyse the complex relationship between economic, political, and societal priorities and the level of attention paid to environmental conservation. • Demonstrates an ability to consider (and contrast if needed) the roles and responsibilities of governments, corporations, and individuals in promoting or neglecting environmental conservation. • Demonstrates an ability to apply the concept of sustainability across different national and cultural contexts, considering how attention to conservation may vary over time and place.	
<u>Key words:</u> • Too little: Implies insufficiency; requires assessment of what is currently being done and whether that is adequate • Attention: Focus, effort, resources, and action directed towards something e.g. public or media awareness, policy action, corporate behaviour, societal engagement, and resource allocation etc. • Paid to: Suggests both awareness and action • Environmental conservation: The responsible management, protection, and preservation of natural ecosystems, biodiversity, and resources • Today: Focus on the current era – post-industrialisation, post-COVID, climate emergency era, volatile global order	
<u>Significant aspects/areas to be discussed (5W1H, Multiple Perspectives, Significant Trends, SPECTRAM):</u> • 5W1H: Who are the significant players involved in attention paid to environmental conservation today? What are the various forms of attention? What are impacts of too little/adequate attention? What are the pressing environmental needs today that suggests whether the attention is adequate? Why has too little/adequate attention been paid to environmental conservation? • TIRE+C: Critically evaluating the attention paid to environmental conservation using considerations such as timeframe, extent of impacts, root cause analysis • SPECTRAM: Analyse the complex relationship between economic, political, and societal priorities and the level of attention paid to environmental conservation; analyse the various economic, political and societal impacts from the lack of attention paid to environmental conservation	

Possible Stands	
• Agree to large extent that too little attention is paid to environmental conservation today. • Disagree to a large extent that too little attention is paid to environmental conservation today.	
Reasons for why too little attention is paid to environmental conservation today.	Reasons for why sufficient attention is paid to environmental conservation today.
Every year there have been talks but attention is cursory and usually overshadowed by other concerns like economic growth and defence. • Climate Policy Initiative in 2013 reported that global spending to combat climate change fell in recent years and remains far below the level needed to prevent its most dangerous effects. A fund needs to be set up to tackle environmental problems. The financing needed is \$1 trillion a year but governments have only agreed to raise 100 billion by 2020. In contrast global spending on military is about 1.7 trillion annually. • In 2023, India increased its defence budget by 13%, reaching approximately US\$73 billion, ranking third globally after the US and China. In contrast, India's budget for the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change was just US\$372 million, a fraction of the defence allocation. This disparity reflects national priorities where security and economic expansion outweigh environmental spending—even as India faces severe air pollution, water scarcity, and climate vulnerabilities.	Every year the international community turns its focus to environmental conservation as is evidenced from the many international summits, talks focusing on the environment. Examples include • UN Climate Change Conferences: The 2023 COP28 summit in Dubai marked a historic moment where nearly 200 countries agreed to transition away from fossil fuels, a first in UN climate talks. The agreement emphasizes deep and sustained reductions in greenhouse gas emissions to limit global warming below 1.5°C, tripling renewable energy capacity, and substantial reductions in other greenhouse gases like methane by 2030. • UN Bodies Committed to Environmental Sustainability: Numerous UN agencies continue to play pivotal roles in promoting environmental conservation and sustainable development. These include the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), among others. Their efforts encompass a wide range of activities, from policy development to on-the-ground projects aimed at achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). • International Observances and Initiatives: The UN has designated various observances to raise awareness and prompt action on environmental issues. For instance, the International Day for Biological Diversity on 22 May 2024 focused on the theme "Be part of the Plan," encouraging global participation in implementing the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework. Additionally, the UN declared 2024–2033 as the International Decade of Sciences for Sustainable Development, aiming to tackle global challenges like climate change and biodiversity loss through inclusive, interdisciplinary scientific approaches.

