

Suggested Answer Key

From Passage 1

1. In paragraph 1, why has the author placed information about another of Burden's performance inside brackets (lines 6-7)? [2m]

From the passage/Lift		Suggested Answer	Marks
Try as he might, Burden never quite matched the shock of his spectacular debut (and he did try, once letting himself be crucified onto the back of a Volkswagen Beetle). (l.5-7)	A	[Function] The author i. wishes to <u>include a side note / additional / supplementary information / information not central to the main point</u> ii. <u>to illustrate / demonstrate OR emphasise to the reader that</u> i. Both i. and ii. required for A.	1m
	B	[Context]: Focus of bracketed text is on Burden's <u>subsequent attempts</u> to match his initial effort. (Clue: 'try as he might'... 'he did try') Burden <u>made an attempt to match / supersede / top his initial / very first showcase (by allowing himself to be crucified on the back of a Volkswagen Beetle.)</u> [Note: Answer should focus on his re-attempt and not on the 'extreme nature' of his performance]	1m

2. Explain what the author means by writing ‘there is a broadmindedness so roomy that it is indistinguishable from indifference, and it is lethal’ (lines 14-15). [2m]

From the passage/Lift		Suggested Answer	Marks
But there is a <u>broadmindedness so roomy</u> (l. 14)	A	The author implies that the general attitude towards the arts is <u>too / overly / excessively accommodating / liberal.</u> Note: must capture the intensity of “so roomy”.	1-2 pts = 1m 3 pts = 2m
that it is indistinguishable from <u>indifference</u> , (l. 14-15)	B	such that we cannot tell it apart from <u>apathy / detachment / a total lack of concern.</u> <i>Note: answer must capture how there is no difference between excessive broadmindedness and indifference</i>	
and it is lethal . (l. 15)	C	Such an attitude could cause the demise of OR be fatal / deadly to the arts. Must capture the intensity that it is death causing or extremely dangerous.	

3. In lines 24-25, what does the author have to say about the future of the art market? [3m]

From the passage/Lift		Suggested Answer	Marks
One can expect <u>more</u> such record-breaking in the art market over the next few years as it is (l.24)	A	[FOCUS: Stronger market (not rate/speed of growth)] The author is implying that the art market will continue to experience <u>increasing/ stronger growth</u> OR new highs in the demand for / value / prices of art, and Must capture the comparative 'more'.	1m
... bolstered by ... (l.25)	B	Focus: Strong growth is fuelled by this growth / expansion is fuelled / driven by	1m
<u>Hong Kong dollars, Swiss francs, and Qatari riyals.</u> (l.25)	C	[INF] Focus: International buyers/clientele OR global demand OR diverse markets demand that comes / arises from <u>buyers / customers / collectors / countries around the world / diverse markets</u> OR <u>international / global / world</u> demand for art.	1m

4. In lines 29-31, what distinction does the author make between what was expected of an informed citizen in the past and what is expected today? [2m]

From the passage / Lift		Suggested Answer	Marks
Fifty years ago, educated people could be expected to <u>identify the likes of Saul Bellow, Buckminster Fuller, and Jackson Pollock</u> , (l.29-30)	A	Point of contrast: 1. Cognitive knowledge/awareness of Arts vs knowledge of the Sciences 2. Students can make a reasonable inference so long as context & support for the distinction is provided e.g. intangible value vs practical application. While enlightened individuals in the past were required to be <u>able to recognise / be acquainted with artists / architects / artistic endeavours</u>, Must capture the expectation placed on informed citizens (based on close reading of the text and repetition of the phrase, "expected to").	2m or 0
while today one is expected to <u>know</u> about the <u>human genome, AI and the debate over global warming</u> (l.30-31)	B	educated people today are required to <u>understand / be aware of</u> developments in <u>science / technology</u>.	

5. In lines 40-41, the author claims that the arts 'need to draw inspiration from the society and culture that is its substrate'. How does the metaphor of a 'plucked flower' (line 46) support his claim? [2m]

From the passage/Lift		Suggested Answer	Marks
Indeed ... the arts, which <u>need to draw inspiration</u> from the society and culture that is its <u>substrate</u>. (l.40-41) The human experience is needed to enrich art, and <u>without a meaningful living connection</u> to the society that nurtures it, art is a plucked flower. (l.45-46)	A	The metaphor supports his claim by showing that [Metaphorical / figurative meaning: To be captured – a flower needs to draw nourishment to survive OR a plucked flower being removed from its source of nourishment] just as / in the same way that i. a flower <u>requires soil / a proper environment / needs to be planted in the ground / soil</u>, OR ii. a plucked flower <u>cannot draw nutrients from the soil / its environment / the ground</u>,	2m or 0
	B	[Contextual meaning: To be captured – arts need to draw inspiration from / to be connected to society/culture] the arts i. similarly require a <u>deep / significant / real / an authentic link / relationship</u> with society / culture (optional: to thrive / attain value / be enhanced). OR ii. similarly <u>cannot survive / exist</u> without <u>obtaining references / ideas / insights from society and culture</u>.	

