

Anderson Serangoon Junior College
General Paper
Paper 1 Assignment 1 Environment
Suggested Essay Outlines

Question 1	
To what extent are developed nations responsible for tackling environmental problems?	
Question Analysis with Conceptual Understanding	
<u>Issue:</u> Developed nations are the ones who have created the most damage to the environment since they started industrializing. They also have the most power, talent and resources to tackle the environmental problems. Should they therefore be responsible for tackling environmental problems?	<u>Context:</u> Global
<u>Conceptual Understanding:</u> - There should be recognition that extent/degree of responsibility is likely to have changed from what it was in the past and will continue to change over time as developed nations' contribution to environmental problems changes. - Consideration may be given to different types of developed nations, and how their extent/degree of responsibility differs according to context. - There may be discussion of how extent/degree will also vary according to the ability of developed nations to solve the problem.	
<u>Key words:</u> Developed nations: A sovereign state that has a highly developed economy and advanced technological infrastructure relative to other less industrialised nations Responsible for tackling: If they are to blame, they have the responsibility to solve. If they have the ability/power/resources to deal with the problem, they have the duty to do so. Environmental problems: Examples include pollution, global warming, natural resource depletion, loss of biodiversity, deforestation	
<u>Significant aspects/areas to be discussed (5W1H, Multiple Perspectives, Significant Trends, SPECTRAM):</u> - How developed nations have <i>caused</i> environmental problems or have <i>solved</i> environmental problems <i>Perspectives</i> of less developed nations and global organisations <i>Changes and trends</i> in the industries and economies of developed nations	
Possible Stands	
- Developed nations are largely responsible when it comes to tackling environmental problems. - Developed nations have limited responsibility when it comes to tackling environmental problems.	
Reasons why developed nations are largely responsible	Reasons why developed nations have limited responsibility

Developed nations were the first contributors to environmental degradation due to rapid industrialisation and a rampant disregard for ecological conservation. Thus, they are to blame for the environmental problems that the world now faces and absolutely should take on a huge role in dealing with the problems they have created. • Then UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon acknowledged the historical responsibility of developed nations for environmental degradation, stating that as their factories released carbon emissions into the atmosphere long before the climate effects were known, "It's only fair and reasonable that the developed world should bear most of the responsibility." • Rich countries, including the United States, Canada, Japan and much of western Europe, account for just 12 percent of the global population today but are responsible for 50 percent of all the planet-warming greenhouse gases released from fossil fuels and industry over the past 170 years.	In today's context, developed nations have increasingly slowed down in their direct emissions given efforts to decouple emissions from economic growth. The quest for accelerated development in developing nations and emerging economies, on the other hand, make them more culpable for a growing proportion of blame for environmental issues as compared to the developed nations. • According to The Global Carbon Budget report, 2023 emissions from coal, oil and gas all rose, driven by India and China. The Chinese rise was caused by its economy reopening after COVID-19 lockdowns, while India's was a result of power demand growing faster than the country's renewable energy capacity, leaving fossil fuels to make up the shortfall. • In contrast, emissions in the U.S. and European Union are both falling, driven in part by coal plants being retired. Overall, 26 countries representing 28% of the world's emissions are now in a downward trend. Most are in Europe, the researchers said. • According to the Center for Global Development (CGD), 63% of annual emissions are produced by developing countries.
The consumption patterns of wealthy developed nations tend to require more resources and produce more emissions. This places a great stress on the environment and so given the significant role wealthy nations play in advancing climate change, they ought to do much more to resolve the problem. • British charity Oxfam released a study that found the richest 10 percent of people produce half of the planet's individual-consumption-based fossil fuel emissions, while the poorest 50 percent — about 3.5 billion people — contribute only 10 percent. The vast majority of the world's richest 10% high emitters still live in rich OECD (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development) countries. According to Oxfam's data, while some "emerging" economies like India and Brazil have high emissions, the lifestyle consumption emissions of even their richest citizens remain some way behind that of their counterparts in rich OECD countries.	Contrary to the idea that developed nations have greater ability and resources to implement solutions, their earlier success has also become a stumbling block, limiting their capacity to revamp existing infrastructures and shift towards sustainability practices without severely threatening their economic well-being. Developing nations, on the other hand, possess greater potential in advancing environmentally-friendly programs given that they have less to lose and a lot more to gain. • As Singapore is very dependent on the oil and gas industry (5% of GDP and ranks amongst the top five oil refining centres globally), undoing all the efforts set up at Jurong Island would be an economic disaster for the island. • Meanwhile, China has become a world leader in solar power, passing Germany's capacity in 2015. The Indian renewable energy sector is the fourth most attractive renewable energy market in the world. India was ranked fourth in wind power and solar power as of 2022.