	World Environment Day: Celebrated annually on 5 June, World Environment Day continues to be a major platform for environmental outreach. In 2025, the focus will be on ending global plastic pollution, with South Korea hosting the global celebrations. This theme underscores the urgent need to address the environmental impacts of plastic waste.
Scant notice is given to the problems to the environmentally unfriendly production methods and consumption patterns if there are economic gains, for example in the way resources are exploited. - Hydraulic fracturing, or “fracking”, is the process of drilling and pumping chemicals, sand and water into rocks at high pressure to extract oil and gas. This causes environmental problems like releasing greenhouse gases and toxic chemicals which leach from the system to contaminate nearby groundwater, and yet is seen now as the answer to expanding world resources – energy companies, like Chesapeake Energy, have denied the damage fracking is causing and governments close an eye in the bid to secure energy. Britain’s government wants to deny the citizens the rights to grant permission to companies which want to frack directly underneath their property. - China has long valued economic growth above environmental protection and has taken economic growth as the predominate criteria for evaluating local officials’ performances. - Australia continues to mine rare earth metals for economic gains and Malaysia agrees to Lynas processing rare earth metals in its own land despite environmental concerns raised. - Consumption patterns have not changed much as people continue with consumerism and a throw-away society still persists as people look for convenience rather than pay attention to environmental conservation. In both developed and developing countries, plastic consumption remains extremely high, with over 400 million metric tons produced annually—about 50% of which are single-use items like packaging and Styrofoam—contributing to widespread environmental harm	There are more companies and industries that have already incorporated conserving the environment as an important part of their business model and this is slowing gaining momentum. Sustainability is the business buzzword. - Amid rising awareness of the impact businesses can have on the environment, companies of every size and type have begun implementing environmental sustainability initiatives. Many organizations have introduced recycling programmes and made efforts to reduce their carbon emissions as a way to mitigate the adverse effects of their business processes. E.g. eBay Eco-Initiatives, whose business model encourages reselling old items rather than throwing them out, and buying used merchandise rather than making new stuff reduces carbon emissions that go along with production, Starbucks - water-saving solution offer ceramic mugs and a discount to those who brought their own reusable cups. - IKEA has implemented a buy-back program to encourage customers to return used furniture, which is then refurbished and resold, promoting a circular economy. The company aims to use only renewable and recycled materials in its products by 2030, aligning with its sustainability goals.
Too little attention is paid to conserving the environment and as a result, people are still ignorant of the environmental crisis we are facing today.	The attention put on environmental problems by many environmentalists and activists has forced the authorities to increasingly adopt cleaner

• In Indonesia, forests are being rapidly deforested to meet the rising global demand for biomass, chiefly for wood pellet production. Since 2021, most of this biomass has been exported to South Korea and Japan, which have financially supported Indonesia's biomass development. Indonesia's plan to increase domestic biomass use for electricity generation further threatens its forests, with a state-run utility aiming to burn substantial biomass annually. Environmentalists worry that weak regulations and oversight will exacerbate deforestation, endangering biodiversity and climate stability. • In Costa Rica, local communities, particularly in Limón province, are facing severe health issues due to intensive pesticide use on banana and pineapple plantations. These agrochemicals, often sprayed by planes, cause symptoms such as burning eyes, skin irritation, and respiratory problems. Many of these chemicals, including chlorothalonil, mancozeb, and chlorpyrifos, linked to carcinogenic and neurotoxic effects, are banned in Europe but still exported to Costa Rica. Research by the National University of Costa Rica's IRET highlights the impact on thyroid health and fetal development among women exposed to pesticides. • According to the Global E-waste Monitor 2024, a record 62 million tonnes of e-waste was produced in 2022, up 82% from 2010. On track to rise another 32%, to 82 million tonnes, in 2030. Meanwhile, less than one quarter (22.3%) of the year's e-waste mass was documented as having been properly collected and recycled in 2022, leaving US\$62 billion worth of recoverable natural resources unaccounted for and increasing pollution risks to communities worldwide.	sources of energy and more environmentally friendly regulations. • In 2022, the U.S. enacted the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA), allocating an unprecedented \$369 billion for clean energy initiatives through 2032. This investment aims to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 40% below 2005 levels by 2030 and achieve net-zero emissions by 2050. The IRA has already facilitated significant advancements, including over two million families claiming \$2 billion for home improvements and over a million families claiming \$6 billion for clean energy investments. Additionally, a tax credit for electric vehicles introduced in January led to the purchase of over 150,000 EVs by June, saving consumers over \$1 billion • China, the world's largest CO₂ emitter, has made notable strides in renewable energy deployment. In 2024, the country installed over 373 GW of renewable energy capacity, reaching a total of 1,878 GW. This rapid expansion has contributed to a 1% decline in greenhouse gas emissions over the past year, despite continued economic growth. However, challenges remain, as 2023 marked the first year in a decade that China's national average PM2.5 levels increased, highlighting the ongoing struggle to balance industrial activity with environmental health
Related recent examples	
Nations strike deal at COP28 to transition away from fossil fuels https://www.reuters.com/business/environment/countries-push-cop28-deal-fossil-fuels-talks-spill-into-overtime-2023-12-12/ Not So “Green” Technology: The Complicated Legacy of Rare Earth Mining https://hir.harvard.edu/not-so-green-technology-the-complicated-legacy-of-rare-earth-mining/	

Global e-Waste Monitor 2024: Electronic Waste Rising Five Times Faster than Documented E-waste Recycling
<https://unitar.org/about/news-stories/press/global-e-waste-monitor-2024-electronic-waste-rising-five-times-faster-documented-e-waste-recycling>