From Passage 2

6. Summarise what the author has to say about the characteristics and impact of art. Write your summary in **no more than 120 words**. [8]

NOTE:

- **BOLD** = key word(s)/phrase(s) that *ideally* should be paraphrased
- UNDERLINE = key ideas that need to be captured (but need not be paraphrased)

From the passage	Point	Suggested answer
Art is anything that <u>stirs something deep within us</u> . (l.1) OR What art depicts can evoke a <u>visceral, almost cellular</u> reaction. (l.10-11)	A	[Characteristic/Impact: Stirs instinctual response] Art is anything that <u>elicits</u> / brings forth an instinctual / <u>innate</u> / <u>gut</u> response in us.
...art has managed to <u>survive</u> the confines of what was considered as 'true art' (l.3-4)	B	[Characteristic: Resists definition] Art <u>resists</u> definition / <u>cannot</u> be pigeonholed .
Art is a form of <u>performative</u> and <u>visual language</u> (l.6)	C	[Characteristic: Visual communication] [INFERRED – combining both qualities] Art is a form of <u>expression</u> / <u>communication</u> that has to be viewed / seen (to be appreciated). OR [PARAPHRASE – accept either or] Art is a <u>dramatic</u> OR <u>graphic/pictorial</u> form of <u>expression/communication</u> .
...it has been an <u>important</u> contributor to an existing <u>discourse</u> (l.6-7)	D	[Impact: Significantly shapes discussion of issues] Art has been [1] <u>vital</u> in influencing / has <u>profoundly</u> shaped / directed [2] current / contemporary <u>conversations</u> / <u>dialogue</u> . Note: Both [1] and [2] needed
It has even created a <u>new narrative</u> around a particular issue (l.7-8)	E	[Impact: Generated fresh perspectives] Art has even [1] generated <u>novel</u> / <u>fresh</u> / <u>original perspectives</u> / <u>insights</u> [2] about a topic / concern.
Art has also exposed issues of <u>social justice</u> (l.8)	F	[Impact: Uncovered issues of social justice] Art has also brought to light / uncovered <u>social problems</u> / <u>unfairness</u> .
As a cultural tool, art has helped <u>actualise</u> the emotions, grievances, and fears of <u>those who may not have another place</u> to voice concerns. (l.8-10)	G	[Characteristic/Impact: Concretises the experiences of the powerless] Art <u>expresses/ concretises</u> / <u>makes real</u> the plight / experiences / suffering <u>of the marginalised</u> .
As an illustrative tool, art has <u>inspired</u> us to <u>action</u> . (l.10-11)	H	[Impact: Has spurred people to take action] As a device for expression, art has <u>spurred</u> people to <u>fight</u> for a better society / <u>oppose</u> the status quo.

However, <u>not all</u> forms of <u>art</u> are <u>seen equally</u> . (I.12) OR This is causing only <u>certain forms of art</u> to <u>precede others</u> .	I	[Characteristic: Not all art valued equally/Value of art is subjective] Different art forms are <u>valued differently</u> . OR Some types of art are regarded as <u>superior / better</u> to others. OR INFERRED <u>How art is valued is subjective.</u>
...(popular culture that) <u>challenges mainstream perspective</u> (I.16-17)	J	[Impact: Challenges prevailing views] Art can also <u>question / confront prevailing / dominant ideas / ideals / opinions / beliefs</u> .
Art is everywhere (I.21)	K	[Characteristic/Impact: Art is ubiquitous] Art is ubiquitous / all-pervasive / prevalent .
and that is why it <u>continues</u> to be relevant to many. (I.21)	L	[Impact: Sustained importance] That is why it <u>remains</u> significant / important / meaningful . Accept: any reasonable interpretation of 'relevant'
...a visual biography of their surrounding <u>culture</u> (I.23)	M	[Impact: Serve as record/chronicle of culture or tradition] Art is a graphic chronicle / record of our <u>customs / way of life / traditions / norms / behaviours</u> .

Points	1-2	3-4	5	6	7	8	9	10+
Marks	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8

From all the passages

7. Passage 1 states that 'A basic familiarity with the ideas of the leading artists and architects is no longer part of the essential cultural equipment of an informed citizen' (lines 27-29).

