



General Paper Bulletin 2020 (JC 2)

Welcome to the first issue of TMJC's GP Bulletin for 2020! In this edition, we bring you a selection of the essays written by your schoolmates during the recent JC 2 Revision Assessment. We would like to express our thanks to all the students who have contributed their essays.

While these essays are not perfect or model essays, there is a lot of merit in them, and they are clear evidence that good quality writing is possible!

While reading these essays, you may find some of the examples and points useful for application to other questions; do be judicious in using such information in a manner that is relevant to the question you are answering. Pay extra attention to the comments on the right column, which corresponds to the marking rubrics on which essays are assessed.

Lastly, you should not attempt to copy and hand them in as your own!

All the best for the upcoming examination!

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Q1 Can terrorism ever be eliminated? (TMJC JC2 RA 2020)

Sample Essay	Comments
<p>Imagine living life constantly being afraid for your safety, not knowing where the next bomb might be detonated, or imagine not being able to walk on the street for fear of being kidnapped or raped by armed militia. For most of us, especially those living in Singapore, this may seem like a very distant improbability. However, for both women and men alike, in third world countries, this is an extremely real threat that these people face every day. Likewise, for many of us, what terrorist attacks we may hear of or experience are only fractions of what these people face daily. Hence, is it ever possible that we may be able to fully eradicate terrorism? Personally, I am of the idea that, no, terrorism will never be truly eradicated. However, with enough proper management and vigilance, we can make it so that terrorism will not pose as high a threat to our safety and well-being ever again.</p>	<p>Relevance to Question Requirements: Captures all the evaluative keywords in the question. It starts off with an interesting hook to capture the attention of the reader, and through the examples presented in the opening, shows understanding and insight in addressing the key issues in the question.</p> <p>Quality of argument (Depth and Scope): Scope of discussion presented in the form of contrasting the experiences of people living in Singapore and other parts of the world (third world countries).</p> <p>Suggestions for Improvement: While there were examples given that alluded to an understanding of terrorism (detonation of bomb, kidnap and rape by the militia), there could be a firmer explanation of what terrorism is (unlawful use of violence and intimidation, especially against civilians) and what these groups hope to achieve through acts of terrorism.</p> <p>Singapore and third world countries are mentioned – was there a point to be made about the prevalence of terrorism in some countries but not others? Contextualisation of terrorism today could be stronger with an explanation of transnational terrorism and the proliferation of terrorist groups with globalised agendas whose operations involve many countries or have ramifications that transcend national borders.</p>
<p>Greek mythology introduces us to the creature known as the Hydra, where chopping off one head leads to the growth of two others. This, in fact, is the most relatable example to the exponentially growing number of terrorist attacks happening today. As perpetuated by recent terrorist attacks such as the Brussels bombings or the Paris attacks happening in 2016, at the height of the terrorist threat, we start to see an increasing trend of self-radicalisation occurring, where these armed groups take every day, harmless objects and turn them into malicious, killing machines with the potential to kill hundreds of people. With the pervasiveness of the internet becoming ever prevalent, access to dark terrorist manifestos are becoming frighteningly easy, which poses a threat to the peace, where seemingly impressionable young minds are being manipulated and turned towards doing such lone wolf missions. Hence, in many countries such as the US, New Zealand or even France,</p>	<p>Relevance to Question Requirements: Points raised in the paragraph directly addressed the question, and good reasons were provided to explain why it is difficult to eradicate terrorism.</p> <p>Quality of argument (Depth and Scope): Insightful arguments, highlighting relevant key issues to the problem of terrorism today (self-radicalisation, lone wolf phenomenon, dark terrorist manifestos over the internet).</p> <p>Use of Illustrations:</p>

<p>where the cultures are more liberal, it becomes a problem as training and monitoring these people's online activity becomes illegal as it infringes on their privacy. Therefore, it would become increasingly difficult to clamp down on these terrorist manifestos, especially with the increasing ease of access, leading to the difficulty of eliminating terrorism.</p>	<p>Good selection of relevant and significant examples to support the point in the paragraph and there is a range of examples given. The significance of the examples to the point being made was also explained consistently in the paragraph.</p> <p>Suggestions for Improvement:</p> <p>While the reference to the Greek mythology was intriguing, deeper connections would have to be made to link the difficulty of eliminating terrorism to the hopelessness of exterminating the serpentine water monster Hydra. The link should not have to be inferred. The thing is, according to the myth, the monster is eventually slayed by Hercules, so does this suggest that eliminating terrorism, though difficult, is possible? The links within the paragraph need to be clearly established.</p> <p>The paragraph also dealt with a number of key issues which could have been tackled in a few paragraphs, rather than compacting them all in a single paragraph, and compromising in-depth analysis as a result.</p>
<p>Moreover in the modern world, realistically, many terrorist groups are funded by larger powers for their own personal agenda, making it extremely difficult to overthrow and stop them because of how much stronger they get from these funding. A case in point is the Taliban in the 1980s. In the 1980s, the Taliban was merely a resistance fighter group fighting for freedom and independence for Afghanistan. However, as there was a Cold War going on at the time between the US and the USSR, which spilled over to the Middle East, with both countries competing for monopoly over the abundant amounts of oil available at the time, the US had funded and trained Taliban rebel groups in order to fight the USSR. After the conflict was over, the Taliban turned into a mercenary terrorist group, with one man breaking off and forming another terrorist organisation to fight the West. He was Osama Bin Laden, leader of Al-Qaeda, orchestrator of the 9-11 attacks. Hence, with this, we see how, in fact, terrorist groups are being funded and trained by first world countries, being given weapons and taught combat, in order for them to be used for these countries' personal agendas, which, in turn, makes it extremely difficult to try and crush these terrorist groups.</p>	<p>Relevance to Question Requirements:</p> <p>Relevant and insightful point to explain why it is extremely difficult to eradicate terrorism.</p> <p>Quality of argument (Depth and Scope):</p> <p>Development of the point demonstrates thorough and deep contextual knowledge. The ideas are also well-elaborated.</p> <p>Use of Illustrations:</p> <p>Examples are suitable / related to the point in the paragraph. They are explained in relation to the main point, and significant details are fleshed out and accurate.</p> <p>Suggestion for Improvement:</p> <p>More current examples could be given. This will show that the point on funding to promote personal agenda is still relevant today – for example, how the Russians and the US are funding different groups in the Syrian War, which has the potential to grow into another mess in future.</p>

