# General Paper Bulletin 2019

Welcome to the first issue of TMJC's GP Bulletin for 2019! In this edition, we bring you a selection of the essays written by your schoolmates during the recent March Block Test. A big thank you to all the students who have contributed your essays.

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

Whilst 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 POC of the question you are answering.

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

All the best for the Mid-Year Exams!

**Editorial Team**

**Mdm Sukhvinder Kaur**
**Mrs Annie Clayton**
**Mr Teddy Tan**
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**Q1: Is a career in sport a viable option in your society?  (TMJCMBT2019)**

'Joseph Schooling earns Singapore's first Olympic gold medal.' This was the headline printed across many newspapers both locally and internationally. The victory inundated the nation with a sense of pride and hope, that this would perhaps motivate the young nation to start to cultivate its budding athletes to compete and earn medals on an international stage. Howbeit, hope does not evolve into anything tangible if no concrete actions are taken. The government has done little to change public opinion that the republic is serious in supporting its athletes. The lack of funding, public perception of sports as well as legally mandated conscription indicate that the young Singaporean society is not ready to allow sports to be a feasible career trajectory. Therefore, I hold the view that a career in sports is not a viable option in Singapore.

Many are unable to be full-time athletes because of the lack of funding from both the government as well as the related sport agencies. Competing on an international scale requires more than just ample training and the best coaches. Aviation and accommodation fees are also part of the package, yet many aspiring athletes are not given the imperative funding by the government for these. For instance, eight-time National as well as Commonwealth champion for Taekwondo, Ng Ming Wei recently disclosed on socio-political website Mothership, that his parents were the ones who funded his international escapades and not the Sports Council nor the Singapore Taekwondo Federation (STF). His training camps abroad with other top national teams as well as his competition stints were all funded from his own pocket. When STF was asked about the lack of funding, they described Ming Wei's achievements as 'paltry', which is ironic considering his achievements and testimonials from various international coaches. Similarly, Joseph Schooling too funded his own career out of his parents' pocket, spending close to a million thus far. The government's unwillingness in funding athletes who have showed promise is a good indicator that perhaps the republic does not support its citizens in sports, rendering a career in it unfavorable. Hence, it is evident that sports is not a viable career option.

A preponderance of the Singapore population has the perception that sports is not lucrative and should only be done as a hobby. Many still hold the view that passion does not correlate with the pursuit of wealth, and that sports should not be prioritised over traditional jobs. For example, multiple surveys indicate that people believe the promotion of science and technology is the reason for Singapore's prosperous economic growth. The PISA test Singapore leads in attest to that claim. This thought resonates with the baby-boomers who also believe that sports as a career is just a frivolous dream and would never come to fruition. In essence, public opinions and perceptions in Singapore are therefore mainly negative, regarding a career in sports. Without the support of the nation's own citizens, it is difficult for one to consider pursuing sports as a career option. Hence, it is evident that a career in sports is not feasible in Singapore.

Singapore's legally mandated conscription warrants one to have second thoughts about pursuing a career in sports. An athlete's peak performance period generally falls in their late teens which coincides with the timeframe for conscription. Should they miss their peak, they are unable to realise their full potential and may be deterred from pursuing a job in their sport. In the case of football players, they traditionally do not play for all of their lifetimes but stop around their early 30s. The performance levels tend to apex when they are in their college years. The republic's conscription impedes the performance of its athletes, which is why in the case of Ben Davis, it was not a feasible option to remain in Singapore to play football and represent the republic. Ben Davis was offered a contract with Fulham, one of the most prestigious clubs in the football arena, yet he was unable to play for Fulham when his request to defer his National Service duties was rejected. The rejection of his application is a conspicuous indicator of Singapore's position on sports. Ergo it is evident that a career in sports is not a welcomed option in Singapore.

However, critics of my argument would posit the notion that in the broad-based definition of sports, one can still pursue a career in sports in certain industries. The e-sports arena has flourished since it

first gained public recognition many years ago. E-sports has become a billion-dollar industry on the world stage and Singapore has taken notice of that, which is why many local teams have sprung up to try to earn a stake and a place on the world stage. Razer, an internationally renowned gaming company that specialises in gaming peripherals recently announced its plans to open a hub in Singapore to support budding e-athletes. Furthermore, the founder of Razer, Tan Min-Liang, is a Singaporean. Incidentally, gaming organisations like 'Resurgence' have started to pay its players a competitive salary alongside gaming gear from its sponsors. The increasing support and recognition of the sport attest to the fact that a career in the sports is a possible one. However, be that as it may, there are only a handful of e-sport athletes who have undertaken this path. Many prominent ones have moved to countries like Taiwan or America to pursue their careers there because the scene abroad is much more developed and the possibility of a career is more sustained due to governmental support. Ergo, while some sports are gaining recognition, pursuing a career in it is a dangerous thought to entertain, especially if the sport lacks governmental recognition.