Identify **one** specific idea from Passage 3 which can be used to undermine this statement. Justify your answer. [2]

Pt	From Passage 3	Suggested answer	Mk
	[MAIN IDEA expressed in lines 27-29 of Passage 1] 1. Informed citizens are no longer familiar with the arts OR 2. Informed citizens no longer believe that it is "essential"/necessary/useful to be familiar with the arts		
A1	In fact, if it weren't for people's understanding and enjoyment of art, our history, culture, and traditions would be in more <u>danger of being forgotten</u> than they already are. (I.6-8)	Identify The idea from Passage 3, found in lines (6-8), states that it was an awareness and appreciation of art that allowed for our culture to <u>be</u> better <u>sustained</u> , instead of lost.	1

B1	A basic familiarity with the ideas of the leading artists and architects is no longer part of the essential cultural equipment of an informed citizen (l. 27-29)	<u>Justify</u> This undermines the claim in Passage 1 because it implies the important role the arts have played in preserving culture, <u>directly refuting</u> the idea from Passage 1 that suggests that citizens of today are not culturally / artistically informed or equipped.	1
A2	Art also promotes <u>cultural appreciation</u> among a generation that's currently preoccupied with technology. (l. 5-6)	<u>Identify</u> The idea from Passage 3, found in lines (5-6), states that art increases/enhances people's perception of how important their <u>heritage/culture is</u> (optional: who are otherwise fixated by/addicted to their devices/technology).	1
B2	A basic familiarity with the ideas of the leading artists and architects is no longer part of the essential cultural equipment of an informed citizen (l. 27-29)	<u>Justify</u> This undermines the claim in Passage 1 because it shows that art leads/prompts/causes <u>people to place value on the arts/view the arts as necessary/significant.</u>	1

Note: Accept any reasonable justification.

RED HERRING (0)

Everyone has emotions and personal experiences, and therefore anyone can learn to appreciate art regardless of social background, economic standing, or political affiliation. (l. 11-13)

- This is incorrect because it is about how art is accessible to all, no matter one's social, economic or political circumstances, whereas lines 27-29 of Passage 1 is stating that citizens are poorly equipped when it comes to artistic or 'cultural equipment' (line 29)

[Art] makes you think about current ideas and inspire you to make your own. In fact, studies have shown that exposure to art can make you better in other fields of knowledge. (l.15-17)

- This is incorrect because there is no specific reference to cultural knowledge

8. Passage 2 states that art has 'exposed issues of social justice' (line 8).

Identify **one** specific idea from Passage 3 which can be used to support this statement. Justify your answer. [2]

Pt	From Passage 3	Suggested answer	Mk
	[MAIN IDEA expressed in line 8 of Passage 2] Art has uncovered/revealed social injustices or issues affecting/leading to social injustices		

A1	While art can't really solve poverty or promote social justice on its own, it can be used as a level playing field for <u>discourse and expression</u> . (l.9-11)	<u>Identify</u> The idea from Passage 3, found in lines 9-11 while art is unable to overcome problems concerning fairness / inequity without other support / interventions, it creates fairer conditions to help people engage in <u>discussion and have their say</u> .	1
B1	exposed issues of social justice. (l. 8)	<u>Justify</u> This supports the claim in Passage 2 because such conditions <u>lead to more comprehensive / open conversations / discussions</u> , which in turn is likely to engender greater awareness of the 'issues of social justice' mentioned. OR <u>would uncover / reveal issues of social justice</u> .	1
A2	[A]rt breaks <u>cultural, social, and economic barriers</u> . (l.9)	<u>Identify</u> The idea from passage 3, found in line 9, states that art knocks down / overcomes <u>all kinds of walls / obstacles</u> .	
B2		<u>Justify</u> This supports the claim in Passage 2 because it suggests that (INFERRED) art can <u>transcend obstacles that may block expression</u> of those who face / are suffering from social injustices. OR art can transcend obstacles that <u>impede / prevent people / society from being aware of / understanding</u> issues of social injustices.	

Note: Accept any reasonable justification.

RED HERRINGS (0)

In a world where some don't even have access to good education, art makes education an even greater equaliser of society. (l.2-4)

- This is incorrect because based on the claim from Passage 2 ('exposed issues of social justice'), the positive impact of art on issues is **indirect**, in the sense that art helps to uncover or draw attention to issues of social justice, not to solve or lessen harm done. In contrast, this idea from Passage 3 implies that art directly addresses inequality by making education more effective as an 'equaliser of society'.

