NAVIGATE

Issue #2

Contents

Message from the JC1 GP Team

Dear Eunoians,

> "Write to communicate to the hearts and minds of others what's burning inside you, and edit to let the fire show through the smoke." - Arthur Plotnik

Writing depends deeply on what you have to say. When you seek to communicate to an audience what you know and what you are about, you write with purpose. When you first begin writing - and especially writing about the abstract, complex and tangled ideas such as those that GP often demands of you - you may find yourself having difficulty conveying your message with clarity. You may end up inadvertently with imperfect writing that obscures instead of revealing, but this is to be expected, for how can one fit the messiness of a multidimensional world onto a page and have it make sense? This is where learning to edit comes in, as a process of refinement that begins, mentally, even before pen touches paper. Editing is a reflective process; like in your CA3, it takes discipline to scrutinise your own thinking and writing processes to determine how best to convey what you have to say exactly.

This second issue of Navigate is a collection of responses to the Mid-Year Examinations - your first ever in EJC. These are noteworthy pieces of writing from some of your peers to guide you along, selected not only for their good qualities but also for the learning that they make possible. Although these pieces are commendable in many aspects, they cannot be plans for your own writing, for that must come from you. We hope that through reading and understanding these pieces you discover for yourself a little more clarity of reading and writing as we head towards the Promotional Examinations. The road ahead is no doubt long, but take heart in the company, and in the knowledge that each step you take counts towards the grand distance you will navigate.

All the best,
Your GP Teachers ❤

Application Question

Eunoia Junior College JC1 Mid-Year Examinations 2018:

In this article, Marguerite Johnson writes about the continuing relevance of fairy tales in our modern world. How far do you agree with her views? Illustrate your answer by referring to the extent and manner in which fairy tales (or folk tales) are significant to you and your society.

Response 1

This piece incorporates salient examples that exhibit clear links to the chosen claims, while providing good balance in terms of addressing the context in which the claims are significant (or not so) in Singaporean society. Evaluation of the examples in relation to the claims is generally well done, albeit a little lacking for the second claim.

Johnson claims that fairytales "showed us how courage, determination and ingenuity could be employed even by the most disempowered to change the cause of events", which in other words, means that they demonstrate how even the average person can utilise good qualities well in bad situations to change their circumstances. This claim is very agreeable to me due to the presence and prevalence of such folklore in my society, which are commonly used to educate the young on how they can apply their virtues in any circumstance to help themselves, which is why the claim is highly applicable to my society. Pragmatists may argue that regardless of what the moral of the fairytale is, situations in fairy tales are rarely applicable to a modern, highly developed and fast-paced society like Singapore, and while I admit that this is true, I would argue that the relevanc[e] of fairy tales lies not in replicating the exact actions of the characters, but rather, in teaching young children about the salience of good values with which to follow for the rest of their lives. Singaporean folk tales include stories about how a young boy in early Singapore managed to protect his village from attacks by swordfish from the sea, by utilising bamboo shoots and other materials to trap the swordfish and simultaneously save his village. While this story is obviously fictional, fabricated and [exaggerated], it still teaches important life lessons, which is why this old tale is still being employed in pre-school classrooms all over the nation to educate children. Kids that read these outlandish fairy tales are not expected to replicate the scenarios in the tale in any way[.] Rather, they are taught to draw out learning points from the story and apply them in classroom-based scenarios and role play to develop a strong set of moral values within them. In the case of the swordfish tale, the key learning point would be creativity and bravery, which are ideal qualities that my society will expect out of all its members, and hence, fairy tales are very relevant in my society, which has a strong focus on education, which includes the usage of fairy tales. Thus, Johnson's claim is largely applicable to my society.	Salient introduction of the context of fairy tales' role in Singapore, linking it to chosen claim Deals with alternative perspective by cogently arguing how this criticism does not impede the relevance of fairy tales Good use of example to further support argument of how fairy tales are still relevant despite the scenarios not being fully replicable in real life

Johnson also states that fairy tales 'reflected the turmoils and triumphs of the lower classes", which means that fairy tales show the trials and tribulations of life as someone with a low social status or low income, or a generally poor socio-economic background. This claim is less palatable to me as while my society is one with a high disparity between the rich and the poor, Singapore does not have much in the way of fairy tales that reflect the lives of the poor, and hence, this claim is mostly inapplicable to my society. Singapore's Gini coefficient, which is a measure of income inequality, is relatively high compared to other developed countries, which illustrates how the poor in Singapore are dealing with a significantly lower quality of life compared to the rich. However, fairy tales do not capture this aspect of Singapore life, largely due to the fact that the lives of the poor in Singapore are far from fairy tales in the first place, since their lives are filled with suffering and struggle without any 'happily ever after' to look forward to. A prime example is when Channel News Asia filmed two local documentaries titled "Don't call us poor" and "Don't call us beaten", which revolve[] around the lives of very poor people and academically-challenged children respectively. The lives of [people in] these strata of society are not depicted as fairy tales because they simply cannot be[;] the documentaries unapologetically showcased the harsh reality of their lives and to instead represent their lives as fairy tales would be woefully inaccurate and disrespectful to these groups of people. Opponents of this viewpoint may claim that even if fairy tales are inaccurate portrayals of the misfortune in society, it could still act as a method for them to be noticed by the rest of society and to encourage more help to be delegated their way. However, I feel that these claims fail to address the examples that I mentioned beforehand, as to represent the plight of the poor or misfortunate as a fairy tale, would likely make the story less powerful and influential, which would not be an efficient method of helping them. Therefore, Johnson's claim is largely inapplicable to my society.

(Hong Chu Yan, 18-E3)

Good contextual background of how Singapore exhibits characteristics which are relevant to chosen claim

Apt use of example to show how role of fairy tale in chosen claim is achieved through other (modern) means

Evaluation can be better linked back to Singapore's context - what is it about Singaporean society that makes us disinclined to approach these narratives as fairy tales?

Response 2

This piece consistently provides apt contextualisation of the characteristics of Singapore's society, which allows for clear evaluation of the significance (or lack thereof) of fairy tales within Singapore. However, the arguments that are put forth sometimes deviate in relevance from the chosen claims, which impedes the overall effectiveness of the piece.

Marguerite Johnson talks about how folk tales help to convey the struggles and successes of the disenfranchised people in society, or those of lower socio-economic statuses, and [how] it allowed people to fantasise about how the wealthier people [] lived. While I do not dispute the claim [that] fairy tales have the potential to achieve these effects, I believe that there are simply far better alternatives that the poor can turn to in order for them to attain these impacts. For example, [with] Singapore being a highly digitised nation, where online access is available to the vast majority of people, social media can give a decently accurate depiction of the lives that others are facing. Instagram for example enables these communities to visually see what life is like for these more wealthy people. As such, there exist[] other more popular and widely used avenues [] which the poor can use to fantasise about how others lead their lives in Singapore. In fact, social media also enables people who would otherwise be merely passive consumers of fairy tales to take things into their own hands to actively create content, and voice out their discontent to members of the public. As such, from an objective stance, fairy tales have a much smaller sphere of influence than social media, the spread of fairy tales as a means to express their struggles is simply not as popular. Furthermore, the spread of fairy tales largely depends on an area having a strong sense of community in order to proliferate. However, as Singapore continues to urbanise and modernise, people living in the same neighbourhood are now more distant from one another, as people start to prefer privacy over interaction with their neighbours. Given such circumstances, one should not be surprised to see that it is now much harder to spread these folk tales through word of mouth, and that these fairy tales simply do not have the same unifying influence, unlike in the past, as communities in Singapore grow to become more distant and isolated from one another.	Good contextualisation of the characteristics of Singapore, and how this has led to other means replacing the role of fairy tales in the chosen claim Argument here deviates from chosen claim - how does actively creating content on social media affect the role of fairy tales? Argument has no clear link to chosen claim; need to explicitly explain how this phenomenon has affected the relevance of fairy tales
The author has also mentioned about how fairy tales enable people to reflect upon the diversity of human experiences and human emotion. While I do agree that fairy tales are a powerful representation of [] human experiences, I believe that the vast majority of fairy tales that are being shown in my society largely do not achieve similar outcomes. This is largely due to the ways in which other fairy tales are being transmitted in Singapore. For Singaporeans, the large majority of people only hear of fairy tales whenever they see movies by major animation firms like Disney. Blockbuster films such as Beauty and the	Provides good contextual

Beast are still examples of how fairy tale-based films can still be very popular in my society. However, the fundamental role [] which fairy tales play has changed drastically from in the past. In the past, fairy tales are used as stories to help align people's moral compasses, but in modern society, the role of fairy tales ha[s] been diluted to simply as something of entertainment value. As a result, when people view these films as merely a form of entertainment, the moral values and feelings of the human experiences will be largely diluted. As such, fairy tales simply are not able to have the same power and impact that it once had on people. However, that is not to say that people completely disregard fairy tales as a means of human expression, it is just that these fairy tales have taken on other forms of arts to fulfil the same purpose. For example, many home-grown Chinese songs in Singapore, or more well known as "Xin Yao", also reflected the many human emotions that one would face through song and dance, often entailing fairy tale-like stories and similar narratives through the lyrics of the song. Fairy tales have also made [their] mark in Singapore literature, where people occasionally would meet up as one community to view certain plays which commonly display elements of fairy tales as well. Therefore, while fairy tales intrinsically no longer have such a great impact as a means of human expression, it has been revived through other means which conserves the elements and core essence of fairy tales, and are used to achieve the same outcome as a representation of human experiences.

(Shuy Yao Kang, 18-E5)

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background on how Singaporeans' perception of fairy tales has changed, and clear line of argument as to how this has negatively impacted the role of fairy tales as stated in chosen claim

Unconvincing attempt to link these forms of art to fairy tales - there might be elements of fairy tales that have been incorporated into these forms of art, but more evaluation needs to be done to solidify this argument

Response 3

> *This piece provides detailed examples that clearly links elements of the chosen claim to characteristics of Singapore's society. Evaluation for the first claim cogently argues for the relevance of fairy tales in Singapore by virtue of these characteristics, although the evaluation for the second claim, which has some gaps in its logic, misses its mark.*

The author states that 'fairy tales repeated familiar instances of unfairness, misfortune, bad luck and ill treatment [to show] how courage, determination and ingenuity could be employed even by the most disempowered to change the course of events'. She suggests that fairy tales tell stories of pain, suffering and overcoming adversity to encourage people, especially the disadvantaged, to apply positive values such as fortitude, drive and creativity to solve their own problems. I feel that this statement is applicable to Singapore society, where books and folk tales are used as a way to give the disadvantaged hope in trying times. There have been several initiatives targeted at spreading these messages, which include the Kids Read @ NLB, whereby volunteers will gather once a week at various libraries in Singapore to read to needy children. Often, the books read are fairy tales such as 'Snow White and the Seven Dwarves' and 'Cinderella'. In an interview by the Straits Times, the founder of Kids Read said the purpose of such a programme was to 'encourage a love for reading and let these kids know that they are not alone'. Hence, the books that were read had to undergo a strict selection process before being read to the children to ensure that the values passed on were positive rather than destructive. Furthermore, Higher Chinese textbooks used in mainstream primary schools include the folk tale of a Chinese warrior Yue Fei, who would place his hand above a candle so that it would burn him if he fell asleep while studying. Though severe, this story shows students the value of working hard, which is arguably a way out of the poverty cycle for the disadvantaged under Singapore's meritocratic education system. Hence, fairy tales and folk tales are employed to help the disadvantaged learn values that would help them achieve greater things in their future.	Good example that shows a clear link to how fairy tales are relevant in Singapore as a means of encouraging the disadvantaged Cogent argument on how the contextual background of Singapore as a meritocracy makes this role of fairy tales have continual relevance
The author also stated that fairy tales are 'a means of social criticism, and convey powerful messages of resistance and rebellion'. She suggests that fairy tales are used by writers to show societal ills as well as encourage the public to oppose authority to change such events. I feel that this is not applicable in Singapore society. Singapore, which ranked the lowest among developed countries for press freedom in the 2016 Gallup Poll, is a country that arguably values social cohesion over individualistic opinions. Born and raised in a country with such a mindset, many budding writers will tend toward self-censorship, although freedom of expression is not illegal. For example, Singaporean writers such as Felix Cheong and Eliza Teoh often choose to write about favourable aspects of Singapore culture, such as	Weak line of logic - lack of press freedom does not necessarily mean that the society as a whole does not value social criticism Examples are not

our hawker centres and own unique variation of the English language – Singlish. Whenever people do try to criticise sensitive parts of Singapore society, people would frequently get upset, and the government would react accordingly. For example, after a 24-year old Singaporean student covered the staircase of a HDB block with gold foil paper to highlight the rising class divide in Singapore, over 20000 people signed an online petition to have it removed, which the government issued orders for within [two] days. Although such an example is not specific to books, it is demonstrative of the arts scene in Singapore, and by extension, if a book highlighting similar themes were to be published, it is likely that many would call for its removal too. Hence, fairy tales are not frequently used in Singapore to evoke social change due to the mindset ingrained in many.	convincing in showing that society does not value social criticism, delving more deeply into Singaporeans' mindset of self-censorship would perhaps be more appropriate It might be worth considering that the act of writing or displaying the art alone to provoke reactions can sometimes already be seen as taking steps towards social change
In conclusion, I believe that the author's view that fairy tales are used to transmit values to help the disadvantaged to find a way out of their problems applicable, while the point that fairy tales are used to encourage rebellion and resistance not applicable to Singapore society. *(Vivienne Teo, 18-A6)*	

Response 4

> *This piece depicts interesting examples that are extensively illustrated, which seem to lend themselves well to discussing the relevance of fairy tales in Singapore. However, note that it falls short when it comes to evaluating these examples, and needs further development in order to fulfil the potential it displays at the start of these paragraphs.*