Critics may also postulate that there is longevity in a sporting career in Singapore. Athletes tend to stop competing and retire when they get older, but it is possible for them to become coaches instead of playing professionally. For instance, Fandi Ahmad, Singapore's most prominent athlete in the football arena retired and became a coach for the Singapore National Team and has coached the team to play on a regional scale. He is an example of an individual sustaining a successful career in sports. I concede that there have been success stories and that there is a possibility of a career in sport being a viable option. However, it is simply too minuscule a possibility since the success stories are so few. Fandi Ahmad's teammates did not pursue anything related to sports after retirement and instead had to take up jobs unrelated to sports. Some of them have struggled to make ends meet. Pursuing a sporting career without any concrete confirmation of its longevity is not pragmatic and not viable. Hence, pursuing a career in Singapore is not a good option.

Sports remains both unrecognised and unsupported locally. To say that it is a viable option is ludicrous and untrue. The rapid technological and scientific advancements attest to where the nation's priorities lie and sports is not one of them. Until public perceptions shift and the government increases its support, is sports a viable career option? I think not.

**Abraham Aw Junquan (18A301)**

**Remarks: Adequate treatment of issue. Arguments are generally contextualised to Singapore society but more explanation and links needed. Topic sentences are generally clear. Consistent use of relevant examples.**

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**Q2: 'In today's world, conflicts have become unavoidable.' What do you think? (TMJCMBT2019)**

In the early days of humankind, our ancestors were often put in situations where survival meant being the strongest. As such, they would fight among themselves to gain more land, resources or even mates. As time drew on, however, conflicts between humans evolved as did the humans themselves. Conflicts took on new forms, and morphed into non-physical forms as well. In today's world, the avoidability of conflicts is something that is often put up for debate. While some believe conflict can be avoided due to several reasons, I believe that they are unavoidable, primarily due to historical, ideological and resource-based factors.

Detractors from my stand would state that conflict can be avoided due to the interconnectivity of citizens and leaders of various countries. With the Internet, advanced communication lines and instant

messaging, transmission of information has been made easy and quick, leading to near-instant clarifications of conflict. Many would point to the Moscow-Washington Hotline, a direct telephone line between the capitals of the USA and the Russian Federation, Washington DC and Moscow. The presence of this telephone line connects the presidents of the two states directly, and has prevented many conflicts between the USA and the USSR, which Russia was part of in the Cold War. It serves the same role to this day, standing as a testament to the role interconnectivity plays in averting crises. While this is true to a certain extent, the increasing connectivity of people worldwide often causes more conflicts than it prevents. The Brexit vote, already a flashpoint topic, polarized even more people due to the widespread misinformation from both sides of the debate. This resulted in conflicts between voters, spilling over into the British Parliament as well. The speed at which the internet works continues to be a reason behind the Brexit saga dragging on till this day, with no concrete solution in sight. On a smaller scale, the internet is also a platform for celebrities and other people of prominence to feud. The feud between American rappers Nicki Minaj and Cardi B is one that comes to mind due to the stir it caused. The spat between local drama artistes Hong Hui Fang and Pan Ling Ling is another internet feud that garnered headlines. The examples prove my point that the interconnected nature of today's world makes conflict more unavoidable, contrary to what is said by my detractors.

The colonial history of many countries have made conflict a way of life in today's world. Many issues in the world can be traced back to colonial times, when most of Africa, Asia and South America were colonized by European powers. Often, they drew messy borders within their colonial realm, and while they were effective in the divide-and-rule strategy adopted by most imperial powers, they proved disastrous to the newly independent states inheriting them. These issues still spark tensions and conflict among many countries. One fine example is the border dispute between India and China. When the British colonized India, they drew messy borders with China, some even the Chinese were unaware of. The issue became a major flashpoint between the two fledgling superpowers post-Indian independence and Chinese unification. While this issue has been limited to the occasional border skirmish today, it has resulted in all-out war several times in the past, and threatens to do so again. This issue is not unique to China and India; several African and Middle Eastern states have also had conflicts due to historically poor colonial administration of borders. Due to the grave ramifications of these mistakes, conflicts are unavoidable and a way of life in several parts of the world today.

Resource scarcity is also a reason behind unavoidable conflict. The central economic problem of scarcity comes about due to limited resources being available to satisfy the unlimited wants of people. Resources come in many forms, such as capital, entrepreneurship and raw materials. The trigger resource for most conflicts is raw materials, the reason being that it can be used to fulfill the wants of a country's citizens. In recent times, Malaysia and Singapore have had various conflicts, primarily over water. The water issue involves the 1962 Water Agreement which stipulates that water from the Malaysian state Johor is to be sold to Singapore for 3 sens per gallon, which Singapore is to treat and sell it back, from 1962 to 2062. Many Malaysian politicians, including Prime Minister Mahathir bin Mohamad, have made damning statements about the treaty and its 'exploitative' nature. Singapore duly responded with its own statements, clarifying the terms of the agreement and its own position. Through the years, it has become clear that this issue will not cool due to the importance of water and its cost for citizens of both countries. With no common solution to this conflict accepted by both sides, this proves the importance of resources and its power in causing conflicts.