9 The reading passages cover a range of views about the relevance of art. [12]

How far do you agree or disagree with the views expressed about art's relevance today?

Support your answer with reference to:

- the ideas and opinions from at least one of the reading passages
- examples drawn from your own experience and that of your society

Possible areas of Evaluation

Passage/Para	Author argues that	Possible areas of evaluation
Passage 1, Para 2	Line 10 <i>No one expressed any palpable sense of shock or revulsion.</i>	<i>Michael Lewis argues that society, which the students represent, has appeared to become emotionally nonchalant or desensitised towards art that is designed to provoke a reaction (line 10), diminishing the relevance of art.</i> <u>AGREE</u> • Arguably, this apathetic reaction to art that is also evident in Singaporeans could possibly be due to the strict regulation of the arts and a corresponding culture of self-censorship, which then results in the lack of proclivity for the local arts scene to challenge, disturb or outrage. <u>Possible EV & supporting examples</u> • On the grounds that Singapore's social fabric is too fragile to withstand views that may offend, intentionally or otherwise, the government has enforced strict cultural and artistic OB markers on what is deemed 'acceptable art'. This can be seen in the artworks gracing Singapore Art Week 2025: ranging from Han Sai Por's <i>Travelling Through the Tropical Rainforest</i> to Beverley Ng's <i>Return to Paradise (Play)</i>, the narrative focus centred mainly on 'safe' themes like the interplay between natural and urban environments in a city's evolving landscape and the nostalgia linked aspects of Singaporean life in the 2000s like gaming arcades and pasar malams respectively. This form of self-censorship comes as no surprise, given that a large portion of arts funding comes from the state-backed National Arts Council, subtly pressuring local artists into conforming to state narratives. Sensing this, most Singaporeans have come to assume that local art, especially in state-sanctioned events like the Singapore Art Week, is merely a vehicle for the attainment of national goals. Consequently, their attitude towards local art is that artistic endeavours, be it as an artist or audience, is primarily an aesthetic pursuit, rather than a revolutionary one. At worst, public perception of Singapore art can quite dismissive, even detached.

		<u>DISAGREE</u> - Contrary to what the author argues, this apathetic behaviour is becoming less and less common in Singapore, especially with marked improvements in arts literacy and increased awareness of art developments and controversies. <u>Possible EV & supporting examples</u> - It would be unfair to say that Singaporeans think of local art as bland and unprovocative. Singaporeans are no longer unthinking nor uncaring about art, given the greater accessibility of public art, which in turn is helping to nurture a more art-literate population. The government has invested in multi-million-dollar schemes like the Our SG Arts Plan as well as the SG Culture Pass to make the arts a lot more affordable. Consequently, there is free admission to many museums and free arts programmes or events under the ArtsEverywhere@CDC initiative. Singaporeans will also receive credits to spend on arts events with paid admission. Combined with growing affluence, there has been an increase in the consumption of the arts by Singaporeans, especially with venues like the National Gallery and the ArtScience Museum that regularly house international installations for Singaporeans to experience. This greater exposure indirectly influences stronger opinions about the art pieces Singaporeans encounter. For example, rather than being indifferent, Singaporeans have been roused to critique various local art ranging from decrying street art by 'guerrilla' artist Samantha Lo aka the 'Sticker Lady' and LaSalle student Priyageetha Dia as mere vandalism, to condemning Vincent Leow's 2018 abstract sketch of a nude human figure and a rooster to be "promoting bestiality". Most recently, Sean Dunston's mural of a smoking samsui woman drew heated dialogue from all quarters about the appropriateness of art seemingly promoting consumption of cigarettes. With greater arts exposure made possible by government efforts, Singaporeans are evidently developing their own sense of what constitutes good or bad art, and increasingly taking to social media and online petitions to express our responses to such art pieces. This was perhaps the strength of art, given its visual nature that appeals to all segments of society and a less confrontational way to engage the community and authorities. The mural therefore provided an important opportunity for various communities to engage in dialogue with each other as a way to negotiate the boundaries of what is acceptable in society, which is important in Singapore's progress to a
--	--	---