<p>However, suffice to say, since everything revolves around money, terrorism can be eliminated with the right amount of funds being channeled into military programmes aimed to crush terrorism. In America today, the government spends around 30% of its budget on the military, where they have used these funds to step up to be the main agent in the war against terrorism. In recent years, they have been even more successful, managing to assassinate the leader of ISIS and even push their forces back to the point that they have been basically incapable of fighting back. However, I feel that it is not financially prudent and wise to spend such crazy amounts of money to combat terrorism, especially in today's economy amidst the COVID-19 pandemic, where as of now, around 23 million people are unemployed, as a result of the government not being able to support them financially, which may very likely be due to the excessive spending by the government on their military activities. Thus, spending money to fight terrorism is easy, but being able to tread the fine line between being able to spend just enough money, or too much money is tricky, and something most governments, especially the Trump administration, seems to be incapable of doing.</p>	<p>Relevance to Question Requirements: The topic sentence captured the opposing view clearly – funding on military programmes to crush terrorism may put an end to terrorism. A plausible point to make. The rebuttal on competing claims for funding is relevant and valid.</p> <p>Quality of argument (Depth and Scope): The rebuttal is sufficiently elaborated and explained.</p> <p>Use of Illustrations: Relevant examples of the US counterterrorism spending and their recent success with ISIS provide the needed contextualisation for the point.</p> <p>Suggestion for Improvement: It could be pointed out that the strategy of funding military campaigns against terrorism might be futile if the root causes of terrorism are not addressed.</p>
<p>I believe that the idea of nihilism and violence innately exists in every human being, whether they are inherently good or evil. Therefore, the idea of terrorism being something that humans subconsciously believe in is something scary. In recent years, as discussed before, self-radicalisation has become an increasing trend in our society. With the numerous cases of self-radicalised individuals fleeing to join ISIS from Singapore, or even the Christchurch attacks in 2019, it begs the question. When one writes one's own manifesto, how far is one influenced by one's own thoughts and not the thoughts of others? If there is a possibility of being radicalised without the help of the internet, then we, as a society, will never truly be able to stamp out terrorism from our society as a result of how innately violent human nature is, and how volatile and susceptible we are to our thoughts.</p>	<p>Relevance to Question Requirements: Of all the arguments, this paragraph has the most abstract point, in that it argues that violence innately exists in human beings and that is why terrorism appeals to them. This is quite a controversial claim, because there is also the tabula rasa theory that individuals are born without built-in mental content, and therefore all knowledge comes from experience or perception.</p> <p>Suggestion for improvement: As such, unless there is stronger development of the argument by way of research to show human beings may be innately drawn to violence, this point is not as convincing as the other points in the essay.</p>
<p>However, in recent years, with more and more countries, especially Southeast Asian countries starting counter-radicalisation programmes, it causes this whole idea of being able to solve terrorism to become more and more realistic in recent years. In Singapore, we have many counter-radicalisation programmes that help to rehabilitate radicalised individuals back into society, allowing them to become productive members of society again. These counter-radicalisation programmes are usually conducted by mosques, and aim to counteract any erroneous ideologies picked up online, and to reinforce proper Muslim teachings to these people. However, this may not be so successful in other countries. In</p>	<p>Relevance to Question Requirements: Relevant point on programmes to rehabilitate the radicalised individuals.</p> <p>Quality of argument (Depth and Scope): Contrast between programmes in different countries, their effectiveness and limitations demonstrates deep contextual knowledge.</p>

<p>poorer, war-torn countries such as Iraq and Afghanistan, it is impossible to get the funding, or even the right people to get to the rehabilitation of radicalised individuals. In these cases, where counter-radicalisation is not possible, radicalised individuals start to group together, getting larger and larger, ultimately forming an armed militia which turns into groups like ISIS, the Taliban or even Al-Qaeda.</p>	<p>Use of Illustrations: Examples are suitable / related to the point in the paragraph. Also, the examples are explained in relation to the main point. There is elaboration of what the rehabilitation programmes entail and how they help the individuals who are radicalised.</p> <p>Suggestion for Improvement: It might be good to elaborate on why the programmes in 'war-torn countries' may not work or even take off, apart from the reasons cited. The nature of the programme / intervention, who the target group is, and the structures in place to reduce recidivism could be considered.</p>
<p>Therefore, in closing, I would like to end off by saying that yes, although terrorism, in my opinion, cannot ever be eliminated, as long as we all play out part in trying to solve the issue of terrorism by ensuring that each and every one does not subscribe to such violent beliefs, and they are well educated, I feel that in the long run, we would have a chance of eliminating terrorism. However, today, terrorism is just a pipe dream.</p>	<p>Sensible conclusion that brings together all the arguments in the essay. There is an attempt to project to the future and a hint of hope that in the long term, terrorism might be eliminated. The concluding sentence provides a definitive ending that sums up what has been discussed in all the paragraphs – possible perhaps in the long run but for the time being, highly unlikely.</p>
<p>Overall Comments:</p> <p>Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relevant points. • Solid analysis backed by deep contextual knowledge. • Language use displayed personal voice and fluency. <p>Areas for improvement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some paragraphs could be more developed and so can the examples. <p>Keep up the good work!</p> <p>Wee Ike Rae 19A201</p>	

Q3 How effective are your nation's efforts at becoming an inclusive society? (TMJC JC2 RA 2020)

Sample Essay	Comments
<p>Singapore, my country, prides itself on being a nation that is inclusive to people of all races and religions, regardless of the language they speak. It is one of the goals of the country, as stated in the Pledge. However, I believe that inclusivity neither starts nor ends at just race, language and religion. I believe that an inclusive society is one that takes care of everyone in the society regardless of social standing, physical ability, sexuality as well as the aforementioned race, language and religion. Singapore can generally be said to be effective in its efforts at becoming an inclusive society, as seen in its racial and religious harmony and its inclusiveness of those with weaker bodies or mental states, as well as people of different socio-economic status. It however, is still far from being fully inclusive as there are still marginalised minority groups, including the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender (LGBT) community and the foreign labourers in Singapore.</p>	<p>Relevance to Question Requirements: Introduction gave a thorough overview of the context of 'your society', as well the evaluative keywords in the essay question. Also, it is evident from the diversity of examples mentioned that the inclusivity extends to all, from various backgrounds and needs.</p> <p>Suggestion for Improvement: While the concept of an inclusive society is loosely one that 'takes care of everyone', central to the idea of inclusivity is also ensuring equal opportunities for all, so that every member of society can achieve their full potential. This aspect of inclusivity will help deepen the arguments later and there should be a hint of this understanding in the introduction.</p>
<p>Singapore has been inclusive of the physically and mentally-limited, or disabled, due to the infrastructure it has built up to serve the people who fall into such a group. The building of infrastructure to specifically serve such people is inclusive as it shows that others care for them and believe they have a place in Singapore. People in this group are often quite different from the average Joe, and have differing needs from the general population. As such, the building of infrastructure shows the country's willingness to include them by specifically serving their needs. The building of special schools such as Northlight as well as the Cerebral Palsy Alliance Singapore has helped those who are mentally and physically challenged to learn at their own pace, with specialised care, so that they can one day grow up to be just another Singaporean, included in the society and not singled out for their weaknesses. This can also be seen in schools, where those limited in their learning, such as people with dyslexia, are given extra time in their examinations. The building of public infrastructure like ramps all around Singapore, including on buses and malls, has also made Singapore a more inclusive society, allowing those who are physically limited to wheelchairs to enjoy access to the same facilities and amenities as others in the population. All this infrastructure built by the country have made those who may be physically or mentally limited a part of our society, being seen as just another fellow Singaporean, showing that Singapore has been effective in its efforts of becoming an inclusive society.</p>	<p>Relevance to Question Requirements: A practical and essential aspect of building an inclusive society is addressed in this paragraph. Indeed, physical infrastructure does go some way into enabling access for groups of people that need extra help.</p> <p>Quality of argument (Depth and Scope): Ideas are generally well-elaborated and there is an attempt to consider the importance of physical infrastructure, not just for the disabled but those with special needs as well.</p> <p>Use of Illustrations: Most of the examples are related to the point in the paragraph and they are explained in relation to the main point.</p> <p>Suggestion for Improvement: While it may be argued that special education schools constitute physical infrastructure for people with special needs to go to in order to learn and receive an education, it is not the same kind of physical infrastructure as ramps for the wheelchair-bound. There is a need to explain further <u>how</u> these schools (in their policies and programmes) have been <u>effective</u> in creating a more inclusive society. There is mention of 'specialised care' and 'learn at their own pace' but since the claim is that these are</p>