With their vast wealth and available resources, it is not unreasonable to say that developed nations have the moral obligation and duty to solve environmental problems. - At the 15th Conference of Parties (COP15) of the UNFCCC in Copenhagen in 2009, developed countries committed to a collective goal of mobilising USD 100 billion per year by 2020 for climate action in developing countries. However, Oxfam's 'Climate Finance Shadow Report 2023' shows that developed nations are shirking their responsibility. While donors claim to have mobilized \$83.3 billion in 2020, the real value of their spending was —at most— \$24.5 billion. The \$83.3 billion claim is an overestimate because it includes projects where the climate objective has been overstated or as loans cited at their face value. By providing loans rather than grants, these funds are even potentially harming rather than helping local communities, as they add to the debt burdens of already heavily indebted countries —even more so in this time of rising interest rates. - According to the UNESCO Science Report published in 2021, the high-income countries that account for 64% of the world's research spending — including Japan, South Korea, the United States and many European countries — showed relatively little change in, or even a decline in, the number of publications on topics related to sustainable development and environmental problems. In contrast, low- and middle- income countries have shifted their priorities and resources towards meeting sustainable development goals (SDGs), showing that developed countries can indeed do more in helping to address environmental problems through scientific research and innovation.	Unfortunately, while developed nations have the means to resolve environmental problems, their ability is crippled by the fact that they are predominantly democracies where efforts are often delayed due to changing leadership or non-stop debates by parties of various interests. - President Trump's withdrawal from Paris Climate Agreement was a deep setback to the process. Aside from the U.S.'s loss of standing, only \$1 billion of its \$3 billion commitment was ever paid. His administration also dismantled major climate policies and rolled back many more rules governing clean air, water, wildlife and toxic chemicals during his term, essentially undoing everything his predecessors have done for the environment. - While both the US and China believe the future will be driven by electric vehicles, their progress is vastly different. While Detroit in US was planning an electric vehicle takeover, Congress is still bickering over tax credits and whether to pay for charging stations. China, meanwhile, has installed some 800,000 public chargers -- about eight times the number in the U.S. -- and has parlayed a combination of tax incentives, land grants, low-interest loans and other subsidies into becoming the world's biggest producers of the vehicles for six years running.
Related recent examples	
How China Beat the U.S. to Become World's Undisputed Solar Champion https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2021-06-04/solar-jobs-2021-how-china-beat-u-s-to-become-world-s-solar-champion Who Has The Most Historical Responsibility for Climate Change? https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2021/11/12/climate/cop26-emissions-compensation.html	

Global CO2 emissions from fossil fuels to hit record high in 2023 -report

<https://www.reuters.com/business/environment/global-co2-emissions-fossil-fuels-hit-record-high-2023-report-2023-12-05/>

A visual look at the state of democracy across the world

<https://www.visualcapitalist.com/state-of-democracy-around-the-world-2023/>

Vulnerable nations lead by example on Sustainable Development Goals research

<https://www.nature.com/articles/d41586-021-01992-y>

Question 2	
'It is impossible for environmental conservation and economic growth to coexist.' Comment.	
Question Analysis with Conceptual Understanding	
<u>Issue:</u> Economic growth has traditionally necessitated the destruction of our environment. As such, it seems impossible to continue developing the economy without harming the environment.	<u>Context:</u> National, regional, global
<u>Conceptual Understanding:</u> - Consideration may be given to the tension between environmental conservation and economic growth. - Discussion of this tension may take place on a national, regional, and global level, showing how the possibility of coexistence differs according to context - There may be discussion of how its ability to coexist is likely to have changed and will continue to change over time, and differ by place, as some countries have more tools available to make it happen.	
<u>Key words:</u> Possible: able to be done or achieved Environmental conservation: this refers to implementing practices that are environmentally friendly, such as reducing carbon emissions, reducing the consumption of natural resources, and even taking measures to improve the environment Economic growth: an increase in the economy of a country or an area, especially of the value of goods and services the country or area produces. The key drivers of economic growth are globalisation, capitalism, and consumerism, which have had detrimental impacts on the environment. Coexist: for both to work alongside each other, or exist harmoniously	
<u>Significant aspects/areas to be discussed (5W1H, Multiple Perspectives, Significant Trends, SPECTRAM):</u> - Students would need to discuss and examine <i>national- or even intra-national-level</i> policies in order to address the question adequately. - Examine <i>trends</i> in technology and their impacts on the economy-environment dilemma - On the global level, examine <i>trends</i> in international relations. Might intense competition affect a country's decision in progressing the economy at the expense of the environment? - Examine the <i>impacts</i> of climate change. Might countries be forced to adopt environmentally-friendly economic policies in order to sustain economic growth, or even just to survive? - Some countries may be constrained by <i>geographical or economic conditions</i> in their effort to protect the environment while sustaining economic growth.	
Possible Stands	
- It is largely possible to protect the environment and sustain economic growth. - It is largely not possible to protect the environment and sustain economic growth.	
Reasons why it is possible to protect the environment and sustain economic growth	Reasons why it is <u>not</u> possible to protect the environment and sustain economic growth