In paragraph 4, Marguerite Johnson noted that fairy tales are "as if there is something ingrained in us – something we cannot suppress – that compels us to interpret the world around us through the lens of such tales". I agree with her claim as it is relevant and applicable to my society. Many of us grew up with fairy tales and nursery rhymes made from these fairy tales. Kindergarten was the stage where students crooned to these folk songs and learnt about various fairy tales. In my society, we have been exposed to fairy tales since young. We even have our own tale of 'Sang Nila Utama', which tells about how a young Malay prince saw a lion on his visit to Singapore and named the place 'Singapura', Lion City in Malay. While we grew up to know that the tale is untrue, most of us, myself included, choose to talk about it or sing the song 'Sang Nila Utama' composed by a local artist. Despite knowing it is a myth, it gives me a sense of connection to my childhood. Similarly, many people in my society grew up with the tale and it is difficult to not mention it as it has been ingrained in us when we were young and naturally people in my society will tend to speak about the story when asked to introduce Singapore. Hence, I agree with the writer's view about fairy tales being ingrained in us.	Good example that clearly depicts how folktales are ingrained in Singaporeans' minds, but evaluation in relation to chosen claim and relevance to society is superficial, and needs much more development
In paragraph 10, the writer mentioned "both children and adults should read more fairy tales – both the original and transformed versions, for they are one of our cultural touchstones". I disagree with the writer's view as the transformed versions may no longer hold the original moral of the story intended. For example, in my society, some writers have gone about transforming these fairy tales into 'Singlish' versions to appeal to people in my society. I unknowingly picked up a book about 'Three Little Pigs', only to find the book filled with Singlish, which is Singapore's version of English, often time which is broken English. More shockingly, the book was expletive-laden with the characters in the book cursing at each other. Unsurprisingly, parents who were equally shocked did not leave good reviews as some of them purchased the books with the intention of reading it to their child. Growing up, most of us read fairy tales which helped to develop our command of the English language, and allowed us to pick up proper English. Reading the transformed versions not only alter the moral of the story, but is also no longer suitable or appropriate for children. Hence, I disagree with the writer's views that children should read transformed versions of fairy tales. *(Hazel Wong, 18-I1)*	Interesting example of an atypical transformation of fairy tales as compared to what was suggested in the passage, but once again, lacking in evaluation on how this has affected the relevance of fairy tales in Singaporean society

Response 5

> *This piece succinctly depicts the characteristics of Singapore's society, while coherently using this context to evaluate the chosen claims' relevance in society. Nonetheless, evaluations can be further improved by incorporating more balance, and by a more concerted effort to address alternative perspectives.*

I agree with Johnson when she says that "[fairy tales] explained the mysteries of the world: birth, death, the season, day and night" (lines 1-2). This is applicable in showing that fairy tales are continually relevant in the modern Singapore society as Singapore's multi-religious and multi-cultural society needs a common ground of history to base a collective identity upon. Folk tales are extremely helpful in explaining the birth of Singapore and how it was discovered, allowing Singaporeans of diverse racial and religious backgrounds to build a sense of unity and common identity upon knowing that we all belong to a society that was birthed from the widely-known folk tale of Sang Nila Utama. Sang Nila Utama was a king who had first discovered the island of Singapore, choosing to name it Singapura after he was intrigued by a mysterious creature - now known as a lion, or *singa* in Malay - that roamed the island. The fact that this tale is continually retold [during] almost every National Day Parade to date is evidence of prevailing relevance in explaining Singapore's past and [how it] is a critical element of the Singaporean identity. Thus, as the folk tale of Sang Nila Utama helps to explain the birth and the origin of Singapore and her history and even unites Singaporeans under the common knowledge and identity of this locally famous folk tale, it does show that fairy tales and folktales are still continually relevant in modern day Singapore, reminding Singaporeans of who we are and where we came from.	Good contextualisation of how the diverse profile of Singaporeans lends relevance to the need for folktales to forge a common identity Salient use of example to support argument that folktales are used as a means of forging a common Singaporean identity Perhaps a claim more appropriate to foundation myths and culturally relevant stories, instead of one dealing with the mysteries of the universe could be selected
However, I do not agree with Johnson when she says that "fairy tales are excellent narratives with which to think through a range of human experiences" in line 46-47. This is inapplicable to Singapore in reflecting the continual relevan[ce] of fairy tales in our modern local society as due to the pragmatic nature of Singaporeans, they simply view fairy tales and folktales as a means of entertainment, and more of entertainment for children who are attracted by fantasy plotlines. Thus they have a reputation of being unsuitable or "too old" for adults who prefer reading non-fictional texts. Because Singaporeans are generally exposed to fairy tales only up till seven, when they first enter primary school, they do not even think of fairy tales as avenues to get in touch with personal reflections on their past experiences. A survey done by The Straits Times reported that adults and teenagers stopped reading the folktales and fairy tales they enjoyed in their childhood at an average of eight years old, where they have started to become loaded with academic pressures, which they view as the top priority in addressing. Thus, they do not pay much attention or thought to fairy	Good contextualisation of how the pragmatic mindset of Singaporeans has relegated fairy tales to mere means of entertainment Apt use of examples to support argument Decent attempt at balance, by showing that the only

tales as narratives to reflect on their experiences and draw connections to. Furthermore, children under the age of seven, who are the ones who generally enjoy fairy tales, do not have the mature capabilities to reflect on their past experiences and relate them to the fairy tales they read. Thus, in this case, this view of the writer's does not reflect the continuing relevance of fairy tales in Singapore if they are forgotten by the time Singaporeans enter their schooling years. *(Leanne Foo, 18-E2)*	group to take fairy tales seriously lack the capability to elicit the role of fairy tales as stated in the chosen claim, but possibly understates the lingering impact that exposure to these fairy tales might have

Response 6

This piece is notable for its illustrative examples that extensively depict the relevance of folktales within society. However, there needs to be more a sustained effort to depict a Singaporean context, and the choice of and adherence to the claims can be improved upon.	

Marguerite Johnson writes about the continuing relevan[ce] of fairy tales in the modern world, claiming that they "[compel] us to interpret the world around us through the lens of such tales", and I find that this is applicable to Singapore, in particular its Chinese community. The fairy tales that were carried down the generations have helped many to see the world through the values conveyed in these tales. The Chinese try to subconsciously exemplify the bravery we see in Hou Yi, the man who shot down nine of the suns in the sky, or the love of a wife, seen in Chang Er, when she refused to let the immortality pill that was meant for her husband fall into bad hands. These stories subconsciously shape our impression of our roles in society: men should be strong, brave, and should care for society, while women should be a loving and domestic wife. Traditional ideals of familial roles are hence conveyed, and help us see and categorise the world. However, this differs slightly from the Western role of fairy tales. While both help us make sense of the world, the Chinese do not categorise in the same way we do with princesses - however, these stories present ideals, which we praise when [they] are reflected in people. They convey values which are important, especially to the large Chinese majority in Singapore, as well as form part of our culture, providing the meanings to certain festivals, like the lantern festival, or foods like dumplings. While fairy tales and folktales help us to see the world, folk tales also help to build culture, and provide the ideals we should have.	Apt use of examples to show that Chinese folktales are a means for educating us on our roles in society, although the relevance of such a role within Singapore society needs to be more explicitly stated

Differentiation between Western and Chinese fairy/folktales seems rather off tangent - needs more evaluation to tie this example back to chosen claim and argument |
| The author also mentioned that "as time progressed and Christian morality intervened, the tales become diluted, child-friendly, and more benign". While I do not deny that time has played a role in the changing of Singaporean and Chinese folktales, the manner in which they have changed is different. While the author presents that fairy tales are losing their relevance in [their] dilution, I find that the Chinese conversely change and adapt fairy tales to be more relevant to the times, and that they may not necessarily have changed to be more benign. The novel "The Joy Luck Club" by Amy Tan, an 'O' level literature text, uses Chinese folktales to show how culture has become diluted over time: stories change as they are passed through the generations, but yet, in essence, remains the same. This story is then used to educate teens nationwide on the dilution of culture, and in this way, the folk stories in the book have changed in function: from educating one's children of the way to live, to providing critical commentary of how culture has changed. Parents [] change the function of these stories to educate their children on values and | Chosen claim does not tie in well with arguments below, there are more appropriate claims that espouse how fairy tales have changed to better suit the needs of the storytellers

Interesting examples that indeed highlight how fairy tales have remained significant in society, but does not strictly relate to the chosen claim above |

scenarios relevant to the times. In the past, a tale of the hunter who grew complacent when a rabbit ran into him by accident, and had begun to starve because of his laziness, compelled farmers to work harder and workers to do their best at their job. Now, these stories warn students against laziness, and serve to compel them to work harder. In contrast to the author's situation, religion has played a minimal part in changing these stories, and while the times have changed it, it has changed in different ways.

(Lew Kylin, 18-U1)

Essays and Paragraphs

Eunoia Junior College JC1 Mid-Year Examination 2018:

1   'Education has not caught up with the needs of the modern world.' To what extent is this true?
- Full essay (Debbie Ong, 18-O5)

2   Can the media ever be trusted to report the truth?
- Full essay (Natalie Lim, 18-O1)
- 1 paragraph (Tan Jia Ying, 18-O2)
- 1 paragraph (Chelsea Leong, 18-I3)
- 1 paragraph (Gerald Yak, 18-A3)

3   Does traditional marriage still hold any relevance in modern society?
- Full essay (Ng Xuan En, Constance, 18-U2)
- 1 paragraph (Yao Yi Chao, 18-O5)

4   'Youth is wasted on the young.' Do you agree?
- Full essay (Soon Minh, 18-I3)
- 3 paragraphs (Ma Wee Kai, 18-A6)

5   'War should never be an option in solving international conflicts.' Discuss.
- Not represented

6   'Consensus is becoming a rarity in today's world.' Is this a fair assessment?
- Full essay (Dason Yeo Boon Xuan, 18-A1)

7   Should your country prioritise the development of sport when her citizens do not value it?
- Not represented

8   How far is elitism inevitable in your society?
- Full essay (Lew Kylin, 18-U1)

9   Consider the view that technology is destroying the quality of written language.
- Not represented

10   'Rehabilitation, not deterrence, should be the goal of the justice system.' Discuss.
- Full essay (Amanda Yap, 18-U1)
- Full essay (Kenneth Hoh, 18-O5)

11   How far should the State be allowed to interfere with the personal choices of the individual?
- Not represented

12   'The solution to all environmental problems ultimately lies with the government.' How far do you

agree with this?
- Full essay (Ling Li Yan, Alethea, 18-U1)

1 'Education has not caught up with the needs of the modern world.' To what

extent is this true?

This essay successfully addresses the challenges faced by the modern world and how education is striving to meet its needs. However, there are leaps of logic in the links at the end of some paragraphs, which could have been avoided by elaborating on the examples in more accordance with the main issue of the question.

Today's world is becoming more globalised and integrated than ever before. The face of education is constantly evolving and changing, the traditional mindset that education is a means to an end no longer holds true today. Given the various advancements and innovations in the modern world, there is indeed a need for education to be constantly enhanced to meet the needs of the modern world []. [I]n fact[,] in most countries today, the education system is suited to the needs of the modern. Hence, the argument that education has not caught up with the needs of the modern world only holds true to a small extent.	Introduction is clear and cogent, bringing in the context of modern society effectively qualify the stand
Firstly, with the advent of technology in modern society today, many educational institutes have incorporated the use of technological devices such as mobile tablets, laptops and video recording systems to facilitate learning. With the onslaught of technology in the modern classroom, collaborative learning is enabled as students take charge of their learning and are able to conduct independent studying given the convenience and accessibility of such technological learning devices. It [was] reported [in] a Straits Times article [] that almost every primary, secondary and tertiary education institute ha[s] access to a multitude of technological facilities that help students enhance their learning experience as and when they want. Besides that, in technologically driven countries such as Japan and China, teacher robots are even used in teaching and the ultimate purpose of such technology is to reduce the need for teachers, addressing the problem of labour shortage, which is a concern in modern society today. Furthermore, in the modern world today, accidents and various incidents happen in the blink of an eye. Without the implementation of technology into our education system, allowing us to pick up any news worthy of note in real time, we will soon fall behind in acquiring information and knowledge regarding the world surrounding us given that speed and efficiency [are] of utmost importance in today's fast-changing society. As schools and educational institutes are constantly implementing the use of technology, be it to enhance student learning or to gradually replace the need for a teacher, it is evident that education has indeed caught up with the needs of the modern world that is largely technologically-driven today.	Can be more explicit about what the needs of a technologically advanced world are - is using technology in education enough? Expression is slightly awkward, could be rephrased How the use of technology in education meets the needs of the modern world should be elaborated on to meet the question demands
In addition, in the modern world today, creativity and innovation [are] very much valued. Society is constantly sourcing for potential individuals with various skill[-]sets and those who stand out among the rest – those who can adapt to the changing needs of the society. In this case, education has caught up with the needs of the modern world by encouraging lifelong learning. Education is a lifelong endeavour[;] wherever we go, we are always bound to be the new kid on the block in various	

aspects. To suit the needs of the modern world, education today has sought to enhance the skill[-]sets of people, allowing them to apply skills that they have picked up when required. For example, in recent years, Singapore has rolled out the SkillsFuture initiative, allowing every Singaporean, be it an elderly [person], a child or even someone in the workforce[,] to participate in complementary skill-based lessons funded by the government. This serves to enhance the overall skill level of Singaporeans in areas such as IT, robotics, childcare as well as nursing. With this, education has undoubtedly evolved to place greater emphasis on lifelong learning, providing platforms for people to constantly upgrade their skills and putting whatever they have acquired to good use so as to contribute and keep up with modern society's innovation and creativity, as well as the constant need for various individuals with different specialised skill sets.	Clear elaboration on the features of modern society, and what it expects of individuals
However, naysayers may argue that there is still an over-emphasis on academic qualifications and the ultimate goal of education is to land one a good job or for one to have a "bright future". This over-emphasis on education does not fall in line with the needs of the modern world today [as] as mentioned above, the modern society is now constantly sourcing for potential individuals with various skill[-]sets. The endless spiral of [the] paper chase is insignificant as people with academic qualifications are not what society is advocating or looking out for today. While it may be true that in this instance, education seemingly has yet to catch up with the needs of [the modern world], many countries and societies that place great emphasis on academic qualifications are beginning to make alterations to their education system. One prime example would be Singapore, an academically-driven society with citizens that prioritise academics over anything else. In recent years, the government has proposed to revamp the Primary School Leaving Examination system in Singapore, turning away from academic achievements and instead, focusing on the personal skills and talents that students possess. Furthermore, the Direct School Admission system in Singapore [was] also introduced so that students are offered equal opportunities to enter the so-called "elite" schools through their talents in arts, sports and science. Hence, as much as how some may argue that the over-emphasis on education proves that education has not caught up with the needs of the modern world, many are starting to place [less] emphasis on paper qualifications and are beginning to realise the value of the various skills that people possess so as to keep up with the needs of the modern world.	Why modern society needs these specialised skill-sets can be developed for greater clarity of what "the needs of the modern world" are Could explain further how this is relevant to the needs of the modern world Aspect of time introduced; main point of this paragraph refuted to align it to the broader stand
Lastly, in the modern world today, there is greater need for political stability, social stability as well as economic progress. Education in most countries has therefore caught up with the needs of the modern world by ensuring equal educational opportunities for all, regardless of family background, race, gender or [socioeconomic] status. For instance, countries like [South] Korea [and] Taiwan [] have female political leaders leading their countries, taking over roles that were once known to be [] dominated by males. Even in the corporate world, the managing director of IBM Singapore, Janet Ang, is helming [] one of the world's top business corporations. In modern society today, education has thus been made available to women, who were once deprived of the opportunity of receiving education. With more women being educated, they can thus contribute to the workforce, increasing productivity[,] which then leads to greater economic progress and stability which is of utmost concern to	Why this is so can be further explained Hasty link but otherwise an

the world today. Therefore, education has indeed caught up with the needs of the modern world by ensuring equal educational opportunities for all, which will then serve [] important needs such as economic stability of the modern world.	interesting point
In conclusion, the educational system across the world has definitely caught up with the constantly evolving and changing needs of the modern society. Be it through the incorporation of technology, the emphasis on skills or equal educational opportunities for all, the evolution of education has [come] a long way but it is one that will never cease. Only with an educational system that can keep up with the needs of the modern world, then can we progress and apply the essence of education and whatever we have acquired through education to good use in society. *(Debbie Ong, 18-O5)*	Absolutes are refutable, and its usage should be avoided in most situations

2   Can the media ever be trusted to report the truth?

This essay's strength is in its clarity and strength of its thesis statement - with the student constantly referring to it in both supporting and opposing arguments, the essay is at once both comprehensive and possessed of a clear, nuanced stand. This can be most clearly seen in the introduction, where different stakeholders are introduced in a panoply of contexts, which sets the groundwork for rich content paragraphs to come. While many of the arguments are insightful and the examples wide-ranging, greater balance can be achieved by exploring why there could be merit in the opposite argument. The writing displays flair, though this is a double-edged sword when longer sentences become convoluted and compromise on clarity of expression.