	<p>'effective' more attention needs to be devoted to showing how successful these schools have been in providing opportunities for those with special needs to reach their potential.</p>
<p>Singapore has also been effective in its efforts at becoming an inclusive society through legislation. Singapore is a country made up of dozens of races of people who speak even more languages and practise different religions. To maintain racial and religious harmony, Singapore has therefore put legislation in place, making racist and hateful remarks towards anyone a chargeable offence under the law. While the law itself may not have made Singapore an inclusive society through charging people, it has taught Singaporeans to live together in racial and religious harmony. This has made for an inclusive society, where religions are at peace with each other, as places of worship such as mosques, temples and churches can be placed in close proximity to one another, a sight not seen in less inclusive countries. The Tripartite Alliance for Fair and Progressive Employment Practices (TAFEP), which mandates that all employees be employed only based on merit and skill and not be discriminated for their race or religion has made Singapore an inclusive society for workplaces full of people of different ethnicities. When the infamous Amy Cheong incident happened on Facebook, criticising Malay weddings for being loud, people of many races defended the Malays, citing it as just a joyous occasion for a fellow Singaporean, showing that Singapore has effectively used legislation to include people of all races and religions, allowing them to carry on with most of their cultural traditions while having peace.</p>	<p>Relevance to Question Requirements: Relevant point showcasing another strategy to create an inclusive society.</p> <p>Quality of argument (Depth and Scope): Scope of discussion demonstrates thorough and deep contextual knowledge, covering legislation that protects different groups of people. There is also deep understanding that 'effectiveness' is key in the discussion and there is an effort to explain this. It is emphasised in the paragraph that in Singapore, not only are there laws to protect citizens, but equally important is the enforcement of the law to ensure no one is discriminated against. Evidence is provided to show the success of such laws. Overall, the ideas are well-elaborated.</p> <p>Use of Illustrations: Examples are suitable and related to the point, are explained in relation to the main point, and significant details are fleshed out and accurate.</p> <p>Suggestion for Improvement: How did legislation play a role in Amy Cheong's case? That could have been explained so that the link between the example and the point on legislation is clearer.</p>
<p>Singapore has also been effective in its efforts at becoming an inclusive society as most people of different socio-economic standings (SES) are still allowed ample opportunity to succeed. Singapore is a country with relatively high income inequality, as seen in its Gini coefficient of 0.398 in 2019, with the most equal countries have coefficients in the range of 0.25. This means that the rich earn quite a lot more than those of lower SES. Hence, when it comes to opportunities, the rich are enabled by their wealth to seize more opportunities. To make Singapore a more inclusive society, where those of lower SES are not segregated due to the lack of opportunities, Singapore's government has put in place a few measures that have made Singapore a more inclusive society. The Education Act, which mandates all Singaporean children to study at least until they finish primary school, has given children of lower SES the opportunity to succeed if they are willing to work hard. The Ministry of Education Financial Assistance Scheme as well as other bursaries and scholarships have given those of lower SES the same opportunity to</p>	<p>Relevance to Question Requirements: Insightfully addresses key issues of the topic, especially in showing the effectiveness of the effort in creating an inclusive society.</p> <p>Quality of argument (Depth and Scope): This point demonstrates thorough and deep contextual knowledge. There is a smooth flow of ideas, and they are well-elaborated.</p> <p>Use of Illustrations: Examples are suitable and related to the point. A range of examples are given, and are explained in relation to the main point. There is also clear signposting of how the schemes / policies are meant to help the group.</p>

<p>study and succeed as those of higher SES, funding the education of such children as long as they are able to study, so they will be included in society as a working adult when they grow up. The SkillsFuture programme, which has given all Singaporeans aged 25 and above \$500 of credit to upgrade their skills has also allowed those of lower SES and who did not manage to learn when they were younger, continue in their learning in adulthood, giving them more opportunity to find their own success. These programmes have made Singaporeans of lower SES more included in the society as they are no longer seen as a class of people doomed to poverty.</p>	<p>Significant details are also fleshed out and accurate.</p> <p>Suggestion for Improvement:</p> <p>The concluding sentence made a claim that the lower SES are no longer seen as a class doomed to poverty. This is a little different from the way the paragraph has been developed. The paragraph looked into opportunities / policies / schemes to give those from the lower SES a leg up so that they would have opportunities for success. The concluding sentence, however, suggests a perception towards this group that has changed – from being ‘seen as a class of people doomed to poverty’ to the present day where this is ‘no longer’ the case. The concluding sentence could be tweaked to reflect the point in the paragraph more accurately or include a brief explanation where in the past people were generally restricted by their background and there were prejudices towards the lower SES, but with the initiatives, there has been a change in the perception towards this group.</p>
<p>Singapore has, however, not been effective in its efforts to become an inclusive society due to its generally conservative population. The majority conservative population of Singapore means that the government would be more likely to appeal to the majority to garner their votes, and hence pass fewer progressive policies and legislation. This has made Singapore less inclusive towards the LGBT community in Singapore, due to the fierce opposition that the conservative population has against them. The non-recognition of LGBT marriage and couples in Singapore has meant a lack of inclusiveness of them in terms of benefits such as housing, where such couples are unable to qualify for certain types of housing due to the legality of their marriages. The annual Pink Dot event, which has taken place for more than 10 years with not much change in legislation, is a testament to the government not being effective in its efforts. While some parts of the country have been continually trying to include the LGBT community, such as through the Pink Dot event and campaigning, the fact of the matter is that as long as the majority of the population is unwilling to include such people, any efforts made by the rest of the population will be negated as the government represents the majority. As such, Singapore has been ineffective in its efforts.</p>	<p>Relevance to Question Requirements:</p> <p>Shows understanding of the issue from the perspective of a group that is still marginalised in Singapore.</p> <p>Quality of argument (Depth and Scope):</p> <p>Attempt at balance is well-framed and well-developed.</p> <p>Use of Illustrations:</p> <p>Examples are suitable and related to the point. They are explained in relation to the main point. The impact on the lives of the marginalised group is also explained. Significant details are also fleshed out and accurate.</p> <p>Suggestions for Improvement:</p> <p>The expression of the point in the topic sentence could be nuanced. Instead of wrting it as ‘not effective’, perhaps it could be phrased as ‘has been met with limited effectiveness’? After all, in the paragraph, there is mention of ‘some parts of the country trying to include the LGBT community’ through Pink Dot and campaigning.</p>

	<p>While there is mention of same-sex marriages not being legal in Singapore and consequently there is lack of access to certain types of housing for this group (good examples of social exclusion), perhaps there could be elaboration of how else 'the majority of the population is unwilling to include such people', for example by elaborating on the 'Wear White' campaign to promote traditional family values and protest against homosexuality, job discrimination, and doxxing / harassment of LGBT individuals by members of the public.</p>
<p>In conclusion, Singapore has been generally inclusive as a society and they are in part due to the effort of the nation to actively include such people. This has however caused a problem where the majority decides who should be included. As such, people like those in the LGBT community are actively excluded due to the decision of the majority, making it unfair for the minorities. However, the situation is looking up, as studies conducted by the Institute of Policy Studies in 2013 and 2019 have shown the population's increasing acceptance of the LGBT community. The COVID-19 pandemic has also shed light on the excluded foreign labourers in Singapore, showing their perils and harsh living conditions, showing more progress needs to be made. As the country becomes more progressive, it can become a more inclusive society, and succeed in its efforts to do so.</p>	<p>Strong conclusion, showing thorough analysis.</p> <p>Suggestions for Improvement: The context of foreign labourers and the COVID-19 pandemic came out of the blue and sounded like an afterthought. There was fleeting mention of this group in the introduction but it was not taken up in the body paragraphs. Generally, the conclusion should not present new information / material that was not raised in the other parts of the essay. The example of foreign labourers could have been placed in the same paragraph on LGBT as it is about the lack of acceptance by society because of certain beliefs / prejudices. Alternatively, it could be placed in another paragraph if the point is about how divisions between socio-economic class and between local and foreigner is prevalent in our society (superseding the divisions once thought to be most common – those between different races).</p>
<p>Overall Comments:</p> <p>Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relevant points and examples, showing clear understanding of question requirements. • Strong conclusion, showing thorough analysis. • Language is fluent with few errors. To improve, practise conciseness. <p>Areas for improvement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More attention needs to be given to evaluation, especially when establishing the impact of an effort (extent of effectiveness). • Topic sentences should look like that of the last body paragraph – focused on why effort is effective / not effective, rather than being area-driven. <p>Caleb Ong Kee Han 19S213</p>	

Q5 Is there any value in formal education now that we can learn independently in the digital age? (TMJC JC2 RA 2020)