		civil society. What emerged from this was a robust yet civil debate that led to the Singapore government allowing the mural to be retained in full, with a plaque installed at the side to caution people on the harm of smoking.
Passage 1, Para 4	<u>Lines 19-21</u> <i>In terms of quantifiable data – prices spent on paintings and photographs and sculptures, visitors accommodated and funds raised and square footage created at museums – the picture could hardly be rosier.</i>	<i>In paragraph 4, Lewis acknowledges that in terms of economic value, as represented by “quantifiable data” (line 22) art does have great significance in society today.</i> AGREE - This “rosy” economic picture of the arts also applies to Singapore, due to robust government funding and support. Possible EV & supporting examples The government recognises the importance of strengthening Singapore’s soft power and ‘cultural diplomacy’, and to that end, has pumped in ever-increasing amount of funding, enhanced infrastructure (through the Arts Housing Scheme and setting up institutions like the ArtScience Museum and the National Gallery) as well as refreshed nationwide strategic programmes to develop a healthy local arts ecosystem (Our SG Arts Plan, launched in 2023, has been given an additional S\$100mil funding; the newly announced SG Culture Pass initiative saw a total of \$300 million set to encourage Singaporeans to attend local performances, exhibitions and experiences). - Singapore has also cemented itself as a major stop on tour routes for international artists – Taylor Swift’s <i>Eras</i> tour alone generated tourism receipts of upwards of S\$350mil, while Lady Gaga’s recently concluded <i>Mayhem</i> concerts have been projected to rake in about S\$250mil. Famously, these dates were the only stop in Southeast Asia, and were in part due to active efforts by the promoter and MCCYS in guaranteeing such exclusivity. Internationally-acclaimed theatrical performances like <i>Hamilton</i>, <i>Wicked</i> and <i>Phantom of the Opera</i> are on constant rotation in the Sands Theatres, and form a major portion of Singapore’s efforts in projecting an image of a culturally-vibrant first class city. In terms of tangible, quantifiable data, it does appear as if the arts in Singapore are more significant than ever.
Passage 1, Para 5	<u>Lines 27-29</u> <i>A basic familiarity with the ideas of the leading artists and architects is no longer part of the essential cultural equipment of an informed citizen.</i>	<i>In paragraph 5, Lewis claims that “familiarity with the ideas of leading artists” (line 27) is no longer considered necessary, suggesting that the arts are presently not perceived to form a significant part of people’s way of life, particularly in relation to the sciences.</i> AGREE It is arguably true that public esteem and recognition accorded to luminaries in various artistic fields in the past

		have given way to a more utilitarian focus on the practical/economic value of the sciences. <u>Possible EV & supporting examples</u> - Pioneering artists like poet Edwin Thumboo, jazz musician Jeremy Monteiro, Chinese writer You Jin and visual arts pioneer Georgette Chen were not only Cultural Medallion winners but also widely celebrated amongst Singaporeans of their time. However, the sustained state push to drive economic growth through investing in Research, Innovation, and Enterprise (RIE) in areas like artificial intelligence and biomedical research, develop a STEM-literate population, and promote STEM careers through career fairs and initiatives like STEM Industrial Partnership Programmes (IPP) and Promotion of Women in Engineering, Research and Science (POWERS), have strengthened the appeal of STEM at the expense of the arts. This national shift towards the STEM disciplines has subtly strengthened the perception that the sciences are more important, and correspondingly that careers in such areas are more prestigious. With fewer and fewer individuals choosing to pursue the arts, there has been a sharp decline in such illustrious Singaporeans in the local arts scene. - Furthermore, even with greater efforts at introducing local and globally renowned artistes in school curriculum and enrichment programmes, these efforts are often perceived as supplementary, rather than central to what a successful Singaporean student and later, working adult, should have as part of their worldview. Focus is still very much on major high-stakes national exams, which rarely – if ever – require students to have a “basic familiarity with the ideas of leading artists and architects”. - As a result, Singaporeans often view the arts as a luxury and a complement, rather than core or essence to their major priorities, including career, material wealth and issues which align to their pragmatic mindset. <u>DISAGREE</u> - While this perception of the arts may have been true in the past, it is actively being reshaped by the government’s efforts to leverage the arts to strengthen national identity and social cohesion. <u>Possible EV & examples</u> - Good arts programming has helped strengthen Singapore’s cultural “heartware”, building stronger connections between the arts and Singaporeans that serve to link Singaporeans to their cultural heritage and simultaneously transcending sociocultural boundaries to bring Singaporeans together. Such developments go
--	--	--