The media was once coined as the "fourth estate" - a non-government institution that acts as a check and balance to the government, one that the people could rely on to deliver the truth. Yet, with the plethora of news outlets and media institutions that have proliferated in the 21st century, coupled with the advent of the digital era, the preservation of the media's role as a reliable source of information has become extremely tenuous. To begin with, the notion of truth, while commonly mentioned, is highly ambiguous, and varies in every context, culture and individual outlook. Despite this, even if the common definition of propagating truth - the accurate and factually correct dissemination of information - were to be taken, I still argue that more attractive, competing priorities of media outlets, such as maximising profits and pushing political agendas still take precedence over the "reporting of the truth". Furthermore, since the translation of information is highly contingent on an individual or collective innate experiences, biases and metrics of value and morality, I believe that the media can never be trusted to report the full, unadulterated, and unobscured truth.	Context of question effectively set up Can be phrased more clearly Clear and precisely stated thesis statement
The reality of the modern world is that the overwhelming majority - if not all - corporations are profit-driven. Thus, regardless of the vitality of the role and obligation they may hold to the people within their society, profits typically take precedence. With an acute understanding that the human brain is inevitably more drawn to sensationalised, shocking or even warped pieces of information, media outlets are highly selective with the incidents and developments they choose to cover, and frequently further sensationalise the events, through means of an embellishing or omitting facets of the occurrence, or simply outrightly making false claims in order to boost or maintain their viewership and in turn, revenue. As a result, consumers of these news outlets are presented a highly- filtered revision of actual events and developments that have transpired and barely get a glimpse of the 'truth'. A subset of the media that is notorious for outlandish alteration of the news is the tabloid and paparazzi sector, with companies such as TMZ and JustJared known to completely fabricate headlines, photoshop photos or even create fictitious events about the lives of celebrities and other public figures in order to stun and generate rumours within the public. It is arguable that the majority of viewers are informed and aware enough to take what these provocative and un-credible news sources release with a pinch of salt, however, virtually every news agency, present a biased revision of the news in a manner they perceive will be the most alluring to the public. Even reputed agencies such as The New York Times have been criticised for their lyrical and wildly exaggerated portrayal of incidents that take place in order to elicit stronger and more emotional responses from their readers. Hence, when the viewership of such highly profit-driven and often simultaneously highly regarded respected and trusted news outlets naively buy into the stories propagated by the media wholesale, this taints their knowledge of the truth, making it clear that the media cannot be trusted in this facet.	Good provision of balance, by considering other perspectives A specific example would be better

Political agenda is another massive external factor that prevents the media from reliably delivering the truth. In an age where the various platforms of media outlets enable heightened outreach to citizens of a wide spectrum of ages, demographic, political views and status, the media is frequently driven, if not exploited by the pushing of political agendas onto the populace in order to compel them to believe in a certain political cause or ideology. Multi-millionaires such as Rupert Murdoch, frequently pay media outlets to disseminate specific political notions in order to sway critical events like nations/elections. For instance, over the past decade, he has instigated the vast majority of media outlets in the UK to falsify the early poll results of elections to favour the Tories, the conservative political front runners in the UK, and has a proven track record of effectiveness as the Tories have successfully won every election ever since. Individuals aside, other institutions, even governments, frequently utilise the media to subversively control the population's views and decisions. An example of this is Russia Today, which is directly funded by the Kremlin and is reputed for its extreme characterisation of events to support the national quasi-communist ideology, such as evidenced in a portrayal of Western leaders in a negative light, or even using images out of context to enhance their stand. On the flip side, leftist, liberal media companies like Vox Media, produce explanatory articles which explicitly state "Trump's tax breaks will make all of us poorer - Here's why" with little delving into technicality or further explanation, proliferating false depictions of much more moderate developments. It may be true that certain companies can be more trusted than others, but check and balance agencies such as Politifact found that even CNN, a media outlet highly regarded to be factual and neutral, had 16% of content that contained some form of falsehood or inaccuracy. Thus, when the media is driven by or exploited as a platform for the subversion or explicit proliferation of political motives, this compromises the people's clarity of truth and hence cannot be trusted.	Topic sentence effectively framed to answer the question Good that more than one example is provided to give the argument more weight Qualifying statement provided, then debunked
It may seem a valid enough argument that the statement that the media can never be trusted to report the truth is untrue as it is absolutist, and surely some element of truth prevails. However, this is premised upon the belief that truth is static, universal and definite. As aforementioned, this is untrue, as one's notion of truth is ultimately affected by perception. With every additional individual in a media company through which information to be disseminated is passed through, the reporter, interviewers, editors, managers, correspondents and even executive boards, truth becomes filtered and obscured by the inherent prejudices and beliefs that affect even our very first interpretation of incidents. The coverage of the very recent Santa Fe school shooting in Texas excellently illustrated the multiplicity of perceptions of what reporting the truth constitutes. Some news reporters focused on the specific gun usage that occurred in the shooting, while others focused on the background of the shooter as sidelined and socially ostracised, and the victims that he shot as peers that bullied and failed to include him in their school activities. Evidently, while news reported may not be mutually exclusive, what reporters view as more critical, more factual, more pertinent, and what is acceptable for the citizens to know or not know all bleed into the eventual, inevitable failure to report an already ambiguous notion of "truth", hence, as such, the media cannot ever be trusted to report what we as a society idealise to be a complete and simple truth.	Confusing - can be phrased more clearly Excellent point that shows much insight and an in-depth understanding of the issue This need not necessarily mean a different account is presented. The example might not be that effective in bring out the point
With the profit-driven and politically motivated externalities that hover over the media's portrayal of events, coupled with human nature's tendency of relying on one's personal interpretations, it is clearly evident that the media can never be trusted to report the truth. While seemingly dismal a finding, this tells us that as individuals, we are instead empowered to exercise our own agency of being media literate, entailing	Good insight

reading from a wide variety of news sources, and forming our own informed opinions to the best of our ability. While we may never be able to negate the taintedness of the media, we can ensure that we consume information intelligently and with political and cultural awareness, enabling us to better make decisions and interpret events that affect our lives with clarity. With a more informed, aware and involved populace, I believe that the menace of falsehood and inaccuracies presented by the media can be alleviated. *(Natalie Lim, 18-O1)*	realised, ending the essay on a good note

2   Can the media ever be trusted to report the truth?

This paragraph provides a clear transition into a counter-argument - by couching the context of media institutions in terms of popular perceptions, the student is able to later discuss the goals of these institutions. This is achieved by the use of signposting phrases (namely "it must be admitted") that point the reader towards the reality of media in modern society and their attendant needs. While the examples provided are of a hypothetical nature, the overall presentation of the drives of media organisations across time remains a concise one.	

Furthermore, many others have faith that the media institutions with a long-standing history of credibility will continue being agencies of truth. They believe that members of the institutions have internalized the ethical code of the media industry, and believe them to be objective and uninfluenced by the changing media landscape. Although their perceptions do hold some grain of truth and [are] possible, it must be admitted that it is becoming increasingly hard to keep to these ideals with greater competition that uses various untruthful methods to attract audiences. All media companies are, after all, in need of making profits. Credible institutions like the BBC, National Geographic, and Channel NewsAsia may one day succumb to the pressure of change, and resort to reporting over-sensationalized untruths to make a profit and survive. Thus, even the continued credibility of such companies cannot be confidently assured, and [they] cannot always be trusted to report the news. *(Tan Jia Ying, 18-O2)*	Context of the question is well-set when expectations and reality are explored and compared The mention of the names of credible institutions helps to concretise an otherwise hypothetical situation, and cements the strength of the argument

2   Can the media ever be trusted to report the truth?

This paragraph is an excellent example of how a counter-argument can be negotiated to fit a thesis statement that is of the opposite stand. It must be emphasized that a comprehensive paragraph must still be provided, but different contexts can be considered to point out that the point that the argument makes may not be the case all the time, as seen in the China-Singapore comparison here, as well as the focus on the role of the individual at the end of the paragraph.

Another widely-championed view is that the media may be used as a tool of propaganda by governments, and this hence leads to the credibility of news reported falling drastically - governments may use the media as a channel for spreading pro-government ideals and concealing political corruption. Due to the media's characteristic of being widely accessible, governments take advantage of this and use it as a way of disseminating information to a large majority of the population. The most well-known case of governments abusing the power of media would be in China. In China, many websites are blocked as the ruling party does not want the people in China to read articles about China's corrupt political leaders, as the obtaining of such information would lead to a tarnishing of the political leaders' image and may lead to an uprising against the government. Famously called the Great Firewall of China, sites like Instagram, Google, and news sites from other countries are blocked, allowing those in China to only have access to websites in China which maintain a pro-government stance. Journalists in China fear reporting about the country's negative political aspects as they may lose not only their jobs, but also their lives, if they tarnish the reputation of government officials. In such cases, the media indeed cannot be trusted to report the truth. However, it is worth noting that China's case is a very extreme one, and a large majority of countries do not have such strict restrictions on media and freedom of speech. Though censorship remains prevalent in Singapore's media, Singaporeans are able to cross-reference with other news websites, such as Channel NewsAsia, to verify if what the media is reporting is true. As such, the media can largely be trusted to report the truth.

(Chelsea Leong, 18-I3)

> The qualifier "large majority" is used to prevent over-generalisation.
>
> Focuses attention on the essay question by referring to it in the response
>
> Good attempt to refute the argument by emphasizing that China is an isolated example, and highlighting the role of the consumer in having the agency to exercise discretion.

2   Can the media ever be trusted to report the truth?

This content paragraph shows us how examples can be adroitly applied to argue for a particular point. The details provided in the comparison between the CNN and Al-Jazeera clearly highlights the perspective that the topic sentence presents, and is made even clearer with the modern-day context of a partisan and politicised media being presented.

The media also has its own inherent biases, fuelled by its own political inclinations and vested interests, which cause it to not report the truth. Increasingly, media outlets are becoming more and more partisan and politicised. While the information reported may not be false, they are often "half-truths" only depicting the side which supports their own agenda. Take, for example, the CNN coverage of the Iraq War. The CNN, having taken a pro-war stance towards the Iraq War, selectively reported victories the American army had in the war, while hardly covering the casualties and losses incurred. Al-Jazeera, a Qatar-based news network, depicted a grimmer and more realistic portrayal of the war, which was that despite the victories the American army had, it was at the expense of many casualties, including civilian ones. The selective reporting and reporting of "half-truths" allows the media to subtly align our views of issues with theirs. While not lying completely, it does not absolve the media of being partisan and thus in such cases, the media has its own biases and reports news subjectively, and thus it cannot be trusted to report the truth.

(Gerald Yak, 18-A3)

Insightful take on why the media cannot be trusted - the reasons provided then elevates the examples by providing a clear context

The contrast between CNN and Al-Jazeera shows how examples can be cleverly presented to prove a point - it is not the case that only one phenomenon is explored

3   Does traditional marriage still hold any relevance in modern society?

This essay is effectively signposted and clear in its structure in terms of content paragraphs. However, the thesis statement could have been rephrased to articulate the stand in a clearer manner. The examples provided are insightful, highlighting the understanding of the key term "modern society". Other arguments could have been written in support of the relevance of traditional marriage in modern society, bringing in other aspects of traditional marriage like the nuclear family and the issue of children.

