NAVIGATE

Issue #1

Contents

Message from the JC1 GP Team

Dear Eunoians,

"Good writing is clear thinking made visible." - Bill Wheeler

Good writing in General Paper is about writing with a keen sense of purpose and audience. It is about writing to communicate your thoughts to your readers clearly and succinctly. In order for that to happen, you need to exert control over what you write and how you write it, you need to exercise discipline in deciding to prioritise what you would like your reader to read over what you would like to say. And we know this is not easy and in fact, it is probably the most demanding kind of writing you will undertake in junior college.

This inaugural issue of Navigate is a collection of GP essays written by some of you, which we have collected for you - a publication by Eunoians for Eunoians. We sincerely hope that this collection of good writing will help you navigate the demands of good writing and inspire you to realise your fullest potential as a writer, whatever that potential may be. If good writing is clear thinking made visible, then the first step to scaling the summit may be to begin thinking critically and continually challenge yourself to reason logically every time you encounter any written material. And that begins with Navigate!

All the best,
Your GP Teachers ❤

Application Question from Timed Practice 1

In response to GCE A Level 2012 Paper 2:
In this article, Patricia O'Sullivan describes some current issues around the subject of food. How applicable do you find her observations to yourself and your own society?

Response 1

> *This piece is notable for its thoughtful inclusion of many relevant ideas which are often well-elaborated. Note, however, its missing links to the context and the question requirements, as well as the lack of a clear, elaborated balance, the addition of which will result in a more cohesive piece.*

The author writes in Paragraph 3 about how modernity has disrupted how we traditionally eat. I found this claim palatable and applicable to my society. One key disruption is in terms of family structure, where men used to be the sole breadwinners and women [were] relegated to handle domestic affairs. But now due to the advancement of the feminist movement which advocates for the liberation of women and their right to exercise freedom outside the home, labour participation [of] women [in the workforce] has increased tremendously. This is particularly true for Singapore where the labour participation of women [has not been] spurred [only] by feminism but [is] largely due [also] to economic pressures and imperatives. Singapore as a small state needed a robust economy to ensure safety and security of its people. Having half the population [limited to the domestic sphere] meant lost economic potential and thus the government actively pushed for the inclusion of women in the workforce. Other economic factors such as the high cost of living in Singapore also pushed women into work[ing]. This meant that women oftentimes came back too tired from work to put themselves through the struggle of making dinner, resulting in families looking for other options. Fast food is seen as a good alternative because it is often easily accessible (fast food restaurants are everywhere) and as their name implies, it is rather efficient to get. All this translates into families not eating at home and turning to fast food options outside.	Vague claim Quoting or referring to a specific claim is advisable, since it will provide a concrete aspect raised by the author to address in detail Identifies a relevant link between Singapore's context and family structure Can be developed further
The author also writes of how eating has become a much more complex and complicated affair in modern times compared to the days of the past in Paragraph 6. I find her claim to be palatable and applicable to my society. As the saying goes, "You are what you eat". This is very true in the modern context because eating is no longer just about the taste and the food itself but also the range of wider ramifications. One's actions [have] an impact on the world. When one takes a bite out of a hamburger, one indirectly supports the environmental degradation required to set up wheat fields and cattle farms, the cruel practices of industrialised meat farms, the unfair subjugation of animal rights for humanity's pleasure and the exploitative corporate structures that run the fast food restaurant. As people get access to more information through the web, they gain awareness of the effects of their actions and consumers, and try to change their actions to fit their worldview. One example is how organic food has become an option that is favoured by many, because they are advertised to be produced under	Quoting or referring to a specific claim is advisable Well-developed elaboration - implications and significance are made clear in a succinct and precise manner

conditions which are sustainable, do not harm the environment, and are also more healthy. Another is the increasing popularity of veganism where people give up eating animal produce to reflect their beliefs about animal rights. These are considerations that were unthinkable of in the past, because in the past there was greater scarcity. People could not afford to pick and choose food item[s] [with] a smaller carbon footprint simply because they would take any food they [could get] their hands on. *(Owen Phua, 18-A4)*	Needs to reference the Singapore context more The links back to the question and context are missing

Response 2

> *This piece takes a very attentive approach to elucidating observations of both Singapore society and from the writer's own experience, without being purely anecdotal. Many links are made between concepts that result in a thorough consideration of the situation in Singapore and its underlying reasons. The response can be improved by the addition of balance within paragraphs to result in a more complex understanding.*

O'Sullivan notes that one of the reasons for increasing levels of obesity is due to the rising popularity of the Western diet, causing traditionally healthy diets such as the Japanese and Chinese to [be] phased out. While this claim does sound logical, it is not entirely applicable to my society. In Singapore, local cuisines are still greatly preferred over Western diet[s] due to their relatively lower costs and availability. Furthermore, most families in Singapore still stick to their Asian roots by having home-cooked meals whenever possible; after all, mixed rice and vegetables are integral to one's society as an Asian. Apart from [economic] and cultural factors preventing healthier diets such as the Chinese and Japanese from being displaced by the Western diet, we also need to consider the social factors and the role of the government in maintaining the popularity of Japanese and in particular, Chinese diets. There [have] been many campaigns by the government to encourage people to eat healthier diets as a method of keeping fit. Furthermore, most people in Singapore have [gone] through formal education which serves as a vessel to instil 'healthy eating' values in the young. For instance, the textbooks of Secondary-level Biology and Geography (some of the mainstream subjects that I took) explain[] some of the risk factors for certain diseases such as heart attacks, with one of the reason[s] being fat-laden diets. From [a] young [age], our society [has] indirectly and implicitly discourage[d] people from choosing more calorie-heavy diets such as Western diets. The combination of economic[], cultural and social factors is why [the] Western diet has not gain[ed] traction as quickly in Singapore as compared to other countries.	Investigates multiple salient factors that have led to the observation that Singapore does not suffer from the same trend String of observations can be more organised Effective inclusion of personal experience that has been generalised to the experience of a wider section of society
O'Sullivan also noted that in [this] day and age, there are various issues when it comes to shopping for food, whereas little to no thought was given in the past. This is true in today's society. One of the most sticky issue[s] when one is considering the selections of food in the supermarket is the issue of ethics. As Singapore progresses economically, people are increasingly informed and educated on some of the cruel acts when it comes to processing livestock, hence, they choose alternatives in which minimal harm is [done] to the animals. For instance, shark's fin soup used to be a mainstay in Chinese cuisine, specifically [during] the annual reunion dinners. However, due to extensive campaigning by animal rights groups and the increasing awareness that sharks are being over-hunted, many Singaporeans decide to use alternatives such as crab meat, resulting in many restaurants removing the signature shark fin soup from the menu. [In comparison], a few years back, shark fin soup [was] a must-have every year. Personally, I tend to pay extra attention to food labels on the packaging when purchasing	Slight deviation from the question requirements Development of example can be organised better Inclusion of personal experience that has been appropriately generalised to the experience of a wider section of society

food to ensure that I am getting sufficient nutrition, and [I am] sure many Singaporeans do that too. As citizens are increasingly health-conscious, they tend to select food that [have been] labelled as [being the] 'Healthier Choice' by [the] Health Promotion Board [of] Singapore. There are also various campaigns by mainstream supermarkets such as FairPrice to encourage people to consume so-called 'healthier' and 'organic' food[s], which are touted to offer health benefits. There has been a rising number of studies that show that processed food contain[s] certain potentially dangerous compounds, and this could lead [to] more health-conscious individuals in society to pay more heed to what they buy. *(Thomas Tan, 18-A4)*	Link back to main argument and question requirements is missing