Question 2	
‘Singapore is an island paradise meant only for the elites.’ Do you agree? (AJC JC1 MYCT 2012)	
Question Analysis	
<u>Issue:</u> The issue being discussed is whether Singapore is an inclusive and equitable society or one that increasingly serves the interests of the privileged and wealthy few.	<u>Context:</u> Singapore
<u>Conceptual Understanding:</u> • Demonstrates an ability to understand Singapore’s reputation as an 'island paradise', recognising the key characteristics this label entails—such as safety, cleanliness, efficiency, modern infrastructure, and a high standard of living—and how these may be experienced differently across socio-economic groups. • Demonstrates an ability to analyse Singapore’s socio-economic context in relation to wider regional and global developments, such as rising income inequality, the effects of globalisation on class divides, and the increasing visibility of the ultra-wealthy in urban centres. • Demonstrates an ability to evaluate how national policies—such as those relating to housing, education, and taxation—shape inclusivity or privilege in a society striving for meritocracy and economic competitiveness.	
<u>Key words:</u> • Island paradise: Implies a highly desirable, safe, clean, and prosperous place; often associated with comfort, luxury, and exclusivity. (key assumption and characteristic of Singapore has to be clearly acknowledge in arguments) • Meant only for (absolute term): Suggests intentional exclusivity or limited access; raises the issue of systemic inequality or policy bias. • The elites: Refers to the wealthy, powerful, or influential segment of society, possibly including the upper class, top earners, or those with strong cultural, social or political capital. (key player; cannot ignore even if stand is that Singapore caters to various groups)	
<u>Significant aspects/areas to be discussed (5W1H, Multiple Perspectives, Significant Trends, SPECTRAM):</u> • 5W1H: Who benefits most from Singapore’s growth and policies? Who does the term "elite" include—wealthy individuals, top scholars, political leaders? Where are inequalities most evident—housing, education, healthcare, lifestyle, access to green spaces? When did the perception of elitism emerge? Has it become more pronounced in recent decades? Why might Singapore be seen this way? (e.g. rising cost of living, income gap, meritocracy) How is the government addressing inclusivity and affordability? Are policies working? • SPECTRAM: Analyse the complex relationship between economic, political, and societal priorities and the level of attention paid to environmental conservation; analyse the various economic, political and societal impacts from the lack of attention paid to environmental conservation	
Possible Stands	
• Disagree that Singapore is an island paradise meant ONLY for the elites. That said it does cater to the elites to a large degree. • Disagree that Singapore is an island paradise meant ONLY for the elites. It caters to various groups beyond the elites.	
Reasons why Singapore is an island paradise that largely caters to the elites.	Reasons why Singapore is an island paradise that caters to various groups, and not just the elites.

The 'island paradise' image is often experienced unevenly—affluence shapes access to exclusivity and comfort. • In Q3 2024, a record 328 HDB flats were resold for over S\$1 million, particularly in desirable estates like Bishan, Queenstown, and Tiong Bahru. These areas offer better amenities, centrality, and prestige—benefits increasingly out of reach for middle-income families, suggesting that even public housing is becoming stratified. • A young couple paid S\$975,000 for a unit at The Pinnacle@Duxton, one of the most iconic HDB developments. Despite being public housing, its prime location and skyline views have turned it into a status symbol, reflecting how access to comfort and quality is increasingly wealth-dependent.	The 'paradise' is fundamentally built on inclusive infrastructure that supports a high quality of life for the majority. • As of 2024, 77.4% of Singaporeans live in HDB flats, with a home ownership rate of 90.8%, one of the highest globally. These flats are well-maintained, safe, and integrated with essential amenities like hawker centres, parks, and public transport—forming the backbone of Singapore's quality of life for the masses. • From October 2024, 1.1 million residents began receiving enhanced healthcare subsidies under CHAS and MediShield Life. For example, a CHAS Blue cardholder may receive up to S\$540 in annual outpatient subsidies, reducing the financial burden of basic healthcare for lower-income families.
Meritocracy and global competitiveness have produced elite pathways that concentrate opportunity among the privileged. • A 2022 MOE study showed students from the top 20% income bracket were overrepresented in Integrated Programme (IP) schools, like Raffles Institution and Hwa Chong, while students from lower-income families were underrepresented. This points to systemic disparities in how meritocratic outcomes are influenced by socio-economic capital. • A 2023 Straits Times report highlighted how some affluent families spend S\$2,000–S\$3,000 per month on tuition and enrichment. These advantages compound over time, giving well-off children a head start in national exams, scholarships, and top-tier universities—reinforcing cycles of privilege.	Singapore actively mitigates inequality through targeted social mobility and educational inclusion initiatives. • 80% of preschoolers are expected to be in government-supported preschools by 2025, with fee caps reduced to S\$160–\$385 per month for low- and middle-income families. This promotes equity in early childhood education, which is crucial for long-term academic and socio-emotional development. • In 2023, SkillsFuture training participation rose to 44%, with 39% of participants aged 40 and above. These mid-career learners benefit from up to 90% fee subsidies and structured career conversion programmes, helping workers upskill and remain competitive regardless of background.
Economic policies prioritise growth and investment appeal, which can deepen socio-economic divides. • Orchard Road has seen increased luxury development, with flagship stores like Louis Vuitton Maison, Cartier, and Gucci, and malls like ION and Paragon targeting high-net-worth shoppers. For many average Singaporeans, such spaces feel increasingly alienating and unaffordable, reflecting a city split by consumption power.	The government recognises and addresses the risks of elitism in policy narratives and national identity. • In October 2023, then DPM Lawrence Wong introduced the Forward Singapore report, calling for a refreshed social compact. The report identified widening inequality as a key concern and committed to strengthening support for lower-income families, mental health, and work-life balance for all citizens. • ComLink+, expanded in 2024, integrates services for 14,000 low-income families, offering