Traditionally, marriage has been defined as the legal union of a man and woman. As stated in the wedding vows, the couple should stay by each other's side "till death do us []part". Traditional marriage is not only seen as a sacred ritual, but also highly encouraged by the government, as evident from the privileges and incentives given to married couples. However, with the modernisation of society, many are becoming more liberal and have [begun] accepting alternative forms of marriage, such as that between two people of the same gender, or even that between a human and a fictitious character. The sacred wedding vows are also no longer held [in] high regard, as supported by the rise in divorce rates over the years. Hence, I believe that while traditional marriage still holds relevance, it is diminishing [] in our modern society.	Can specify which governments are being referred to; an acknowledgement of different contexts will result in more nuanced writing Mildly awkward expression of thesis statement
Firstly, a traditional marriage is needed for the couple to be recognised in the eye of the law, regardless of where[] they are. A traditional marriage would require the couple, consisting of one man and one woman, to register their marriage. Thereafter, they would be given a certificate of marriage, which would serve as legal proof of their union. This is essential for the couple to enjoy the incentives given by the government. For example, married couples in Singapore are given priority when applying for a flat with the Housing Development Board (HDB). In addition to getting priority, the couple can also apply for housing grants and subsidies to ease their financial burden. Being legally married makes the partner one's next-of-kin, which allows one to make decisions for their spouse, when required, such as consenting to surgery when the spouse has met with an accident. Therefore, traditional marriage brings about convenience for the couple when dealing with legal proceedings, as well as incentives for the couple in certain circumstances.	More detail could be provided to compare the ease of getting a flat if one were married versus if one is not Can develop the idea further - traditional marriage is still relevant because many laws in modern society still rely on traditional marriage as an institution
However, the traditional definition of marriage is constantly under question, especially with the increasing open-mindedness of our modern society. Should marriage only be limited to couples comprising [] a man and a woman? Conservatives may argue that marriage between two people of the opposite gender has been a sacred ritual which has been practised for centuries and hence, should be respected and kept that way. Yet, it is important to note that other age-old traditions evolve with time to remain relevant, so why should it be different in the case of marriage? As the masses gain insight into fundamental human rights, it is no surprise that acceptance for the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) community is growing. With an increasing number of people supporting LGBT rights, many countries have thus legalised gay marriage, such as the United States of America, Canada and Australia. In order to match the pace at which the modern world is progressing, the definition of marriage has been broadened to include LGBT couples and traditional marriages are	Good link back to the question and modern society

no longer the only form of marriage, hence their relevance is no longer as prominent as before.	
Consequently, the wedding vows of traditional marriage, stating that the couple should stay together till the end of life, which used to be regarded with high [reverence] are gradually losing their meaning. In the past, divorce was a taboo topic which was rarely ever heard of, no matter how unhappy any of the individuals were in the marriage. In addition, men were usually the sole breadwinners and women relied heavily on their husbands for all their necessities, hence the women rarely stood up for themselves and merely accepted the treatment they received from their spouse. However, with increasing gender equality in our modern society, many women have their own career and are able to fend for themselves. With their independence, they have no need to tolerate any form of mistreatment in their marriage just [] for their survival. The stigmatisation of divorces has also been reduced. As such, more people are unafraid to assert their right to break free [from] an unfulfilling marriage, leading to rising divorce rates. The increasing rate of divorce is testament to the fact that age-old wedding vows are losing their importance and that the relevance of traditional marriages, which were expected to last till death, is declining.	Can be more explicit what this is a consequence of More explanation needed to substantiate claims
Lastly, traditional marriage may not be as desirable as before, due to the growing need for freedom among the younger generation today. The younger generation, especially [millennials], may view marriage as restrictive as it legally binds two individuals for life. Many also believe that being married legally is not crucial to show their love and devotion for their partners. Thus, an increasing number of young couples have opted for cohabitation, without being lawfully wedded to each other. Evidently, with the changing needs and mindset of this generation, the traditional marriage may be less desirable and hence, not as relevant as before.	
In conclusion, traditional marriage still holds relevance in modern society as it is the legal procedure binding a man and woman for life, and married couples recognised by the law still benefit from incentives and privileges, which are exclusive to lawfully wedded couples. Despite that, modern society has found many alternatives to the traditional marriage, such as LGBT marriages and cohabitation, to suit their changing needs. Increased gender equality and de[-]stigmatisation of divorce have also led to increased divorce rates in recent years, which goes against traditional wedding vows. Therefore, while it still holds significance, the relevance of traditional marriages in modern society has been diminished, as compared to before, simply due to the changing beliefs and values of society. *(Ng Xuan En, Constance, 18-U2)*	Conclusion effectively links main points of the essay back to the question, while summarising it with connections to understanding of the universal concept of beliefs and values, which is also employed earlier in the essay

3   Does traditional marriage still hold any relevance in modern society?

This paragraph offers insight into how to effectively engage the characteristics of modern society and whether it affects the relevance of traditional marriage today. While there are certain loose ends, the paragraph is largely able to establish a link between a shift in societal norms surrounding women and the need for marriage.

With the rise of women's rights and women's empowerment, women in modern society no longer see traditional marriage as the only means of ensuring their livelihood[,] which has led to the relevance of traditional marriage decreasing. In the past, women in most societies did not possess equal rights to men, specifically being denied the right to education. This caused women of the past to generally lack any skills needed to make a living on their own[,] which resulted in them having to resort to traditional marriage in order to survive. However, gender bias[] and discrimination against women has decreased drastically in modern society, as seen from the fact that women can now be involved in politics, a concept frowned upon in the past, and are given equal access to education. This has led to the economic empowerment of women as they can now enter the workforce due to being educated and provide a livelihood for themselves. This has resulted in the need of traditional marriage for survival decreasing among women, causing the [practicality] of traditional marriage to decrease, [] resulting in the diminishing relevance of traditional marriage in modern society. *(Yao Yi Chao, 18-O5)*	Some reference to why such discrimination has decreased (e.g due to changes in mindsets or the structure of society) would have further strengthened the argument's link to 'modern society'

4 'Youth is wasted on the young.' Do you agree?

This essay is notable for its unique style and the clarity of its arguments, which combine to result in a response that is truly compelling. The arguments here are not complicated, but their logic is sound, intelligently presented and fully relevant. The impact of the ideas is compounded by writing that is authentic and whimsical in tone, both characteristics which are particularly well-aligned with the defence of youth that is the question's subject matter.

If life had seasons, youth would almost certainly be spring. Everything seems to be smooth-sailing, we enjoy peak physical health, and there are opportunities abound. What [is] there not to love? However, some are of the view that this peak physical and mental state and the boundless energy and opportunities that make up 'youth', are wasted on 'young people' between the ages of fifteen to thirty. The hidden assumption is that young people are undeserving of youth. I would not claim to share these views, as I believe youth is not wasted on the young. In the words of Jasnah Kholin, a character from Brandon Sanderson's epic fantasy novel The Stormlight Archive, 'Youthful immaturity is one of the cosmere's greatest catalysts for change.'	Opening line brings out a certain playfulness that is sustained throughout
First and foremost, young people are best placed to make great changes due to this timely combination of mind and body. As stated above, 'youth' refers to the period of life where there is peak physical and mental state, and many opportunities. Youths also have the unique advantage of bright eyes and fresh minds, which lack the cynical, jaded world views that one inevitably picks up before fifty. This set of advantages means that youths are willing to take risks and be the change the world needs. Albert Einstein was only twenty-six when he first proposed the theory of relativity, which [catapulted] him to scientific stardom. He was prepared to risk ridicule and taunts for upending Newtonian Physics, which had been accepted as gospel for 200 years. However, his youthful, clear-thinking mind and hopeful worldview meant he could take risks and change the world. Another example would be Noguchi Ken, an American-raised Japanese who climbed the highest peaks of all seven continents by age twenty-five. This inspired him to start environmental efforts to clean up Mount Everest, which has been littered with decades' worth of garbage. This unprecedented move would certainly be more easily accomplished at twenty-five than at fifty-two. Hence, young people deserve youth, as their peak physical and mental state, mixed with a fresh perspective, can change the world.	In response to the notion of youth being capable of changing the world, a likely criticism would be that youth *can*, but they usually *do not*. This opposing idea can be brought up and addressed to develop the argument further
On the flip side of the coin, some are of the opinion that youth is wasted on the young because they are reckless and immature. To such people - who are usually a generation older - young people, like the proverbial second son in the Bible, squander away their gifts and land themselves in dire straits. These arguments cannot be ignored. Michael Fay, a sixteen year old American, was severely punished in a high-profile court case for vandalising cars. He received four strokes of the cane and was heavily fined. Another infamous youth would be Amos Yee, who was forced to leave Singapore after openly airing his highly controversial views. The examples of Fay and Yee show that youths can lose opportunities or bring judgement upon themselves because they lack judgement and experience. Despite this, I still believe youth is not wasted on the young as it is only through making mistakes in our youth that we gain good judgement and experience. I am confident that all of us have made mistakes or erred in our ways during our youth, though perhaps not as extreme[ly] as Fay and Yee. It is only through falling down repeatedly that we learn how to walk properly. The best time to do so would arguably be while we are youths, where the stakes are lower and we have more time left to recover. Thus, in my opinion, youth is	There is potential here for recognition that this is a perennial criticism - each generation is criticised in its youth, and will in turn criticise subsequent generations - which can add depth to the understanding of the question's context

This argument can be substantiated |

not wasted on the young as they gain experiences and learn what is important in life.	with examples
Finally, I believe that youth is not wasted on the young because, frankly, there is no way to 'waste' your youth. Youth is the mountain valley where we climb most of life's peaks and pits, enjoy its highs and lows. It may be the one time we really can throw caution to the wind and truly 'live'. Like most things, humans have 'expiry dates': we reach our intellectual peak at eighteen and our physical peak at twenty-five. Biologically, we were not built to last. Youth, therefore, should be enjoyed while we can. Youth comes with no user manual - it is our choice on how we want to spend it. Regardless of how our youth is spent - toiling hard for a better future or checking things off [one's] bucket list - over one's youth, the individual is sovereign. Therefore, how we spend our youth, and whether or not we waste it, is entirely up to us. Youth is not wasted on the young, because it is ours to 'waste' before we grow old.	Very effective use of multiple images to convey the argument
In sum, youth is not wasted on the young as they are best poised to change the world, they use their youth to gain valuable experience, and there is no right or wrong way to spend one's youth. As Steve Jobs brilliantly worded it, 'Your time is precious, so don't waste it living someone else's life.' There is no time more precious than the golden years of youth, so why let other people's opinions influence your life? Perhaps it is apt that 'youth' is spelt with 'you' - we have the liberty to choose how we want to spend our lives, and we only really waste our youth if we place it in the hands of other people. *(Soon Minh, 18-I3)*	Ties the essay back to the quote in the introduction, which not only answers the question, but also makes an argument about the greater significance of youth. This link can be made slightly more explicit for greater cohesion

4 'Youth is wasted on the young.' Do you agree?

Like the previous essay, the argument in this piece is built on some cleverly argued points, though it lacks some of the other piece's finesse in expression. The three paragraphs below constitute the introduction, conclusion, and one of the essay's points. Together, they demonstrate an incisiveness and strong awareness of the perspectives that are embedded in the statement 'youth is wasted on the young'.

There is a current, if slightly old, acronym popular with youths known as "YOLO", which translates to "you only live once". This acronym has been paraded around by youths, saying that due to us only having one chance at life, we should live it to the fullest by doing all the things we want to and leave no regrets. However, some people overlook the alternate view that exactly because we only live once, we should not waste this life seeking thrills and pleasure, but rather utilise it to the fullest for our goals in life. Hence, we have the two primary perspectives in this issue. Is youth truly wasted on those who have it, or is this just the lamentations of those without it, wishing they had used their own youth differently? In truth, I believe that this youth is not wasted on the young, as it is where we learn and grow from.	Effective use of a well-known saying that is emblematic of youth culture and behaviour to quite naturally bring across the main opposing views in the question
[...]	
"Youth is wasted on the young." When reading this, one must note that in order to be "wasted", youth must have definite ways in which it can be used "effectively". What then decides which effects are positive? Does it necessarily have to be in ways that yield definite, tangible, obvious results towards one's future? In every conceivable method of utilising youth, there will definitely be benefits and drawbacks to every one of them, no matter how trivial or essential, how obvious or subtle, or from which perspective it is viewed. For example, using youth effectively can mean to study as much as possible, to accumulate an expansive database of skills and knowledge. However, it must be considered that forcing youths to do so when they are unwilling tends to form a negative association of such information, significantly reducing the function of these skills and knowledge. Is this not, then, a drawback of using youth "effectively"? Thus, to absolutely classify the way youths utilise their youth as a waste is just a [gaffe].	Transition is slightly awkward and looks as if the intention is to remind the writer, rather than the reader, of the topic! Points out the assumption in the question and addresses its shortcomings
Ultimately, the way youths use their youth will have pros and cons no matter what path they choose, and it cannot be said that the perspective [from] which the statement 'youth is wasted on the young' [is made] insinuates that this youth will be better used by older persons, people who similarly had their own youth to spend, and in their own words, "waste" when they were young. In this case, what then forms the qualification for this statement, given that those who state so seem guilty of this themselves? *(Ma Wee Kai, 18-A6)*	Recognises a circularity in the perspective that 'youth is wasted on the young' and undermines its validity to the benefit of the stand taken

6   'Consensus is becoming a rarity in today's world.' Is this a fair assessment?

This essay provides valuable insight on the rarity of consensus at various levels, both within and between societies. It constantly refers back to the main contention of the question, without losing sight of the topic of "consensus". The illustration in this essay is particularly impressive, showing a deep and wide-ranging and knowledge of content that is used to build an argument that is well-informed and relevant.

In today's world, we seem to be constantly living in fear in a[n] extremely ambiguous and uncertain world. Nowadays, we witness too many conflicts, too many protests and too many disputes, so much so that we have even become desensitised to hearing news about various conflicts worldwide. Many people choose to live in their own world[,] entitled to their individualistic view[s], and are unable to come [to] any consensus with one another. Consensus refers to a group of individuals coming together and agreeing on a common objective, which paves the way for better [cooperation] among the people. However, I believe that in today's world, consensus is indeed becoming a rarity. I would hence [assess] this statement on a political and societal level, and argue that it is a fair assessment to claim that "consensus is becoming a rarity in today's world". Although there are various manifestations of consensus[,] as seen in international agreements to combat terrorism and climate change, such things are becoming a rarity as seen in the tensions between countries on a geopolitical scale, and in society where people disagree on what is desirable for their society.	Definition can be introduced more naturally A good variety of instances of consensus is provided, illustrating how conflict and consensus can be manifested
Major conflicts and disagreements worldwide have inhibited our progress in achieving consensus. Earlier this year, the United States (US) President Donald Trump announced that the US will officially move its embassy in [Israel] from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem, and this decision sparked outrage and protests across the globe, particularly in the Muslim world. This has always been a thorny issue in the Middle East, and the holy site of Jerusalem has experienced multiple riots, protests and even deaths. In the past, most countries in the United Nations (UN) were able to agree that Jerusalem will not be recognised as either [Israel's] or Palestine['s] capital and adhere to the "two-state" solution. However, the President's decision has [unwound] decades of consensus among UN member states, and the US even threatened to sanction countries who do not support the US and [Israel]. This is a prime example of disagreements and opposing views on a particularly sensitive issue, where countries do not come [to] consensus to decide what is [the] best solution to bring about peace in Jerusalem. Even up till today, many Palestinians are protesting and many have lost their lives in the protests. The [Israel]-Palestine conflict is not a standalone issue. President Trump's presidency has been marked by various controversial decisions he has made on foreign policy, [such as] withdrawing the US from the Paris Climate Agreement, the Iran nuclear deal and starting a trade war with China. All these actions are definitely not evidence[] of consensus, but rather conflict[], as the US being a world leader is unable to come [to] consensus with many countries on multiple issues. Hence, it is fair to argue that consensus is becoming a rarity due to various politicians['] disagreement on certain issues that lead[] to widespread conflict and chaos.	Cogent link going back to the main issue of the question, though the argument can be further developed to consider how the characteristics of the world today are such that consensus is becoming more of a rarity
It is also fair to argue that consensus is becoming a rarity because it is true that many countries are unable to come to a common consensus as populist sentiments in many	Awkward sentence structure that could be clearer and