Essays and Paragraphs from Timed Practice 1

GCE A Level 2012

1   Consider the view that most work these days could, and should, be done from home.
- Not represented

2   How far can an individual be held responsible for crimes against humanity?
- Full essay (Kenneth Hoh, 18-O5)

3   Would it matter if all the performing arts venues in your society, such as concert halls and theatres, were closed down?
- Full essay (Lew Kylin, 18-U1)

4   'The person who dies rich dies disgraced.' Discuss.
- Not represented

5   'The book has no place in modern society.' Discuss.
- Full essay (Chelsea Leong, 18-I3)
- 1 paragraph (Nolin Ho, 18-O3)

6   To what extent has technology had a negative impact on the skill levels of people?
- Not represented

7   Does sport merit the vast sums of money that are spent on it?
- Not represented

8   How effective are international efforts to ease the problem of global hunger?
- Full essay (Sanchana Gnanasekaran, 18-O4)

9   'No politician's reputation can survive the judgement of time.' How true is this?
- Full essay (Kylie Kwek, 18-E2)

10   How important is it for people in your society to retain a sense of tradition?
- 2 paragraphs (Law Tao Xin, 18-O5)

11   'The key to good health is lifestyle rather than medicine.' How far do you agree?
- Full essay (David Ethan Ng, 18-I5)

12   Can mathematics be seen as anything more than a useful tool in everyday life?
- Full essay (Soon Minh, 18-I3)

2   How far can an individual be held responsible for crimes against humanity?

This essay shows exemplary organisation: from beginning to end, the structure and direction of the argument is effectively signposted and therefore never in doubt. The content of the essay is insightful while expression is intelligent, precise and judicious - each sentence and word is carefully chosen to serve the purpose of the essay. It can be further strengthened with more developed and more wide-ranging illustration to support the skillful rhetoric.

Even though war and conflict have existed since the beginning of time, the 20th century has been characterized by the rapid rise of massive crimes against humanity, providing much food for thought. Crimes against humanity refer to objectively wrong acts deliberately committed as part of a broader systemic attack on a civilian population including rape, genocide and torture. Many of us analysing the countless atrocities in recent history – that of the Holocaust, the Nanjing Massacre and the more recent Rwandan Genocide – are disgusted by what we consider acts of pure evil. We are convinced that these manifestations of pure evil, actions that have claimed countless innocent lives, represent the worst of human nature. Many therefore automatically assume that individuals should take full responsibility for the consequences of their actions. In many cases, accountability is important, but when viewed in context, crimes like these are committed in sets of highly complicated and nuanced circumstances and conditions that must be considered. While crimes against humanity are indeed morally regrettable, I believe that there are certain factors that can prevent us from holding individuals, at various levels, fully responsible for these acts. I will thus analyse this from three different levels of complicity – leaders of organizations, their followers and officials, and members of communities.

> *Can be incorporated more naturally into the writing*
>
> *Apt introduction of the events in history that have led to the contention in the question*
>
> *Looks discursive - this can be better incorporated into the argument in the thesis statement*

The most powerful argument made for the harshest and most punitive measures under international law goes twofold. Firstly, crimes against humanity are morally condemnable – the intentional torture and killing of innocent civilians goes against any standards of human decency, and that should be punished as violations of our common understandings as one humanity. Secondly the scale and degree of harm accrued as a result of crimes against humanity warrants the harshest of punishments under a model of retributive justice. While I acknowledge the extent of harm inflicted on innocent individuals, this does not necessarily lead to the adjudication of responsibility. Our beliefs and values, which influence our actions and decisions, are formed and influenced by coercive conditions and circumstances. Apart from complicity, the adjudication of responsibility also involves the determination of intention of harm. If the links between intentions and actions cannot be proven, the weight of moral condemnation cannot be accorded. Furthermore, it is precisely the nature of International Humanitarian Law that should make us wary of conveniently adjudicating responsibility. Given that the law must straddle diverse cultural contexts, we must not attempt to make assumptions regarding how actors interacted. What may be considered as inhumane or uncivilized in Western societies may be common practice in African tribes. Similarly, what a Chinese or Asian may consider indecent or immoral may be described as liberating in the West. It is therefore more important that we, against emotionally charged voices calling for the harshest of punishments, distinguish consequence from responsibility. In this light, I strongly believe that the moral weight of crimes against humanity should not diminish the weight of other factors when adjudicating responsibility.

> *The necessity of considering the law can be introduced earlier. It is set out successfully here*
>
> *Appropriate and fair acknowledgement of the validity of the concerns of an opposing perspective*
>
> *Insightful, precise argument*
>
> *Illustration can be better linked to crimes against humanity*
>
> *Reiteration of argument*

Leaders of organizations orchestrating atrocities are definitely responsible for these crimes against humanity. Within the individual, societal, and international context of the time, however, the decisions may not have been pure acts of evil but steps, however misguided,

> *Presentation of opposing perspective*

towards a broader and sometimes altruistic good for their community. Leaders, particularly those of nations and political entities, are expected to make critical decisions in the best interest, both short-term and long-term, of the organization or country he or she is leading. This means that leaders are often expected and able to justify the means with the ends. In the context of crimes against humanity ordered by senior officials and leaders, many of these crimes were conducted in the context of chaos, disorder and conflict. Many of these leaders believed that this disorder would lead to severe ramifications. Others may have believed that quick victory in chaos was necessary to secure immediate foreign policy objectives. For instance, Emperor Hirohito of Japan orchestrated massive crimes against humanity through interrogation, torture, and strict policing of colonies under the rule of the Japanese empire. While he was vilified internationally for these acts, he genuinely believed, as with other Japanese officials, that the strict and punishing regime in their colonies was crucial for obtaining the necessary information and stability to cement the Japanese Empire. Many leaders, similar to Emperor Hirohito, believed that a show of force and violence was necessary to pressurize actors or falling in line, thereby serving the interests of their nation's people. While this does not detract from the moral reprehensibility of the actions and our disapproval of their decision to pursue this means for the end, this means that we cannot treat these leaders and their actions as manifestations of pure evil and demand to exact retribution.	Effective use of lower modality statements to avoid absolute statements, recognising the complexity of the issue Consistent links to question
More often than not, crimes against humanity are not directly carried out by the leaders themselves, but by lower-ranking officials in these organisations. While these officials and followers were directly involved in these atrocities, they did so often under the orders, direct and indirect, from their superiors - orders that we cannot reasonably expect them to disobey. Many advocate maximum punishment for these officials as they were at the front line of these atrocities. Others, blinded by emotion, may associate their pains and sorrows with these individuals.	
However, these critics fail to realize the power of force in compelling and dictating action. Very often, organizations directing crimes against humanity are military, paramilitaries, or authoritarian political organizations, all of which are highly regimented and hierarchical. These include the Nazi party and its affiliated paramilitaries, the Indonesian Army, or the Rwandan government. The top-down structure facilitates the use of force to compel individuals to obey orders. Critics often point to prolific instances of sheer courage, in which individuals, in the face of threatened sanctions, defy and disobey orders to commit these crimes. However, these examples do not detract from the very real threats to these individuals and their families in cases of disobedience. Very few people are cognizant of the massive effect of these authoritative structures on one's behaviour. Stanley Milgram, a psychologist from Yale University, conducted a series of famous experiments on human behaviour and our willingness to harm others. The study found that under the pressure of authoritative figures, individuals are fully capable of harming others, even when they are fully aware of the harm they create. This is similar to that of individuals in crimes against humanity. I am not asserting that they had no knowledge about the gravity of their actions – instead, the response – to obey orders – is, however regrettable, one that we cannot fault them for in law. Stories of immense moral courage should be celebrated but are not realistic expectations to exact on all involved. Individuals who commit crimes against humanity cannot be held fully responsible for them – particularly if they were following orders from their superiors.	Skillful insertion of complication to the argument with the inclusion of an opposing perspective Link includes apt acknowledgement of opposing perspective and consideration of its limited applicability
Apart from the organizations committing these crimes against humanity, many point to the communities and individuals of nations committing these crimes, arguing that these individuals were complicit in these atrocities, and that their inaction equates to an endorsement of these crimes. However, I posit that members of these communities cannot	