On the contrary, detractors from my stand would argue that it is not economically feasible to have conflicts due to the nature of the world economy. Gone are the days of economic isolationism, the modern world functions as a global marketplace, where any minor action can trigger major changes to a country's economy. As a result, many feel avoiding conflicts for the sake of economic interests is the way forward. Take for example the recent row between India and Pakistan. Pakistan shot down an Indian plane in response to the Indian Air Force bombing terrorist camps inside Pakistan's borders. The pilot of the aircraft was captured and Pakistan threatened escalation. However, after this move drew strong condemnation and threats of sanctions from India and some other countries, Pakistan

was forced to back down and released the pilot back to India. This proves that economic threats can lead to conflict de-escalation and ultimately, avoidance. This is a valid point, though it does not always hold true because many conflicts occur regardless of sanctions anyways. Russia continues to be in conflict with the Ukraine over the Crimean Peninsula, despite US sanctions. North Korea continues to pursue nuclear weapons development despite heavy sanctions by many nations. This goes to show that in many cases, economic stability is barely considered, and conflicts occur anyways, making it unavoidable.

Ideological differences are also a reason why conflicts are unavoidable in today's world. The diversity of ideologies around the world ensures that people tend to believe in mutually exclusive ideologies causing conflict among private citizens and even governments. The gun control debate in the USA highlights this well. Those for gun control feel that guns are useless in a modern society, and only serve as tools of violence. As such, they believe that the sale and use of firearms must be severely restricted. However, those against gun control cite the Second Amendment of the Constitution, and believe that the right to bear arms is a God-given one, for which any restriction is an infringement.

**Ashok Sujith Kannan (18S501)**

**Remarks: 'Today's world' is not always well contextualised and explained. Good range of apt examples which are well developed. Clear signposts, paragraphing and organisation. Vocabulary and sentence structure shows complexity throughout though essay lacks a conclusion.**

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**Q4: Is it easier to commit crime in an increasingly connected world? (TMJCMBT2019)**

With the evolution of state-of-the-art technology, and with the increased affordability of various devices that allow anyone to gain access, much of the world today is being 'uploaded' to a digital one. Initially, with the promise of safety online, many have been sharing information liberally, but this rampant spread of information quickly led to the demise of such a promise. With such a widespread reach, technology was quickly leveraged by criminals. While security systems may have become more advanced, many users still continue to put themselves at risk and hacker systems are steps ahead of these security measures, and crime is becoming easier to commit in an interconnected world.

Critics may posit that with the increasing development of security systems across the globe, crime is more difficult to be committed. This can be seen as people who are tech-savvy are employing the use of anti-viruses and proxies to deter malware and keep themselves hidden from the grid. But the reality is that only a minority are carrying out proper steps to ensure they are digitally safe. Many anti-virus programs only protect users completely if they pay to receive 'premium' access. One example is Norton Security, which offers a basic, but minimal coverage for free, and will only allow users access to features such as its safe internet browser if membership is purchased. Majority of the people worldwide only use anti-virus programs with no membership – common ones like AVG or McAfee – or have no anti-virus programs at all. On a national level, governments are only beginning to understand the reality of digital threats, and as such, are overwhelmed by attacks. An example is the Singhealth hack in Singapore, which saw 1.5 million patients having their medical information stolen, myself included. The reality of digital threats has only recently become noticed, and I personally feel that more should be done from both a personal and national level, as it seems that crime is easy to commit, even on a governmental level.

Critics may also argue that criminals online can leave footprints which can be traced back to the source. This can be seen as criminals can leave behind their IP addresses, which can then reveal their location, and potentially their identity as well. However, that is no longer the case as the technologically intelligent crooks will make use of multiple measures to ensure they remain anonymous. An example is through the use of cryptocurrency transactions to hide money laundering deals. Bitcoin cryptocurrency, a popular criminal currency, can be sent across personal wallets, and ensures that both parties stay unknown. Hackers online tend to carry out simultaneous attacks on a single target as well, overloading the system and breaching its functionality, rendering it useless in identifying assailants. This leaves a digital gap in identifying the crime and the criminal, who continues to remain unidentified, making crime easier to commit.