With the continued worsening of our environment, more companies and governments are beginning to see that an investment of time and money into implementing environmentally-friendly policies can in fact help ensure sustained financial development. <u>This then contributes to a country's economic growth while ensuring the environment is kept safe.</u> • Since the climate strategy was released in 2020, Denmark made a decision to invest in a renewable energy project called Energy Islands, consisting of a network of offshore wind turbines in the North and Baltic Seas. The islands are expected to generate more electricity than Danish households annually consume and the government hopes to export its green power to neighbouring European countries like Poland, Sweden, the Netherlands and Germany. An agreement to sell renewable energy output under an EU cooperation agreement in a so-called statistical transfer was recently struck between Denmark and the Netherlands to help the Dutch reach their 2020 renewable energy target. This project is set to be up and running by 2033. • A report titled "The Truth Behind the Paris Agreement Climate Pledges" warns that by 2030, the failure to reduce emissions will cost the world a minimum of \$2 billion per day in economic losses from weather events made worse by human-induced climate change.	Environmentally-friendly economic policies require commitment by the countries' political leaders, and are thus subject to the whims of leaders who intentionally choose to ignore the environmental impacts of their actions for the sake of political power. • A vast expanse of Amazon rainforest seven times larger than Greater London was destroyed in 2019 as deforestation surged to a 12-year high under Brazil's far-right president Jair Bolsonaro. Much of the land was cleared for cattle ranching and soy farming (a crop primarily used as livestock feed) in a bid to turn the Amazon into Brazil's "economic soul". • In his inauguration speech in January 2025, Donald Trump declared a national energy emergency, signalling that his administration would use the authority to rapidly approve new oil, gas, and electricity projects that typically take years to permit. The Trump administration scrapped climate regulations, rolled back clean water rules and loosened pollution standards. Protections for public land and threatened species have been shrunk while new oil pipelines and coal mining have been encouraged. Most significantly, Trump withdrew the US from the 2015 international Paris climate agreement yet again, contending that the agreement would "undermine" the US economy. This undermines global efforts to save the environment as other countries may be less willing to adopt aggressive climate actions.
With the advancement of technology, green technology is growing more reliable and affordable, allowing countries to tap on it for sustainable economic growth. • According to a recent report published by Allied Market Research, the global green technology and sustainability market size was valued at \$8.79 billion in 2019, and is projected to reach \$48.36 billion by 2027, growing at a rate of 24.3% from 2020 to 2027. • A plan to coordinate the global introduction of clean technologies to drive down costs quickly was agreed at the COP26 summit in Glasgow where over 40 nations pledged that they would align standards and coordinate investment to speed up production and bring forward the pace at which green technologies are more	On the global level, environmental protection has been seen as a zero-sum game in which countries believe they will lose out to other countries economically if they were to be environmentally-friendly. As long as countries continue to compete for economic growth, it will be impossible to simultaneously protect the environment. • From the 1997 Kyoto Protocol to the 2015 Paris Climate Accord, cooperative environmental regimes can be sustained only if parties perceive that other parties are making appropriate sacrifices. However, seven years after the Paris Agreement, in which leaders pledged to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in order to avoid the worst effects of climate change, the world is still not on

Commented [AHT(H1): May need to include some details on how this is financially beneficial to the country

affordable and accessible than fossil-fuel alternatives. In the past decade, the cost of solar panels, LED bulbs and lithium-ion batteries have plunged by around 90%, with solar and wind power now the cheapest in the world. By coordinating signals to industry, policies and standards, research and investments, each government aims to push production up to push prices down for other technologies.	track to meet those goals. New data published by Climate Action Tracker, an independent research group, reveals the gap. None of the world's biggest emitters — China, the United States, the European Union and India — have reduced their emissions enough to meet the Paris Agreement goals. • The majority of Paris parties are emerging economies and, almost without exception, they have submitted NDCs that would allow them to continue increasing their emissions through 2030 (albeit more slowly than baseline). On the current trajectory, in 2030, 45 percent of global emissions will come from countries whose emissions are still rising.
With heightened green consciousness across the world, market forces and green government policies are accelerating a global shift away from oil consumption. This marks a transition to economic growth that can now be fuelled by clean energy. • The electrification of transport is now one of the major trends of the 21st century, and the markets are reacting: the 700% year-to-date surge in China-based electric carmaker NIO's stock value and Tesla's 415% growth in 2020 show that investor excitement around electric vehicles is building. Global electric vehicle sales rose a dramatic 65% from 2017 to 2018, for a total of 2.1 million vehicles, with sale figures steady through 2019. • Sweden is aiming to cut greenhouse gas emissions by 59% by 2030 compared with 2005, and to have a net-zero carbon economy by 2045. It was also the first country to introduce carbon pricing and has the highest carbon tax in the world at €122 per ton in 2023. Today, the bulk of Sweden's energy comes from nuclear, hydro and biofuels, with an increasing portion of wind and solar.	Some countries may be constrained by geographical or economic conditions in their effort to protect the environment while sustaining economic growth. • Addressing environmental issues costs money, and many poorer nations lack the resources necessary to tackle even the most pressing environmental problems. In fact, many of the countries doing the least to protect the environment also rank among the 25 poorest countries in the world. One such country is Malawi, where very few people in the country have access to electricity, so most meals are prepared on wood fires. The demand for wood and charcoal contributes to deforestation, with an estimated 3% of Malawi's forests lost each year. • After years of promises of new climate funding, the developing world is coming to grips with a disappointing reality: Money still isn't coming through fast enough to address the mounting challenges of climate change. Promises from some of the world's biggest economies, including the United States and China, haven't been panning out. Many are years behind schedule or still years away from sending money, delayed by political fights, bureaucratic snags and debates over new rules to expedite aid from development banks and private donors. In 2023, the United Nations estimated the global shortfall in funding to cope with this onslaught amounts to several trillion dollars. While Western countries have started to mobilize vast sums

