

Anderson Serangoon Junior College
General Paper
Weighted Assessment 1 (WA1)

Duration: 1 hour

Essay Question Response

Write a stand and two body paragraphs (including balance) in response to any **one** of the questions below.

Q1. How far are individuals prepared for future crises in your society?

Q2. ‘People, rather than the government, should be responsible for their own well-being.’ Do you agree?

Question 1	
How far are individuals prepared for future crises in your society?	
Question Analysis	
<u>Issue:</u> Whether or not individuals in your society are prepared for future crises and to what extent	<u>Context:</u> Your society
<u>Conceptual Understanding:</u> - Demonstrate the ability to understand the link between characteristics of your society and individual’s preparedness towards future crises - Demonstrate the ability to understand existing qualities of individuals in your society against challenges that might happen in the future	
<u>Key words:</u> “How far” – To what extent, the degree to which “individuals” – Singaporeans, with consideration of their various qualities and characteristics “prepared” – possessing the right qualities/skills to tackle/address a specific situation “future” – a period of time that has yet to come “crises” – a time of intense difficulty or danger ; natural crisis; health crisis; humanitarian crisis; technological crisis; economic/ financial crisis	
<u>Significant aspects/areas to be discussed (5W1H, Multiple Perspectives, Significant Trends, SPECTRAM):</u> - SPECTRAM to brainstorm for the various types of crises - Trends of the world/your society to brainstorm for reasons on how and why individuals are prepared	
Possible Stands	
- Individuals in my society are prepared for future crises to a large extent. - Individuals in my society are prepared for future crises only to a small extent.	
Reasons why individuals are prepared for future crises in my society, Singapore	Reasons why individuals are <u>not</u> prepared for future crises in my society, Singapore
- In response to an increasingly volatile and uncertain future, Singapore is increasingly committed in ensuring that all individuals in the country are aware and well-equipped with the knowledge to handle and manage potential crises. - In 2016, led by the Singapore government, Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong launched the SG Secure	- The increasingly complex and unpredictable nature of global crises today makes it challenging for individuals to ever be prepared to anticipate, let alone, manage them. - In a survey commissioned by National Geographic Channel and conducted by Idstats, four out of five Singaporeans do not consider

national movement in an effort to sensitise, train and mobilise Singaporeans to prevent terror incidents and respond to them. Under the campaign, Singaporeans are prepared to better protect themselves against a terror attack. ○ “Stay prepared” initiative – a community outreach effort by Temasek Cares, ST Engineering, KK Women’s and Children’s Hospital, Singapore Heart Foundation, SMRT and Singapore Civil Defence Force aims to help the public be prepared for unexpected events and crises. The initiative was launched in 2014, supported by a \$75 million Temasek Emergency Preparedness (T-PREP) Fund prepares Singaporeans for a range of emergencies, and provides assistance to the public alongside community groups and VWOs. Members of the public were taught crucial skills, such as receiving lessons in using automated external defibrillators (AEDs) for cases of cardiac arrest and learnt how to apply continuous chest compression resuscitation techniques to save lives.	themselves to be prepared in the event of a major disaster. 7 in 10 of the respondents who felt unprepared adopted a fatalistic attitude toward disasters. When asked why they felt they were not as prepared as they thought they should be for catastrophe, 67 per cent of respondents said it was because “there’s nothing anyone can ever do to be truly prepared for a catastrophe”.
• Individuals in Singapore today grew up in an era where global and domestic crises are not uncommon. Singaporeans are well aware of one’s vulnerability towards these potential crises and are prepared to tackle these crises. ○ Singapore has always been and will always be, exposed to effects from outside its borders. Our capacity to weather the shocks and crises that come with being a small open global economy has also broadened considerably. Singapore has experienced many different crises in the past that has shaped our preparedness towards future crises. Most notably, when transboundary haze – caused by slash-and-burn plantation farming in nearby Indonesia – reached hazardous levels in 2013, an Inter-Agency Haze Task Force set up in the 1990s and led by NEA stood ready to deal with the emerging situation. This demonstrated that Singapore’s seasoned whole-of-government response and the slew of measures that quickly followed was effective in handling future crises. Individuals from also reacted promptly by giving out free masks to the community. Three brothers gave out more than 400 N95 masks bought with their own funds to lower-income households in their Chai Chee neighbourhood. Other business people rallied volunteers to donate and distribute over 7,000 masks to needy families.	• Individuals in Singapore are increasingly individualistic and are often too caught up with the fast-paced lifestyle to even personally care for issues other than their own, the possibility of future crises does not impact them as it is regarded as the responsibility of the government instead. ○ In the same survey, on who should be responsible for disaster preparedness, half of the Singaporeans surveyed said the responsibility for doing so lies with the government.