• In 2024, Good Class Bungalows (GCBs) saw record sales, with prices exceeding S\$50 million per unit, often purchased by tech founders, CEOs, and foreign investors. With only about 2,800 GCBs in Singapore, they represent an ultra-exclusive lifestyle that few citizens will ever experience, reinforcing perceptions of an elite class.	caseworkers, job matching, childcare enrolment, and housing support. This proactive, ground-up model illustrates how Singapore’s policies aim to bridge inequality through targeted, holistic interventions.
Related recent examples	
Spending by Singapore families on private tuition rises to \$1.8 billion in 2023 https://asianews.network/spending-by-singapore-families-on-private-tuition-rises-to-1-8-billion-in-2023/ Commentary: Budget 2025 shifts the focus from short-term wage support to long-term skills investment https://www.channelnewsasia.com/commentary/singapore-budget-2025-workforce-training-upskilling-reskilling-workfare-skills-support-4948726	

Question 3	
To what extent is raising the retirement age a necessary evil in today's society? (RI JC1 Promo 2010)	
Question Analysis	
<u>Issue:</u> Whether it is necessary, even though it is not desirable, to raise the retirement age in today's society.	<u>Context:</u> Today's society Global
<u>Conceptual Understanding:</u> • Demonstrates an ability to make observations about global/regional/local trends in the raising of retirement age amidst evolving population challenges • Demonstrates an ability to analyse the complex relationship between economic, political, and societal priorities in the extending of working ages • Demonstrates an ability to apply the concept of extended retirement age across different national and cultural contexts, considering how attention to challenges and opportunities may vary over time and place.	
<u>Key words:</u> • 'Is': Need to consider factors which cause the issue in question to be the way it currently is, and otherwise • 'Raising the retirement age': Increasing the age at which individuals are eligible to stop working and start receiving retirement benefits. This can involve increasing the age for receiving social security benefits, pensions, or other retirement income programs. It often reflects longer life expectancies and aims to address demographic shifts and potential strain on social security systems. • 'Necessary evil': Something that is undesirable but must be accepted • 'Today's society': A complex and dynamic social structure characterised by advanced technology, interconnectedness, and a mix of both positive and negative aspects. It is shaped by globalisation, digital communication, and evolving social norms, leading to both opportunities and challenges for individuals and communities.	
<u>Significant aspects/areas to be discussed (5W1H, Multiple Perspectives, Significant Trends, SPECTRAM):</u> • Who: Workers, employers, government, taxpayers • Multiple Perspectives: Governmental (policy-level – striking a balance between citizen welfare (including taxpayer load, social welfare initiatives, and demand for medical services) and corporations' interests) • SPECTRAM: social welfare systems, cultures and expectations around retirement and active ageing, strain on medical resources, technological advancements which replace human labour	
Possible Stands	
• Raising the retirement age is largely a necessary evil in today's society. • Raising the retirement age is only slightly a necessary evil in today's society.	
Reasons why raising the retirement age is a necessary evil in today's society	Reasons why raising the retirement age is <u>not</u> a necessary evil in today's society
Medical advancements and healthier lifestyles mean people live longer and are capable of working beyond traditional retirement age, a boon for societies with an ageing population in maintaining social safety nets. • In France, the 2023 pension reform raised the retirement age from 62 to 64, with President Macron arguing it as vital to prevent a deficit in the pension system, which faces a funding gap due to a shrinking workforce relative to retirees.	Not all demographic groups experience equal health or life expectancy gains; blue-collar and lower-income workers disproportionately and unfairly suffer more from extended working years. • While average life expectancy in the United States is about 77 years, lower-income workers, especially those in manual labour, often face declining life expectancy. https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/products/databriefs/db492.htm