Sample Essay	Comments
<p>Today, the world seems to be abuzz with all things coronavirus. The SARS pandemic was said to have catalysed the emergence of e-commerce, and the pandemic of this decade seems to share the same trailblazing fervour, tearing down the frail industries of yesterday, and propping up the budding (for now) industries of tomorrow. That which concerns myself, a fellow student, is none other than the surge in digital education. Formal education mandates we be at our seats in school, attend physical lectures and tutorials, and take an examination every now and then. This quiet ebb and flow of the quintessential student has been this way since time immemorial, that is, until today. Students and teachers can now hold tutorials behind a screen at the comfort of their own homes, homework is digitised and scanned for submission, and the schools which once housed us boisterous beasts now seem forlorn and empty. Is this really a good thing? I stand to oppose. In my discourse which follows, I will expound on why formal education still holds dear value, even in this brave new world.</p>	<p>Relevance to Question Requirements: The current context is clearly set, which flows coherently to address the topic of formal education in the digital age. All the evaluative keywords in the questions are meaningfully defined.</p> <p>Quality of argument (Depth and Scope): Ideas flow smoothly and sensibly. A good contrast is provided between education of the past and the present to bring out the evolving times.</p> <p>Suggestions for Improvement: Would be good to recognise that the change in the way we learn had been underway for some time now and to elaborate more on what 'the digital age' entails.</p>
<p>Why then should anyone believe otherwise?</p> <p>Perhaps the most salient argument against my view is that independent learning in the digital age is more personalised, and hence more efficient. After all, we learn at our own pace, the best pace there is, and the ability to rewind lectures, look back on past material, and search up additional information online reinforces learning and caters to learners of different types and abilities. This seems to be superior to formal education, where the fastest learners are shackled by the slowest ones in the class while the slower learners find themselves breathless from trying to catch up with what is being taught. The pace of learning is then often too fast or too slow. Statistics are thrown around by experts, some say learning is 40% more effective online, others say 70%. However, these statistics are misleading, as after all, not everyone soars in online learning. Among younger learners, online learning proves to facilitate more distractions in their own homes and online, greatly affecting their learning efficiency. Furthermore, we often feel less engaged when not physically around our teachers and classmates who create some kind of expectation of behavior we often feel obliged to live up to. Personalised learning may then, not necessarily be as effective as learning which is less differentiated. While there are those that do excel at independent learning online, there are also those with poor internet connections, making online discussions inefficient, and those without necessary devices, making it impossible. Think Indonesia, Somalia, or Venezuela. Hence formal education is still valuable to some students.</p>	<p>Relevance to Question Requirements: Topic sentence clearly addressed the question by providing a clear argument on the value of independent learning in the digital age.</p> <p>Quality of argument (Depth and Scope): Addresses the issue from a wide range of angles, showing depth in content knowledge by recognising that there are different types of learners and that learners of different age groups also respond to online learning differently. The point also goes beyond the learners to recognise the logistical constraints of individuals which also affects the efficiency of an individual's learning, providing scope in the discussion. The rebuttal is relevant and elaborated on.</p> <p>Use of Illustrations: Examples are suitable and to the point.</p> <p>Suggestions for Improvement: More significant details could be provided for the examples to facilitate insightful analysis of the examples in relation to the point. The nature of young learners could have also been better elaborated in justifying their response to online learning.</p>

<p>It is also often argued that digital education has an infinite variety of learning opportunities compared to formal education. Online, we can learn so much more from independent organisations across the web. Aspiring programmers often learn programming languages such as C++ and Python from freeCodeCamp, the Japanese language can be learnt at their own pace from WaniKani, and a multitude of sites such as Coursera provide courses from Data Analytics to Game Theory. While I may admit the variety of learning opportunities available, I must question the depth of such learning. Online learning can only take one so far, as most courses are only touching the surface of how much there is to learn from a discipline. The Japanese language can be 'picked up' from a smartphone application such as DuoLingo in a matter of months, but in reality, language is a skill which takes years to master from constant immersion in the language in schools. People say they 'learnt programming' by themselves, but still go on to study it in universities. The depth of learning, after all, is still lacking in today's digital education landscape, and it hence still cannot match that of formal education.</p>	<p>Relevance to Question Requirements: The topic sentence is clearly relevant to the question. The argument here is distinct from the previous argument.</p> <p>Quality of argument (Depth and Scope): The rebuttal is sensible and reasonable.</p> <p>Use of Illustrations: Range of relevant examples with significant details are provided.</p> <p>Suggestions for Improvement: Examples can be further analysed to bring out the implications and therefore clearly linked back to the argument. For instance, the nature of languages could have been explained to justify why to be able to use them effectively requires deeper learning. The examples could also have further elaborated on the implications of furthering one's learning of programming in universities to clearly show the lack of depth in online learning.</p>
<p>Formal education also facilitates the learning of social skills which digital education lacks. It is harder to build meaningful friendships when we do not physically see our classmates. Behind the screen which divides us, we feel a social disconnect, and it becomes difficult to pick up social skills and cues, a skill clearly vital to our emotional and even workplace well-being given that understanding the non-verbal aspects of communication enables us to modify our behaviour in response to the reactions of others. For example, the term 'video deficit' was created as a result of many studies that confirm that young children learn better from live interaction than from screens. In a 2003 study conducted by Dr Simcock G, an expert in developmental science, both live and videotaped models performed a series of actions with rattles and stuffed animals in front of children. Although children imitated both the in-person and videotaped models, their imitation scores were significantly higher in the live condition. This shows that when children use digital communication extensively, it can curtail the face-to-face experiences necessary for them to develop and master important social skills. In addition, we also feel a lack of identity and culture when we do not gather as a class and as a school, and this dehumanises education, making it an interminable exercise of intellectual rigour without meaningful connections and support. Hence, formal education is still superior in this respect.</p>	<p>Relevance to Question Requirements: The argument clearly brings out the benefits of formal education in relation to digital education, therefore, addressing the keywords in the question.</p> <p>Quality of argument (Depth and Scope): The elaboration of the point shows thorough and deep contextual knowledge. The argument is well-elaborated by justifying the importance of social skills.</p> <p>Use of Illustrations: The example raised is reliable and analysed well to prove the point on digital learning affecting social skills.</p> <p>Suggestions for Improvement: The argument could be further elaborated to show social skills as an important part of human identity, not only identity as a class or school. The point can also be further extended to how the creation of connections in school helps one to form networks crucial to one's future success.</p>

<p>Formal education is also better at communicating socially accepted morals and ethics. Alas, I can already hear the barrage of counter-arguments to this point, and I can well understand them. Lessons on morals and ethics are often dry and monotonous in our classrooms and the effectiveness of such lessons are always under fire. And while I may acknowledge that the way civics lessons are taught may not be the best in formal education, I bounce the argument back to my critics and question civics education over a mere screen. It is even more unthinkable. In physical schools, at least we learn what is right and wrong from how our teachers and classmates interact. When a teacher consoles a crying classmate we learn that it is the right thing to do, and when we see someone step up to bullying we learn bravery and to give help to others. When schools arrange for us to help the needy or charities, we learn heart and that giving back is important. In addition, the internet is constantly filled with hatred and criticism, as it catches more attention and people can hide behind the veil of anonymity. This negatively affects our perception of the world, making us lose touch with how kind the world can be, rather than how it is often negatively depicted in the media which profits from sensationalizing facts. The internet may even act as an echo chamber to reinforce one's own beliefs as search engines are tailored to give us positive results which corroborate our own opinions and beliefs, rather than ones that oppose. This lack of questioning and self-reflection blindsides us into thinking we are right, which is very dangerous. Hence, not only is formal education better at teaching morals, it keeps us in touch with reality, helping us to be functioning individuals who can contribute to the society positively.</p>	<p>Relevance to Question Requirements: The benefit of formal education is clearly highlighted in the topic sentence. The argument also insightfully addresses the question by bringing out the nature of the Internet and its implications on our morals and ethics.</p> <p>Quality of argument (Depth and Scope): The attempt at balance is well-framed as the paragraph recognises possible opposing views and successfully addresses them in order to further the supporting view. Even in highlighting the opposing views, the flow of ideas is ensured.</p> <p>Use of Illustrations: The examples are related to the point and are explained in relation to the main point.</p> <p>Suggestions for Improvement: The discussion could have brought out the nature of morals and ethics which requires a personable, human touch in transmitting them.</p>
<p>In conclusion, as much as digital education is increasingly an inevitable part of our lives, it is still in its infancy, and there are still numerous problems associated with it that should be sorted out before it can even compare with formal education. As of now, digital education plays a complimentary role to support and enhance formal education. Therefore, there is still value in formal education despite our ability to learn independently in the digital age.</p>	<p>Relevance to Question Requirements: Conclusion effectively brings out the issues in the question.</p>
<p>Marker's Overall Comments:</p> <p>Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A rather thought-provoking argument with strong and clear arguments. • Vocabulary is superlative; essay is well-organised. • Essay shows coherence and makes for an easy read. <p>How Hong Jun 19S101</p>	