• Singaporeans possess resilience and a willingness to comply with the government, allowing the nation to tackle future challenges in a united fashion. ○ Our success in fighting the COVID-19 pandemic did not come without majority of the population being willing to adhere to Safe Management Measures and to get themselves vaccinated. ○ During the lockdown period, Singaporeans displayed their resilience is finding many creative ways to keep themselves occupied and connected with their loved ones, while still contributing to those in need in the community and cheering on those in the healthcare sector who were on the frontlines fighting the virus.	
Related recent examples	
• Phishing exercise to strengthen cyber resilience part of nationwide Total Defence campaign https://www.channelnewsasia.com/singapore/exercise-sg-ready-total-defence-phishing-mindef-4940641 • Next phase of SGSecure asks individuals what roles they can play against terror threat https://www.channelnewsasia.com/singapore/sgsecure-next-phase-terror-threat-first-responder-3661211 • Religious organisations, schools and hospitals are prepared for terror attacks: Sun Xueling • https://www.straitstimes.com/singapore/politics/religious-organisations-schools-and-hospitals-are-prepared-for-terror-attacks-sun-xueling • Commentary: If Singapore were to come under attack or face a natural disaster, how prepared would you be? https://www.channelnewsasia.com/commentary/total-defence-day-siren-warning-signal-emergency-disaster-plan-preparedness-3273901 • 79% of S'poreans not prepared for major disaster: survey (2012) https://sg.news.yahoo.com/79--of-s%E2%80%99poreans-not-prepared-for-major-disaster--survey.html	

Question 2	
'People, rather than the government, should be responsible for their own well-being.' Do you agree. (Adapted from 2018 HCI)	
Question Analysis	
<u>Issue:</u> The issue being discussed is the responsibility for individual wellbeing, whether it should primarily rest with individuals themselves or if there is a role for government intervention and support.	<u>Context:</u> Global
<u>Conceptual Understanding:</u> • Demonstrate the ability to understand that the roles and responsibilities of the government of the government under the social contract is the basis that forms the expectations citizens tend to have of their governments, and how much responsibility citizens feel they should take over areas of their lives can depend on how much they have come to rely on the government. Such levels of reliance can vary across countries and cultures. • Demonstrate the ability to understand Government intervention: Assessing the impacts of social, economic, and environmental factors on individual wellbeing, how many of these factors can the individual deal with on his/her own? How many are not within their control and would therefore require the government to take responsibility of? • Demonstrate the ability to understand that differing contexts may come with their own sets of conditions that require either the people/the government to step in more.	
<u>Key words:</u> • People, not the government: Comparison question that requires students to pit one against the other • Should: Consider the pros/cons/moral justifications • Responsible: If they are to blame for a poor outcome, 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. If their identity carries certain obligations (as with the social contract in this case), they have the duty to do so. • Well-being: The state of being happy, healthy, or prosperous, where welfare is protected and upheld	
<u>Significant aspects/areas to be discussed (5W1H, Multiple Perspectives, Significant Trends, SPECTRAM):</u> • The effectiveness of government policies and programs in supporting individual wellbeing. - E.g. Consider the role of education and healthcare in promoting well-being • The ethical considerations surrounding personal responsibility and government intervention • The impact of international relations on the well-being of people • The social, economic and political influences that affect the well-being of the people	
Possible Stands	
• To a very large degree, people, rather than the government, should be responsible for their own wellbeing • To a very large degree, the government, rather than the people, should be responsible for their own wellbeing	
Reasons why the government, rather than the people, should be responsible for their own well-being	Reasons why the people, rather than the government, should be responsible for their own well-being
• Under the social contract, a government is obligated to ensure its people's well-being through equitable access to healthcare, education, and social services for all. E.g. Scandinavian citizens (Denmark, Norway, Sweden) pay high taxes to fund comprehensive social safety nets with high levels of government spending on healthcare, education, and social welfare programs. In return, they receive a strong social	• Government resources can be better allocated to address broader societal issues if individuals take ownership of their own well-being. This is especially so when there exists so many competing needs in our complex world today. E.g. MediSave is a national medical savings scheme that helps individuals set aside part of their income to pay for their personal or approved