be fully held responsible for these crimes, regardless of complicity due to the presence of strong ideologies influencing their actions and decisions. Crimes against humanity, particularly those in war, are often committed by leaders and their organizations against support in terms of ideology, which are accompanied by pervasive personality cults. These ideologies can be tied to deeply personal aspects of one's identity, including race and religion. The exclusionary nature of identity is often weaponized by these leaders, to justify and legitimise the use of power of these leaders, even in crimes against humanity, with the apparent involuntary submission of members of communities. The most prominent example in this case would be Nazi Germany, responsible for the Holocaust, arguably the worst genocide in crime against humanity in the history of mankind. Many therefore hold Germans fully responsible for the atrocities of the Holocaust, pointing to the many instances in which the German people could have stopped Adolf Hitler – from voting him out of various elections, boycotting his conscription laws, and refusing to support his paramilitaries which facilitated the gathering of innocent Jewish civilians. However, while the Germans accept responsibility for their actions, we cannot condemn them for inaction. Adolf Hitler was highly skilful at driving a schism between Germans and Jews, justifying and lending credence to the systematic killing of the Jews. Many Germans, though now realizing the weight of their actions, were genuinely convinced and swayed by Hitler's rhetoric, and believe in the Holocaust and its aims. In this light, I strongly believe that individuals in communities cannot be held fully responsible for crimes against humanity as they may have been influenced by ideology to justify these atrocities.	Use of understanding of universal concept of identity and its potential effects - not closely explained, but raises key ideas

Consistent links back to main issue |
| Ultimately, crimes against humanity are highly regrettable and all nations around the world, regardless of political interests, should actively aim to prevent these atrocities from occurring again. However, with regard to the adjudication of responsibility of these atrocities, we should avoid our knee-jerk reactions of instantly condemning individuals involved as pure evil. Instead, we should seek to understand these individuals with the empathy that they lacked and understand the factors that shaped the way they view the world. Through analysing individuals at three different levels of complexity and involvement, as well as the different factors and conditions that may influence these individuals, my stance is clear – we cannot hold individuals fully responsible for crimes against humanity.

(Kenneth Hoh, 18-O5) | Clear reiteration of the course of argument and stand |

3   Would it matter if all the performing arts venues in your society, such as concert halls and theatres, were closed down?

This essay contains some good arguments about the significance and relevance of arts and thus by extension performing arts venues, but each argument could be framed more closely with certain features of Singapore society. This contextualisation and focus on a specific society should be established early on for a response to such a question; it should be present in the introduction, and maintained throughout the essay.

The arts have always been important to the human race, and early human civilisation[s] have always included some form of art in their society – visual arts for the cavemen, music for the tribesmen and nomads, and religious rituals utilising music, theatre, and dance dating back to the Ice Age. Art forms, especially performing arts which include dance, music, acting and theatre, as well as marching arts, like marching bands, and magic, where performing arts are defined as art that consists only of a person or group performing something, and that does not exist apart from when it is being performed. Since they do not exist when they are being performed, we can say that it would matter if all the performing arts venues in Singapore are closed down, because it would cause the direct disappearance of these art forms and this would matter to the artists whose lives directly depend on their art as well as the Singapore population. However, while it may be argued that physical arts venues are unnecessary, I feel that this is largely untrue, as the venues hold a certain meaning and value in the eyes of Singaporeans.	Broad opening not immediately relevant to society Weak definition - interesting ideas poorly stated Can be better contextualised to Singapore society specifically
Many may argue that the closing down of arts venues in Singapore would not make a difference or matter to anyone. With the advent of the digital age, many performances, especially of iconic productions like the Phantom of the Opera, for example, can be found in [the forms of] both a recording of the production, as well as film. While a closing down of these venues might mean that these shows cannot be performed in Singapore, citizens still have access to pre-recorded versions online, or film adaptations. This is likewise the same for musical performances, where artists have studio recorded versions of their songs and previous recordings of performances, which are readily available on platforms like Spotify and Youtube. In the case of musicals and plays, many are available in text form as well, complete with musical scores and stage directions. While some may think that these versions are enough, patrons of these arts know better. In fact, many elements come to play in a staged performance, with one of the key parts of a performance being the atmosphere created, especially in the performers' interactions with the audience. This interaction, as well as the special bond created during the span of the performance does, in fact, influence the way audience members enjoy the performance. Interaction between performers and audience members help lighten the atmosphere, build a relationship and rapport, as well as make the audience feel involved and important. These contribute to the atmosphere and contribute to how well they can connect with the art form, directly impacting the impact of the art. This is especially important in art forms or works that aim to create change in society. Without these platforms, their power to influence society, and their voice, would effectively be removed from them. Hence, while alternatives to performing arts platforms exist, they may not [be] as effective as the existing stages, and are not enjoyable for audience members, and these destroy the original intent of the art form, rendering [it] useless without a stage.	Rebuttal of opposing argument Detailed explanation of the value of a live arts performance Missing link back to the question of whether it would matter – so it matters from an artistic angle
Hence, it is clear that the existence of these stages matter greatly in how the intent of the art	Misplaced sentence