https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/frances-latest-pensions-battle-could-ignite-fresh-political-crisis-2025-02-18/ - Germany is gradually raising the retirement age to 67 by 2031 is seen as essential to sustain pensions, as over 21% of the population is already above 65. https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/germany-approves-pension-reform-incentivize-later-retirement-2024-09-04/ - With the world's highest life expectancy (about 84.4 years, World Bank 2022), Japan has raised the retirement age to 65, and plans to encourage work beyond that. Older workers remain a significant part of the economy, particularly as Japan faces severe labour shortages.	In the United Kingdom, research shows that men in deprived regions live up to 4.4 years less than those in affluent areas; a uniform retirement age indefensibly exacerbates inequality. https://ageing-better.org.uk/news/living-poorest-parts-england-can-cost-you
Low birth rates combined with ageing populations create workforce gaps that hinder economic growth, making raising the retirement age crucial to sustain societies. - With the world's lowest fertility rate (0.72 in 2023), Korea faces severe future labour shortages. Policymakers discuss raising retirement to maintain productivity. https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/south-koreas-fertility-rate-dropped-fresh-record-low-2023-2024-02-28/ - Italy has one of Europe's oldest populations (median age is around 47.6 years). Higher retirement ages help offset economic stagnation caused by labour force shrinkage. https://www.straitstimes.com/world/europe/italys-demographics-are-worst-in-europe-for-growth-scope-ratings-says	Given today's advances in technology, AI and automation increasingly replace jobs, especially for older, less tech-savvy workers, making raising the retirement age outmoded. - Facing demographic decline, China debates raising retirement age, but many low-skilled workers, especially in rural areas, risk redundancy as automation rises in manufacturing. https://www.channelnewsasia.com/commentary/china-population-shrinking-ageing-retirement-age-young-workers-jobs-4550311 - In Europe and the US, sectors like logistics and clerical work are rapidly becoming automated, making it harder for older workers to remain employed or be retrained.
Modern medical advancements have extended lifespans, but healthy ageing requires not just physical well-being but mental engagement, social connection, and purpose. Continued participation in the workforce — especially through flexible or phased retirement — can help seniors remain physically active, mentally sharp, and socially integrated. In Japan's "100-Year Life" society, working beyond traditional retirement is encouraged to keep seniors mentally and physically engaged. Research shows older Japanese workers report better cognitive function and lower rates of depression compared to those who retire early. Companies increasingly adopt flexible re-employment schemes for seniors up to age 70, promoting health, purpose, and economic security. https://asia.nikkei.com/Spotlight/100-Year-Life/Japan-to-let-older-workers-stay-on-job-until-70	In some societies, retirement is not merely about leaving the workforce; it symbolises achieving dignity, rest, and respect after a lifetime of contribution. Raising the retirement age disrupts these deeply rooted cultural expectations. The French value a work-life balance, short working hours, and social protections as part of their national identity. Retirement at 62 was culturally seen as a milestone symbolising liberation from work and a reward for contributing to society. The government's 2023 pension reform, raising the retirement age to 64, sparked intense backlash in the form of strikes, protests, and widespread public opposition not just for economic reasons, but because many saw it as a betrayal of cultural ideals around leisure, equality, and quality of life. For many, working longer undermines the cultural expectation of enjoying one's later years with autonomy and dignity. https://time.com/6263754/amid-protests-france-pushes-through-bill-to-raise-retirement-age-without-parliamentary-vote/
Related recent examples	

- How companies are addressing workforce shortages and employee satisfaction with senior employment in Japan
<https://www.weforum.org/stories/2024/08/how-companies-are-addressing-workforce-shortages-through-senior-employment-in-japan>
- Retirement and re-employment ages to be raised to 64 and 69 in 2026
<https://www.channelnewsasia.com/singapore/retirement-reemployment-age-increase-4168776>
- The global retirement age dilemma: balancing longevity, economics & social welfare
<https://www.visionofhumanity.org/the-global-retirement-age-dilemma/>