safety net and a high standard of living. Sweden, for instance, provides universal and automatic healthcare coverage, ensuring that all citizens have access to essential medical services without financial hardship. This commitment to equitable access to healthcare is a reflection of the social contract between the government and its people, where the government is obligated to ensure the wellbeing of its citizens through essential services. E.g. The US Constitution can also be seen as a classic example of the social contract between the American people and their government. Citizens agree to cede some power to the government in exchange for security, order, and the protection of their rights. The Bill of Rights further strengthens this contract by outlining fundamental freedoms and limitations on government power. In fiscal 2022, the government spent \$119.4 billion on Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) alone, a program more commonly known as Food Stamps that provides food to the low-income families. Other welfare programs it has includes Medicaid, Supplemental Security Income, Children's Health Insurance Program and more.	dependents' hospitalisation, day surgery and certain outpatient expenses, as well as their healthcare needs in old age. With this compulsory savings scheme, Singaporeans are thus empowered with the responsibility to take charge of their own health expenses, freeing the government's resources up for other needs such as providing monetary supplements to its citizens in adapting to the recent rising cost of living, or investing more resources into our '30 by 30' cause that seeks to improve food security by generating 30% of its nutritional needs locally by 2030. E.g. On the Japanese island of Okinawa, well known not only for the extraordinary longevity of its residents but also for active ageing, there is this notion of ikigai – which means “the reason you live” – that permeates every aspect of the Okinawan way of life and suffuses residents' entire lives. It is what gets the local centenarians out of the house and being active every day, doing anything from teaching Okinawan karate, to passing on the arts and culinary traditions to the younger generation. When the aged themselves are empowered to take charge of their own well-being, the Japanese government is less burdened by the pressing needs of an aging population.
• Larger external factors such as international relations, socioeconomic background, environmental crises and systemic inequalities that are not within the control of the individual can significantly impact an individual's ability to take full responsibility for their wellbeing. As such, the government that has greater power, authority and resources should step in to take responsibility for these aspects of the people's well-being. E.g. In response to Iran's nuclear program and alleged support for terrorism, the Iran nuclear accord, formally known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), has seen the U.S. place several sanctions on Iran in 1979. U.S. most recent sanction in Mar 2024 further targets Iran's military procurement networks, blacklisting companies and individuals involved in supplying Iran with materials like carbon fibre and epoxy resins, which can be used in missile programs. These sanctions severely affected the Iranian economy, leading to high inflation, unemployment, and shortages of essential goods such as medicine and food. The well-being of the Iranian people was significantly impacted, as they faced difficulties accessing basic necessities and experienced a decline in their overall quality of life. In situations like these, there is little the people can do but to rely on the Iranian government to find a way out through diplomatic negotiations.	• Government intervention in personal well-being may unfairly infringe on individual freedoms and privacy rights, undermining personal autonomy and choice. E.g. In the United States, debates around government intervention in personal wellbeing often center on issues like vaccination mandates. While some argue that such mandates infringe on personal freedoms and autonomy, others point to the government's role in protecting public health and safety. For example, during the COVID-19 pandemic, governments at various levels in the US implemented vaccination mandates for certain professions, highlighting the tension between individual freedoms and the government's responsibility for public health. E.g. Similarly, during the COVID-19 pandemic, a number of governments implemented contact tracing apps to help track and contain the spread of the virus, including Singapore's TraceTogether app. While these apps were developed to help track and contain the spread of the virus for the collective well-being of the society, critics argue that they infringe on individuals' privacy rights by collecting and storing sensitive personal data, such as location and health information. Additionally, concerns have been raised about the potential for these apps to be used for surveillance purposes beyond the pandemic, highlighting the need for transparency and accountability in their development and implementation.
Related recent examples	

- What the data says about food stamps in the U.S.
<https://www.pewresearch.org/short-reads/2023/07/19/what-the-data-says-about-food-stamps-in-the-u-s/>
- What is the Iran Nuclear Deal
<https://www.cfr.org/background/what-iran-nuclear-deal>
- Active ageing lessons from islands in Japan and Greece
<https://www.straitstimes.com/opinion/forum/letter-of-the-week-active-ageing-lessons-from-islands-in-japan-and-greece>