countries cause unrest and people are unable to agree on the future direction of the country. Brexit has been a pertinent issue in the European Union (EU) which shows the conflict with the United Kingdom (UK) itself and tensions between the UK and the other European countries. The electorate in the UK is becoming increasingly divided, between the young and the old, and between the urban and the rural. The country itself is unable to agree on the UK's future in the EU, and the results of the referendum to leave the EU caused an uproar among [the] youth[] and urban class who oppose Brexit. Such disagreements are also seen in the US, France and Italy, where populist sentiments cause political upheaval as populist leaders promise to break away from consensus, tapping upon radical ideologies to allow far-right sentiments to proliferate. This has resulted in intense debate across two ends of the political spectrum, and when society has become so divided, riots and unrest start to flare up, which is an obvious sign that consensus is becoming a rarity in today's world.	more straightforward
On the societal level, conflict between different identities and ideologies are manifestations that consensus [is] becoming increasingly rare. More often than not, people nowadays easily resort to violence to express their discontent over various issues. In the US, the country still remains extremely divided over the issue of gun control. The National Rifle Association (NRA) and its supporters are willing to do whatever [they] can to protect their rights enshrined in the second amendment. On the other hand, liberals and activists of stricter gun control[] advocate for Congress to protect Americans from future gun violence, culminating in a massive "March For Our Lives" protest earlier this year. In an increasing[ly] polarised society, the country cannot come to a consensus as people hold very different ideologies. Moreover, in this age of social media, netizens are entitled to their individual freedom to choose what they want to read, and choose to believe. As a result, individualism and factionalism are becoming common in our modern society, subscribing to their own view and fail to acknowledge the value of recognising alternative views to strike a consensus. In Singapore, we are also starting to observe certain disagreements over the issue of foreign talent[], because various social classes view the subject differently. The less educated Singaporean might feel afraid of his or her future if foreigners "steal" his or her job, and hence people are unable to agree with the government that migration is needed for further economic development.	Can be tied back to the argument being made for greater impact
However, I also acknowledge that in today's world, we ought to be hopeful of our future. There are still commendable international efforts which have come to a consensus, specifically to counter the common threat of terrorism and climate change. All countries in the world pledge to take action against terrorist attacks, and a common consensus [has been achieved] among major world powers to collaborate and share information networks on terrorist threats. The global community also stands in solidarity with countries affected by terrorist attacks, as seen in the Manchester bombing where various celebrities and people organise[d] a special concert to raise funds for [the] affected families. The landmark Paris Climate Agreement which was signed in 2015 was also a remarkable consensus among all countries to take action against climate change. In today's world, many countries recognise the significance of our environment and biodiversity and come to an agreement to save planet Earth together. Hence, the evidence [of] such remarkable consensus may seem to be unfair in claiming that consensus is becoming a rarity in today's world.	A possible rebuttal to this opposing argument - why do terrorist attacks in cities such as Manchester and Paris receive more attention than those that may occur in developing countries? Is there consensus to help all, or only those that are visible?
Also, many [] contend that we have made [] significant progress to achieve consensus and advance world peace, as compared to the past. This is a point worth contemplating [], because it may be true that major conflicts and disagreements were worse in the past, which was manifested in the two World Wars of the twentieth	

century. Some would argue that in comparison [to] the past, although consensus [is] still not very common today, we have achieved far more consensus than in the past. Nevertheless, I still believe that it is fair to claim that consensus is becoming a rarity in today's world, given how our society has changed with the proliferation of social media and extremist ideologies in dealing with certain issues. Consensus is rarely seen nowadays as our world and society have become more polarised, [with] everyone holding [] their own sets of beliefs and values without appreciating other viewpoints.	
In conclusion, I would still believe that it is a fair assessment to state that "consensus is becoming a rarity in today's world". I applaud efforts in the international community to strive towards a common goal of consensus and achieving peace. However, evidence[] of the increasing number of conflicts worldwide, particularly in Jerusalem, Syria and between major powers[,] ha[s] made it clear that consensus [is indeed a rarity in today's world]. *(Dason Yeo Boon Xuan, 18-A1)*	Conclusion is slightly mechanical in wrapping up the arguments - there is space for more impactful expression

8   How far is elitism inevitable in your society?

This essay demonstrates a deep understanding of how meritocracy, a principle that drives Singapore and the mindsets that it engenders in Singapore citizens are mutually reinforcing, resulting in elitism. Crucially, the connections between meritocracy and elitism are well explained and rooted in an understanding of how that means the presence of elitism could be inevitable. The evaluation of the state of affairs is mature and balanced, recognises that the issue is dynamic rather than static, and leaves space for the possibility of change in the future.

The issue of elitism is one that is prevalent in all societies, and has plagued many governments, with Singapore not being an exception. Elitism, or having a non-inclusive mind-set, with groups of exclusive individuals viewing themselves as superior to the masses, has always been present, and continues to prevail today. It can be observed since medieval times, where royal blood or relation to the royal family would immediate place one in a class above the rest, and even in modern times, when financial status immediately classifies people and society into groups. This is especially prevalent in Singapore, especially in financial terms, given the context of meritocracy, our financial gap, and the cyclical nature of an elite class. However, elitism, while pervasive, is not inevitable, and on higher and structural levels, it can be alleviated or avoided, and the government has made attempts to do.	A sense is provided that elitism is a bad thing, though the reasons for this, which can ground the importance of this argument, can be clearer Can be explained a little more carefully, or its impact is lost Good distinction between being pervasive and inevitable in the stand
The concept of elitism pervades all levels of Singaporean society, is present in the mindsets of the people, and is reflected clearly in the way they lead their lives. This takes place mostly in economic aspects, given the strong presence Singapore has in the corporate, business world, but also takes place in other aspects of life, such as race. However, as these other aspects are not as common as the divide based on one's economic background, for the purposes of this essay, I will only tackle the economic reasons for elitism.	Can be expressed more clearly
Firstly, elitism in Singapore is extremely prevalent, and serves to be almost unavoidable, due to the concept of meritocracy. Since the country's independence in 1965, the Singapore government has recognised the need for a small country like Singapore, with little to no natural resources, to work hard. As many politicians have pointed out, one of Singapore's strongest assets is its people; the educated population, who can work to put Singapore on the global map. Hence, the Singaporean government, under the guidance of the late Mr. Lee Kwan Yew, introduced this national economic ideology of meritocracy – where everyone has an equal opportunity, and hard work is rewarded. However, this concept has ironically led to a divide in Singaporean society, where people become defined by their "reward" or financial situation since it directly links to the hard work that was put in. Because of the fairness of this system, in which financial status seems to only be directly impacted by the amount of hard work invested, elitism thus emerges and becomes unavoidable – the richer upper class can now have a reason to frown upon the lower classes – because they have been "lazy", or not "hardworking" enough. While these might not be the actual reasons why the lower class is in their specific financial situation, the concept of meritocracy still gives the rich a reason for pride, where they can take pride in the fruits of their labour. This human pride then widens the already present financial gap into a mental, social one; the mindset of the rich is thus set directly against the poor, and worse yet, the rich, due to pride, feel justified to do	Other factors, such as talent and academic excellence can also be considered, since hard work is not the only way to success Can expand on what some of these potential reasons might be Can be conveyed less awkwardly

so. Elitism hence emerges, and pervades all levels of society, since financial status applies to all.	
Secondly, while this elitism is omnipresent, it is also unavoidable, simply because meritocracy is unavoidable, and pervades all aspects of life, especially of an institutional level. Meritocracy is not only mentioned by the government at National Day speeches or election rallies, but is also implemented in every level of society, in schools and in the workplace, and in the mind-sets of people where it is seen as a way to move up in life. In schools, good results and hard work are rewarded by better opportunities, like leadership positions, or a better class. In the Primary School Leaving Examinations, 12 year-olds sit for a national exam, which streams them by score into the school of their choice. Of course, better students get into more elite schools, and so on. In the workplace, this is likewise observed: better, more hardworking employees have more opportunities to move up the corporate ladder, earning more and eventually gaining higher positions. This then creates a functional elitism for the country, where an elite group is created solely for functional reasons: to encourage people to do better, and gain a better nationwide performance. Since this happens at every level of society, from schools to the workplace, to mindsets, it is currently inescapable and inevitable.	This is an important connection to make - the inevitability of elitism cannot be properly accounted for without tying it to meritocracy, which is recognised in this paragraph as a fundamental tenet of Singapore society Can consider more seriously if elitism can be a productive force here
Thirdly, elitism is inevitable in Singapore, because the gap between different groups already exists, and will only continue to widen exponentially, drawing the divide larger and larger as time goes by. Currently, the Singapore government groups its citizens by financial status, for its functional benefits. The government then uses this to identify which groups in society require the most help, and offer this assistance to them. For example, in schools, students are split by financial background, so that the Ministry of Education can identify how much aid to offer them under the Financial Assistance Scheme (FAS), and the percentage of subsidies they should receive. For example, students whose parents earn less than $2400 a month are eligible for a 100% school fee subsidy, including the provision of free school uniforms and textbooks. Students in the window above that may receive 80%, and so on. While this seems fair and beneficial, the definition of people in economic terms creates a mental divide among citizens, as they develop an acute understanding of their standing in the economic world. This is worsened by the already present rich-poor divide, which is only set to worsen. In 2013, the GINI coefficient of Singapore, which is a way of measuring the rich-poor divide in a country, was the highest in the world, with Singapore even beating countries like Hong Kong and India. With this huge rift between the rich and the poor, it is no wonder that people have begun to divide themselves along those lines, and no wonder that those in the upper class feel a sense of entitlement.	Good links made between the policies that are meant to lessen the economic divide and the mindset of elitism that they inadvertently engender
Fourthly, this is made worse by the cyclical nature of elitism, where elitism and social divisions are difficult to break out of. As previously established, meritocracy, and as a result, elitism, is present in all levels of society. However, because this is so closely tied to the idea of family, one finds that they cannot simply escape from this. For example, a child born into a well-to-do family already has an elevated financial status, and an inheritance. This child then also has greater opportunities in school: more tuition, and more chances to go on overseas trips. Parents with connections in the corporate world would also guarantee their children jobs in top law firms or hospitals, and teach their children what they know. On the other hand, poorer parents might only be able to	The explanation of the cycle is incomplete - the link to how students who grow up privileged pass their benefits in turn to their own children is

encourage their children to study harder, and might not be able to enrol their children in extra classes either. Hence, we can see that elitism and social divides are, by nature, unavoidable in society, and this is especially so in a Singaporean context.	missing
However, these above observations have also been made by the government. The news about the GINI coefficient had caused a huge uproar in 2015, and the government has since attempted to close the gap. Announcing that "all schools are good schools", the Ministry of Education tried to remove the elitism mind-set that students and parents have about "better" schools, and is attempting to close the gap. Several junior colleges around the island, like Pioneer Junior College and Jurong Junior College, have also merged, giving more students the opportunity to enter top junior colleges, since the aggregate required for entry is higher and more attainable. Of course, there is only so much the government can do, since much of it stems from mindsets that have been ingrained by years of an elitist system. However, since many systemic faults are to be blamed for these mindsets, I feel that the government is making slow, but good progress. While this takes time, and will not be solved in a year or two, we can have hope for the future, and for future generations to come.	Somewhat inaccurate - "every school a good school" is a goal rather than a straightforward description of reality Nuanced evaluation
In conclusion, while elitism is, in the current context of Singapore, unavoidable, due to systemic faults and the mind-sets of people, and due to the omnipresence of these flaws, it is not completely inevitable, especially in the future. If Singapore continues to slowly remove divisive factors at the institutional level, we can hope that in the future, our children might not have to face the same circumstances we do now. However, what is then left for us to do is to attempt to purposefully adjust any elitist mindsets we ourselves might have, and each plays a part in creating a more inclusive society and nation, keeping in mind our ideal of a nation with fewer divisions. *(Lew Kylin, 18-U1)*	A considered and thoughtful evaluation

9 Consider the view that technology is destroying the quality of written language.

This essay shows the ability to make connections between disparate ideas, and deal with depth and complexity, exemplified through how further development of ideas is consistently appended onto the main idea in order to strengthen it even further. However, there is a pressing need to clearly delineate what "quality of written language" entails, to ensure that there can be a coherent discussion of how technology has had a negative impact on it. While some of the arguments are clear, others display some leaps of logic and could be explained more effectively - for instance, the intensity of the keyword 'destroying' can be better accounted for.	
The ubiquitous presence of technology in our world today is no doubt making a huge impact on our lifestyle and habits, Instead of writing letters physically, or going to a library to browse books [in] paperback, we now send text messages and emails, as well as read whatever interests us on the Internet, disregarding by whom and where the book was written. As such, we are exposed to content that [is not] written in proper English [] like slang [] and broken English. Moreover, the practice of hand-writing to communicate with others has been compromised - people now place less importance on penmanship. Therefore, due to the advancements in technology, such as the rise of social media, the Internet and electronic devices, I feel that technology really is destroying the quality of written language.	Key terms such as 'the quality of written language' should be thoroughly unpacked to increase understanding and relevance and avoid missing the point as it has here with this idea
The 21st Century also refers to the Internet Age, where a majority of the human population living in fairly developed countries rely on the World Wide Web to exchange information and find sources of entertainment. The presence of articles and published works which are not edited have caused a decreased quality of language to those who read such works, thus destroying the quality of written language. For example, fan fiction, which is a written fictional story by fans of a music artist, fiction book, or a movie, has been on the rise. Websites such as Wattpad and archiveofourown are sites where anyone can post their fan fiction for other fans to enjoy, without going through proper editing. This means that people who do not have English as their first language, and people with poor linguistic ability still have a platform to publish their works written in bad grammar. Not only can people post fanfiction on Wattpad, they can also write their own fiction that is not properly thought through and edited. These unofficial ways in which people post written work have decreased the standards of English for the readers, destroying the quality of written language. Moreover, content found online is usually more convenient to find and read. For instance, fanfiction caters directly to what many other like-minded fans want to read, fuelling the rise of such content that ruins the quality of written language. Other articles, such as news articles written in other languages can be translated by Google Translate, which provides direct translation that usually distorts the meaning of the original sentence. Therefore, the Internet - a technology invented 29 years ago - does destroy the quality of written language.	This evaluation may be too strong for what has been explained - 'destroyed' is a strong word, and the impact on the written language needs to be shown to be commensurate in magnitude