	for their own clean energy transitions, government officials and other diplomats say poor and vulnerable nations — where the need is often greatest — are being left out.
Related recent examples	
- On climate change, zero-sum thinking doesn't work https://www.theguardian.com/environment/climate-consensus-97-per-cent/2018/apr/02/on-climate-change-zero-sum-thinking-doesnt-work - Cheap Renewables Keep Pushing Fossil Fuels Further Away From Profitability - Despite Trump's Efforts https://www.forbes.com/sites/energyinnovation/2018/01/23/cheap-renewables-keep-pushing-fossil-fuels-further-away-from-profitability-despite-trumps-efforts/?sh=49fd6206ce9a - The Paris climate agreement is at risk of falling apart in the 2020s https://www.vox.com/energy-and-environment/2019/11/5/20947289/paris-climate-agreement-2020s-breakdown-trump - COP26: GREEN TECH TO BECOME CHEAPER https://www.challenge2025.eu/cop26-green-tech-to-become-cheaper/ - Rich countries promised poor nations billions for climate change. They aren't paying. https://www.washingtonpost.com/climate-environment/2023/10/09/rich-nations-pledged-poor-ones-billions-climate-damages-they-arent-paying/	

Question 3	
How effective are efforts aimed at conserving the environment in your society?	
Question Analysis with Conceptual Understanding	
<u>Issue:</u> As climate change becomes more and more of an issue, countries around the world are making varying efforts to deal with this. Considering the specific context of your society, evaluate the efficacy of the measures taken.	<u>Context:</u> Your society
<u>Conceptual Understanding:</u> - Consideration should be given to efforts made to conserve the environment, how successful they have been, and the implications of the efforts on the individual and society. - Observations of trends regarding environmental conservation in Singapore and the relationship between conservation and pragmatic constraints. - There may be discussion of: (1) how the effectiveness of these efforts is likely to have changed, and will continue to change over time; (2) how effectiveness of these efforts may vary due to competing interests and priorities for the government (e.g. regional/global commitments, political popularity, developing the economy, etc.) and resources of individuals (e.g. financial status, personal willpower, etc.).	
<u>Key words:</u> - Efforts aimed at conserving the environment: Solutions / measures that seek to protect the environment (e.g. adopting alternative environmentally green and renewable energy sources, launch of campaigns to encourage environmentally-friendly behaviour, preserving biodiversity) - How effective: An evaluation of how well these solutions / measures are working → consider TIRE+C framework - Your society: Consider relevant characteristics of your society	
<u>Significant aspects/areas to be discussed (5W1H, Multiple Perspectives, Significant Trends, SPECTRAM):</u> Examine measures taken by different <i>stakeholders/players</i> within your society – individuals/consumers/citizens, corporations, non-governmental organisations, the government	
Possible Stands	
- Efforts aimed at conserving the environment in my society are largely effective. - Efforts aimed at conserving the environment in my society are effective to a limited extent.	
Reasons why efforts aimed at conserving the environment in my society are effective	Reasons why efforts aimed at conserving the environment in my society are <u>not</u> effective
Increasingly , individuals in Singapore do recognise the need for a concerted national response towards tackling environmental problems and many have put in efforts to be environmentally friendly by recycling, reducing plastic bag usage and protecting biodiversity. Compared to a possible situation of total apathy and lack of initiative to tackle environmental problems, these efforts	While Singaporeans have a heightened green consciousness these days, the effectiveness of individual efforts in conserving the environment has been significantly hampered because many citizens still have misconceptions about what they need to do and how best to conserve the environment, resulting in a futility of efforts . <i>[Ideal vs Realistic]</i>