Question 4	
Should governments be blamed for the ineffectiveness of efforts to conserve the environment? (ASRJC JC1 Promo 2021)	
Question Analysis	
<u>Issue:</u> The issue being discussed is the extent to which governments are responsible, or should be held accountable, for the lack of progress in addressing environmental degradation despite ongoing efforts.	<u>Context:</u> Global
<u>Conceptual Understanding:</u> • Demonstrates an ability to analyse the role of governments as policymakers, regulators, and enforcers in driving environmental action, and assess their effectiveness. • Demonstrates an ability to understand the multi-stakeholder nature of environmental conservation, including the influence of private corporations, international agreements, and citizen behaviours. • Demonstrates an ability to evaluate what constitutes “blame” in political and ethical terms, whether responsibility lies in intent, capacity, implementation failure, or structural constraints.	
<u>Key words:</u> • Should: used to say or ask what is the correct or best thing to do • Government: national or local authorities responsible for setting and implementing policies, allocating resources, and enforcing environmental regulations (key player shouldn’t be ignored, even if arguments are considering other stakeholders) • Be blamed for: implies accountability for failure—whether due to negligence, poor leadership, ineffective policy, or inaction. Requires clarity on what “blame” means and how it can be assessed • Ineffective: lack of visible or measurable effects or results despite initiatives or efforts made • Efforts to conserve the environment: attempts and activities to protect natural and physical surroundings from damage and harm, including policies, campaigns, treaties, funding, and laws aimed at preserving natural ecosystems, reducing pollution, mitigating climate change, and promoting sustainability etc.	
<u>Significant aspects/areas to be discussed (5W1H, Multiple Perspectives, Significant Trends, SPECTRAM):</u> • 5W1H: What are the efforts being referred to? What does “ineffectiveness” mean in this context? Who else, other the government, is responsible for environmental conservation? Who suffers from the ineffectiveness? Where have governments been effective—and where have they not? Why might governments be blamed? How can government efforts be measured? • Multiple Perspectives: Governments: Policymakers and regulators / Corporations: Major polluters and influencers of economic policy / Citizens: Everyday behaviours and lifestyle choices / International organisations: Global frameworks like the Paris Agreement / Environmental activists/NGOs: Push for action and accountability	
Possible Stands	
• Governments should take on most of the blame for the ineffectiveness of efforts to conserve the environment. • Governments should take on little of the blame for the ineffectiveness of efforts to conserve the environment.	
Reasons why governments should take on most of the blame for the ineffectiveness of efforts to conserve the environment.	Reasons why governments should take on little of the blame for the ineffectiveness of efforts to conserve the environment.

Governments hold most of the regulatory and enforcement authority and have the power to ensure that individuals, business and the country adhere to efforts to conserve the environment. As such, the ineffectiveness of these efforts indicate a failure of government. • A global assessment of environmental rule of law by the United Nations Environment Programme found that despite a 38-fold increase in environmental laws put in place since 1972, failure to fully implement and enforce these laws is one of the greatest challenges to mitigating climate change, reducing pollution and preventing widespread species and habitat loss. The report identified multiple factors contributing to poor enforcement, including poor coordination across government agencies, weak institutional capacity, and corruption. This suggests that problems with governments have prevented environmental regulations from being effectively implemented, and this has resulted in the ineffectiveness of environmental conservation efforts.	Governments are also responsible for meeting the economic and material needs of a country, which are often at odds with environmental conservation. Governments may be forced to prioritise other needs over environmental conservation and thus should not be blamed for the ineffectiveness of conservation efforts. • In 2020, Indonesia's Parliament gave final approval to a sweeping jobs-creation bill that would loosen environmental regulations. Supporters of the bill argue that it will attract investors by cutting regulations on businesses, speeding approval of projects and eliminating many permit requirements. It is hoped that this bill would help with the country's economic recovery from Covid-19 by creating jobs and attracting local and foreign investments. Economic recovery from Covid-19 is understandably a top priority for many countries. Environmentalists, however, argue that by eliminating environmental reviews for many new projects, the legislation would lead to the destruction of primary rain forests that are essential in controlling carbon emissions and slowing climate change.
Many governments are unwilling to introduce tough environmental conservation policies because of a lack of political will. Their inaction or half-heartedness has led to ineffective conservation efforts and so they are largely to be blamed. • U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said in 2019 that the world's efforts to stop climate change have been "utterly inadequate" and he pointed out that what is lacking is political will. Despite demands from citizens, especially young people, for climate action, governments have been hesitant to impose carbon taxes, stop subsidies on fossil fuels and stop the building of coal power plants. Governments may be wary of jeopardising the economy or jobs related to these sectors. • In 2023, reports indicated that several countries continued to invest in fossil fuel infrastructure, with global subsidies for fossil fuels reaching significant levels. This continued support for fossil fuels undermines international climate goals and reflects a lack of commitment to transitioning towards renewable energy sources. The persistence of such policies highlights the gap between governmental rhetoric on environmental conservation and actual policy implementation.	Governments have finite resources. Considering the magnitude of environmental damage that has been inflicted over decades, it may not be within the immediate ability of governments to effectively address environmental problems. • The United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change says that an annual investment of \$2.4 trillion is needed in the energy system alone until 2035 to limit temperature rise to below 1.5 degrees Celsius from pre-industrial levels. This amounts around 2.5% of the world's economy. This is a massive amount of money and countries may not be able to immediately provide such funding. It would understandably take time and resources to address the environmental problems that have accumulated over centuries of human activity, and governments should not be blamed if current environmental efforts seem insufficient for now.
Governmental negligence and policy failures have directly contributed to significant environmental	While governments have the power to implement laws and regulations, there is a limit to how much governments can and should control when it comes to