Moreover, with increased connectivity of more users across the globe, this would increase the vulnerability that people face online. This is because clouds of data are stored online, and criminals need only hack into said cloud to gain one's information. An example is the iCloud keychain, which promises to keep your passwords and account information on your phone safe. Hackers have shown that while iCloud encryption is tough to decrypt, it is very possible. This may compromise the other iCloud features, which include the iCloud wallet, which stores credit card information. To name another vulnerability, connecting to public internet networks is also dangerous. Channel NewsAsia's series 'Get Real!' discusses the reality of hackers being able to connect to a public internet connection and hack into other devices that are also connected to this same wireless internet network. The attackers are able to anonymously see all the things that you see on your screen, which allows them to compromise one's privacy and potentially steal one's private information. Such promises of convenience are slowly being compromised as it becomes easier to infringe on one's private information.

The increasing advances of technology also mean that there is significant development in criminal technology as well. An example is the previously un-hackable blockchain technology, that is utilised by most cryptocurrencies, which is now hackable by newly-developed hacking tools. The advancements in such instruments do no stop here, as malware sites are only being distributed more efficiently on social media platforms like Instagram. This is due to the creation of fake accounts (or bots) which are able to 'spam' virus-infected websites to other users. Even on an international level, the controversial topic of the Russian involvement in Trump's election is also possible due to the advancements in hacker technology, which makes crime easier to commit.

Lastly, the inability to regulate the content people view online allows for them to view whatever they wish to. This can lead to things like self-radicalisation as people are able to access sites that promote such things, and as such, are committed to 'fight for their faith'. This could lead to serious internal security threats as these people are inspired by such content and try to carry out acts of terrorism. This could also lead to other serious crimes, highlighting the reality of how easy it is to commit crimes in this digitalised world.

Overall, while the government and individuals continue to defend themselves from getting hacked, the speed at which hackers are able to devise new schemes will, more often that not, surpass the majority of security systems currently in place. As such, it is imperative that regulation becomes more strict, and more stringent security measures are undertaken, in order to make crime more difficult to commit.

**Ong Wee Liang Elijah (18S310)**

**Remarks: Good scope, showing clear understanding of the subject matter. There is also good use of illustrations. Balanced is achieved, but do develop your OVs and substantiate them. Clear structure and persuasive language used.**

**Q7: 'Violence should never be used to manage territorial disputes.' What are your views? (TMJCMBT2019)**

'Violence is never the answer'. This age old saying is one that quite a large number of people agree with, especially when concerning territorial disputes. After all, the horrors of World War Two have left a sour taste in everyone's mouths. Yet, claiming that the act of violence should never see the light of day is rather obtuse, and I disagree with a blazing passion. Yes, fighting over whoever has the bigger imaginary line in the sand sounds asinine at first glance, but the fact that territorial groups constantly resort to violence should send a message of its own: violence is a very effective and quick way to settle such geographical issues, is fantastic at deterring more arguments over land from occurring, and is also a powerful trump card to play; a last resort option.

In situations of territorial conflict, drawing blood, while undesirable, is the fastest method to assert one's side over the other, and subsequently allow them to garner control over the dispute. In contrast, more peaceful methods take far too long to settle the problem, considering both sides do not want to be disadvantaged, and will metaphorically fight tooth and nail to make sure their side benefits more. This is why in virtually every single territorial dispute to date, negotiations come after the violence; there is now one side with greater sway to steer the situation in their favour. Famous examples include Germany's quick takeover of Poland, where then leader Adolf Hitler utilised a military invasion to cripple the country, before finally usurping control for himself. Hitler managed to pull all of this off within a month, a feat that is still highly regarded to this day, and one that definitely could not have happened had he decided to play nice and talk it out with the Polish government. Hence, violence is useful in the sense that it is very efficient; quicker than other peaceful alternatives.

Additionally, violence can help ensure territorial situations are put to permanent rest. This is typically done via displaying an immense show of military might to intimidate the other party, culling them into submission and preventing them from trying to dispute again. Perhaps the most prominent example is the USA's infamous bombings on Nagasaki and Hiroshima. The USA's usage of atomic bombs effectively frightened Japan to the point where it immediately halted its plans to conquer the whole of Southeast Asia, relinquishing control over other countries like Singapore and Malaysia. Afterwards, Japan never attempted to colonise any other country ever again. It is thanks to violence that the conflict could be resolved once and for all, thus ensuring lasting peace.

When all bets are off, and all cards have been played, violence can be reliably called upon as a last resort. Considering everyone is attuned to the inherent concept of inflicting harm onto others, the straightforward nature of violence is therefore easy to understand and call upon in times of need. Otherwise, why would countries need a military strike force? Furthermore, violence is quite literally the only option left when peace talks fail. Consider the terrorist group ISIS, an organisation chock full of radical extremists who believe that cold-blooded murder is the way of their religion. I highly doubt that asking them to put away their weapons will end the ceaseless slaughtering of innocents in their attempts to control more territories and expand their influence on a global scale. The current declared war on ISIS by the USA, Russia, Ukraine and numerous others, is an excellent example that violence sometimes has to be used to settle territorial disputes, especially when the other side consists of homicidal maniacs.