		beyond quantitative figures depicting the fiscal health of the arts in Singapore, to suggest that the presence of the arts is not as weak as that which is depicted. The Esplanade holds annual cultural festivals such as Huayi, Pesta Raya and Kalaa Utsavam so that they coincide with key cultural/ethnic celebrations like Chinese New Year, Hari Raya Puasa, and Deepavali or “Festival of Lights”. Such smart programming helps root appreciation of the arts in Singaporeans’ cultural and ethnic traditions. • More tellingly, data from the National Arts Council has consistently demonstrated that Singaporeans who engaged with the arts during childhood were more likely to express higher levels of engagement and greater interest in the arts as adults. The deliberate and conscious inclusion of arts education and literacy in primary and secondary schools has resulted in a slow-drip effect on the population – while still not yet “essential cultural equipment” of the everyday Singaporean, the arts is still part of the general consciousness of younger citizens who are, indeed, more aware, engaged and participative in arts events.
Passage 2, Para 2	<u>Line 8</u> Art has also exposed issues of social justice.	<i>Passage 2 makes the point that art’s ability to allow us to reveal “issues of social justice” (line 8) gives it great relevance.</i> <u>AGREE:</u> • This point is highly reflective of Singapore society, where art has increasingly served as an indirect yet powerful medium to cast a light on groups that have arguably been unfairly treated, while negotiating a tightly controlled civic landscape. <u>Possible EV & examples as support</u> • Art in Singapore, especially given the context of a closely monitored cultural and political space, is one of the few mediums still able to highlight instances where certain groups have been unjustly treated, even persecuted. Expression, speech and public discourse are formally and informally limited by a combination of hard laws like the Public Entertainment Act and the Public Order Act, as well as tacit rules in the form of OB markers that set limits on public protests and what Singaporeans can and cannot say in the public space respectively. Art allows artists to circumvent these restrictions and bring the unjust treatment of certain groups to light. Haresh Sharma’s 2008 play “Gemuk Girls” critiqued the tight political control exerted by the ruling party and the latter’s utilisation of the Internal Security Act to silence political opponents, but does so indirectly through dramatising the emotional fallout suffered by fictional characters who went through such an experience as well as the profound effects on their family dynamics. Another example is “Tango” by Pandemonium, which examines different

		aspects of what make the lives of LGBTQ individuals in Singapore challenging through the lens of the familiar themes of parenthood, filial piety, duty, and family structure. These examples show that, by conceptualising unconventional or non-state-sanctioned narratives as artistic endeavours, art is still able to interrogate dominant political or societal narrative
Passage 2, Para 2	Lines 8-10 <i>As a cultural tool, art has helped actualise the emotions, grievances, and fears of those who may not have another place to voice concerns.</i>	<i>The arts institution argues that art's relevance to society lies in how it is able to "actualise the emotions, grievances, and fears" (line 10) of groups who may otherwise lack the space to do so.</i> <u>AGREE:</u> - This point is highly applicable to Singapore given the presence of marginalised groups that may lack easy access to platforms to share their trials and tribulations, including those suffering from mental illness and foreign and migrant workers. <u>Possible EV & examples as support</u> - Artists at the ArtScience Museum's MENTAL: Colours of Wellbeing exhibition used their art to interpret the emotional struggles of those living with mental health conditions as well as their caregivers, and depict the often arduous process of healing and recovery sufferers have to go through. Alecia Neo's work Between Earth and Sky is a mixed media exhibit comprising a video and an installation of 14 kites to present and help visitors reflect on the weight that caregivers for the mentally ill deal with on a daily basis. Artist Li Yi Xuan herself suffers from mental health issues, and has created State of Mind to represent and express her own emotions, foster self-recovery, and advocate for the eventual acceptance of all the emotions individuals experience. These examples show art's importance in providing an outlet for us to explore and think about mental health issues, especially in a context where there is still significant stigma or a lack of awareness. - Similarly, another example that shows how art provides a platform for the marginalised to actualise their emotions and voice concerns is the Migrant Worker Poetry Competition that featured poetry written by migrant workers from different countries. which gave Singaporeans authentic and profound glimpses into the emotions and life-worlds of a community that is still commonly misunderstood. Art, specifically poetry, allow them to tell deeply personal stories depicting their inner lives using their own voice, helping to challenge dominant narratives and stereotypes of the migrant workers in a manner that is not tokenistic or overly simplified. Once again, the role that art has played in uncovering otherwise hidden or unseen stories and