Q7 Can the use of genetic modification in human reproduction be justified? (TMJC JC2 RA 2020)

Sample Essay	Comments
<p>There are many fields in Science which have benefitted society. For example, the field of nuclear physics has enabled us to create the first atomic bomb (Manhattan Project). However, since the mid-20th century, there has been an area which has received both praise and criticism: that is genetic modification in human reproduction which involves the direct manipulation of genes using biotechnology. This new field of genomics has the potential to revolutionize what we already know about ourselves. Yet, its capabilities are tightly regulated by governments and institutions across the world due to the amount of backlash it has received from the public. Personally, I agree with these regulations and feel that the use of genetic modification especially in human reproduction can only be justified to a small extent.</p>	<p>Relevance to Question Requirements: Keywords in the question are captured.</p> <p>Quality of argument (Depth and Scope): Discussion shows understanding of key technical terms.</p> <p>Suggestions for Improvement: The reasons for tight regulations by the government could have been briefly highlighted.</p>
<p>The first issue which arises from this is societal inequality. Society has never been fair to people of all walks of life and it is in everyone's interest to close the social inequality gap between humans. However, genetic modification in human reproduction would only worsen this issue. Due to its expensive nature, only the rich are able to afford it. This means that the rich are able to afford genetic modification for their babies such that they have various advantages over those who are not able to afford it. For example, a rich person could be able to modify her fetus such that when the fetus grows up, he or she may be physically or intellectually more advantageous and since according to Forbes, one's physical characteristics translates into higher earnings hence affecting one's success, some biological improvements could further cement the rich's place in a higher social class. This only worsens the inequality issue already raging across countries. The inequality gap often results in many societal issues, making it necessary for genetic modification in human reproduction to be tightly regulated to prevent societal inequality from worsening. Hence, genetic modification of human reproduction needs to be limited.</p>	<p>Relevance to Question Requirements: The topic sentence directly addresses the key issue of the topic.</p> <p>Quality of argument (Depth and Scope): There is a smooth flow of ideas lending the paragraph clarity.</p> <p>Use of Illustrations: Reliable and suitable examples provided. The examples are explained in relation to the main point.</p> <p>Suggestions for Improvement: The discussion of social inequality as a result of genetic modification could be more insightful.</p>
<p>Additionally, genetic modification in human reproduction also creates a morality issue. Different cultures across the world have different morals and beliefs. But, most believe in the sanctity of life and therefore, the life of human beings should not be tempered with. With genetic modification in human reproduction, this issue arises. Many religious groups have condemned the field as it goes against their own beliefs that human life should be valued and considered as sacred. Furthermore, the exaggeration of the nature of these fields by news outlets and social media has made it all the more difficult for the public to believe that genetic modification in human reproduction should be justified. The media tends to focus on the harmful impacts of genetic modification, having referred to GM food as 'Frankenstein foods'. We also regularly see scare-tactics in the media, even subtle ones, such as using the word 'shocking' to refer to the extent of genetic modification products and procedures, casting the idea that genetic modification is something to be afraid of. For example, a few years back, Chinese scientists had successfully genetically modified a set of embryonic twins such that they are more resistant to HIV.</p>	<p>Quality of argument (Depth and Scope): Addresses the issue from a wide range of angles by highlighting the impact of the media in affecting the public's perception of genetic modification.</p> <p>Use of Illustrations: The examples are suitable, with significant, relevant details, and are relevant to the main point about morality.</p> <p>Suggestions for Improvement: The moral issues pertaining to genetic modification could be discussed further to bring out the complexity of such issues fully.</p>

<p>However, the media questioned and criticised this experiment as it involves fiddling with embryos which have the potential to grow into humans when left untampered. To many, these scientists are seen as 'playing God', especially if one believes that the principle of the sanctity of life covers all human life from the embryo stage. To modify the embryos to be more resistant to HIV is to transcend natural boundaries and that it could even lead to the commodification of babies, and humans would begin to treat the gift of life as a product. Subsequently, many regulations were imposed by the Chinese government on the use of genetic modification in human reproduction. Thus, as this field has generally seen much criticism and backlash from the public, it is only justified that it is limited to what it could potentially do, and possibly even be banned.</p>	
<p>Furthermore, as it is a relatively new field, there is no full understanding of the effect that genetic modification has and what it could potentially do. The risks are therefore not acceptable since it is hard to assess the risks involved. The risks are made all the more unacceptable when we consider that innocent lives could be at stake. This can be seen in the case of Dolly the sheep, an offspring that was artificially created such that it had the same genetic sequence from another sheep, using the process of somatic cell nuclear transfer (SCNT). Although the sheep was born, it only survived for weeks before dying due to complications arising. Though this has proved the existence of such capabilities predicted by scientists (that it could duplicate and produce genetically identical sets), many scientists and government authorities have questioned the repercussions that may arise if performed on humans instead of animals. The idea of having genetically identical twins may bring about issues of identity and imposters. Also, it is difficult to tell if the duplicated offspring would survive (as seen from Dolly the sheep). Thus, as genetic modification in human reproduction has not been perfected to produce credible results, it is not justified due to the potential and unnecessary loss of life.</p>	<p>Relevance to Question Requirements: The argument raised directly addresses the key issues of the topic.</p> <p>Quality of argument (Depth and Scope): There is a smooth flow of ideas which are logically coherent.</p> <p>Use of Illustrations: The example raised is related to the point. Significant details are fleshed out and accurate.</p> <p>Suggestions for Improvement: The point could be further substantiated with an example specific to human reproduction.</p>
<p>But, critics claim that having genetic modification in human reproduction should be justified to a large extent as it could eliminate diseases. There have been diseases, such as Rheumatoid Arthritis and Alzheimer's Disease, which most doctors and scientists claimed to have arisen when the patients were embryos. Thus, genetic modification in human reproduction can rectify this issue by replacing the genome which caused this disease, potentially preventing suffering and saving lives. Although I agree as it is theoretically true, there has been very little practical evidence to support this. As it is a very new field, society may be sceptical and find it hard to embrace the idea since there have been many strong cases and evidence in the past which goes against this. There are therefore very few people who are willing to let scientists genetically modify their embryonic offspring due to the sheer cost and the unintended outcomes it could come with. Hence, such statements made by scientists should be reviewed and questioned given the lack of reliable evidence. More studies need to be carried out to prove that these procedures are feasible. However, even these studies need to be tightly regulated and limited as for now, the costs clearly seem to far outweigh the benefits.</p>	<p>Relevance to Question Requirements: The argument raised directly addresses the key issues of the topic.</p> <p>Quality of argument (Depth and Scope): The attempt at balance is well-framed and directly addresses the opposing view.</p> <p>Use of Illustrations: The examples are suitable.</p> <p>Suggestions for Improvement: The opposing view could be further elaborated on. The example could also be more detailed to facilitate deeper analysis.</p>