The link to how this destroys the quality of written language should be made |
| Next, the presence of social media and Internet slang [has] lowered the acceptable standards of written language, thus destroying its quality. Due to our fast-paced lifestyle, we have found ways to shorten words while texting and communicating. For instance, in Singapore, many people use Whatsapp text to communicate. This gives rise to text language and slang, such as 'LOL', which means to 'laugh out loud' and using the first letter of certain words to shorten them, [such as] 'w' for 'with' and 'q' for | Can be more explicit in pointing out a shift in mindset that prioritises the speed of communication, thus compromising |

'quite'. This makes many people's text language informal and completely not understandable in proper written language. Since many people rely on social media platforms to communicate with their friends and family, as well as derive entertainment from platforms like Instagram and Twitter, they use text language as a dominant form of communication, disregarding the need for proper, formal written language. This, in the long run, would become a habit for people who use text language excessively, destroying the essence of quality written language. Furthermore, Internet slang can give rise to a distorted perception of proper written language. In the online context, 'salty' is used to express one's feelings of regret or jealousy. Because people use it so much, seeing that it is a proper English word, they get the impression that 'salty' can be used as a term in formal or written language. However, it cannot be used. This thus serves as a perfect example of how online text language and Internet slang words have ruined the quality of written language by lowering the standards.	the quality of language Note that 'LOL' precedes texting, first appearing in the 1980s on a Bulletin Board System! Consider how the use of slang words results in a lower quality of written language. What is the standard of good writing?
While many believe that the presence of online language-learning and improving applications and websites [has] helped increase the quality of written work, I feel that the view is myopic as it fails to take into account the willingness and ability of netizens who need such websites. Some simply do not have the time, some cannot be bothered to do it, and some simply [are not] aware. Grammarly is a free application that can be installed on a laptop. It helps to identify grammatical errors and suggest the best replacement word. However, people dislike having disruptions when they type out their work, so they end up uninstalling Grammarly, or pay no heed to it. Moreover, Grammarly is only advertised in certain countries with English as a first language. In European countries, many people who are learning English are unaware of such online applications, so they do not have [many] opportunities to correct their English. For those who want to learn languages online or in person, they have to pay to get the full lesson package, making it undesirable to learn from such sources. Hence, they resort to other unofficial methods such as reading from websites or articles that do not have official edited work. This gives them the wrong information when picking up the language, causing them to not learn the language well, destroying the quality of written language.	Can be rephrased to sound less anecdotal Here, as in the earlier paragraphs, signposting has been used to signal the addition of new ideas or complications Can be stated more finely, e.g. 'the cost makes it prohibitive to many learners'
In sum, the presence of technology has indeed brought about lower language standards, giving many the wrong perception of proper written language and formal language. This, in turn, would destroy the quality of written language, and the problem will only get larger with the rising use of informal text language and Internet slang. *(Violet Liaw, 18-E6)*	

10   'Rehabilitation, not deterrence, should be the goal of the justice system.' Discuss.

This response makes a good effort at providing insight and real-world illustration. At the same time as there are good and usefully employed examples, there are also some that are factually inaccurate or have not been sufficiently linked to the point being made to be effective. While rehabilitation has been quite well covered, further exploration of the impact, effects and benefits of deterrence as a measure could have been conducted for a more rounded discussion, as it should be for a comparative question.

Facing near death, the criminal tenses, as a cocktail of lethal drugs is injected into his body. Within seconds, the poison seeps into his tissues, forcing him to writh[e] uncontrollably on the floor. It was only after 20 minutes did his torture stop, with the drugs stopping his heart. "An eye for an eye, and the entire world goes blind." Gandhi provoke[d] global criticism by organisations such as Amnesty International and the United Nations, declaring deterrence methods by global justice institutes to be "state-sanctioned murder"; harsh transactions that do not fully encompass the tenet of human values of compassion and forgiveness. Why must global justice systems resort to dealing with violence with violence? As the championing for human rights continues to overwhelm retributive legislations enforced by departments of justice, the question still remains as to whether global justice systems should work towards integrating rehabilitation into its rigid system, or disregard it and continue utilising its punitive measures. However, the view that deterrence methods should completely be abolished in order to pave the way for rehabilitation seems much too myopic - though I agree that rehabilitation could be a possible alternative, it would ultimately boil down to the degree of the crime committed that decides the punishment enforced on the criminal.	More is not better. Can have a greater sense of connection between the disparate (but still useful!) parts, since the essay is supposed to function as a whole Clear thesis statement that makes use of a condition to refine the stance. However, the link between this condition and how the desired goals are weighed is tenuous
Traditionally, the value[] of compassion [has] been completely disregarded, with justice systems enforcing deterrence methods such as the death penalty and the infamous electric chair, in attempts to induce fear into its citizens, and prevent [repercussions] of future criminal atrocities. Justice systems referred to "An eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth" for moral redemption, declaring that violence begets violence, and the criminal deserves to be awarded the same punishment he inflicted unto others. Besides the death penalty, justice systems have also whipped and caned criminals, sparing them from death, but carving on them the painful memory of the mistake they committed. These harsh deterrence methods have recently been criticised for [their] inhumanity and ineffectiveness, as according to the National Institute of Justice, the United States of America (USA) faced over a 60% recidivism rate in 2012, with released criminal committing crimes again within a short, mere span of three years. As indicated by the alarming statistics, it appears that retributive legislations are ineffective in changing the criminals' moral compass and purpose in life. The use of harsh violence could further impede the moral growth of a human being, with retaliation occurring soon after, thus questioning the effectiveness of the panoply of such violent deterrence methods.	More care can be taken to disambiguate deterrence from retribution - though they may manifest in similar actions, the underlying philosophies are different What retributive methods are used in the USA, and what purpose do they serve towards deterrence? More explanation would be helpful.
As with the growing number of human rights organisations, it appears that rehabilitation, which seeks to connect the criminal to human compassion and allow them to truly understand his/her wrongdoings, does appear to be a viable solution. Nordic countries employ this method in their justice systems, with prison cells furnished with television sets and Xbox consoles, to provide prisoners with forms of relaxation and freedom. The statistics that Norway's recidivism rate of 20%, more than	Very well supported with specific knowledge

three times less than that of the USA's, seems to [put] forth that rehabilitation should be promoted in justice systems, as they yield better results than violent methods. Rehabilitation also provides counselling sessions, seeking to understand the individual, and following that, guide them to not repeat committing the same crime. SCORE is a Singaporean, local enterprise which seeks to offer rehabilitation in the form of counselling, further providing job opportunities for the prisoners after their release. They aim to integrate prisoners back into society, and whilst they still remain in prison, provide them with fundamental job skills that can potentially aid them in future jobs. This method has yielded positive results, with Singaporean companies such as Swensens employing ex-convicts for the long-term. Thus, rehabilitation abolishes violence, and statistics prove its positive impact, that using compassion to counsel prisoners will allow them to atone for their sins by contributing back to society [in] their second chance at life. Popular food franchise "18 Chefs" is run by an ex-convict, and seeks to employ other offenders to provide them with a second chance at life, to redeem themselves and give back to society. [The] "18 Chefs" founder not only provides others with hope, but provides them with economic stability, highlighting how compassionate methods of rehabilitation prove to connect humans to create a better society, and not repeat their mistake.	of the subject matter
However, to claim that rehabilitation is the one goal justice systems should work towards is far too absolute, as the degree of the criminal act and the age of the criminal does play a part in deciding the criminal's punishment. The harsh deterrent methods serve the function [of dissuading] individuals from committing crime, and as seen in Singapore, only illegal smugglers of drugs are given the death penalty. This resulted in former US President Bill Clinton hailing Singapore as the one successful country against the "war on drugs", as our drug-trafficking rate is relatively low and almost non-existent. In this sense, the death penalty need not be utilised often, but rather seems to deter the public from committing such an act, attaining justice.	Needs further elaboration, especially since it was mentioned in the thesis statement Factual inaccuracies Should link to question to solidify the focus
Indeed, if countries only resorted to harsh, punitive measures, [the world will truly go blind], blind to compassion and other moral values. However the sole dependence on rehabilitation is not feasible, as [repercussions] of the crime may occur. Thus, justice systems should seek to integrate both deterrence and rehabilitation into [their] system[s], according out the right punishment for the individual based on his/her age and degree of crime committed. *(Amanda Yap, 18-U1)*	A very strong statement to make, since justice itself is often meant to uphold these values! Not explained or developed sufficiently

10   'Rehabilitation, not deterrence, should be the goal of the justice system.' Discuss.

Compared to the previous essay, this piece takes a more conceptual and theoretical approach to the question, focusing on the use of reason rather than explicit examples to substantiate its argument. It is particularly successful in its use of logic, being well thought through and intelligently structured to effectively navigate this comparison question. Though it has done a commendable job of achieving breadth and depth with the illustration of not only the societal impact of these goals but also their impact on individuals, there remains the possibility of tying the essay more closely to the real world through the consideration of real examples to contextualise and lend some concreteness to an otherwise abstract argument.

In a world where traditional justice systems have had varying effectiveness across different societies, the two objectives of rehabilitation and deterrence emerge as two contrasting philosophies to achieve the same primary objective – that of reducing [recidivism] and the incidence of crime. The act of imposing the harshest of punishments on individuals in the criminal justice system, in an effort to "scare", "shock" and disincentivise others from committing crime has, in recent years, come under intense scrutiny, not simply for its moral injustice but also for its underwhelming effectiveness. Instead, another approach, that of rehabilitation, the reintegration of these individuals into society, is ultimately more effective at empowering these individuals and therefore should be the primary aim of the justice system.	Understanding of the subject matter is evident with the explicit recognition of the purpose of the justice system to serve as a backdrop for the discussion of the competing goals Clear stand
The most powerful argument in favour of a deterrence-based model in the justice system is, in essence, that of utility. Proponents of harsher sentencing laws, longer sentences, and even the death penalty, argue that these are simply ways for the state to disincentivise people from committing crime. If people weigh the costs and benefits of crime before committing a crime, and if we can increase the potential cost in their decision-making calculus, they argue, we can then effectively convince people not to commit crimes. This is an argument that has been accepted around the world in varying degrees, but is not prominently manifested in the idea of a death penalty – that the harshest of punishments can convince even the most hardened of criminals to capitulate.	Establishes utility as a point of comparison for the evaluation of the two goals
However, this argument is simplistic at best and is premised on a highly superficial understanding of human psychology. The logic assumes that this added "cost" of harsher punishments is apparent to those who choose to commit crime, when it is not. Very often, people commit crimes when they are forced to – often by the conditions in which they live in. For those living in abject poverty, struggling to put food on their table, crime in the form of robbery or thievery may be the only viable option left. In these dire and pressing circumstances, the cost of incarceration and punishment may seem like a faraway possibility, and when juxtaposed to the real, urgent problem of poverty and hunger, is ignored in the decision-making calculus[] of these individuals. This is simply one of many instances in which our thought processes are thwarted by real problems. While deterrence may be effective in convincing the "privileged" to avoid crime, it is ineffective in teaching the problem of crime committed in the context of poverty. The threat of removing all that one owns is irrelevant when one perceives oneself to own nothing of great value, lending credence to the idea that they have "nothing to lose". After a while, these harsh punishments trumpeted by the justice system only become empty threats, which have little to no effect on these individuals. The ineffectiveness of a deterrence-based model in the context of poverty is	Cogent, insightful argument that recognises the gap between the intended effects of deterrence and the impact that it has in the real world, when complications and considerations such as poverty and hunger are present

problematic, because of the inextricable link between poverty and crime. It has been proven, through decades of research, that there is a higher incidence of crime in less financially-privileged communities. Insofar as the criminal justice system fails to address the largest proportion of crimes, and the highly pertinent context of poverty, proponents cannot argue that it is "effective". It is therefore evident that another approach is necessary to effectively solve the problems of crime.	
This is where rehabilitation is a far more effective solution in terms of dealing with the decision-making calculus[] of individuals. The crux of rehabilitation is to ensure that even the very decision of weighing the costs and benefits of crime never resurface. This is seen through various initiatives like increased educational opportunities and counselling sessions in a rehabilitation-based model of justice. Through rehabilitation, the incarcerated are generally guided towards reintegration and greater empowerment. Individuals can seek to learn new skills or attain further educational qualifications in order to increase their employability once released, and, with this, a better chance of a better future ahead. Instead of denying the very visceral problem of poverty, of which deterrence-based systems are guilty [], the rehabilitation system is based around this understanding. This system is rooted in the belief that people will be less incentivised to commit crime if they are not coerced to do so, and thus by empowering these individuals with education and counselling, we can lift them out of poverty and thus remove these coercive conditions of poverty. This is ultimately a far more effective solution for two reasons. Firstly, it recognises the complexity of the decision-making calculus[] of individuals – something the deterrence-based model fails to do – and avoids a simplistic and ultimately false generalisation of how people think and act. Secondly, it is far more forward-looking and long-term in its approach. An underlying assumption within the deterrence-based model is that this "deterrence" can be maintained. According to the logic proposed by its proponents, once the deterrence is removed, the weighing of costs and benefits will return to its previous state, and crime rates will similarly return to original levels. This is in clear contrast to the model based on education and empowerment, in which regardless of the extent of punishment levied on these individuals, most of them will be empowered to make the right decisions. While this rehabilitation-based approach is certainly ambitious, and education may not be the panacea to all the complex contexts in which crime is committed, the undeniable links between crime, poverty, and education, necessitate the prioritisation of rehabilitation as a goal of our criminal justice systems that we should all work towards.	More explanation could have been provided on how education and counselling would empower them to break out of the cycle of poverty Incisive evaluation of the benefits of rehabilitation over deterrence
With regard to empowerment, we cannot ignore the devastating effects of prolonged incarceration on individuals – a product of a deterrence-based model of the justice system. If deterrence is truly the aim of a criminal justice system, the logical extension of this is the increasing of sentences dished out to the convicted. This is incredibly damaging to individuals. Apart from the massive psychological and physical torments of being in a prison, and the restriction on one's freedom of movement in a cell, incarceration deprives individuals of their productive capacity. In essence, one is unable to work or elevate themselves in prison. This, first and foremost, introduces a massive opportunity cost to individuals while in prison, as years' worth of money and time are robbed from them. More perniciously, however, it has been proven that the longer one stays in prison, the harder it is for one to find a job once released. This is true for a number of reasons, most notably the diminishing relevance of skills one possessed before incarceration, as well as greater stigma and suspicion amongst employers with regard[] to [one's] abilities and morals. This is particularly problematic, because it ironically fuels the very coercive conditions, as elaborated earlier, that convince people to commit crime in the first place. In contrast to this, a	Punishment does not always result in incarceration Insightful links made to previously established ideas, adding to the overall cogency of the essay