signal the effectiveness of individual efforts in (slowly but surely) moving the nation towards greater commitment to environmental conservation. <i>[Extent]</i> • In 2022, out of concern about the lack of awareness regarding intertidal habitats in Singapore, environmental activists and artists Woo Qi Yun and Dorcas Tang reached out to Minister for National Development Desmond Lee to design illustrated signs to be placed along Singapore's inter-tidal coastline. The signs communicate essential intertidal etiquette and help Singaporeans learn how to care for intertidal animals. • Surveys by the Ministry of the Environment and Water Resources (MEWR) and the National Environment Agency (NEA) show that about 6 in 10 (more than half) Singaporean households recycle regularly. Though still fairly far from full participation, these figures are encouraging as they reflect the understanding that many Singaporeans do recognise that collective effort is essential to conserving the environment. • Research on HDB corridors has shown that Singaporeans plant a huge diversity of plants outside their homes - 231 different species were found across a survey of 135 corridors, showing that Singaporeans are doing their part to protect biodiversity. According to the Straits Times, planting native species at home helps to conserve natural heritage and may provide a lifeline for native birds and insects. An increasing number of residents also volunteer with organisations such as the International Coastal Cleanup Singapore, which collects litter from mangroves and beaches.	• This is most clearly illustrated in recycling efforts in Singapore where many are still unclear about what can be recycled and what cannot be. According to the Straits Times, 67% of Singaporeans surveyed by NEA thought soiled food paper packaging can be recycled. Another 62% thought that glass cookware, porcelain and ceramic can be recycled when they actually cannot be. These wrongly recycled items contribute to the high contamination rate of the recyclables collected from the blue recycling bins nationwide. These contaminated recyclables become unsuitable for recycling. With such misconceptions and lack of knowledge, the efforts of those who have contributed recyclables would be futile.
Certain measures taken by our government to conserve the environment in Singapore are effective as good planning has allowed us to directly address a root cause of environmental problems. <i>[Root Cause]</i> • The Carbon Pricing Act (CPA) came into effect in Singapore on 1st Jan 2019. The carbon tax is done to reduce the use of fossil fuels whose combustion releases greenhouse gases such as carbon dioxide, which are responsible for climate change. Carbon tax helps to reduce emissions and fight climate change in three main ways: By increasing the cost of using	Efforts by the government to conserve the environment are technically nullified when Singapore's policy decisions continue to prioritise economic growth which extensively harms the environment. This shows our lack of sincerity and dedication towards environmental conservation. • While the government unveiled the lofty Green Plan 2030, outlining our nation's agenda for sustainable development, very few are discussing the carbon footprint our dependence on the oil and gas industry causes. Instead of scaling down, the

carbon-based fuels like fuel oil, companies will be motivated to move towards cleaner forms of energy such as solar energy. A carbon tax will also naturally increase the price of electricity, spurring consumers (both residential and commercial) to conserve energy and be more efficient to save cost, further saving on fossil fuel use. The revenue gained from the tax can be used on many government initiatives that could include research on better renewable technologies or funding clean-up and disaster relief efforts that result from climate change.	government has struck a deal with ExxonMobil to expand the manufacturing complex in Jurong Island. Despite recognising the importance of the Central Catchment Nature Reserve and declaring it as a gazetted area as a core nature conservation area, the government went ahead with the decision to build the Cross Island MRT line directly under it instead of skirting around it. This would reduce the construction cost by about \$2 billion.
Given that the government possesses the resources and the ability to pull together different organisations, concrete actions taken by the government have had a significant impact on improving and conserving different aspects of the environment concurrently. <i>[Context, Extent]</i> Singapore is devising a S\$100 billion (\$72 billion) plan to safeguard the city against temperatures and floodwaters several times those levels. At the heart of Singapore's plan is a coastal adaptation study commissioned by the Building and Construction Authority in 2013 and submitted to the government last year. The BCA declined to provide details of the report, saying that the government is reviewing the findings, but the options for the government are expected to be wide and varied, from using mangrove to protect coastlines to flood-proofing subway stations and developing green "sponge" areas that can absorb floodwaters.	While green practices are gaining ground in Singapore, capitalism and an attachment to convenience continues to lure both companies and citizens in adopting with practices that harm the environment. These environmentally unfriendly practices limit the effectiveness of the efforts put in by others to conserve the environment. <i>[Ideal vs Realistic]</i> - A total of 119 companies have been prosecuted for illegally discharging trade effluent, or liquid waste, into sewers since 2014, said Senior Minister of State for Environment and Water Resources Amy Khor. Twenty-one of those companies are second-time offenders, while another 23 committed the offence three or more times. Bakery and food manufacturing company BreadTalk was given the highest fine among the 38 companies for multiple instances of discharging liquid waste into sewers. - According to CNA (2020), annual missions generated from AC use in an HDB flat with four AC units is greater than yearly emissions generated from driving a car, which stands at about 4.6 tonnes per year. A 2017 survey by Eco-Business also saw 68 per cent of respondents from Singapore encountering excessive cooling of public places such as offices, shopping malls and cinemas.
	Despite the growing desire to shift to green technology and protect our rich biodiversity,

	Singapore is ultimately still limited by physical constraints. <i>[Context]</i> - As a small, resource-constrained country, Singapore imports almost all its energy needs, and has limited renewable energy options: - Lack of sufficiently strong winds, fast flowing water, and geothermal energy sources make those forms of renewable energy inaccessible for us. - Our small physical size (715.8 sq km), high population density and land scarcity constraints the safe deployment of nuclear power in Singapore. - While solar energy is an option, we have limited available land for the large scale deployment of solar panels. In addition, the presence of high cloud cover across Singapore and urban shading poses challenges such as intermittency. - Calls to conserve Dover Forest among members of the public and other nature groups, including Singapore Youth Voices for Biodiversity and LepakInSG, emerged after the Nature Society of Singapore released a proposal suggesting Dover Forest could be turned into a “nature park” in response to plans to develop a part of the forest into a 33ha housing estate. A Change.org petition has been set up to save the forest. In response, National Development Minister Desmond Lee said that in land-scarce and densely populated Singapore, the Government will have to continue balancing the needs of development and conservation as part of its long-term planning processes.
	There is also the issue of safety given that some of our technology employed to reduce environment damage may not be foolproof yet. This leads to more problems than benefits when they threaten lives or may potentially cause more harm to the environment. <i>[Ideal vs Realistic]</i> The use of alternative energies like compressed natural gas (CNG) as a means to