<p>Some also claim that genetic modification in human reproduction has to be justified to a large extent as it could alter traits and characteristics in humans, such as physical appearance or mental ability, such that they become favourable to current societal norms. Although these claims are true, there have been much backlash with regard to genetically modifying embryos to conform to society's standard as it could result in 'Designer Babies'. Many are against the idea of having this procedure as they feel that it could reduce genetic diversity amongst humans. It could even lead to the creation of an elite, more superior race. When taken to the extreme and when used by those with ill intentions, it could even be deployed for social engineering. For example, if genetic modification in human reproduction could be made accessible and affordable to humans, humans might alter their offspring to possess the best possible attributes. As a result, this decreases genetic diversity as everyone would possess similar genes to reflect the preferred attributes. This lack of genetic diversity could have disastrous consequences for the human race since genetic diversity generally underpins population resilience and persistence. Without genetic variation, a population cannot evolve in response to changing environmental variables and, as a result, may face an increased risk of extinction. Furthermore, the issue of morality once again comes into question as some religions believe that it tempers with mother nature and is an act of playing god. It is evident that genetic modification in human reproduction could have impactful negative consequences on society, it should therefore be limited such that it would not harm human life. Hence, there is very little justification to continue in this field.</p>	<p>Relevance to Question Requirements: The argument captures the evaluative keywords in the question.</p> <p>Quality of argument (Depth and Scope): There is clear use of appropriate technical terms and concepts pertaining to the topic to demonstrate depth of knowledge. The discussion is extended to consider further implications of 'designer babies'.</p> <p>Use of Illustrations: The example is suitable and analysed well to illustrate the negative repercussions of 'designer babies'.</p> <p>Suggestions for Improvement: The opposing view could be further elaborated on.</p>
<p>To conclude, genetic modification in human reproduction can only be justified to a small extent as it is not credible enough to be embraced by society, there are issues pertaining to inequality and it could lead to moral issues. Although it could eliminate diseases and produce favourable traits and characteristics for society, there are as yet little valid evidence that supports the potential of genetic modification in human reproduction. It is difficult for society to accept it as it is still relatively new but as technology advances, governments and institutions may become more liberal in regulating this field as the benefits might eventually outweigh the costs incurred.</p>	<p>Relevance to Question Requirements: The conclusion effectively summarises the key points raised in the essay. The stand is clearly reiterated.</p>
<p>Overall Comments:</p> <p>Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overall, it is a relevant discussion. • Good linguistic ability with clear attempt to vary sentence structure. Meaning is clear. <p>Areas for improvement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider the real-life context and implications such that in proposing solutions, it is fair and does not cause other problems. • Do not take 'reproduction' literally. • Stick to one significant rebuttal point per OVR paragraph in order to properly and fully rebut the OV idea. <p>Lee Wen Yeong 19S303</p>	

Q10: A world without borders is neither desirable nor feasible. Do you agree? (TMJC JC2 RA 2020)

Sample Essay	Comments
<p>'A world without borders' is a concept that many in today's society find increasingly attractive, and who can blame them? Since the dawn of mankind, human beings, in our capacity as social animals, have always found ways to erase our tribal inclinations, our territorial preoccupation about the specificity of imaginary lines. From the days of the Romans initiating contact with the Celts of Britannia, to Vasco de Gama's contacts with the Indian rulers of the past, to the supranational organisations today, such as the United Nations, European Union and ASEAN, all share a common theme - the effective elimination of borders, be it politically, socially, economically or territorially. Thus, some argue, based on a quick look at history and the aforementioned examples, that the effective elimination of borders appears to be the natural development of humanity overtime. Yet, one cannot help but wonder, why humans, purported 'social animals', whose propensity to congregate, would maintain these borders in the first place. Could it be that these 'social animals', despite their natural inhibitions, understand the undesirability and infeasibility of a world without borders too? In this essay, I will argue that, while there are certain merits of having a world without borders, it is, ultimately, a concept that is neither feasible, nor desirable to begin with.</p>	<p>Relevance to Question Requirements: There is provision of relevant background information that traced back to the history of mankind in order to contextualise the issue in terms of a continual quest (of a borderless world) into today's world.</p> <p>Quality of argument (Depth and Scope): Broad considerations (political, economic, social perspectives) to the issue of desirability and feasibility of a world without borders are mentioned.</p> <p>Suggestions for Improvement: There could be less background information and instead a 'meatier' thesis statement that includes an overview of the reasons for the stand could have been provided – why is it ultimately neither feasible not desirable?</p>
<p>Firstly, one cannot talk about a world without borders, without talking about something the world runs on - money. Or to put it more eloquently, economics. Here, one must concede to the idea that a world without borders, is not only feasible, but desirable. A world without borders would be the continuation of a long-running tradition in human history, that of tearing down borders and barriers to free trade, and if anything, this has led to an economic boon for all those who participate in it. Take for example, the North American Free Trade Association, wherein participating states such as Mexico, Canada and the United States all agreed to tear down restrictions on trade and economics, allowing the free flow of goods and services between these nations, which in turn, promotes greater economic efficiency and comparative advantages in these participating countries' economies. And the result? Higher standards of living for all participant countries, with rising GDPs and more goods and services made available and affordable to more people than ever before. Furthermore, we can see that it is feasible in that, despite push backs against greater globalisation of trade, with calls for more barriers to economic transactions manifesting itself in the rise of isolationism globally, we still see, even in movements opposed to fewer barriers to trade and economic transactions, that they inadvertently turn towards policies that advocate for the very policies they oppose in all but name. Take for example, Brexit. The argument against the common market with the European Union that helped propel Brexit into reality, now is its greatest hindrance to success. Brexit negotiations are halted and stalled over the UK's desires to maintain preferential access to the common market of the European Union, and the European Union's opposition to it. Thus, we can see that even in the most successful retaliations against the reduction in barriers and borders to economic activities, they appear to be nothing but a change in rhetoric and public</p>	<p>Relevance to Question Requirements: Economics is certainly an important consideration to anchor a discussion on the desirability of a world without borders. The point is reinforced at the end of the paragraph.</p> <p>Quality of argument (Depth and Scope): Clear explanation, with sufficient depth given in the first half of this paragraph to convincingly show desirability.</p> <p>Use of Illustrations: Apt, with explanation linked to economic growth to address desirability.</p> <p>Suggestions for Improvement: More current examples of economic cooperation between countries could have been cited. The point on feasibility is not so focused: it is unclear if the Brexit example is used to further the point on desirability or feasibility. Also, be mindful of sentence structure; sometimes it gets long and convoluted rather than clear.</p>