However, detractors may argue that violence should never be used. They claim that nothing is more sacred than a human life, and as such anything that threatens that sanctity should not even be an option. While I definitely agree that a human life is very important, a large flaw in their argument is that sometimes, failure to act with violence ends up causing more casualties in the process. In fact, the main reason why the biggest and deadliest territorial war to date, World War Two, occurred in the first place is because Britain and France opted to try negotiating with Germany instead of attempting a preemptive assault. Their failure to use violence resulted in over six hundred thousand dead British soldiers, and a bloodbath unlike any other. In a perfectly ideal world, maybe Germany would be willing to listen and talk it out. Unfortunately, the real world contains greedy people who will stop at nothing

in their quest for power and control. The idea of cherishing human lives, even in the face of conflict, is noble but unfeasible.

In conclusion, violence is a cruel yet necessary evil: it is quick to stop conflict, able to prevent more conflict from arising, and is a strong last resort. Sadly, this comes at the loss of innocent lives. Hopefully someday, we will find a way to guarantee that violence can never be used as a solution, but in our current society, this is the best we can do.

**Lim Jin Kit Ryan (18S414)**

**Remarks: This essay has fully relevant arguments showing awareness of the issues of violence being raised by the question. However the examples do not necessarily show understanding of 'territorial disputes'. Some time could have been spent elaborating on how the examples were territorial disputes to begin with, before weaving in the arguments.**

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**Q8: 'The Arts will never be taken seriously' To what extent is this true in your society? (TMJCMBT2019)**

In my opinion, the late Robin William's best performance as an actor would be his deeply impassioned portrayal of literature teacher John Keating in the cinematic classic, Dead Poets Society. In it he says, and I quote, 'Medicine, business, engineering - these are noble pursuits necessary to sustain life. But poetry, drama, the fine arts - these are what we stay alive for'. In relation to my society, there is some truth to this as the arts which is broadly defined as any form of expression- be it audio or visual, is largely what people of all backgrounds enjoy as a means of relaxation, while some even pursue it as a passion. It has broadly been debated over the years that Singapore is a scientifically driven society that lacks opportunities for those who wish to pursue the arts as a career, and by extension, one that does not take the field seriously. However, I beg to differ as with an increase in the number of arts-focused schools and courses in Singapore, along with a rise in arts exhibitions and overseas scholarships by local art bodies, Singapore is beginning to listen to the voices of its artistes and take their craft seriously.

Over the years, many have argued that that Singapore is a society that does not take art seriously for many local institutions are science-focused. In elite schools in Singapore which offer what is known as the Integrated Programme, Pure Science subjects are compulsory, along with the study of both Elementary and Additional Mathematics. However, art-focused programmes like the Drama Elective Programme (DEP) or Art-Elective Programme(AEP) are not even offered in top tier schools like Raffles Institutions and Hwa Chong Institution. It is a known fact that junior colleges in Singapore offer more places to science stream students than that of the arts. Additionally, Singapore has been ranked as the top country in the world to pursue Mathematics and the sciences, while not even being in the corresponding list for the Arts. With such longstanding trends in Singapore, many question if we are a society that will ever take art seriously, and I am of the belief that we will, and very soon.

Within the recent decade, Singapore has opened up several arts-focused schools, including Lasalle College of the Arts, which allows Singaporean students to further their passion for the arts at a tertiary level. Institutions such as School of the Arts have also entrenched their place in our society, allowing Singaporeans to pursue their desired art form from 13 to 18 years of age, offering specialisation ranging from musicals to theatre. That is not all. Local art institutions such as the National Arts Council offer overseas scholarships to students who wish to advance their study of the arts in prestigious arts-focused universities like Queen Mary University of London. Hence, despite Singapore being a science

driven society, it would be unfair to dismiss it as one which has total disregard for the arts, especially in today's day and age in light of the nation's efforts.

Moreover, with an increased frequency of art exhibitions in Singapore as well as emerging art-enhancing technologies, Singapore cannot be said to be a society which will never take arts seriously. For example, the 2017 Singapore Biennale saw a record 600 thousand visitors, showing how more Singaporeans are taking a keen interest in arts-related pursuits. At the exhibition, local artist Arya had showcased his artwork 'King of Meat: The Nothingness', in which he examined our cyclical existence through meticulous shots and detailed photographs of wildlife, all made possible through advanced technology found within the little red dot. New art-enhancing technology is not just limited to photography. In 2015, visual effects giant Lucasfilm had opened its first company in Singapore, under the condition that at least half of its employees had to be Singaporean. With such a condition put in place, the number of budding visual effects artists that aspire to be part of Hollywood's biggest blockbusters is set to increase. Thus, with a conscious effort being made to popularise the arts in Singapore and import foreign art-related technology and expertise, this society must be regarded as one which will take the arts seriously.