rehabilitation-based model which seeks to maximise re-employment once released is clearly more effective.	
Beyond the minute practical differences between both philosophies however, is the issue of mindsets and perceptions. The greater trust and investment we have in a system, the greater we feel obliged to protect it or abide by its morals and values. This is the reason why governments place great emphasis on inculcating national pride and a strong sense of national identity. If we feel invested, safe, and happy in a system or institute, we will be more incentivised to preserve it and work hard to contribute to it. Similarly, if people have trust in social order and society, and if individuals feel respected and comfortable in this community, there will be a greater sense of moral duty for us to preserve this order and avoid committing crime. Conversely, when individuals have lost faith in political institutions and lose their trust in society to treat them fairly, there is little reason for them to avoid committing crime, because they see no value [in] the rules and systems that have yet to represent and serve them. This is precisely why the issue of perceived fairness is important. Whether or not a punishment is "fair" is ultimately subjective. Instead, punishments need to be accepted as fair in order for this trust in societal institutions to be maintained. When criminals are subjected to the harshest of punishments under a deterrence-based model of justice, they feel as if they are being treated as "lost causes" – that their predicament is considered irreversible and their only worth to public institutions is in being examples for the rest of society to avoid emulating. This is particularly apparent when [there is] a greater focus on punishing them – deterrence – vis-à-vis helping them reintegrate back into society. [They] see no reason to treat others in society with compassion and empathy, when they have been crucified[] by the criminal justice system. This is one of the most deeply rooted problem that exist[s] in many societies which adhere to a model of deterrence. Conversely, a model of rehabilitations sends a strong signal to incarcerated individuals – that we believe in them, and want to help them, just like how society helps any other disadvantaged group []. It is precisely this that allows them to regain trust in society, the trust that institutions are there to represent and serve their needs, and that their rights are still protected; trust that [had] been lost as a result of discriminatory institutional policies and widening income inequality. While this may not convince all criminals to have a change of heart, this would definitely change the way some individuals react to public institutions, decreasing reactivi[ty] and therefore is a more effective solution than deterrence.	Could be more straightforward Paragraph is lengthy but packed with ideas. It can be broken up into smaller chunks to ease reading
Ultimately, a criminal justice system should seek to uphold justice and the rule of law – embedded within this is the objective of reducing crime rates. Deterrence, in which the harshest of measures are taken to convince others to change their ways, has long been touted as the panacea to all of the problems currently faced in the system. However, this philosophy is premised on dangerous assumptions and overlooks the broader ramifications of such a policy. In order to truly change society and reduce crime, we need to begin empowering individuals to change for the better – and rehabilitation is the best way to do this. The goal of the justice system should [therefore] be rehabilitation, not deterrence. *(Kenneth Hoh, 18-O5)*	

12 **'The solution to all environmental problems ultimately lies with the government.'**

How far do you agree with this?

This essay's strength is its use of a broad range of local, regional and international examples, and the ability to effectively use these examples to substantiate its points. However, there could have been much more cognisance of the relationship between stakeholders that the key word 'ultimately' demands, through a more concerted attempt to consider how the stakeholders influence each other in their actions.

Environmental problems have always been a pressing issue facing our world. From the large amount of waste that we produce daily, to the steady depletion of our Earth's natural resources, the environmental issues that face us are an immediate and intimidating threat to a sustainable future. In a modern world characterised by increasing affluence and globalisation, environmental problems are further exacerbated. However, efforts have been made to solve these pressing issues. Whilst I do agree that governments do play a large role in solving environmental concerns that require large scale action and change, the absolute nature of the statement given causes me to ultimately disagree, as the solution to some environmental problems[,] such as unsustainability[,] is driven mostly by technological advancements. Furthermore, a change in the lifestyles and mindsets of the people are integral to solving smaller-scale environmental issues like day-to-day wastage. Thus, it cannot be said that the solution to all environmental problems ultimately lies with the government.	Context for the discussion is well established with the examples of environmental problems and modern-day concerns

Clear stand, with reference to arguments that will be elaborated on later in the essay. |
| I do agree, however, that some environmental problems that require international or nation-wide change are ultimately solved through efforts from [the] government. When these large-scale issues like pollution require solutions, such as an improvement [in] one or more countries' policies, governments play the largest role. This is due to their great influence and power, as the leaders of their countries, over the people in their nations. They can mandate or inspire large-scale change to solve environmental problems, which can affect an entire country. Governments also have the extremely valuable privilege of having access to an international platform where they may collaborate and discuss with other world leaders, stimulating change and creating solutions to environmental problems which require this high level of attention and scale to improve. For example, Denmark's government has created a nationwide goal of using 100% clean energy, such a solar and wind power, by 2030. This solution to the environmental concern of pollution, driven by the power of the government to set goals for a country and cater their country's policies towards achieving this goal, has influenced the large-scale, nationwide endeavour to eradicating pollution. Furthermore, the solution to the issue of our carbon footprint [lies] ultimately in the international collaboration between governments during the Paris Climate Agreement in 2016, where many governments across the globe pledged to reduce the amount of carbon emissions from their countries. As such, it is clear how environmental issues that require nation-wide or even international action to solve, such as pollution and our carbon footprint, have solutions driven ultimately by governments. Thus, I do agree that the statement has some truth, as the solution to some environmental problems ultimately lies with the government. | Starts the essay with opposing argument, quite naturally addressing the concerns from which the question's contention arose |
| Other environmental problems that are caused fundamentally by day-to-day actions of the people however, are mostly solved by the change in lifestyle and mindset of the people themselves. In an increasingly affluent world today, the environmental problem | Sentences are |

of wastage is exacerbated by the frivolous lifestyle that many people lead, where focus is placed on spending on unnecessary items just because these people have the capacity to do so, only to throw them away as and when. Many children thus grow up with an intrinsically selfish mindset with a lack of concern for the immense environmental harm caused by wastage. For example, 50% of all waste in Singapore is food waste, which displays how even the basic, day-to-day action of eating, when coupled with an affluent Singapore society and a lack of care for the food wasted, can contribute to the environmental issue of wastage which could lead to over-depletion of resources in the future. Thus, it is now clear how only a change in mindset and lifestyle of the people can drive the solution to this environmental problem. For example, in Japan, children are taught from as early as pre-school the importance of recycling waste and conserving resources. This is done through [] education from parents and schools, which [instil] an eco-friendly mindset and a [thriftier], less frivolous lifestyle. Japan remains one of the most self-sustainable countries in the world today. Thus, as can be seen, when [] economic [problems] such as wastage [are] caused by such a fundamental cause such as daily habits and poor lifestyle choices driven by a wrong mindset, only a solution driven by a change in the people themselves can really alleviate such problems and eradicate them in the future. Thus, I disagree that the solution to all environmental problems lies with the government.	sometimes convoluted and can be simplified for improved clarity Consider if the inculcation of mindsets can also be tied back to government action Good example, though more evidence can be given to strengthen the claim made
Furthermore, environmental issues brought about by the interconnectedness of world trade due to globalisation [are] fundamentally solved by technological advancement and not the government. In a modern, globalised world, the trade of goods [such as agricultural produce] between countries occurs via advanced means like air travel. Not only does this harm the environment by producing tons of carbon emissions and waste, it also results in the long-term environmental issue of unsustainability as countries are unable to manage all the waste produced in the long run. As such, technological advancements to alleviate some of these concerns [are] extremely important. For example, farmers in Singapore have begun to make use of aeroponics and hydroponics in their farming, capitalising on this method of technology that combats space constraint[s] to grow more produce. Not only does this technological advancement give Singapore the option to cut back on global agricultural trade, reducing pollution and waste generated, it also allows Singapore to have an environmentally-friendly, sustainable future where "green living" is incorporated into Singaporeans' everyday lives. Furthermore, South Korea has managed to, with new waste management technology, transform an offshore landfill site, Sudokwon, into a place of leisure and enjoyment for families, with facilities such as amusement park rides and parks. Through technological advancements in reclamation and waste treatment, South Korea has solved the environmental problem of the unsustainability of waste management and waste collection. Thus the solutions to environmental problems brought about by globalisation and the interconnectedness of trade lies ultimately in technological advancements and not necessarily the government. Hence I once again disagree with the statement given.	Types of waste should be elaborated to further support the argument. Consistent link to the question, though it should be considered if these technological advancements can be attributed to the government or other stakeholders
In conclusion, I disagree with the absolute nature of the statement given, and believe that whilst some environmental problems that require a large-scale, concerted effort to alleviate are fundamentally driven by governmental efforts, this is definitely not necessarily so with all other environmental issues. Problems such as wastage which arise mostly from daily bad habits by people who are not environmentally conscious, and issues [arising] from international trade and globalisation are solved ultimately by a change in lifestyle of the people themselves, and technological advancements respectively. Whilst environmental problems may have always been a pressing issue in the past, today, with the greater focus on creating more environmental solutions by	Awkwardly expressed Arguments are consolidated well, although the recognition of more links between these various ideas would have strengthened the response to the

different groups of people and through different methods, I believe that there would definitely be an improvement to the environmental situation that our Earth faces today. *(Ling Li Yan, Alethea, 18-U1)*	question Final line can be truer to the question's focus

Double Passage Application Question

Eunoia Junior College JC1 Timed Practice #2 (GCE A Level 2008 Paper 2):

Anna Banatvala thinks an understanding of history is essential, whereas Lee Min Yen thinks history has no value. How important is an understanding of history for you and your society, and how far has your view been challenged or confirmed by these two passages?

Response 1

> *While there may only be one paragraph in this piece, it is meticulously written in a logical and balanced manner where both authors' views are seriously and sincerely considered in a very clear argument. Improvements could be made in referencing the authors' arguments not just at the start of the paragraph, but also where connections can be made, as have been added in the square brackets below.*

In my opinion, an understanding of history is essential and I agree more with Anna Banatvala's views. She states that the study of history can "teach us how to avoid their mistakes and inspire us to emulate their triumphs", while Lee Min Yen dispels this claim and states that the study of history is impractical as "The daily interactions of the billions of people on our planet… produce an infinitely complex web of causes and effects which are wholly unrepeatable". While there is some merit to Lee's claim, I agree [to a greater extent with] Banatvala's claim and I think it is applicable to Singapore's society. Although Singapore is still a very newly established country, the study of events that have occurred here in the past have been largely beneficial. Singapore celebrates Racial Harmony Day annually in commemoration of the racial riots that broke out in Singapore in 1964, which brought about much social unrest and resulted in the loss of some lives. Learning about the riots lets us Singaporeans know the negative consequences that disputes and intolerance between different races can bring and that racial harmony is required to achieve an ideal, peaceful society. Although the celebrations have not achieved [their] aim of complete harmony between the different races, it has at least allowed the races to be tolerant of each other and live peacefully to a large extent. Certainly, [as Lee argues,] the implications surrounding the outbreak of the 1964 riots will be very different from those surrounding present-day conflicts, such as the recent 2013 Little India riot. The study of history might not be able to inform us how to avoid conflicts similar to those that occurred in the past, but the study of these events will serve as a reminder of the undesirable impacts that they have brought about and that they should best be avoided. In order to prevent these conflicts from happening today, we will have to understand the current issues prevalent in Singapore's society and be wary of factors that may trigger violent sentiments among racial groups [, an understanding that is built upon an understanding of past events]. Therefore, while I agree with Banatvala's claim that studying history teaches us to avoid repeating

Relationship between the two claims can be explained for greater understanding of why they are addressed together

Good, useful explanation that connects the illustration to the point

Reference to the authors and their points would show greater engagement with the text, although the logic in this argument is already clear

Final statement could have been rearranged, such that the reader is left with a stronger impression of the view, rather than a weaker one. Switching the order of

the wrongdoings of our ancestors, there is also some merit in Lee's claim that no historical event can be replicated perfectly. *(Ong Ping Din, 18-O5)*	the two statements will help to foreground what is more important

Response 2

This piece shows a strong personal voice through its authentic engagement with the passages and demonstrates evaluation that is clear and well-supported. An overall stance to the question is established before moving into a comparison of the authors' arguments, providing in this case a unifying central thesis to the response. In the first paragraph, the candidate draws on the views raised by both authors to offer a perspective that is strongly grounded in his own personal identity and beliefs. This recognition of the opposing views has resulted in a response that is well-informed and therefore ultimately more convincing. The second paragraph is less well-supported in comparison, with examples that could have been developed to better support the intelligent critiques of Lee's arguments. A similar consideration of Banatvala's arguments would complete the response.