<p>perspective, as they still clammer to ensure that economic activities are not subjected to more barriers. Thus, a world without borders with regards to trade and economics can be achieved, as it is both feasible and desirable, on account that most attempts to oppose it have ended up being nothing more than rhetoric and the rising standards of living associated with fewer borders and barriers to trade, respectively.</p>	
<p>However, when one considers the issue from the aspect of security, a world without borders may appear to be desirable, albeit unfeasible to begin with. When discussing national security, the lack of borders, theoretically, would be a desirable outcome, for even in today's society, a society with borders, transnational crime has always been ticking upwards, with human trafficking, drug smuggling, piracy and money laundering still prevalent in many countries till this day. Hence, hypothetically, a world without borders would allow for greater cooperation between security agencies of various states to work together to track down transnational crimes that would have already no regard for borders to begin with. Thus, if criminals do not adhere to borders and freely commit crime across several countries, it would be foolish for nations to handicap themselves by restricting or limiting their attempts at enforcing security only to their own borders. Not only would this be inefficient, it would embolden these criminals, with full confidence that they would not be brought to justice by simply fleeing to a less stringent country. Yet, while its desirability cannot be doubted, its feasibility is very much in doubt. This is because we already have a real world example in today's society of an organisation dedicated to the enforcement of security and safety without borders - Interpol. And through it, we can see its continuous shortcomings, with failures to arrest or detain high profile criminals, nor being able to bring those wrongdoers to justice. This is, of course, no surprise, for it is unrealistic to expect countries to surrender their exclusive right to the enforcement of their own security within their own borders to any supranational organisation, out of fear that it would compromise their own security, in instances such as fear of espionage by said supranational organisations. This mistrust, derived from a general apprehension of revealing state secrets that compromises a nation's security and integrity, highlights that although in theory, a world without borders with regards to security and enforcement is beneficial and desirable, the sheer mistrust and weaknesses of current solutions, coupled by the reluctance of nations to trade away their national sovereignty and exclusive right to safeguard their own nation themselves, fundamentally proves that it is ultimately unfeasible.</p>	<p>Relevance to Question Requirements: It is relevant to highlight transnational crimes as the focal point of why there is a need for cross-border cooperation.</p> <p>Quality of argument (Depth and Scope): There is clear, logical and sufficient development of the point on the desirability of a borderless world in tackling crimes.</p> <p>Use of Illustrations: The examples on the types of transboundary crimes are briefly mentioned.</p> <p>Suggestions for Improvement: It is mentioned that the cooperation between countries for the purpose of security necessarily means countries are 'trading away' their national sovereignty. This needs re-examination. Is this necessarily the case in all such situations? Also, the example citing the failure of the Interpol could be better supported with details, rather than sweeping claims made of Interpol's failures.</p>
<p>Furthermore, politically speaking, a world without borders, is once again, both unfeasible and undesirable. This may come as a shock, for in our world today, supranational organisations have their importance in society as a means to unite nations and allow for greater cooperation amongst peoples and nations. Yet the rise of populism and right-wing nationalism indicates that a gradual push towards a world without borders, under the leadership of these supranational organisations is increasingly unpopular. This unfeasible idea manifests itself in examples such as Brexit, wherein one of its key issues was how the sovereignty of Britain should always supersede the authority of the European Union. This dichotomy between</p>	<p>Relevance to Question Requirements: It is certainly critical to consider a borderless world from the political perspective.</p> <p>Quality of argument (Depth and Scope): This point shows an understanding of the current world affairs, especially prevalent right-wing sentiments in Europe where people want their governments to first pay greater attention to national concerns and interests.</p>

<p>supranational political organisations slowly erasing borders and its successful backlash against it, indicates that there are greater attempts at erasing these national borders to create a world without borders such as attempts by the EU and the Schengen Area that allows for passport-free travel between member states. Additionally, the idea of putting the interests of the collective over individual member states, as advocated by these supranational organisations is an undesirable one too, for the diversity of nations are far too complex for a single supranational organisation to adequately represent. Take for example, the Icelandic and British fishing industries. If one were to live in a world without borders, these nations would share, in a utopian sense, the ocean's bounty together. Yet, such a hypothetical situation is even in a utopian idealist sense, unfeasible for Iceland whose dependence on fishing is disproportionately higher than Britain's. This highlights the complexities of a world without borders, the responsibility of mediating a myriad of interest groups would fall into the hands of a supranational organisation who in turn, is less likely to represent a diverse set of interest groups due to the pressures by other opposing interest groups, leading to greater frustration and inefficiency among member states, and is hence unfeasible. Thus, politically speaking, a world without borders is both unfeasible and undesirable.</p>	<p>Use of Illustrations: Relevant current examples are cited, with links made to the main point.</p> <p>Suggestions for Improvement: Evaluation of the role of supranational organisations can be more thorough. For example, consider if the interests of the collective versus the interests of the individual country (who is part of the collective) is necessarily non-complementary or even, an antagonistic. Also, the range of examples can be expanded beyond Europe.</p>
<p>Lastly, one must consider the social impacts of a world without borders. When borders are gone, the implied idea would be a greater inflow and outflow of peoples - immigration would thrive. Yet consider the prospect of mass immigration in a world with no borders. Even with immigration, its social impacts have been controversial to begin with, and its desirability questioned. We have seen how the influx of immigrants into countries that were previously homogenous, led to changes and upheavals in society at large when for a time, borders were relaxed. Take for example, anti-immigration riots in European countries as well as the rise of nationalistic movements echoing the rhetoric of Nazi Germany, coupled with the fact that many immigrants generally feel unaccustomed and isolated in the countries they reside in, despite attempts to assimilate them. This lose-lose scenario for natives and immigrants alike highlight the infeasibility of this idea of a world without borders, as the greater disruption of civil society brought about by immigration alone is proof of why a world without borders would be unfeasible. Undesirable too, would a world without borders lead to, for greater influxes of people into society would mean lower wages, at least immediately, for the unskilled labour force in a country. That would in turn, contribute to issues such as higher unemployment and greater discontent. An example would include the many immigrants during the European Refugee Crisis, who were more qualified for low-wage jobs, simply because of differing certifications and mismatch of skills, and this in turn threatened employment of similar low-wage natives in the countries they sought asylum in. Thus, this greater competition in the labour market and its consequent social repercussions will hurt both parties - natives and immigrants, and thus it is undesirable.</p>	<p>Relevance to Question Requirements: It is relevant to follow through with the social implications of a world without borders.</p> <p>Quality of argument (Depth and Scope): There is some breadth provided to consider the social impacts of migration from the receiving country's perspective, as well as the immigrant's perspective. The explanation is also focused on problems associated with migration of people to highlight the current controversy and to argue for undesirability.</p> <p>Use of Illustrations: The examples cited are apt.</p> <p>Suggestions for Improvement: The first mention of anti-immigration riots as an example could be improved if details pertaining to the negative social impact were highlighted. Also, the examples tend to be Euro-centric. What about the social impact of the movement of people across borders in Asia?</p>
<p>Fundamentally, the noble goal of a world without borders has some merits, especially when we consider how it will improve the economies of those who partake in the increasing global, communal world we live in.</p>	<p>Neat summary of the main points covered in essay.</p>

Yet, we cannot ignore the disproportionate negative implications it will bring to bear on other aspects of society. Perhaps one day, such a goal for a world without borders may be possible and beneficial, but presently, such a goal is neither desirable nor feasible.	
Overall Comments: Strengths <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Mostly coherent points were raised with strong justifications for your SVs (undesirable and not feasible).• Examples were mostly apt for the point, though not detailed for all points. Areas for improvement <ul style="list-style-type: none">• It might have been a clearer on the whole if the POCs were dealt with separately.• The OV arguments (desirable + feasible) were weaker in the evaluation and development.• A range of implications across the political, economic and social dimensions were explored, although the moral and cultural implications could also be analysed. Cayton Lee Xi Hao 19A301	

Q11. Consider the view that more attention should be given to the sciences than the arts in today's world.