In addition to international expertise and technology helping to boost the local scene, our nation has also been able to successfully act as a stepping stone for many local artistes to break into the international scene. Through local singing competitions such as Singapore Idol, Vasantham Star and Anugerah, many local artistes have garnered success and fame - most notably 2005 Vasantham Star winner, Shabir Tabare Alam. Featured in both English and Tamil newspapers multiple times, Shabir is the first singer that has been able to break into the international Indian Music Industry, composing songs for up to 7 Tamil movies to date. Other examples include local singer JJ Lin, who expanded his fan base from Singapore to Southeast Asia, garnering close to 10 million followers across social media platforms and fan pages, inspiring many young Singaporeans to take this unorthodox route by exemplifying that passion can lead to success. In summary, with Singapore serving as a strong foundation for these local artistes to build their careers, it would be unfair to claim it as a society that will never take the arts seriously.

It cannot be denied that Singapore is currently focused on the pursuit of the sciences. However, to suggest that it is a society that will never take the arts seriously is an unjust claim, considering its efforts in establishing arts-focused institutions, importing art-enhancing technology, and organising local art competitions to launch the careers of the artistically-inclined. As an arts student in Singapore, I am of the belief that our collective voice is growing stronger and that in time to come, our field of study will stand on the same plateau as that of the sciences.

**Shyam Daniel s/o Syed Mansoor (18A302)**

**Remarks: 'Extent' not addressed. Scope could also have been increased with one or two more points. Future element 'will' and 'taken seriously' are quite well tackled in this essay. Examples cited show range, and are quite well developed. Clear signposts, paragraphing and organisation. Vocabulary and sentence structure used are apt, with clear evidence of personal voice.**

**Q10: 'Migration creates more problems than benefits.' Discuss. (TMJCMBT2019)**

Migratory birds travel and fly hundreds of kilometres, sometimes even thousands, to a different location to inhabit, as the seasons change, since conditions in their original habitats have become unsuitable. The lengths at which they would go to, to seek to live more comfortably, demonstrates how it is also innate for humankind to desire to live a better life, away from home. People move, to benefit their own well beings, and in return, they contribute something to the economic or social ecosystem of that nation which can benefit the natives too. However, more often, the migration of foreigners to a country causes more issues for a nation than solves them. Although some may argue that immigrants benefit a country more, by contributing to its economic growth, migration still creates more problems than benefits because of the potential hateful uprisings due to xenophobia and the cost of sustaining the needy immigrants in a country.

Migration causes more problems than benefits because of its potential shaking of a country's social stability. Like many organisms, it is innate for human beings to be slightly averse, at the very least, to people who differ from us. This stems from unfamiliarity with the cultures and intentions of those people. So, while migrants can help take up low-paying jobs, and help in labour shortage, they can be perceived to be a threat to the natives, economically or physically. This contributes to a sense of wariness towards them among the locals. While not yet full-blown hate, a sense of caution would be employed by them when dealing with immigrants. There is the expectation by locals that migrants abide by their rules and behave well. However, as with any group of people, there will tend to be a few bad apples who would possibly commit foul acts or crimes. Due to the already wary attitude of the local public towards immigrants, a crime carried out by one migrant could incite massive hate towards the whole lot of them, ensuing prejudice, discrimination and possibly civil wars. This would cause xenophobia in a country which could linger for decades, causing an atmosphere of distrust and hate. For example, in 2018 in Germany, after the influx of asylum seekers from the Middle East due to crises there, a 14-year-old German girl was raped and murdered by Iraqi Ali Bashar, who was living in a refugee shelter nearby despite having had his application for asylum rejected. The case was seized upon by the media, making Germans livid and inflaming anti-migrant tensions there. The people used the event as a basis to push for tighter borders and even for Angela Merkel to be impeached. This took a toll on Merkel's government and she agreed to tighten borders in July 2018, for fear her government would collapse. This illustrates how the distrust of foreigners that come to a country can bring destruction, socially and politically, to a nation. A combination of xenophobia and an influx of migrants can only lead to a lingering atmosphere of hate in the country, which, when sparked by any particular issue, can lead to even riskier consequences. Thus, due to the potential of xenophobia shaking a country's social stability, migration brings more problems than benefits.

