Answer any **two** questions.

1 These days, leaders among health professional bodies, the government, employers and employees speak with a shared message – for most people, work is good for their health and well-being, and that the loss of work, whether because of impaired health or for other reasons, is generally harmful. The results of worklessness are plain to see: the loss of self-esteem, standing and identity within the community, all of which leads to a halt to material progress, social participation and fulfillment. Health, both physical and mental, soon becomes compromised. The image of the all-too-idle retiree wasting his life away is unfortunately all too common.

On the other hand, work may yield many benefits. It ensures that some physical activity is undertaken on work days, thereby helping enhance physical health. It provides a sense of social inclusion, thereby encouraging stronger attachments to the wider working community. It allows workers to feel that they are making a contribution to society and their family, for example, in the provision of financial security to the latter, thereby improving self esteem. It also decreases the likelihood of individuals engaging in risky behaviour, such as excessive drinking, thereby improving the social fabric. It is true, of course, that too much work can be bad for one's physical and mental health, but the solution is not no work at all but simply less work or, rather, a better work-life balance. Hence, what we need is a rethinking of the idea of retirement as simply no work at all but one where there is merely enough work for the individual to reap its benefits, but not so much that he or she cannot take the time to be idle, smell the roses and travel the world.

Critically assess the reasoning in this argument, explaining why you do or do not accept its conclusion(s). [15]

2 A recent forum letter pointed out that our primary school children do not have sufficient time for lunch on school days and calls for a longer break of 45 minutes (as opposed to the current 5 minutes).

Yet such a view fails to consider the trade-offs. With classes having to end at about 1.30pm, it is difficult to factor in time for lunch unless parents do not mind school hours being extended. Given the entitlement mentality that is rife in Singapore today, parents are sure to complain of such a change, arguing that they have had to painstakingly schedule their lives around their children's school hours and any changes in these hours mean a seismic change for them, such as cancelling their weekly high-tea sessions with their fellow mother-friends. And since school activities have to continue, one cannot simply cut school hours without consequences. The result could be a faster pace of teaching or more self-directed learning, or there could be less teaching and students may suffer later as the content to be covered snowballs with each passing level.

If proper lunchtime is a concern, students can choose to have their meal in the canteen after dismissal and before they head home. Classes used to end at 1.30pm when I was in primary school as well, but we managed to figure out solutions ourselves. Mollycoddling children will only produce a generation that is overly dependent and self-entitled. In asking for better welfare for children, we seem to have neglected the teachers – many of them often skip lunch, or sometimes have it at awkward timings — at 10am or after 3pm when lessons have concluded. Teachers do not deserve such a treatment. This is something the Ministry of Education should look into.

Critically assess the reasoning in this argument, explaining why you do or do not accept its conclusion(s). [15]

We are living in Hollywood's Comic Book Age. A global obsession, superhero movies are seen by hundreds of millions, arguably the most consumed stories in human history. One way of looking at comic book movies is to see them simply as mental popcorn, meant to be rapidly consumed and forgotten — this may be precisely why so many people love them. They are harmless. Armies of Hollywood professionals get paid, megamillions enjoy them and nobody gets hurt. Even snooty critics have fun inventing clever ways to slam them. Here's one: ""Thor: Ragnarok," "Guardians of the Galaxy" and "Avengers: Infinity War" make the best argument for meaninglessness; they are little more than cosmic mixed martial arts bouts with a handful of clever lines."

But superhero movies are not just harmless fun. Two-time Academy Award Winner, Jodie Foster, recently described current big-budget productions as the cinematic equivalent of fracking, mining box office gold while wrecking the Earth. "It's ruining the viewing habits of the American population and then ultimately the rest of the world." In fact, more than one's viewing habits are affected; movies have a real effect on one's behaviour. For example, the gratuitous and oft-unpunished violence in these films (think Zack Synder's "Man of Steel" where the climatic fight between Superman and Zod resulted in buildings being destroyed and thousands killed) comes at a time when America grapples with an increase in gun violence and vigilantism. Furthermore, one can easily think of numerous examples where young children try to emulate the feats of these superheroes such as flying or swinging from building to building, sometimes to truly tragic conclusions.

Given the nature and effect of such films on society, it is now time to call on governments around the world to ban the production and viewing of such material.

Critically assess the reasoning in this argument, explaining why you do or do not accept its conclusion(s). [15]

END OF PAPER