is carried out. These stages also matter greatly to the artists, as well as anyone else involved, like directors and crew, as their livelihood and freedom of speech depend on it. For many performing artists such as dancers and singers, their entire livelihood depends on their performances. Many full time artists such as dancers from the Singapore Dance Theatre, and actors, directors and producers in theatre companies like W!LD RICE making a living from each production they [stage], which are specifically created with the stage in mind. Many of these productions are planned with the idea of having it staged, and shown to the public or greater community. Directors pay attention to details like how costumes, makeup and sets would look on stage, or how the choreography will be seen by the audience. The idea of performing art is hence closely linked with the performance of it itself, which requires a platform, [so] when these stages are taken away, these art forms cannot exist, because it contradicts the essence of the art form, which do[es] not exist only for the discipline of the art, but for the sake of expression to the public. Because of this, artists also view the art forms as a way of self-expression, and a platform for them to express views on everything from love and daily life, to society and its constructs. Taking away these platforms takes away their artistic voice: their ability to express themselves in other forms, and takes away their ability to make change in society, essentially stripping them of the right to freedom of speech and expression.	Some good elaboration, but can be better if the context can be used to frame the argument; Link to society (and thus question requirements) can be strengthened Some disorganisation - idea of the artist's livelihood in topic sentence has been lost
The removal of these venues would also matter to Singaporean citizens, as these venues may hold a special meaning to citizens. Theatres such as the Victoria Concert Hall, or Capitol Theatre have been around for decades, and would inevitably hold special meaning in the eyes of Singaporeans. In the case of the Victoria Concert Hall, it holds special historical significance dating back to colonial times, and is more important to Singapore than its importance as a performing arts centre. They do hold sentimental value in the eyes of many, and the demolition of these venues would definitely face public outcry.	Argument not fully developed - they are a symbol of our social memory, our collective history
These stages also matter to the masses, because a removal of [them] would lead to the dying of cultures and a diminishing of Singapore's cultural richness. Singapore is a culturally unique country, made of different ethnic groups and languages, which are further divided into subgroups such as dialect or minority groups, which individually have developed their own unique art forms. For example, one of the last two existing Teochew puppet troupes in Singapore, the Sin Sai Poh Hong puppet troupe, has gone into retirement in recent years, because of the lack of demand for such shows [nowadays]. In the past, it would draw huge communities out into the streets, and was regarded as one of the most popular forms of theatre, dating back several centuries to Southern China. However, because street theatre has become less and less popular, the art is dying off. Hence, since the performance arts cannot exist without the stage, taking these platforms would make these arts obsolete in Singapore, which would also impact the culture present in Singapore, and the daily lives of Singaporeans.	Relevance to performing arts venues is limited Logical leaps present
The removal of performing arts venues would also matter to the general public and consumers in Singapore, who view art not only as entertainment but as a form of education, and a way to connect with themselves in a spiritual manner, in an experience that is arguably unique and one of a kind. Many visit theatres to see concepts they know in their head or on paper such as musical scores and theatre scripts, [lived out] onstage. While not everyone has the talent or ability to perform, and treat the arts as self-expression, anyone can be a consumer of the arts, and consumers do enjoy the wide range of perspectives that the arts	Needs specific examples

provide them. The arts give the general public a greater range of perspectives in life, and helps them be more empathetic people. The arts are also proven to help in creative thinking, and in helping develop people's thinking process, as well as the brain. Music and dance may also help in therapy, and the removal of these will surely have a great impact on those who depend on them.	Link to performing arts venues can be strengthened
In conclusion, the performing arts venues and the art[s] themselves are closely linked, and the removal of these venues is synonymous to the disappearance of the art form. This affects the livelihood of performers, as well as Singaporean society and daily lives of Singaporeans. The removal of stages also removes the performers' rights to self-expression, as well as holistic education of members of the public. Hence, I do believe that it would matter if venues like concert halls and theatres have closed down. However, we might vote that it is innately human to express ourselves, with the performing arts being one of the major avenues for people to do so. Because there is an innate desire, perhaps we can find solace in the knowledge that man will always create platforms for us to express ourselves. *(Lew Kylin, 18-U1)*	Evaluation of the likelihood of such a phenomenon happening as closure to the discussion - dispels fears and ends on a positive note

5   'The book has no place in modern society.' Discuss.

> *This essay exhibits a well-developed argument that is successful in considering opposing perspectives in a balanced manner. Here, attention is paid to the development of ideas and the writer is acute in attending to objections that might be raised. The examples are also well chosen and well used, though there are still opportunities for pushing the argument to an even deeper level of analysis, particularly with regard to the characteristics of the modern day context.*

'Books are a uniquely portable magic.' These are the words of renowned American author Stephen King, whose books are loved all over the world. Books can indeed transport people to fantasy worlds that exist only in our minds and on the pages, and can serve as a much-needed distraction from the [hustle and bustle] of 21st century life. However, with recent advancements in technology and increased emphasis on environmental consciousness, people have begun switching from the traditional printed book to other forms of the book like the eBook or audiobooks. The physical book has seemingly started to lose its value in the eyes of people, and its significance in modern day society is challenged by its more convenient and accessible counterparts like the Kindle or iPad. This begs the question – do books still have a place in modern society, or are they becoming more irrelevant? In my opinion, physical books still play an irreplaceable role in modern society, and will not be eradicated any time soon. I believe that physical books will remain relevant in modern society despite the advent of technology due to the invalidity of the assumptions raised in the question, digital books still cannot exhibit some of the beneficial characteristics of the physical book, suggesting that physical books cannot truly be replaced and that they will continue to retain their value in the digital age.	What specific assumptions these are and why they are they invalid can be mentioned
Firstly, a common argument that digital book supporters usually make is that digital books make much more economic and environmental sense than physical books. Digital books are generally cheaper, and multiple books can be stored within the same digital book reader. As such, a lot of paper can be saved simply by opting for a digital book reader. This may appeal to the more environmentally friendly readers or readers on a budget, who do not wish to spend a large proportion of their income purchasing physical books. Some may also choose to go digital in a bid to save the environment, since an increasing number of people are becoming aware of the severe environmental problem of deforestation and its impacts. Most people only read a book once or twice, hence going digital presents itself as the more attractive option. However, while digital readers are indeed more environmentally and pocket friendly, most countries have [a public library system] that allows citizens to loan books for free, reducing the need to spend any sort of money on the books if returned on time. Furthermore, one copy of a single book in the public library is most likely read a couple of times by multiple people. For instance, Singapore has more than 20 National Library Board (NLB) branches, providing residents easy and convenient access to a wide range of titles. Singapore residents can borrow the books for free as long as they sign up for a library membership, and this reduces the need for Singaporeans to go out to purchase books whenever they want to read one. Hence, it is not necessarily true that digital books always make more environmental and economic sense than physical books, unless one considers the physical book to be purchased instead of borrowed. Therefore, physical books do not necessarily have a disadvantage as compared to digital books in this aspect.	Unnecessary/ unintentional repetition Rebuttal provided is clear and attentive Synthesis of arguments raised so far can be further linked to the question
Another common argument that is made is that digital books possess several features that physical books lack that can serve to enhance the reading experience. Digital books allow for font and font size to be adjusted according to the reader's preference, making reading a more personalised experience. This feature is not available for physical books, where the book usually comes in one standard edition where font preferences cannot be customised. Hence,	One point is discussed in the paragraph. The topic sentence should be more precise