Migration will cause increased government spending for the support of immigrants, leaving less for natives. Migrants usually flow into a country, in search of a life better than the one they lived in their previous home. It then comes as no surprise that these people may come from devastating backgrounds of war and conflict, having lost most or all of their assets. While migration is thus an opportunity to start anew for these migrants, and possibly enhances the reputation of the governments taking them in, it comes at a cost. For instance, after wars in the Middle East, Germany had to accept tens of thousands of refugees and spent millions in funding refugee camps and providing monetary benefits for these new residents. The country then has relatively less government spending on its own citizens. When people migrate to a country, the government usually has to allocate a portion of their budget to sustain them, which leaves less for the locals. This can be detrimental since locals are angered by this, causing them to take actions. This is well exemplified in 2016, where the majority of people of the United Kingdom voted to leave the European Union, which means stricter regulations for immigrants coming in from the European Union. According to the Ipsos Mori polling firm, a month before the Brexit vote, it was found that most people in Britain overestimated the percentage of child benefit going to children living Europe, and underestimated how much foreign investment came from the European Union. This then explained and justified Britain's preference to leave the European

Union. This shows the significant downside of a government financially supporting immigrants, in the local people's eyes. A government which spends a significant sum on immigrants is very likely to warrant hate, unhappiness and controversy among its people. As such, migration creates more problems than benefits.

Migration also increases the number of issues a country has by adding to the crime rate of a nation. Immigrants come from origins with differing beliefs and backgrounds, which enhances cultural diversity in their new country. However, acts that are more commonplace in their home countries may very likely come off as even more shocking to the people in the country they migrate to, causing more controversy when carried out in the new country than when done in their home country. When a wave of new immigrants brings along the few bad apples with them, this could cause catastrophe in a country, especially if they unfortunately so happen to be radicals. Extreme crimes that immigrants commit can cause trauma to a country, and potentially kill people. For example, there was an incident in Nice, France, where a Muslim driver drove a truck through a crowd, killing over 80 people. This marked the start of heightened caution towards people of that religion in that country. The crime immigrants bring in puts great fear in locals, due to the combination of the already existing unfamiliarity of foreigners as well as the occasionally radical nature of their crimes. This fear can lead to an increasingly tensed atmosphere between immigrants and locals. Unbeknownst to many if it was coincidental, just a month after the attack, the Burkini, a type of swimsuit that complies with religious rules for Muslim women, was banned in many cities in France. This again caused heated discussion and controversy. Thus, migration brings more problems than benefits because of the potential crime it brings to a nation, due to the different and possibly extreme behaviours of the immigrants which can wreak destruction in a new community.

However, detractors to my stand may argue that the benefits of migration to a country actually outweigh the troubling issues that it may cause. Some argue that a valuable benefit of migration is economic growth, due to the influx of brains and talent from elsewhere. A country's income increases, when talented and intellectual immigrants arrive and work in a country. They boost a country's productivity and creativity, keeping it competitive in an increasingly globalised world. For example, Singapore encourages immigrants to work there, for that very reason. This accounts for why they have one of the least stringent immigration policies globally. However, despite the pragmatic economic benefits they may bring, this comes at the expense of the locals. With more immigrants living in a country, job competition increases and the job securities of many locals are threatened. Using Singapore as an example once more, the locals there are unhappy with their government for allowing these immigrants into their country. It takes about 8 months for a fresh Singaporean graduate to find employment, which is a duration many locals complain about. Thus, since migration's economic benefits come at the price of locals' job security, migration still brings more problems than benefits.

Tensions between locals and newcomers are no doubt difficult to mediate or solve, given that we are still in the early stages in the process of globalisation. Much effort is needed to be put into advocating tolerance, understanding and acceptance in locals, towards people who differ from them, as well as from the newcomers to modify their behaviours to act in ways that are considerate to locals. Slowly but surely, a peaceful, more tolerant human race will result.

**Zenith Wong Hui Xian (18S310)**

**Remarks: Relevant treatment of the negative aspects of migration, but more needs to be written to show how these outweigh the good it can bring. The benefits also need to be better developed. There is also some similarity in points for the first and third points. Also, be careful not to overgeneralise, and use modifiers to ensure accuracy in your statements/assertions.**

**Q11: 'The poor are often at the mercy of the rich.' Is this a fair statement? (TMJCMBT2019)**

'Poverty is a plague against humanity which we must fight without cease.' As Pope Benedict XVJ suggests, the poor are an indispensable and notable part of our societies today. However, with the existence of the poor, there are the rich as well. This begs the question: Are the rich superior to the poor? In this context, being poor is relative, defined by the deprivation of opportunities that exceed one's financial wealth. As such, it is a fair statement to make that the poor are more often than not at the mercy of the rich as poverty stems from competition of free markers, alongside the rich already having more to begin with.