		experiences is crucial, showing the sheer relevance of art in Singapore. <u>DISAGREE:</u> - While art <i>can</i> be a powerful tool for exposing social injustice, in the Singapore context, which is a largely conservative one, its ability to actualise emotions and grievances—especially from marginalised groups—is limited by strict regulations, political sensitivities, and cultural gatekeeping. The state exercises significant influence over the arts through funding mechanisms (e.g. the National Arts Council), and laws governing public expression such as the Public Order Act, which discourages overt political or socially controversial content. As a result, artists in Singapore often self-censor, avoid provocative themes, or express dissent only through subtle analogies or subversive ways, which risk diluting the messages. <u>Possible EV & examples as support</u> - A compelling case is Ken Kwek's 2022 film <i>#LookAtMe</i>, which was banned in Singapore by the Infocomm Media Development Authority (IMDA). In the film, the protagonist is offended by a pastor's stance on homosexuality and plots a revenge attack on the pastor. Kwek himself has stated that the film was meant to spark conversation about freedom of expression and the lived experiences of LGBTQ+ individuals—a group that continues to face marginalisation despite legal and social shifts (e.g. the 2022 repeal of Section 377A). The banning of <i>#LookAtMe</i> thus reinforces how, in Singapore, art does not freely serve as a platform for voicing fear, grievances, or emotional truth—particularly when those truths challenge dominant ideologies around religion, sexuality, or authority.
Passage 2, Para 3	<u>Lines 16-17</u> <i>However, popular culture that challenges mainstream perspective can still have a positive impact on society.</i>	<i>The arts institution argues that “popular culture that challenges mainstream perspective” (lines 16-17) should still be considered valuable art.</i> <u>AGREE:</u> - In fact, this ability of popular art to counter commonly held perspectives is particularly important in Singapore, given that constraints imposed on the mainstream arts scene have shrunk the civic and discourse space. <u>Possible EV & examples as support</u> The leveraging of popular culture is strategic where challenging mainstream and/or pro-establishment perspectives are concerned, given how meaningful messages can be embedded and disguised as entertainment, thereby allowing regulatory measures to be bypassed.

		- One of Singapore’s most commercially successful filmmakers, Jack Neo, has consistently used popular cinema as a vehicle for social commentary, demonstrating how art can remain relevant and impactful. His <i>I Not Stupid</i> films offered a pointed critique of Singapore’s rigid education system and the societal preoccupation with academic success, at a time when terms like “helicopter parenting” and “kiasu culture” were not yet widely discussed. By humanising students and parents caught in this relentless pressure and presenting such commentary as entertainment, Neo was able to indirectly critique the costs of our high-stakes education system and spark widespread public reflection. - Likewise, his film <i>Just Follow Law</i> delivers a sharp satire of bureaucratic inefficiency and the entrenched “Yes-Man” mentality in Singapore’s civil service. Though packaged as comedy, the film holds a mirror to the overly rigid, hierarchical structures in public institutions—highlighting the absurdity of systems that value protocol over critical thinking. These examples show that popular culture in Singapore can subtly challenge dominant narratives and stimulate civic discussion, especially when such critique is reconstructed or repackaged as popular art or entertainment, since such commentary is less overtly political and consequently less likely to cross the threshold of being deemed socially or politically seditious. This shows that the mainstream nature of popular art actually greatly enhances its social relevance rather than diminish it. - Additionally, the work of local YouTube creators and comedians like Preeti Nair offers another form of popular culture with social critique. Her satirical videos about racism, class, and social hypocrisy resonate particularly with younger Singaporeans. While her 2019 parody video about a racially insensitive advertisement was removed after backlash, the controversy itself brought national attention to racial stereotyping, showing that humour and internet culture can function as alternative platforms for social critique, even if they are not institutionally sanctioned. <u>DISAGREE</u> - A combination of risk aversion amongst popular culture content creators and the reality of a largely conservative and uncritical audience means that popular culture is often designed to appeal to the broadest audience possible, which can lead to the perpetuation of racial, gender, or class-based stereotypes, rather than challenging them. <u>Possible EV & examples as support</u> - Some of Jack Neo’s films, while socially conscious in intent, have also been criticised for perpetuating
--	--	---