Sample Essay	Comments
<p>The arts and sciences have always been at loggerheads with each other due to their inherent, conflicting nature. They have always been mired in controversy in terms of their relevance, superiority and practical value they engender in today's world. Increasingly, we witness more societies - especially the pragmatic ones - shifting their resources to the sciences. Opponents may argue that the arts lack the practical economic incentive. Nonetheless, I staunchly believe that societies and individuals should devote equal or more attention to the arts than sciences due to the emotional aspects the arts possesses that the science is bereft of. Specifically, the arts could foster a strong sense of belonging and exhort creativity and freedom of expression.</p>	<p>Relevance to Question Requirements: The context is appropriately set to discuss the place of science and the arts in today's world. The personal stand is clearly articulated and the opposing view is also accounted for. There is also provision of an overview of the points to be developed later in the essay.</p>
<p>In today's world, characterised by a highly stressed and fast-paced society evident in the incremental rise in suicide rates and new innovations in science and technology being churned out at an unhealthy pace, a panacea is needed to restore the mental health of these urban dwellers. The arts that taps on our spiritual aspects through providing a platform of escapism is highly relevant to modern societies and we should invest just as equally, if not more in the arts than science. Science could lack the capacity to alleviate our stress and anxiety or even aggravate them due to the cold and clinical nature of science. Moreover, society could place immense pressure on their populace to generate transformational innovations and discoveries that could in turn produce high levels of stress and depression. Meanwhile, the arts could indirectly emancipate one by disconnecting from the tyranny of daunting deadlines and hectic schedules. In Singapore, we witness a rise in the number of Singaporeans who seek for art therapy in tandem with the increasing stress they face today. The Singapore Arts Museum reported an eighty-five percent increase in visitors especially for the Future World installation where Singaporeans could spend their time to pause and revel at the art installations and feel revitalised thereafter. This shows that Singaporeans could seek for the arts to relieve them of their stress and anxiety. Societies today that rely heavily on science to define their progress could bring significant mental health issues. Therefore, the arts become relevant in liberating and reinvigorating their souls. The arts, as a result could be construed as a panacea in highly stressful societies. Therefore, a society should invest more in the arts than the sciences due to what the arts can do for our emotional well-being that science cannot.</p>	<p>Relevance to Question Requirements: The need for the arts is discussed in light of what science cannot do and how an increasingly scientific and technologically-based society has impacted lives. There is a good attempt at holding both the sciences and the arts in focus and with some degree of tension for the purpose of analysis.</p> <p>Quality of argument (Depth and Scope): Explaining the need for the arts in relation to and by comparison with the sciences naturally provided some depth in the analysis.</p> <p>Use of Illustrations: Apt examples cited, which are coherently weaved into explanation of the point.</p> <p>Suggestion for Improvement: Care must be taken in simply attributing the cause of stress and depression to science. It could also be argued that the pressure and stress faced by individuals stem from living in a competitive society where people value achievements and material success. It thus has more to do with values than the 'cold, clinical nature of science'.</p>
<p>Apart from relieving us from our emotional woes, the arts could promote a strong sense of belonging in one that the sciences could be incapable of, and so we should care more about the arts than the sciences. The value in an artwork could be held by the message it is trying to convey or the objects and ideas they symbolise that are invaluable to a certain community. On the other hand, science often deals with empirical data and facts that could show no value in being inclusive as the knowledge of the sciences is not unique to a certain group of people. The film 'Ghost in a Shell' is one of the best-selling movies in Japan, and its main character is faced with gender issues and is impeded by society in his pursuit of self-realisation. This film's message is to encourage the LGBTs to be fearless in accepting their true gender and identity and to be emancipated from the institutional straitjackets imposed by society. After the debut of the film, the LGBT community has become increasingly prominent and vocal. This film exemplifies how the arts can encourage the building of</p>	<p>Relevance to Question Requirements: Good use of a connecting phrase to transit to this paragraph. Clear and focused topic sentence.</p> <p>Quality of argument (Depth and Scope): Good analysis demonstrated in comparing objective scientific facts and information which we tend to regard as credible, with the more subjective nature of artistic information and message which is equally important.</p> <p>Use of Illustration: There is an interesting angle / perspective of science creating the medium and the arts</p>

<p>social ties that established a new community for the betterment of society. Moreover, in today's world fraught with terrorism that utilises the media to recruit people online, a sense of belonging becomes highly vital in functioning as a bulwark from getting radicalised. The science that created the media that facilitated the operations of terrorism could be countered through establishing a strong sense of belonging that could be built by the arts. Thus, societies should devote more attention to the arts than the science as it could foster a strong sense of community that the sciences could not.</p>	<p>countering the message that comes through the medium through the example of terrorism as we see it today.</p> <p>Suggestion for Improvement: The use of the example - social ties of the LGBT community for the betterment of society needs to be better explained.</p>
<p>In addition, the arts provide an avenue for freedom of expression, thereby suggesting that societies should invest in the arts more than science. Unfettered by conventional ideas and societal stigmas, artists could allow their imagination to run wild and move beyond ideas that were not conceived. Meanwhile, science is usually definitive and not subjective. This means that science is rigid and inflexible as it deals with cold hard facts, lacking any capacity for one's imagination and personalities to flow naturally. The lack of freedom in expression and rigidity could stifle creativity. This is supported by a study conducted by Stanford University of Society where they found a correlation between a strict and inflexible curriculum and schedule that is associated with a dull landscape of innovations and ideas in various institutions. The ingenious inventions and creations we see today often stems from one's creativity - the ability to conceive the unimaginable - that is highly exhorted by the arts by its property of freedom of expression. Hence, a society should care more about the arts than the sciences due to its capacity for freedom of expression that science lacks.</p>	<p>Relevance to Question Requirements: Relevant point raised, though greater clarity could be given to why freedom of expression is to be desired.</p> <p>Quality of argument (Depth and Scope): A clear and focused point with sufficient explanation given to argue for the creative energy associated with the arts.</p> <p>Use of Illustration: Relevant details are mentioned to support the point.</p> <p>Suggestion for Improvement: There is some haste in proving the point, and in turn, a sweeping statement is made of science: is it not too extreme to say that science is rigid, inflexible and lacking in capacity for imagination? Do we not associate innovations and breakthroughs with science as well?</p>
<p>Detractors may argue that the arts lack the practical value that the sciences possess. The sciences that usually derive new innovations and technologies could bring about unprecedented wealth to a society. According to PwC, the introduction of AI could add an astounding sixteen billion dollars to a country's GDP. Occupations that are in the science sector are usually associated with a handsome pay and stability. This is highly enunciated in Singapore where there is a disproportionate number of students in the science stream as compared to the arts. There is a parochial view in Singapore where the arts would not guarantee a high paying job and hence it is obsolete or even superfluous. Hence, the lack of the art's practical value could justify why it is unattractive to invest in the arts than the sciences. However, one should not dismiss the thriving arts market today. The arts market could engender numerous economic benefits that rival science. Based on the US Central Bureau of Economic Analysis, the results they found were stunning - the Arts industry could generate five-hundred and four billion that counted for seven percent of the country's GDP as of 2014, ahead of transportation and agriculture. Artworks could be of high economic value and magnates could indulge in the investment of arts that proved that the arts industry is a lucrative one. Therefore, the arts could be just as profitable and hence more worthy of attention than the sciences when we look at it from the profits perspective.</p>	<p>Relevance to Question Requirements: It is important to point out this critical opposing view which hinges on the practical value of the sciences to society.</p> <p>Quality of argument (Depth and Scope): There is a good explanation of what this practical value means in terms of economic growth for the country and job prospects for the individual. A relevant rebuttal is made along the lines of practicality.</p> <p>Use of Illustration: Relevant evidence is provided though more details could be shared to clarify what constitutes the arts industry that could generate the billions of dollars for the economy. There is also a need to be mindful that the example is probably true and reflective of the American economy. To what extent then can a generalisation be made with regards to the practicality and profitability of the arts across the different societies today?</p>
<p>In conclusion, the arts should be given more attention than science due to its spiritual aspects, ability to concretise a sense of belonging to a community and exhorted the community - all of which science could lack</p>	<p>There is a sense of closure with the key points briefly summarised and overall stance reinforced.</p>

or even depresses. There should be a paradigm shift in how we perceive the arts. It is more than just a favourite pastime for the affluent for it is a panacea to our many mental health issues and sufferings. Notwithstanding the benefits the sciences beget, the drawbacks of science could possibly be alleviated by the arts.	
Overall Comments: Strengths <ul style="list-style-type: none">• A good comparison of science and the arts is made.• There is excellent development of the paragraph and examples. Keep up the reading habit.• Strong language use; error free and fluent. Areas for improvement <ul style="list-style-type: none">• More equal attention could have been paid to both science and the arts, since there were some unfair accusations levelled at science. Low Wei Bin 19S204	