I will choose to agree with Banatvala and argue that an understanding of history is very important. I find Lee's passage and reasoning to think that history is of no value is flawed. We ought to understand that many of our current actions, beliefs and values or traditions emerge from the past, and [it] continues to play a significant role in influencing the modern society. As a History student, I firmly appreciate and believe that history is crucial, for us to reflect on past actions made and commit to striving for a positive future. This is especially so when I apply Banatvala['s] view that understanding history is essential to the Singaporean context. As a largely immigrant society with ancestors from China and India, together with the indigenous Malay community, it is undeniable that Singaporeans remain far from united in early independence. In paragraph 6, Banatvala claimed that understanding our various 'family' histories is essential so that various people can learn to live harmoniously in tolerance and mutual respect. This is indeed what Singapore has achieved, through [over fifty] years of national education. In secondary schools, History is a compulsory subject for lower secondary students, which emphasises on Singapore's history and teaches students that Singapore was formed by various contributions made by all ethnicities. Every year, we commemorate Total Defence Day to remind us of the dark ages of [the] Japanese Occupation, not to stir up hatred and animosity towards the Japanese like what Lee mentioned, but rather to highlight the fragility of Singapore as a nation state and teach us the value of sovereignty and living together in peace. Racial Harmony Day is also commemorated every 21st July of the year which history traces back to the racial riots in Singapore. We are not afraid to discover Singapore's past, because our society recognises the need to learn from the past and avoid previous mistakes. Hence, the government strongly emphasises on the need to promote humanities education in school, to ensure that everyone knows the history of Singapore so that we will better appreciate the multi-cultural society and peace that we enjoy today. Therefore, as a proud History student who has benefited from the understanding of our nation's history, I am in full agreement with	This sincere statement of personal identity and beliefs establishes a strong personal voice and imbues the argument with conviction Clear contextualisation within the Singaporean context Moving from a general assessment to a specific analysis of an argument from the passage - this can be started in a new paragraph Alternative view acknowledged and addressed smoothly Three examples are triangulated to result in a stronger evaluation of both authors' claims. Personal investment in the discussion is evident Clear, logical links from the explanation of the examples back to the requirements of the

Banatvala that understanding history is important.	question
I am worried that Lee believes that history holds no value, as he posits that the past is a 'foreign country', they do things differently there. I understand his concerns to find the studying of history as a waste of time instead of looking towards the future. However, I believe it is logical to say that to look into the future, one needs to study the present and realise that the present is heavily influenced by the past. Across time and centuries, traditions die and new inventions emerge, but still it is important to realise that we are not living in blocks of time. Human behaviour continues to be influenced by history, as do religio[us] and political traditions. The points that Lee raised do not support why history has no value, but rather shows how history may be abused by radical leaders with ill intentions. Therefore, this must not mean that history has little significance, because it is a faulty assumption to assume that in every age and every country, people rewrite history to suit their own needs. In Singapore, our history as an immigrant society continues to affect our current social [lives], where different ethnicities and religion[s] stay together. I do not believe that the government uses history to incite hatred or tension, but rather the understanding of history helps Singaporeans to be more aware of the sensitive and delicate social demographic, and together foster a common sense of identity through shared history. Museums continue to play a relevant role in the cultural art scene in modern Singapore, which are important sites of cultural appreciation. Hence, I do condemn Lee's view that history is of no value because I believe Lee himself holds a flawed opinion on the value of history which is illogical. *(Dason Yeo, 18-A1)*	Recognition of the validity of some aspects of the opposing view provides a more balanced perspective Shifts in position are well signposted. Strong, lucid critique on flaws in the opposing argument Nuanced argument that does not discount the possible validity of the opposing perspective, but makes the point that the opposing view may be too narrow or pessimistic

Response 3

This piece deals with claims from the two authors in separate paragraphs. Although it does not make an explicit comparison between the two passages, it is still successful in meeting the question requirements, as the conclusion is particularly helpful in tying the response together to form a more coherent whole. Furthermore, the explanations are mostly well-written and there is good use of illustration, although the response can be improved with more consistent reference to features of the context that influence the way the authors' arguments play out in the particular context.

I agree with Banatvala when she says that "shared knowledge of what our predecessors thought and did in their daily lives is essential if we are to have a sense of common identity" (lines 33-34). This understanding of history is important for me and my society as Singapore is a multi-racial and multi-religious society where different people may share diverse views on various situations. Thus, having a common identity is important in ensuring our collective unity. Understanding Singapore's history allows us to understand and appreciate how far we have come from a third world to first world country in approximately half a century. Especially for my generation, who generally live better lives than our ancestors, understanding their pain in working to establish Singapore as a developed country allows us to be grateful for the good life we currently have, with a good education and standard of living, which was brought about because of the People's Action Party's dedication to improving the lives of Singaporeans through various measures like implementing public housing so that citizens had a home to call their own and be motivated to work for their country. Understanding our previous generations' mindset of hard work and devotion to Singapore allows locals of my generation to be thankful for our ancestors and the government, sharing a common identity that we as a nation were born from sheer hard work and determination. This shared identity allows us as the future generation of Singaporeans to strive for the same excellence of our ancestors, motivating us to work hard in achieving the same, if not a high level, of success than them in developing Singapore. Hence, my view that understanding history is crucial to establishing a shared [identity] has been confirmed by Banatvala's passage.	Clear contextualisation, with circumstances specific to Singapore raised to emphasise the particular importance of history in the context of Singapore The link in this example of how understanding our ancestors' pain leads to a common identity needs to be more firmly established A large amount of description without clear links to the argument can lead to an unfocused and irrelevant point Good explanation of how an understanding of history can build a common identity. Its significance to Singapore can be re-emphasised with a link back to the characteristics of Singapore that make it particularly important to local society
However, I disagree with Lee when he says that "the only lesson to be learnt from history is that there are no lessons to be learnt from history" (lines 7-8). I believe that as history is the study of past events, there must be things we can take away from understanding it. The things we learn from history need not be past events that teach us what to repeat or not repeat again, but can also be the values and characters of key people in historical events that have allowed them to be worthy of recognition and commendation, giving them a place in history. In Singapore, there were numerous prisoners of war in World War II (WWII) like Lim Bo Seng and Elizabeth Choy who chose not to betray their fellow Singaporeans to the Japanese for the sake of self-preservation and they were a vital part of Singapore's WWII history	Statement does not follow logically Good line of argument, but can explicitly state that this argument is in response to Lee's claim for greater clarity Ideas relevant to the

because of their bravery and selflessness in doing so. Understanding their thoughts and mindsets from historical accounts can allow Singaporeans to appreciate such good character and beliefs along with their sense of loyalty to the country and their fellow comrades. Thus, studying and understanding history can allow us to learn from the admirable morals and values of past historical figures, motivating us to strive to be better and improved people. Lee's definition of learning from history only seems to encompass takeaways from tangible and factual ations and happenings that happened in history, and thus I think it is a rather myopic view of Lee's to conclude that nothing can be learnt from history just because he finds that most events in history are not recurring. Hence, my view that an individual can learn to improve as a person through studying history has been challenged by Lee, but I believe that it is because we have differing perspectives as to what can and cannot be learned from history.	argument are selected from the example well, but their importance to Singapore can be explained in greater depth with reference to specific characteristics of the context. The use of an example based in Singapore does not on its own qualify it as important to Singapore, so the link should be made
In conclusion, I agree more with Banatvalas' views and disagree with Lee. Understanding history, in my opinion, is more than just learning about the past events that have contributed to the current world as it is now, but should also be about improving oneself as a person by studying the actions and qualities of past historical figures. Understanding history is also crucial to establishing a strong common identity as a society as it ensures that we are united under a common knowledge of our country's past and experiences. *(Leanne Foo, 18-E2)*	Purposeful conclusion that wraps up the argument and helps to make the response to the question coherent and complete

Response 4

This piece demonstrates a deeper understanding of the way in which Singapore's history has had an undeniable impact on its identity and future. It is quite coherent in moving from a comparison of two competing claims in the first paragraph to a development of some of the other benefits and concerns that come with an understanding of history in the latter paragraphs. However, more explicit reference can be made between these ideas and other claims the authors have presented in their respective passages in the course of this response, both to acknowledge where they have come from and to draw on their explanations to serve as a basis for the argument, as engagement with the passages is a key aspect of the Application Question. As the stance to the question develops over the course of this response, a conclusion at the end would be helpful in creating a more coherent response to the question.

Both passages broadly address the role and importance, or lack thereof, of the study of history to understanding or make meaning out of the random events happening around us. In her third paragraph, Banatvala argues that interpreting the past is derived from the "desire to discover – or indeed impose – order on the seemingly haphazard ebb and flow of happening." In essence, she posits that studying history is important due to our ability to ascribe meaning and significance to what we may otherwise consider as the disorganised, illogical arrangement of events. To this, however, Lee proposes an opposing perspective, explaining that "daily interactions … of people" and "unpredictable natural happenings" will "produce an infinitely complex web of cause and effects", thereby arguing that it is precisely the random nature of history that makes the study of it non-meaningful and therefore unimportant. While I do agree with both authors that history can be perceived as that of an incoherent amalgamation of events, I propose that, in agreement with Banatvala's perspective, it is precisely this random nature of events that makes history ever more so relevant and important for me and my society, therefore reject[ing] Lee's view.

> Incisive identification of the point of contention - clearly explains that both authors agree on the unpredictable nature of events, but have differing viewpoints on how effective a study of history can be in terms of helping us to deal with these events

Singapore's development narrative – narrating our progress from "third-world" to "first" is often seen as an economic miracle. It is not secret that our development and relative success was predicated on a confluence of factors, each of which were dependent on events completely out of control – like the British East India Company discovering Singapore in the first place, the presence of World War 2 to stimulate a post-war prevailing attitude of self-determination that eventually allowed us to secure independence, and so on. According to

> Relevant examples that affirm the common grounds of authors' claims - that events are unpredictable

Lee's argument, we should reject the study of our history due to overwhelming randomness, but this ignores the special significance of this development narrative and its importance in the local context. It is precisely this enhanced, albeit imperfect, understanding of our luck and immense vulnerability that drives us to constantly innovate, work hard, and stay ahead. The belief of vulnerability has been etched in the Singaporean psyche and is thus necessary to our development as a nation, reliant solely on the determination and will of her people. Therefore, Lee's assertion and dismissal of the study of history simply does not hold true in my society, while Banatvala's argument that the study of history is important as it can satisfy our desire to impose order, is far more relevant to the Singapore context.

> Solid evaluation of examples to show how the study of history has resulted in the acquisition of valuable lessons
>
> Link to Singapore's context can be enhanced by showing how these lessons have continuing relevance to Singapore in the present day

In fact, the motion of imposing 'order' is notably relevant as well and further accentuates the importance of the study of history in Singapore, strengthening my extent of agreement with Banatvala's perspective. Singapore is a diverse society, consisting of disparate racial and religious identities and communities. Therefore, it is increasingly difficult to expect a coherent narrative to be framed organically, without active intervention. Similarly, it is highly difficult for an identity predicated on cultural, religious, or heritage-based elements of society, given that this would ultimately be exclusive and superficial. Therefore, the idea of a development narrative becomes ever more important, as this is the only strand of sociocultural attachment that can unite all involved in the Singapore story and this notion of "imposing", as active intervention is especially important. In Singapore, we see this manifesting in government-led initiatives to increase public exposure to our history as an island colony, and notably, the creation of museums to preserve these ideas and items, and mandatory national education for all children enrolled in the public education system. Therefore, the imposition of such a narrative directly ties to its importance, and it reflects the relevance of Banatvala's views in my society.	Apt discussion of how the characteristics of Singapore have necessitated a study of history Specific claims made by Banatvala or Lee can be referred to here, as this is more relevant to some of their other arguments (such as Banatvala's claim of how history can be used to forge a common identity) than the ones quoted in the previous paragraph
That being said, the importance of views on history is viewed by Lee with suspicion, as it is "dangerous" where these policies become the basis of "propaganda to whip up nationalist or religious hatreds." He thus uses this argument to detract from history's importance. While I do concede that the line between imposition and propaganda is indeed fine, I believe that his observation instead reaffirms the importance of the study of history. It is true and possible that governments may manipulate history to suit their political needs, perhaps not to stir up conflict but to garner more support. However, this also highlights the importance of alternative perspectives, which is exactly what the study of history promotes. His argument in fear of propaganda is one against a dominance of narratives and not one against history as a whole. In fact, we can observe a growing recognition of this value of societal discourse in Singapore, evidence[d] by Dr Tham's inquiry about Operation Coldstore. Thus, while his observations of postulates holds credence, I am ultimately in disagreement with Lee's perspective. *(Kenneth Hoh, 18-O5)*	Good acknowledgement of the validity of Lee's views, especially in relation to the above paragraph, and cogently argues how this alternative perspective fails to account for the full use of history Can further develop how the prevalence of a one-party rule in Singapore makes this study of history even more important

Response 5

This response takes the unpopular view in having views that are aligned more with Lee. The argument has merit in its close reference to the Singapore context, clarity, flow and personal voice. In these ways, it is effective in making its point. However, it neglects to point out and address some of the more obvious objections to the perspective taken, resulting in a response that is more evidently one-sided due to the greater burden of proof that tends to accompany a lesser-held view since many readers will naturally be more likely to disagree and find fault with it.

In Passage 1, Banatvala states that "we must grow into something like a single family, or we will annihilate ourselves", which explains that destruction is inevitable unless the human race unites to form a working unit and that it is only by understanding our various 'family' histories that we can learn to live together in tolerance and mutual respect, which implies that comprehension of our history will allow us to accept and respect one another. I disagree with this viewpoint and find it inapplicable to my society, as Singapore is not cohesive because of understanding our history. [I]n fact, Singapore barely has any since it was established less than 60 years ago, but rather [we are cohesive] through accepting that we are currently living together and have to ensure and maintain this harmony for the country to function. There is a fine line between living in harmony because we accept our past and living in harmony because we accept the functioning of our society. Singapore has been a multi-religious country since the beginning, but this has done little to impact the present. It is in fact the future that really impacts the present. Singapore is aiming towards a diversified country with little religious conflict and this has been emphasised by many of our political leaders and it is even part of the SG Secure counter-terrorism movement's community cohesion pillar which, which features tour galleries aimed at sharing the importance of religious harmony. If Singapore was striving towards being a country with only one race to live harmoniously, we would change current ways and means used to achieve that regardless of the functioning of our society in the past. For Singapore, the future is more relevant than the past, and this view has been challenged by Banatvala as she strongly believes that history is crucial in today's world. However, this is not reflective of the situation in my country.	A complex claim was identified, but it has been broken down clearly and succinctly Singapore context clearly provided that refutes Banatvala's claim Consider where such aims may have come from. Some balance should be made through seriously considering if an understanding of history has had no part to play in the reality of the present and the imagining of the future
On the other hand, in passage 2, Lee Min Yen suggests the idea that "in this extraordinary century, which will be quite unlike anything that has gone before, we need to focus all our faculties on the way ahead", which implies that the future is unique and unpredictable and hence history is irrelevant, but development is more important. I agree with this viewpoint and believe that it is applicable to my society. Singapore is a small nation with limited resources, but we have come a long way since independence in 1965. Big aspirations coupled with action has transformed us into a developed country with extensive international ties. Since the beginning till now, Singapore has been emphasising on development and pursuing for achieving more, to enlarge our presence	Well contextualised, with good and relevant reference to Singapore's circumstances

on the international stage. Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong is constantly devising measures and initiatives to boost development, with the latest one being on boosting economic integration and technology adaptation in the region. Although preservation of our past is important, there is a constant debate on preservation of our past versus development and the latter seems to take precedence today, as seen from the destroying of historical sites to use the land for development. My view is supported by Lee Min Yen as he also recognises that the future is uncertain and history is not that important.	Links should be made to why these are indicative of a focus on the future, and why such a future-focus must take priority Alternative perspective can be considered more seriously to provide a more balanced response
In conclusion, Lee's views are more in line with my society's as compared to Banatvala. My perception of history is that it is not as important as Banatvala makes it to be, although I see the value and basis of her argument and realise that history is necessary sometimes. *(Steffi Chua, 18-E2)*	Conclusion ties up the argument and forms a coherent response to the question