disasters, underscoring their responsibility for ineffective conservation efforts. • A 2021 study estimated that 81% of forest conversion for palm oil in Indonesia was illegal, with the nation's Supreme Audit Agency determining that less than 20% of palm oil operations complied with national laws and regulations. Despite existing forestry laws, weak enforcement and corruption have allowed illegal logging and land clearing to persist, leading to significant loss of biodiversity and contributing to global greenhouse gas emissions. The government's failure to effectively regulate and enforce environmental laws has been a major factor in the ongoing deforestation crisis.	the actions of individuals even when these actions contribute to environmental problems. • A 2023 analysis by the FAIRR investor network revealed that emissions from the world's top 20 meat and dairy producers increased by an average of over 3% compared to the previous year. These companies, including suppliers to major retailers like Walmart and McDonald's, have been criticized for their inadequate efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. While governments can set regulations, the effectiveness of such measures also depends on consumer behavior and corporate responsibility. Given the rising global demand for meat and dairy products, it is challenging for governments to regulate individual dietary choices, which significantly contribute to environmental issues.
Related recent examples	
Dramatic growth in laws to protect environment, but widespread failure to enforce, finds report https://www.unep.org/news-and-stories/press-release/dramatic-growth-laws-protect-environment-widespread-failure-enforce UN chief warns of 'point of no return' on climate change https://apnews.com/article/united-nations-madrid-antonio-guterres-ap-top-news-international-news-7d85d6d7b05c4436b6f4d162f6c06566 Where climate cash is flowing and why it's not enough https://www.nature.com/articles/d41586-019-02712-3 Big meat, dairy firms' greenhouse gas emissions larger than Germany's: Study https://www.straitstimes.com/world/big-meat-dairy-firms-greenhouse-gas-emissions-larger-than-germanys-study	

Question 5	
Is singlehood desirable in your society?	
Question Analysis	
<u>Issue:</u> Whether it is desirable to be single in your society or not	<u>Context:</u> Your society
<u>Conceptual Understanding:</u> • Demonstrates an ability to analyse the desirability of singlehood while considering the specific characteristics of your society which make singlehood desirable or otherwise • Demonstrates an ability to understand the different stakeholders in the phenomenon of people getting married / family planning • Demonstrates an ability to evaluate evolving trends and realities influencing singlehood in your society	
<u>Key words:</u> • 'Is': Need to consider factors which cause the issue in question to be the way it currently is, and otherwise • 'Singlehood': the state of being without a romantic partner, regardless of marital status. It encompasses individuals who are unmarried, divorced, widowed, or simply without a partner. • 'Desirable': wished for as being an attractive, useful, or necessary course of action • 'Your society': essay must consider a feature of your society in each argument	
<u>Significant aspects/areas to be discussed (5W1H, Multiple Perspectives, Significant Trends, SPECTRAM):</u> • Who: Singles, government, organisations, society, family • Multiple Perspectives: Government wants to urge citizens to marry and have children (increase total fertility rate); singles prioritise financial and personal freedom over starting families (it is expensive to bring up children in Singapore) • Significant Trends: More dual-income-no-kids households, more young people preferring to stay single • SPECTRAM: Governance (policies that make singlehood desirable or otherwise), society (expectations/norms/pressures), economics (whether it makes financial/fiscal sense), culture (societal perceptions of singlehood)	
Possible Stands	
• Singlehood is largely desirable in my society, Singapore. • Singlehood is hardly desirable in my society, Singapore.	
Reasons why singlehood is desirable in my society, Singapore	Reasons why singlehood is <u>not</u> desirable in my society, Singapore
Given the high cost of living, housing, and child-rearing in Singapore, remaining single allows individuals to allocate resources towards personal aspirations, investments, or lifestyle choices without the financial pressures of supporting a family. • According to estimates by The Straits Times (2023), raising a child in Singapore costs between S\$200,000 to S\$500,000, factoring in expenses like childcare, education, and daily necessities. Singles get to avoid these long-term financial commitments. https://dollarsandsense.sg/much-cost-raise-child-singapore-till-age-18 • Singles who co-rent or live with parents can significantly reduce their living expenses.	Singaporean society, policies, and even social events are often structured around family units, which may leave singles feeling marginalised or disconnected over time. • A 2023 survey by CNA Insider found that 43% of singles aged 30-39 reported feeling pressured during family gatherings due to persistent questions about their marital status. https://www.channelnewsasia.com/commentary/chinese-new-year-singles-dating-marriage-family-pressure-4900381 • Singapore's Ministry of Social and Family Development (true to its name) is partial to initiatives like Families for Life, focus on strengthening family bonds through activities