for certain readers such as those who are a near-sighted, the ability to adjust font size by making it bigger can be an added bonus. For instance, digital reader Kobo has a wide variety of over 24 font sizes to choose from, and comes with a custom boldness dial. Hence, digital books do have an edge over physical books when considering how tailored each reader's reading experience is. However, it is important to note that not all readers prefer being able to adjust font preferences and some largely prefer the tactile experience a physical book offers. Hence, the added features available in digital reading devices may serve as a distraction rather than a point of attraction. Some books, such as children's books, also are able to carry out their purpose better when it is in physical book form. This is because many children's books contain specialised textures, such as silk and fake fur, to teach the children how to recognise these textures from a young age and provide a more sensory experience. Textures are unable to be expressed on a digital tablet, hence in this aspect, physical books remain superior. In addition, Scholastic's 2015 Kids and Family Reading report found that 65% of children aged 6 to 17 agreed that they would prefer reading physical printed books, while 77% of children who had tried reading e-Books also mentioned that they would prefer reading print books. This highlights children's preferences for physical books as compared to digital books. Hence, the argument that digital books possess superior characteristics that can eventually lead to the phasing out of physical books does not hold water as physical books are still able to play roles that digital books cannot.	Can be explained more closely - leaps of logic made Good evidence that could use more explanation. Note the potential significance of this statistic: young children, who might be expected to be used to digital mediums, still prefer books, which is revealing about the enduring attractiveness of books.
On the other hand, in the modern world, physical books continue to play a role in many religions and traditional practices, and this role cannot be easily replaced by alternative forms of the physical book such as the eBook or audiobooks. Many religions still choose to have text in the physical form, as they feel that technological developments may reduce the religious and cultural significance of the text. Whilst digital versions of these religious texts may exist, a large majority of the religions' followers still choose to own the physical copy of the book as a physical reminder of the religion's beliefs and values. Some countries also have traditions which involve the gifting of a physical book to another individual, and this tradition has been so deeply rooted in their society that digital books just cannot replace it. For instance, in Christianity, all churchgoers are strongly advised to own a physical copy of the Holy Bible, which they can make reference to during church sessions. It is also considered rude to be using handheld devices when there are speakers or pastors delivering a speech, hence in this aspect, the physical Bible remains superior and irreplaceable. To add on, in Iceland, there is a tradition called 'Jólabókaflóð', or the Christmas Book Flood. It involves Icelanders gifting each other books on Christmas Eve, and it is hard to replace the book involved in this tradition with a digital book, due to the society's perception of the digital book as being of lesser value than the physical book. Therefore, due to the unique role that physical books play in religion and tradition, the digital book will find it hard to fulfil its duty as a perfect replacement of the physical book. As such, the physical book continues to hold its place in modern society.	Unnecessary use Can bring out the link to the question further: how might this be potentially more significant in modern society? Clear evaluation of the place of the book

To add on, without physical books, it will be more difficult to fight illiteracy in the developing world. The developing world refers to third world countries, as well as the poorer or less developed regions of a country. Books have always been symbolic of intelligence due to the widely-recognised idea that books serve to impart knowledge and educate the ignorant. The easiest way to improve literacy rates in developing countries or rural areas are through the provision of educational materials such as books. Physical books are more practical than digital texts in this aspect as most people living in these regions would not have any means to purchase or download these books. High end technology, such as laptops, and wireless connection may not be available in these areas so reading anything digitally is a foreign concept. Despite the fact that most of the modern world is literate, we cannot overlook the minority that continue to lack access to education and work towards our common goal of increasing literacy rates worldwide. For example, United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) has a programme in Vietnam titled 'Books for Rural Areas of Vietnam' that aims to increase the number of books available in rural and mountainous areas by setting up more public libraries, [thereby] addressing the historic shortage of reading materials in these contexts. The books in these libraries are all physical books, and this therefore highlights the effectiveness of the physical book in its role of disseminating information and educating people [where digital technology has yet to make inroads]. Thus, the physical book continues to play the invaluable role of educating people in less developed areas, due to the inaccessibility of its digital counterparts in such areas.	Definition can be inserted with more style Can make clearer what this is an example of
In a nutshell, the role of the book in modern society cannot simply be replaced by its digital counterparts just yet due to digital books' various shortcomings. Physical books will continue to play an irreplaceable role in our society due to the unique characteristics they display. Some readers may also prefer owning the book in its physical, tangible form rather than just a file on their eBook reader that provides the reader little to no tactile experience. In the hypothetical case that the physical book is rendered extinct, it is almost for certain that the development of humankind will suffer as well. *(Chelsea Leong, 18-I3)*	Conclusion summarises the arguments raised

5   'The book has no place in modern society.' Discuss.

This paragraph offers an interesting insight into the value of books. However, while the idea is interesting, it is not developed to its full potential, which can be tapped through making a clearer comparison to illustrate the limitations of other competing media in modern society.

Lastly, the value of nostalgia and the purpose of keeping track of the kinds of material that we have treasured and indulged in allows the book to stay relevant in today's society. Some may find it cumbersome to hold stacks of books in their homes for many years, and would rather stick to using their electronic devices to satisfy their need for entertainment with online videos or movies. However, these forms of entertainment can never completely replace the value in a book. The book allows us to look back on the intellectual journey we have taken, from the simple and casual fiction books we read in our youth, to the more sophisticated book examining the human mind and psychology in books like Lord of the Flies, and even to the reference books we buy to explore a topic we are interested in to more depth. The collection of books over the years allows us to understand where we initially were when we first experienced reading, and how we progressed from there, serving as reminders for the various lessons we can learn from the characters of fictional stories such as the fact that humans largely fear the unknown, derived from the fear of the 'Beast' in the Lord of the Flies. The truths that we uncover from the stories we read can translate to real life, and books hence still have a place in our society, as they provide a flashback on our past memories at one glance. The tangible value of a book that requires a span of time to finish allows us to relive the experience in years to come, something a short online video could never replicate. Hence, while it is inevitable that there are other alternatives to the book, its value and significance could never be replaced, and hence the book still has a place in modern society. *(Nolin Ho, 18-O3)*	Can benefit from a clearer comparison against digital media Effective example for this question, drawing on knowledge of real books Can be developed to show more clearly why digital media does not measure up

8   How effective are international efforts to ease the problem of global hunger?

This essay's strength is its provision of points that goes beyond simple listing - each paragraph attempts to provide pertinent insights on each factor. However, the student should go further when it comes to evaluating the counter-arguments and tell the reader why efforts to combat hunger must be prioritised.

Have you ever gone to bed hungry? Millions of people around the world do so every single day. Global hunger is an issue of paramount significance today. Multitudes of people currently face the risk of an insufficient or inadequate food supply due to the global scarcity of food. Growing up hungry also poses negative effects that last a lifetime. Hence, it is crucial to address the matter as there will be dire consequences if the necessary actions are not taken. Many organisations are attempting to alleviate the situation. However, not all their efforts produce the desired impacts. Most international efforts made by organisations have successfully reached the people suffering from global hunger and made a lasting impact to improve the situation. However, there are some cases where the organisations encounter complications, preventing aid from getting to the intended audience.	Significance of discussion is raised Key issue is recognised but not developed further
International efforts from organisations have helped ease the problem of global hunger as they empower and guide those suffering from hunger to find ways to help themselves and support their families for the long-term. They are effective in helping ease the problem of global hunger as the organisations are exploring new and innovative methods to make a positive impact on the situation. Through the use of technology, long-term impacts that will truly help alleviate the problem in many countries are brought about. With such efforts, there is a decrease in dependency of direct food aid by the people and they are able to produce their own and sustain themselves. For example, the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (FAO) and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) teamed up to design a mobile app to help milk processors in Kazakhstan geo-locate current and potential raw milk suppliers. Since the majority of them are small farms or family farmers, this application enables them to have more effective means of production and improved livelihood, which in turn helps them in easing hunger. In another instance, the Aga Khan Foundation aims to provide solutions for issues such as food security and global hunger through international efforts as well. The organisation supports farmers and farming communities in various parts of the world, including America and India, through technical assistance on machinery as well as farming assistance, helping them increase their productivity which in turn improves their means of livelihood. Hence, by enabling the poor to improve their means of livelihood, international efforts of the organisations can be highly effective as these positive effects are retained for the long-run. They are able to help those suffering from hunger to find a long-term solution to ease their suffering. Therefore, through the introduction of technological advancements to those suffering from hunger in these ways, the organisations are able to develop effective means through their international efforts to ease global hunger.	Links unclear Shows understanding of the issue of dependency, but this has not been introduced properly yet Links to sustainability unclear The synthesis should focus on explaining why long-term solutions are effective
International efforts from organisations have also helped ease the problem of global hunger due to enhanced financial capabilities and outreach. Some organisations focus on spreading the message about global hunger and raising awareness about it, which would in turn encourage more people in developed countries to donate money to help those suffering. These efforts are effective they help advocate for those suffering from hunger on a world-wide scale, enabling more support and aid to be given to them. Through global advocacy, the increased awareness and understanding across the world helps to bring about more monetary aid. This additional support helps organisation acquire more resources and implement more measure to ease the problem faster, speeding up the process. For example, the Hunger Project has a segment of 'global advocacy' which educates people on global	Clear explanation on how awareness leads to increased international efforts