		caricatures of minority races or using slapstick humour that trivialises complex social issues. This suggests that popular culture can inadvertently entrench problematic norms rather than dismantle them.
Passage 2, Para 4	<u>Line 21</u> <i>Art is everywhere, and that is why it continues to be relevant to many.</i>	<i>The arts institution makes the assertion that the sheer ubiquity of art enhances its relevance (line 21).</i> AGREE: - There is certainly a growing visibility of art in everyday common spaces in Singapore, and this comes about because of the recognition that beyond promoting cultural appreciation, art is also very significant as a form of shared social memory and identity-building. Possible EV & examples as support - Recent initiatives like <i>ArtsEverywhere@CDC (2025)</i>, which will bring over 200 performances—from hip-hop and Chinese puppetry to Malay dance workshops—into public neighbourhoods, reflect a deliberate move by arts institutions to democratise access to the arts, and to promote an appreciation of local arts and culture. At the same time, it helps to develop local arts talent by giving them platforms to build their confidence through public street performances. The People’s Gallery, a free exhibit by the National Gallery, leverages augmented reality (AR) technology to reimagine HDB void decks as transformative art spaces. QR Codes situated at various HDB void decks across different neighbourhoods in Singapore allow Singaporeans to view artwork in AR, complemented by informative labels and audio guides. Such measures insert the arts into everyday life and bringing them into close proximity with Singaporeans, helping to connect us to shared memories while simultaneously constructing new shared ones. - In the same vein, Singaporean muralist Yip Yew Chong’s street murals in places like Tiong Bahru, Kampong Glam and Chinatown depict scenes of everyday life and serve as a visual representation of cultural heritage. His murals, such as <i>"Kampong Gelam"</i>, <i>"Provision Shop"</i>, depict scenes of kampung life, traditional trades, and cultural rituals—making history tangible for passers-by and the younger generation. Together, these efforts show the desire by arts practitioners to locate art in everyday public spaces—void decks, hawker centres, and community centres—and in so doing, turn it into a communal experience that connects Singaporeans across class, culture, and generation.
Passage 3, Para 1	<u>Lines 1-2</u> <i>[Art] can create awareness and present information in a way that could be</i>	<i>Afzal Ibrahim states that art has social relevance because it can effectively “create awareness and present information” (lines 1-2).</i> AGREE

	<i>absorbed by many easily.</i>	- This claim holds particular resonance in Singapore, where the maturing arts scene makes art an effective tool for public education and also social reflection. As the arts develop, local artists become more skilled at using their art to expose Singaporeans to complex ideas and unconventional narratives in subtle yet accessible and palatable ways. <u>Possible evaluation and examples as support</u> - One striking example is Sonny Liew's <i>The Art of Charlie Chan Hock Chye</i>, a graphic novel that presents Singapore's political history through the eyes of a fictional comic artist. The work explores events such as Operation Coldstore and the rise of the PAP, offering alternative perspectives not often found in official historical narratives. Its innovative use of the comic medium—blending rich visuals with nuanced storytelling—makes difficult political topics more approachable to a broad audience, including youth and those unfamiliar with formal historical texts. Crucially, it does not merely inform but encourages readers to reflect on the cost of Singapore's rapid development and political trade-offs. In doing so, the novel transforms history from a static subject into one of civic inquiry, public discourse, and deeper national introspection. - Another example is poet Cyril Wong, who through poems like "Flight Dreams" and "An Excerpt from The Dictator's Eyebrow", challenges readers to ponder over complex themes like heteronormativity, and the relationship between authoritarian rule and fear. - Together, these examples show that artists in Singapore are not simply creating art for art's sake, but actively using their art to inform in ways that make challenging ideas more emotionally engaging and intellectually accessible.
Passage 3, Para 2	<u>Lines 5-6</u> <i>Art also promotes cultural appreciation among a generation that's currently preoccupied with technology.</i>	<i>Afzal Ibrahim argues that in a world where many are "currently preoccupied with technology" (line 5-6), art's ability to enhance "cultural appreciation" (line 5) makes it particularly relevant.</i> AGREE This idea is especially relevant in the context of Singapore, where digital saturation and fast-paced urban life can easily detach young people from their cultural roots. Given Singapore's multiracial, multicultural, and multireligious fabric, fostering understanding and mutual respect among different communities is essential for preserving social cohesion. In this regard, art serves as a valuable conduit for cultural education and empathy-building. <u>Possible EV and examples as support</u>

		• Singapore recognises the role of art in bridging generational and cultural gaps, and has intentionally leveraged it to promote deeper appreciation of the nation's diverse heritage. This is seen through initiatives like the <i>Singapore HeritageFest</i> and <i>Arts in Your Neighbourhood</i>, which engage youth by transforming abstract cultural narratives into tangible, emotionally resonant experiences. These programmes allow young Singaporeans to explore cultural practices such as Chinese ink painting, Malay dance, or Indian rangoli-making -- not as distant relics of the past, but as lived, participatory traditions. Importantly, many of these activities are tailored for younger, tech-savvy audiences through immersive, digital storytelling techniques and social media engagement, making the content more relatable and memorable. • By allowing youth to experience culture through interactive art rather than passive observation, such initiatives cultivate curiosity, empathy, and respect. This not only counters the disconnection brought on by technology but also strengthens interethnic understanding and a shared sense of national identity. In a society where harmony and unity are crucial, especially amidst rising global polarisation, art thus plays a vital and contemporary role in promoting cultural appreciation among the younger generation.
--	--	--