	conserve the environment is still rather problematic, greatly limiting its potential as a primary means of reducing carbon emissions. About 90 per cent of the roughly 1,600 private cars fitted with CNG cylinders have had their vehicles inspected or have applied to get the CNG system removed according to the Land Transport Authority (LTA). Of 1,363 cars inspected, 105 were found with gas leakage. In 2017, two CNG taxis actually caught fire.
Related recent examples	
- Cross Island MRT Line to run directly under Central Catchment Nature Reserve https://www.straitstimes.com/singapore/transport/cross-island-mrt-line-to-run-directly-under-central-catchment-nature-reserve - Singapore unveils Green Plan 2030, outlines green targets for next 10 years https://www.channelnewsasia.com/singapore/singapore-green-plan-2030-targets-10-years-1883021 - Singapore firms will get time to adapt to higher carbon tax https://www.straitstimes.com/singapore/politics/higher-carbon-tax-can-spur-green-transition-but-must-be-calibrated-to-help-spore-firms-stay-competitive - Singapore Has a S\$100 Billion Plan to Survive in a Far Hotter World Than Experts Predicted https://www.bloomberg.com/news/features/2020-02-25/singapore-has-a-100-billion-plan-for-adapting-to-climate-change - Commentary: Air-conditioning – the unspoken energy guzzler in Singapore https://www.channelnewsasia.com/commentary/air-con-unit-electricity-energy-carbon-emissions-climate-change-1339326	

Question 4	
Does environmental degradation affect us all equally?	
Question Analysis with Conceptual Understanding	
<u>Issue:</u> Economic degradation is a global problem. However, the impacts of the economic crisis may not be equally felt.	<u>Context:</u> Global
<u>Conceptual Understanding:</u> - The issue of environmental degradation could be discussed in terms of its impacts on different societies depending on their context (economic/geographical/political/etc), as well as on the different groups within a society, again depending on their context (economic/political/etc) - The issue of environmental degradation may be linked to other issues such as how it exacerbates, or is exacerbated by, other issues to show connections across trends - The issue of environmental degradation should also be considered across time – how it may have worsened or gotten better due to related trends	
<u>Key words:</u> Environmental degradation: this refers to how the natural environment has been compromised, often as a result of human activity. It can refer to loss of biodiversity, the different forms of pollution, climate change etc. Affect us all: the impacts and consequences of this degradation on humans around the world Equally: measure the extent of the impacts and whether it is of similar scale. This word signals the need to make some comparisons of the impacts felt by different groups of people.	
<u>Significant aspects/areas to be discussed (5W1H, Multiple Perspectives, Significant Trends, SPECTRAM):</u> - Students need to consider the state of the climate emergency and its <i>impacts</i>. - Students should consider different types of <i>impacts</i> of environmental problems e.g. climate change, resource depletion, pollution etc. - Students would need to identify different <i>groups of individuals/stakeholders/players</i> who may face different impacts due to environmental degradation. - Students can consider <i>trends</i> of richer nations buying their way out of climate issues or the problem of a climate apartheid.	
Possible Stands	
- Environmental degradation does not affect everyone equally, but the impacts felt by different groups are largely similar. - Environmental degradation does not affect everyone equally and the impacts felt by different groups are vastly different	
Reasons why the impacts of environmental degradation on different groups are largely similar	Reasons why the impacts of environmental degradation on different groups are vastly different
Additionally, in the sense that environmental degradation transcends borders, we are all in the same	Developing countries tend to disproportionately bear the brunt of environmental degradation as they are

boat, as its impact on air, water, and climate inevitably affects our physical health, no matter where we live—even if some suffer more than others.

- Although Singapore experiences little to no forest fires, the transboundary nature of haze means that it frequently suffers from air pollution caused by forest fires in neighbouring countries.
- A study found that microplastics cause damage to human cells in the laboratory at levels known to be ingested by people through their food. The research showed that the harm included cell death and allergic reactions, highlighting the potential adverse effects of microplastic exposure on human health. Microplastics affect different parts of the world due to their pervasive presence in the environment. They have been found in remote places far from human activities, such as the most remote areas of the earth, including polar regions and remote islands. Studies have shown that microplastics are major contributors to plastic pollution and are widely distributed in the environment, with high-income countries being the main contributors. The continuous use of everyday items, such as clothing and cosmetics, leads to the release of microplastics into the environment, posing a threat to human and planetary health. Therefore, microplastics have a global impact, affecting various regions and ecosystems across the world.
<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0048969720338717>

Additionally, in the sense of how inescapable environmental degradation is, we are all equally vulnerable, since its species-endangering impacts cannot be fully contained despite affecting different groups to varying degrees.

usually poorly equipped to find ways to prepare for and prevent environmental threats. To make matters worse, richer nations have used their wealth to their advantage to outsource environmental problems to poorer nations.