hunger, along with the causes and effects of it. They work in countries all around the world to bring an end to hunger in many different countries such as Peru and India. The organisation not only raises awareness about global hunger, it also allows people to donate to it, enabling them to use the money to support those suffering from hunger. Similarly, the Borgen Project does the same. The active online and community presence they have helps spread awareness such as their blog which brings about attention to the issue internationally. Moreover, the monetary aid they receive through donations is used to advocate to the US Congress about those struggling from global hunger as they believe developed countries should help developing ones. Through the raising of awareness and empowering people from any corner of the world to make a difference, the international efforts are increasing their outreach and financial capabilities of organisations to ease the problem and alleviate the situation.	Provides further elaboration on the example, does not just stop at awareness to the general public
However, some governments may refuse to cooperate with those providing the aid, and the aid would not be able to reach the people who need it. Instead, they may use the aid for themselves, rather than distributing it to the people. This would also cause unhappiness amongst the people, which may in turn lead to political instability in the nation, worsening social conditions and intensifying the problem rather than easing it.	Qualifying statement provided, but there is overlap with the next point
Despite organisations trying to bring attention to the issue, their efforts are rendered ineffective as political instability in the famine-stricken countries does not allow for the proper distribution of the aid. The impacts that will arise due to the lack of aid reaching the people would then worsen the situation tremendously. However, the international organisation are not the ones at fault for it as the governments are the ones refusing the aid for them, causing their people to continue suffering. For instance, Al-Shabab, the party in power in Somalia, does not allow agencies and non-governmental organisations such as the World Food Program, UNICEF and CARE from entering its area. The party not only threatens the aid workers but tries to prevent and punish refuges who try to cross into Kenya and Ethiopia for aid. Hence, the government's reluctance and insistence in refusing help has worsened the situation. There is an urgency for help, but the help is not received because of the government. Hence the international efforts are ultimately ineffective. Thus, international efforts could make a great deal of difference around the world, but without the governments' cooperation and capacity to do so, it would be incredibly difficult for the aid to reach the people and ease the problem of global hunger.	Needs more elaboration on why aid is refused, and needs to evaluate these reasons against the severity of hunger Important role of governments touched on here
In sum, international efforts have helped to ease the problem of global hunger as they empower those who are suffering. They have also been able to do so due to their enhanced financial capabilities and outreach. However, some efforts fail to reach the people and instead backfire as a result of political instability. Overall, it would appear that there has been progress made over the past few years and the situation of global hunger is slowly improving due to the amount of importance being placed on it. *(Sanchana Gnanasekaran, 18-O4)*	Functional conclusion - a summary of points that could be executed with more style

9   "No politician's reputation can survive the judgement of time." How true is this?

This essay provides good arguments and has fitting examples to explain the main points of the paragraphs. Structurally, improvements can be made for clarity - a thesis statement articulating the response to the absolute nature of the question and the direction of the essay has to be provided, the topic sentences should engage more directly with the question to position the arguments well, and a more complete conclusion can be provided.

Thomas Jefferson once said, "No man will ever carry out of the Presidency the reputation which carried him into it." [This]implies that a politician will start off with a good reputation and end up with a different reputation, a better or worse one, when they retire from their duty. A politician's reputation changes over time, for the better or the worse. Tensions in the stability of a politician's reputation arise due to the breakdown in status quo, [where] politicians should be completely honest and transparent, but in reality, that is not how politics work. These are assumptions that all politicians should have a good reputation and unethical behaviour severely damages their image, should they engage in dishonourable conduct. Their reputation depends on the nature of political rivalries, public opinion in the face of new information or evolving values and the qualities of the politicians themselves. Politicians are elected public officials, and reputation refers to the beliefs or opinions that one holds about them. The function of time is that over time, things can be revealed, and the private lives of politicians will become open to public scrutiny. The societal conditions, criteria, and circumstances for assessing politicians change over time, significantly affecting political reputation for the worse. Yet, there are also universal and constant criteria to judge politicians, preserving political reputation, despite changes in societal conditions and circumstances.	Relevant quote used to explain the conflict A thesis statement should be included to address the absolute statement in the question Ignores the possibility of an enhancement in reputation over time
Admittedly, some politicians may have won the respect of citizens on the basis of their economic, political and social visions for the country but suffer a rapidly tarnishing reputation as their bold plans fail to deliver on actual material outcomes such as job creation, control of inflation, greater income equality, and social stability. Institutions like the government exist to reduce the suffering of people, but when they lack the capacity to adapt and meet the demands and expectations of the people, this widens the gap between the ideal and reality, causing the weakening of institutions. People begin to doubt the capability of politicians and are dissatisfied with them. Very often, we find that elected politicians do not say what is true, but say what the voters want to hear. For example, one of the world's most lauded humanitarians, Nobel Peace Prize laureate and a democracy icon, Aung San Suu Kyi, suffered heavy damage to her reputation because of her incapability to grasp control over the Rohingya crisis. There were even calls for her award to be withdrawn. Therefore, it is true to say that a politician's reputation cannot survive the judgement of time as people lose trust in them when they fail to fulfil their promises to better the country's welfare.	Signposting results in a clearer argument Missing links between reputation of politicians and government Example is chosen and elaborated effectively Unqualified assumption made that politicians will fail to fulfil their promises