Poverty is a natural outcome of competition from free capitalist markets which many countries adopt. This essentially entails people of wealth and status, given their position of power and influence, to be able to exploit the poor in order to achieve their business goals. Knowing that firms are profit-motivated far more than they are welfare-inclined, this puts the poor in a highly vulnerable predicament. The open capitalist system tends to entrench capital, revenue and wealth at the top, making the disparity between the two groups more and more jarring. This is endemic in the fast fashion industry. H&M, a popular Swedish fashion firm, is amongst many others like Zara and Cotton-On which adopt corporate brainwashing. This means that while they seemingly champion ethical workplace environments and practices, this is a far cry from the truth of the poor working for H&M. In Cambodia, women and children are forced into working in extremely poor working conditions for up to 14 hours a day with no breaks. Furthermore, they are highly underpaid, earning a mere US$143, stipulated by H&M as a minimum wage, when the viable living wage is at US$343. This is a stark contrast from Johan Pearsson's income, CEO of H&M, standing at more than US$16 million annually. This demonstrates how the rich often exploit the poor with little to no moral regard for their well-being. The poor are thus deemed to be at the mercy of the rich because despite the inhumane conditions they face, they are forced into this manual work due to the basic yet immediate need for any income they can get, having to prioritise their short-term survival rather than long-term welfare. The wealthy, in comparison, need not even worry about having basic amenities like housing and food. Therefore, the poor are often controlled by the rich due to the natural structure in which the free market works.

The rich often have more resources and assets to begin with, putting them above the poor from the get-go. This highlights the idea of generational wealth, whereby parents will naturally provide for their children in accordance to their wealth, which enables those born with silver spoons in their mouths to develop, from an early age, an edge over their peers. This thus enables them to be in the same echelon of society their parents were in, continuing the cycle for their offspring. Pertinent in the meritocratic system of Singapore, the government has long dabbled with the issue of children having 'different starting points' in life. This steers children of different socio-economic backgrounds into congregating with those of similar wealth, as seen through the prominence of 'elite schools' in certain neighbourhoods and 'neighbourhood' schools in heartland areas. A Singaporean professor deems this effect as the 'Great Gatsby Curve', whereby the poor, even if they can climb the socio-economic ladder, will still be more disadvantaged than the rich. If not, they are unable to escape the lower strata of society. As such, the poor are often at the mercy of the rich as they are always receiving less, which will naturally put them in positions beneath the rich, granting the wealthy greater status and power. Hence, the rich simply having more from the get-go feeds the cyclical effect whereby the rich only get richer, while the poor grow poorer.

In order for governments to even help the impoverished in society, the funding needed is more often than not garnered from the wealthy. Many countries adopt the idea of being 'welfare-states', catering to the poor with the intention of alleviating the strains of poverty, elevating them onto a level playing field with the rest of society. However, given the degree of which both relative and absolute poverty exists in our world today, the government expenditure incurred is massive, and often has to be extricated from the pockets of the rich as well. This is exemplified in Norway and Sweden, whereby their Human Development Indicators and Gini-coefficients are the best globally. These come at the

cost of tax-payers, of which both countries are notorious for having insanely high taxes that make the rich pay for the expenditure dedicated to welfare. As such, this demonstrates how in order for the poor not to be tied down by their (financial) constraints, contribution of the rich is made an essential and big component of the benefits for the poor. The poor thus can be seen as at the mercy of the rich, given the indirect yet necessary reliance on the rich in order to weaken the constraints of poverty.

Detractors of my stand will argue that poverty exists and is exacerbated by the cyclical nature of it, rather than determined by the rich. Given that they are unable to earn much, they have to prioritise within the limits of their low income, which hinders them from seeking better employment and prospects in the long run. It is far more than the extent of poverty rather than the power of the rich. This is pertinent in the forced and bonded labour found in the brick kiln industry of India. Families are unable to remove themselves from extremely demanding yet under-paying manual labour due to debt or just the fundamental need for money to survive. Hence, they need to stay employed despite the low income, which hinders their children from seeking education or better jobs as well, continuing the cycle of extreme poverty. However, it must be remembered that there will always be the existence of the rich when there are poor in the society. The rich, in this sense, are those who not only have power financially, but power in terms of leadership politically or legally. It is worth noting that while labourers are obligated by their own needs to continue slaving away, the international and local governments' actions are simply ineffective. This highlights the lack of political will and how governments largely falter because of it. In India, legislation protects employers far more than labourers, claiming that forced labour is only considered physical restraints rather than those more emotional or monetary in nature, the latter of which is exactly what labourers suffer instead. As such, this highlights that regardless of the nature of poverty experienced, governments have the ability, and should take a top-down approach since the poor clearly do not have the capacity to enact change. This demonstrates just how the poor are at the mercy of the rich and powerful, as the powerful fail to adequately use their power to aid or protect the poor at times.

All in all, the statement is fair as the poor often have less to begin with, hence having to succumb to the power and wealth of the rich. While the situation seems bleak, it is my hope that with time, governments and the wealthy alike will work hand in hand towards alleviating the ache of poverty. But for now, the disparity between the rich and poor will remain as something that plagued our societies, of which only some will strive to eliminate without cease.

**Ng Jing Wen Amelia (18A301)**

**Remarks: Strong use of language throughout essay. While there were a number of valid points raised, with suitable examples and evaluation, in some paragraphs, the examples were rather descriptive, so the point is not very clear until the end of the paragraph. This could be improved with better, more direct topic sentences that get to the heart of the issue.**