- Poor countries tend to have more poorly constructed homes, fewer resources for emergency response and relocation after sea level rise, and weaker health care systems ill-equipped to deal with increased rates of tropical disease. From 1980-2007, only 15 percent of hurricanes, typhoons, and the like happened in low-income countries, but 68 percent of people killed by these storms died in poorer nations.
<https://www.lse.ac.uk/granthaminstitute/news/cyclone-idais-devastating-impacts-highlight-the-importance-of-overseas-aid-from-rich-to-poor-countries/>
- As technology advances exponentially around the world, consumers are constantly purchasing, upgrading, replacing and discarding their electric products. Among the developed nations, the U.S. alone throws away 400 million tons of electronic items per year. To avoid spending the large amount of money needed to recycle e-waste formally, developed countries illegally ship their e-waste to developing countries for disposal. In Agbogbloshie, Ghana — a former wetland turned toxic electronics graveyard — young men make a living of about \$2.50 a day sorting through e-waste with their bare hands. Heaps of e-waste are set on fire or doused with chemical solvents in order to burn off the rubber and plastic so workers can harvest the valuable materials inside. Breathing in toxic fumes day after day with no protective equipment, many workers reportedly die of cancer and other illnesses by the time they're 20 years old.
<https://www.pureearth.org/project/agbobloshie-e-waste/>

Developing nations also face a more immediate impact from environmental degradation given their livelihoods are dependent on natural resources. When these resources are affected by climate change, their ability to make a living is significantly affected.

• Humans have already heated the planet by roughly 1.1 degrees Celsius since the 19th century, largely by burning coal, oil and gas for energy. And the consequences can be felt across the globe. • South Sudan: The country has been affected by floods and droughts, with temperatures increasing at two and a half times the global average. Severe flooding at the end of 2022 affected more than 900,000 people • Pakistan: The country experienced heavy rainfall causing flooding and landslides, affecting the lives of many people • Somalia: Climate change has worsened challenges of drought and extreme food insecurity, affecting an estimated eight million Somalis, nearly half of the country's population • Syria: Flooding in late 2022 affected more than 1 million people in the country, exacerbating an already existing economic crisis • Brazil, India, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, and Indonesia: These countries were among the most affected in overall dollars, with the UAE, Mauritania, Saudi Arabia, Oman, and Mali being the most affected based on GDP https://www.pbs.org/newshour/science/climate-change-caused-by-wealthy-nations-creates-harm-for-poorer-study-says	• The impact of global warming on the well-being of herders and farmers in Somalia is evident despite the country contributing less than 0.003% of greenhouse gas emissions into the atmosphere. Climate change-related disasters, such as prolonged droughts, floods, and locust infestations, have significantly affected the livelihoods of herders and farmers in Somalia. These events have led to the displacement of thousands of people, threatening food security and causing devastating consequences for herders and farmers in the region. Despite its minimal contribution to greenhouse gas emissions, Somalia is among the most climate-vulnerable countries, and the adverse effects of climate change are acutely felt by its population. https://www.icrcnewsroom.org/story/en/1960/somalia-climate-change-and-conflict-threaten-herders • The impact of climate change on rice production in Bangladesh is well-documented. Several studies have highlighted the adverse effects of climate change on rice yields in the country. For example, research from the University of Arkansas indicates that climate change is expected to reduce overall rice production in Bangladesh by an average of 7.4% every year over the period 2005–2050. Additionally, a study published in the Japan Times suggests that worsening soil salinity due to climate change could cut the production of high-yielding rice varieties by 15.6% in Bangladesh by 2050. These findings support the claim that climate change is impacting rice production in Bangladesh, which could have significant implications for food supplies in the region. https://www.japantimes.co.jp/environment/2023/09/01/climate-change/bangladesh-farmers-climate-damage/
	The geographical location of people determines the severity of impact faced from environmental degradation. • Low-lying countries are particularly vulnerable to climate change. Rising sea levels mean that Kiribati may be wiped off the map entirely in the coming decades. The islands are only six

	feet above sea level and sit upon a system of atolls and reef islands, which means that rising sea levels are a threat to the nation’s existence. The islands have even purchased 5,000 acres of land in Fiji in case they need to relocate. https://www.ipcc.ch/srocc/chapter/chapter-4-sea-level-rise-and-implications-for-low-lying-islands-coasts-and-communities/
Related recent examples	
• Which countries are most affected by climate change? https://www.oxfamamerica.org/explore/issues/climate-action/which-countries-are-most-affected-by-climate-change/ • Microplastics are everywhere: Is it possible to reduce our exposure? https://www.bbc.com/future/article/20240110-microplastics-are-everywhere-is-it-possible-to-reduce-our-exposure • Sea level rise: Everything you need to know https://www.weforum.org/stories/2024/09/rising-sea-levels-global-threat/	