Furthermore, new information regarding a politician's life and work, such as the release of classified documents or scandals uncovered by investigative journalists, may lead to public reassessment or even vilification of a previously respected leader, especially if the new information exposes acts of moral or ethical duplicity. There is an acknowledgement that politicians are also human in nature and humans do make mistakes sometimes. Some mistakes made by politicians do not compromise their reputation as the mistakes can be deemed forgivable and do not warrant the public's complete sanction of them. Most political leaders are too self-serving and power-hungry, and even if they do not start out this way, the competitive spirit that fuels their desire to be at the top has a tendency to corrupt their minds, which results in them carrying out underhanded deeds for their own personal gains or self-interests. When politicians lose their ability to conceal these "mistakes", their reputation is in jeopardy as their scandals and undoings are brought to light as time passes. Dishonest politicians often reek of corruption, typically involving bribery and the misuse of authority. When their double-dealing acts are made known to the public, people start to doubt their integrity and lose their respect in them, labelling them as frauds. For example, when Richard Nixon's involvement in the infamous Watergate scandal was revealed to the public, it caused major damage to his reputation, which ultimately led to his fall from grace and resignation. This shows that a politician's reputation cannot survive the judgement of time as time can reveal the true colours of politicians as to whether he cares more about society or his own political immortality, and people question their morality when their mistakes are made public.	Good topic sentence, but should be linked to the passing of time Some logical irregularities in the series of statements More explanation about the means and motive of concealment can help Need to recognise difference between "mistakes" and "wrongdoings" Focus of argument and function of paragraph unclear
Due to the nature and responsibilities which forces the politician to exercise duties that do not aid in keeping a positive image of them in public, it is hence justifiable to say that their reputation cannot survive the judgement of time. For example, when Lee Kuan Yew first became Prime Minister, he was not well-liked as he was radical and ran for non-populist ideas since he was so far-sighted and could imagine a future no one else could see. However, these duties that they assume which may endanger their image and reputation tend to be more accepting in in the public's eye when the results of implementing an unfavourable policy are produced in the long run. The benefits brought by these politicians will surface and enhance the reputation they hold in the long run as people realize that the once strongly disliked policies improved their welfare. This increases public satisfaction towards the politician who took the public's interest into consideration. Their initial bad reputation will change for the better. A true politician with the right heart for the nation will thus survive the changes in public opinion. After half a century, Singapore's gross domestic product per capita was last recorded at 52,000 US dollars in 2016, which was equivalent to 417% of the world's average, as compared to 3,389 US dollars in 1960. Today, Singaporeans are enjoying the fruits of Lee Kuan Yew's visions. Thus, a politician's reputation can survive the judgement of time as the benefits of the implementation of initially politically unpopular policies come to light as time passes.	Develop the argument before bringing in examples, otherwise examples may become unfocused and less relevant. The truth of this statement is also questionable Arguments can be made more coherent
In conclusion, it is true to a large extent that a politician's reputation cannot survive the judgement of time. We are living in a stressful, fast-paced and volatile world, so it is highly unlikely for a politician's reputation to remain stagnant as most are unable to adapt quick enough to the ever-changing needs and wants of the people, and oftentimes dirty or smear their own name with corruption, thus affecting their reputation negatively. *(Kylie Kwek, 18-E2)*	Incomplete conclusion; need to achieve symmetry and completion of the response with the conclusion

10   How important is it for people in your society to retain a sense of tradition?

These two paragraphs, which are an opposing argument and its accompanying rebuttal, demonstrate the understanding and application of the Universal Concept of Beliefs and Values as well as the Enduring Understandings of Change and Continuity. The use of these in the writing results in deeper insight that is relevant to the question, which is in this case is already about belief.	
However, some may insist that retaining tradition is not important and does not benefit the progress of a country or organization in the long run. Satya Nadella, the Chief Executive Officer of Microsoft, once said, "Our industry does not respect tradition. It only respects innovation." This echoes the mindset of the younger generation in Singapore today. There is an ongoing conflict between 'static' tradition and innovation, as well as between modern culture and traditional culture. Modern culture mainly focuses on the changes in different aspects of our lives, viewing change to be beneficial and positive. This leads to the rejection of tradition as they view traditions to be stagnant. In other words, it is the antithesis to progress, going against their belief that changes are essential to the advancement of individuals and society as a whole.	
I disagree with the statement [above] as I believe that tradition is fundamentally subjected to change, and this does not hinder the process of innovating. Retaining a sense of tradition means that core values and beliefs should be transmitted from one generation to the next, albeit through different practices, highlighting how change can occur amongst continuity. While they may be presented as paradoxical concepts, one has to understand that the latter does not imply the lack of the former. Instead, traditions are always subject to continuous interpretation and reinterpretation by both individuals and communities. In fact, some traditions are modified to encourage innovation while transmitting the same core beliefs and values. For example, traditionally, young people are expected to accept what their elders say without a doubt as it is seen as a form of respect. However, in the context of Singapore, the lack of questioning can threaten the process of innovating and slow down the progress of the nation. Hence the tradition has been modified by allowing juniors to express their doubts in a humble and polite manner. Not only does this encourage room for improvement, it retains the core value that juniors should respect their seniors. Retaining traditions does not necessarily mean that we should stick to the same old practices. Rather, it implies that we should use the traditional beliefs and values to our advantage. *(Law Tao Xin, 18-O5)*	Use of universal concept and enduring understandings to develop a rebuttal to the opposing argument

11 **'The key to good health is lifestyle rather than medicine.' How far do you agree?**

Assumptions of questions are questioned and with that, a relevant thesis statement is provided. Good insights and apt examples are provided, especially in the exploration of how good health truly means and the rigorous weighing of the effectiveness of lifestyle and medicine in achieving these various aspects of good health.	

"He who takes medicine but neglects to diet wastes the skill of his doctors." This Chinese proverb suggests that one cannot be healthy if he takes medicine but fails to adopt a healthy lifestyle. Is that a valid assessment? While this stand holds true in the majority of cases, it is an overgeneralisation and fails to account for diseases which can only be treated through medicine. Hence, while I agree that one's lifestyle generally plays a more important role in one's health than medicine, medicine also has an indispensable role in mitigating the effects of a wide range of illnesses, some of which cannot be cured through lifestyle changes. Thus, I believe that there is no single "key" to good health and we cannot remain healthy without a combination of medicine and a good lifestyle.	Need to unpack key ideas: what "lifestyle" and "medicine" may entail
A common argument is that by leading a healthy lifestyle, such as through a balanced diet, regular exercise, avoidance of smoking and drinking and so on, many diseases can be prevented, such as cardiovascular diseases. Hence, these individuals believe that since medicine exists solely to cure diseases after contraction, by the idea of prevention being better than cure, the key to good health lies in one's lifestyle. While I concede that having a healthier lifestyle significantly decreases the risk of contracting diseases, I believe that the perspective is rather myopic as there are many diseases which require medical intervention to treat the illness. For example, lifestyle changes alone cannot cure cancer patients, or those suffering from human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) infections. Instead, it is medicine which can help the patient to survive. In the case of cancer, the current treatment used is a combination of surgery with chemotherapy or radiotherapy. Without medical treatment, cancer patients will almost certainly succumb to the disease. However, with successful medical intervention, lifespans are lengthened and some can even live to a normal lifespan. Hence, I think that lifestyle is not the sole determinant of good health as it cannot treat certain diseases which can be cured by medicine.	Good insight, and good choice to scope the paragraph's discussion to the curing of diseases

Effective comparison of the range of effectiveness of lifestyle and medicine |
| [Consequently], some may argue that the medical breakthroughs of the past century have given rise to a wide range of medical treatments to which we owe our good health. Proponents of this argument suggest that without medicine, we would not have treatments to common ailments such as fevers, allergies, digestive problems, as well as more serious diseases, such as cancer. Medicine can also treat diseases that cannot be cured through healthy lifestyles, as well as hereditary disorders such as Type 1 diabetes, which cannot be prevented. As such, these individuals believe that since we would have significantly shorter lifespans without modern day medicine to help us combat our illnesses, it is medicine which is the key of good health. Once again, while I do concede that we are able to cure our illnesses through medicines, this point of view is superficial as it fails to understand that good health is more than just a lack of symptoms. Achieving good health also involves complete physical, mental, and social well-being. This can only be attained by tackling the root causes of the disease or condition. In the case of cardiovascular disease, one can have life-saving surgery following a heart attack, but he cannot improve his cardiovascular health; he must do so by changing his diet and lifestyle. Another example of medicine's failure to improve health is how antidepressants can temporarily resolve the symptoms of depression without actually improving the health and life of the patient. In addition, long-term use can come with unwanted side effects such as weight gain, infertility and many more. Instead, lifestyle changes such as regular exercise and seeking social support can help reduce the effects of | Signposting helps with the flow of the essay - relating one point to the next

Extent of the types of conditions well-elaborated on, as well as its consequences