Renting a master bedroom in a HDB flat costs about S\$1,200 to S\$2,000 per month in 2024, which is far cheaper than supporting an entire household with dependants.	such as picnics, workshops, and talks; it offers far fewer structured opportunities tailored to singles seeking community. https://www.msf.gov.sg/our-services/e-services
With fewer family obligations, single individuals in Singapore can pursue demanding yet fulfilling careers which may be harder to prioritise with family responsibilities. - Under the SkillsFuture Mid-Career Support, singles can take up courses or overseas attachments without the logistical concerns of relocating a family. As of 2023, over 660,000 Singaporeans have utilised SkillsFuture credits for personal development. https://www.channelnewsasia.com/singapore/300-monthly-allowance-part-time-courses-midcareer-workers-skillsfuture-budget2025-4944416 - Untethered by family commitments, Sim Wong Hoo, the Singaporean founder of Creative Technology, was able to dedicate decades of his life to entrepreneurship in the digital entertainment industry which he was passionate about, remaining unmarried even when he passed in 2023. He famously attributed his success to his risk-taking, and said, “I can take risks because I have no family.” https://sg.finance.yahoo.com/news/dont-get-married-creatives-sim-wong-hoo-advises-budding-entrepreneurs-013605163.html	Considering Singapore’s ageing population, those who remain single may face difficulties securing caregiving support or companionship in their later years, increasing their vulnerability compared to those with family networks. - According to the Ministry of Health, around one in four elderly Singaporeans aged 65 and above live alone, with social isolation linked to higher risks of depression and health complications. https://www.moh.gov.sg/news-highlights/details/seniors-staying-alone-2022 https://www.straitstimes.com/singapore/all-the-lonely-people-tackling-social-isolation-among-older-singaporeans - According to a qualitative study by eminent researchers from the Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy and Nanyang Technological University, a single man or woman aged 65 and above would need at least \$1,379 a month to sustain what they considered to be their basic standard of living, compared to a couple aged 65 and above needing \$2,351. https://www.straitstimes.com/singapore/study-finds-1379-a-month-needed-to-meet-basic-living-standard-for-single-elderly
In an increasingly individualistic society, some Singaporeans value the freedom to make independent decisions and avoid potential emotional stress associated with relationships or marital conflicts. - Many singles actively volunteer through platforms like Giving.sg, which reported over 80,000 active volunteers in 2023. Singles, with fewer family obligations, often contribute significantly to such causes. - Singapore’s growing digital nomad trend is supported by access to regional remote work hubs, with platforms like Workbuddy.sg offering flexible workspace memberships, which singles can utilise without having to coordinate family logistics.	Remaining single in Singapore reduces access to key social and policy benefits that are designed around the traditional family unit, limiting an individual’s long-term security. Singles under 35 years old cannot apply for a new Build-To-Order (BTO) flat, and can only purchase resale flats under the Singles Scheme when they are 35 years and older, often at significantly higher prices. As of 2024, the median price for a 4-room resale flat in mature estates is S\$600,000 to S\$900,000, compared to BTO prices which are considerably lower. Even when singles are eligible to buy BTO flats, they are limited to purchasing 2-room flats, compounding the heavier financial toll on singles who have no choice but to buy a more costly resale flat in order to secure a flat in the size that they want. https://www.channelnewsasia.com/singapore/bto-hdb-flats-singles-priority-grants-national-day-rally-ndr-2024-4553171
Related recent examples	
7 in 10 young Singaporeans feel it is not necessary to marry, but most still want to: Poll https://www.straitstimes.com/singapore/most-young-singaporeans-feel-it-is-not-necessary-to-marry-but-almost-7-in-10-want-to-poll \$7b to be spent on marriage and parenthood initiatives in FY2026 https://www.straitstimes.com/singapore/politics/7b-to-be-spent-on-marriage-and-parenthood-initiatives-in-fy2026 - Married without kids? It’s becoming a lot more common in Singapore these days https://www.straitstimes.com/singapore/married-without-kids-its-becoming-a-lot-more-common-in-singapore-these-days	