Question 5	
'Young people today are only concerned about themselves.' Comment.	
Question Analysis	
<u>Issue:</u> Young people today, perhaps from their behaviour and way of thinking, have been accused of being self-absorbed and only concerned about themselves. Are young people today truly only concerned about themselves?	<u>Context:</u> Today, global
<u>Conceptual Understanding:</u> - The different concerns of young people could be discussed from different societal contexts (economic/geographical/political/etc), as well as the different groups within a society, again depending on their context (economic/political/etc) - The different concerns of young people may be linked to other issues such as how their preoccupation with themselves/other issues may exacerbate, or is exacerbated by other trends in society - The different concerns of young people should also be considered across time – how it may have changed due to related trends	
<u>Key words:</u> - Young people: - A person generally from 14 to 17 years of age (Oxford Dictionary) - UN defines 'youth' as those persons between the ages of 15 and 24 years for statistical purposes - The operational definition and nuances of the idea of young people vary from country to country, depending on relative sociocultural, institutional, economic and political factors. - Only: Single, one, no one and nothing more; extreme degree (will likely have to disagree with the word/claim in the stand, unless it is absolutely reasonable to do so) - Concerned: Something that troubles you that is important to you	
<u>Significant aspects/areas to be discussed (5W1H, Multiple Perspectives, Significant Trends, SPECTRAM):</u> - How young people behave and why they behave in such a way - How communities and countries perceive young people - How people of different age groups perceive young people - Changes/trends that have influenced the way young people think and behave (e.g. education, social media, modern technology) - Note: When disagreeing with the question, you ought not to be providing arguments to examine specific issues young people are concerned with (e.g. young people today are concerned with the environment). This would lead to example-driven arguments that <u>do not</u> directly and insightfully address the question. Instead, you should be examining <u>reasons</u> for <u>why</u> young people are concerning themselves with things beyond them (refer to arguments below).	
Possible Stands	
- It is not true that young people are only concerned about themselves although they are largely concerned with/care mainly about themselves. - It is not true that young people are only concerned about themselves; in fact, majority of them show concern for bigger societal issues beyond themselves.	

Reasons why young people today are largely concerned with themselves	Reasons why young people today are <u>largely</u> concerned with bigger societal issues beyond themselves
Today's young people are hard-pressed to give themselves an advantage in order to succeed in an environment bridled with stiff competition. Being concerned with themselves is necessary to survive in today's world. Research by YMCA revealed that 44% of young people have concerns about their studies and exam pressures. Academic standards are higher than ever, and there is increased pressure to excel and demonstrate a well-rounded profile https://www.roundmidnight.org.uk/understanding-the-challenges-young-people-face-in-2021-and-beyond/	As a result of greater use of social media, today's young people are becoming increasingly more enlightened about issues that may not concern them directly but that they want to help with. Through social media, many young people have learned about the HeForShe campaign, a platform founded by UN Women for engaging men and boys in support of gender equality. Emma Watson's speech at the United Nations Headquarters during the launch of the HeForShe campaign resonated with young audiences and quickly spread through social media. In a HeForShe University Tour in Thailand, students reflected on their role in ending gender inequality, and encouraged the university administration to make concrete changes to end gender-based violence on campus during the panel discussions. Students also translated their knowledge into practical initiatives for change during the tour's interactive, group discussion sessions.
Young people are grappling with perennial adolescent woes magnified by modern societal issues. Hence, it is understandable why young people today are worried by their individual concerns. - Millions of teenagers worry about their body image, with social media being a key cause. A survey by the Mental Health Foundation found that almost one-third of teenagers felt ashamed in relation to their body image, and more than a third worried about it often or every day https://www.verywellfamily.com/startling-facts-about-todays-teenagers-2608914 - Some young people constantly worry about flaws in their appearance, focus on specific areas of their body, and change their eating habits as a way to feel more in control of their appearance https://www.youngminds.org.uk/young-person/coping-with-life/body-image/	Young people's concerns are multifaceted, and while they do care a lot about their own image, a growing trend among young people today is to build their image around being a socially and politically engaged individual. Thus, their individual concerns and concern for bigger issues become very closely tied. The Black Lives Matter movement has seen significant engagement from young people, particularly on social media and through public protests. Many young people engage in Performative Social Media Activism by posting about BLM on social media. Some use hashtags like #BlackLivesMatter or purchase products with BLM messaging in order to follow a certain trend. However, this does not mean that they are not concerned about the issue. Young, black women have been at the forefront of the fight to end racism, using social media to push for policy change. Students have also pressured their schools to support the BLM movement, urging administrations to match donations and protect Black students on campus. The BLM

	movement has engaged youth providing a way for Black youth to exert collective identity and decrease feelings of powerlessness. The sustained pressure for the BLM movement indicates the significant involvement of young people in advocating for social change.
Related recent examples	
• HeForShe takes the message of gender equality to students and staff in university tour https://asiapacific.unwomen.org/en/news-and-events/stories/2019/10/heforshe-takes-the-message-of-gender-equality-to-students-and-staff-in-university-tour • Gen Z Leads The Black Lives Matter Movement, On And Off Social Media https://www.forbes.com/sites/rebeccabellan/2020/06/12/gen-z-leads-the-black-lives-matter-movement-on-and-off-social-media/	