Word choice: this is almost impossible to achieve

Definition of "good health" is expanded upon this paragraph

Drawbacks of drug use - comparison between lifestyle and medicine achieved Hedging phrases helps make points |

depression and can even prevent it altogether. Hence, I cannot agree beyond partial concession that medicine is the key determinant of good health, as it is unable to address the root cause of illnesses.	sound less absolute and one-sided
What, then, is the key to good health? I believe that it is rather naïve to claim that either lifestyle or medicine is "the key" to good health as there can be no single key to health. In my opinion, any stance that there is one key determinant of good health fails to understand and account for the wide range of illnesses, each of which requires its own unique treatment. In most cases, a healthy lifestyle is all we need to prevent disease. In the case of cardiovascular disease, it is preventable with regular physical exercise and a healthy, balanced diet. However, if an individual is genetically predisposed to certain conditions, or has a congenital condition, and eventually suffers from them despite a healthy lifestyle, then medicine is crucial to attaining good health. Ultimately, due to the lottery of birth, some are unable to treat their illnesses with lifestyle changes alone. An instance of this is Type 1 diabetes, which cannot be prevented. After the onset of symptoms, the patient must undergo treatment with insulin to survive. Combined with lifestyle changes such as a diabetic diet and regular exercise, the patient is able to live a relatively normal life. Therefore, I strongly believe that while lifestyle changes can be successful in preventing diseases, the importance of medicine in curing them cannot be understated. Hence, the true key to achieve good health is through a combination of lifestyle and medicine.	Assumptions of the questions are questioned

Too absolute - use hedging words to avoid making an absolute, unrefined statement

Repeated example |
| It is clear, then, that it is pointless to claim that there is one sole factor that is the key to good health. On the contrary, the type of disease or condition the individual has determines which combination of lifestyle and medicine should be used to achieve the greatest effect. In my opinion, it is only through understanding how to best utilise both lifestyle changes and current medicine that we can truly attain good health.

(David Ethan Ng, 18-I5) | Useful evaluation of the arguments to form the final response to question |

12   Can mathematics be seen as anything more than a useful tool in everyday life?

This piece is commendable for its logical and persuasive argumentative assertions. The writer displays skill in furnishing relevant quotes and drawing connections between them and the subject matter of mathematics. The essay could be further strengthened with the addition and development of concrete examples to substantiate these argumentative assertions.

What do Sudoku, the 14-15 problem, and Rubik's cubes have in common? All of them are fascinating puzzles that once took the world by storm, and were developed from a peculiar branch of science we call 'mathematics'. For many students and working adults, math brings back tiring school days of endless problems and tests to slog through. For most people, everyday use of math includes no more than monetary exchange and watching the clock. While useful, math seems useless for anything else. However, if viewed from outside a classroom or an office, mathematics is really quite spectacular. Although we typically assume it is mundane and is no more than a means to an end in our everyday lives, I believe mathematics is more than just that. It has an innate, intrinsic beauty, and the driving force behind most of our world. Nearly all of humanity's collective knowledge stems from mathematics – without it, where would we be? Thus, I believe in our everyday lives, mathematics can be seen as more than just a useful tool.	The element of paradox could be strengthened here; otherwise it might seem like a contradiction. Statement of the significance of mathematics --beyond everyday life.
Numerous groundbreaking inventions that helped us advance as a species owe their birth to mathematics. Although not all of these inventions are used in our daily lives, we do feel distant ripple effects from them that help make life less cumbersome. The first moon landing in July 1969 was made possible through a $25.4billion USD space rocket. The necessity of such an [exorbitant] sum may be debatable, but we cannot deny that the advancement in technology from the rocket's construction led to further developments in life support systems and computer communications. This would not be possible without mathematics. If our ancestors never progressed from counting on their fingers to calculating derivatives, it is unlikely we would have progressed as far as we have the past four centuries. Hence, in our everyday lives, we should not just view mathematics as a simple tool to solve minute problems, but learn to appreciate it as the engine driving humanity forward. Being a useful tool requires us to give it proper respect. Having the means to an end is nothing to be scoffed at.	Nuanced statement qualifying the conditions for mathematics' significance. The notion of being nothing more than "just a tool" is subverted here, as the writer points out the importance of a tool.
However, another widely-championed view of mathematics pronounces higher level mathematics in standard education curricula useless and irrelevant. Students have no need of such skills in [the] future, unless they pursue specific occupations. These arguments are not unfounded and should not be ignored. After all, how often do we need to use the Pythagoras' Theorem or calculus when adding up our grocery bill? Nonetheless, consider the purpose of mathematics in schools: it is not taught despite its difficulty, but because of it. Students are trained to be critical and intellectual thinkers, who learn how to think in an orderly, disciplined manner while following formalised and strict logic. Furthermore, the rigour and high demands of the subject encourage higher order thinking and reward perseverance, shaping students into future-ready learners. Thus, mathematics [instils] logical thinking and helps us pull out reserves of mental discipline when in need. In the words of the late Stephen Hawking, "We are just an advanced breed of monkeys of a minor planet of a very average star. But we can understand the Universe. That makes us something very special." Through mathematics, we can make sense of the world around us and act accordingly in an ever-changing environment. Yes, it is a useful tool, and we should respect its vast utilitarian value.	Introduction of opposing argument Concession: acknowledging opposing arguments' merits Reconciliation: the writer defends her stand

Finally, perhaps the greatest beauty of mathematics comes to light when its sole purpose is [none] other than amusement and entertainment. A useful tool it is, but a fun toy it can be too. Some, like John Keats, might find this claim incomprehensible: "Do not all charms fly / At the mere touch of cold philosophy?" To him, there was nothing worse than destroying the innate beauty of nature by methodically analysing and dissecting it. It would have frustrated or tickled Keats to hear that currently, most of our highest level of mathematics are done purely out of mathematicians' [interests] and have no utilitarian function in daily life. In applied mathematics and science, conducting research on something does not destroy its intrinsic beauty. Rather, the added insight adds to our appreciation. In our everyday lives, although we may never fully comprehend the complexity of such advanced math, we can toss in a good dose of appreciation. The intricate spirals of a flower that follow a Fibonacci sequence, elegant buildings constructed with the Golden Ratio guiding the architect's hand, or the precise logic by which your Sudoku puzzle is solved all have something worthy of admiration. As Richard Feynman brilliantly worded it: "[There are] all kinds of interesting questions [that come from a knowledge of] science, [which] only adds to the excitement, the mystery and the awe of a flower. It only adds. I don't understand how it subtracts." Mathematics as an art is no less valuable than mathematics as a tool.	Further clarification required to show disagreement with Keats's words: while Keats claims that analysis destroys the appeal of the subject, the greatest attraction of mathematics stems precisely from a pure interest in doing so Reframing mathematics as an art --beyond being a practical tool
All in all, mathematics can and should rightfully be viewed as more than a useful tool in our everyday lives. Mathematics is essential for advancement of the human race, developing logical thinking, or just amusement and enjoyment. In a world where mathematics is too often seen as the enemy, our beliefs and values of mathematics and its functions (and inverse functions) can channel that. Yes, mathematics is a tool to be valued, so we should not dismiss [it] as only a tool as its utilitarian value is extremely high. It also has the capacity to be more than just a tool, it is valuable in itself. Math may not teach how to add love or subtract hate, but it gives us hope that every problem has a solution. *(Soon Minh, 18-I3)*	Clarification required: who perceives mathematics as the enemy, and why? Pun! Done tastefully, it *counts* towards style.