# NAVIGATE
## Issue #12

# Contents

# Navigate User Guide

**What is Navigate?**

Navigate is a curated collection of essays and responses to the Application Question written by Eunoians like yourselves. In most cases, these pieces have been written under timed conditions, and except for a smidgen of grammatical polishing, they are left as they come. It is our hope that their raw edges, as much as their skilfully crafted facets, will serve as authentic and empowering learning resources. To help you discover these, the Navigate Team provides a preamble containing a broad overview of the strengths and flaws of each piece, as well as annotations to direct you to key features. What we hope you will take away from Navigate is not mere mimicry, but a deeper understanding of how good writing is crafted, and that you will make these skills your own.

**How do I use Navigate?**

While your tutors may use some of these resources in class or direct you to them, much can also be gained from reading them independently. To get the most out of your independent reading, consider the guiding points below.

**What to read**

   ● Not everything! Save time for reading your other packages, the news and opinion articles.
   ● Often it is a good idea to read the essays for the questions which you have attempted or would potentially attempt.

● Scan the preambles for features or parts of writing that you struggle with or wish to strengthen your understanding of.
● The ones which look interesting!

**How to read**

● Read the preamble before you read any text, because it will point out key strengths and areas for improvement that you should keep in mind as you read.
● Be aware of both macro and micro features of the text. You can read closely to notice the details, but you can also read to make sense of the bigger picture. Toggle between these different levels to recognise how the details fit together to make the argument effectively.
● Read actively and make annotations of your own. These can be of:
  ○ Writing strategies
  ○ Good ideas and examples
  ○ Argument development strategies
  ○ Structure and organisation

# List of Essays and AQs
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   ● Not represented

10    Is wealth the best measure of success today?
   ● Pan Haihao, 21-U2

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## 2022 JC2 Preliminary Examinations Paper 2 AQ
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## 2023 JC2 Term 1 Paper 1 Timed Assignment (2019 A Level)
1    How far should countries have relations with others whose human rights record is poor?
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2    To what extent should income equality be a goal in your society?
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   ● Not represented

   4    Consider the view that social media has more influence than politicians.
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5    To what extent is Artificial Intelligence (AI) replacing the role of humans?
   ● Chong Woei Ern, 22-I3

6    'A leader's responsibility should always be to his or her own country, not other nations.' Discuss.
   ● Not represented

7    'Religion is an important part of the lives of young people today.' Consider whether this is true in your society.

● Not represented

8   Does violence in the visual media portray reality or encourage the unacceptable?
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9   Is globalisation to be welcomed or feared today?
            ● Peh Xin Rong, 22-A1

10  Should both parents take equal responsibility for raising their children?
            ● Angie Toh, 22-U1

11  Assess the importance of food within Singaporean culture.
            ● Tee Wan Yu, 22-U4

12  Can fiction teach us anything meaningful about the real world?
            ● Yu Xin Yu, 22-I3

# Essays: 2022 JC2 Prelim Exam Paper 1

## 2    To what extent does social media give power to the undeserving?

*The essay demonstrates keen attention to the keyword 'undeserving' and a good conceptual understanding of the nature of social media. Apt illustrations are offered and concisely explained to effectively support ideas raised. Resequencing the opposing viewpoint earlier in the essay may make for a smoother transition to the conclusion.*

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| The advent of the world wide web in the 1990s paved the way for and allowed for the rapid development and proliferation of social media, which permeates nearly every corner of contemporary society. It has levelled the playing field, allowing laypeople to post their views and ongoings onto the large expanse of the internet for everyone to see if they wish. With this increased opportunity for visibility and exposure, many have tried their luck at finding their own five minutes of fame and many have, indeed, succeeded. The rise of social media-grown celebrities and online influencers in the past decade can attest to this. With this increased attention on those with social media clout, we can see how capturing the attention and clicks of their viewers is a powerful tool in their arsenal. The term "attention economy" describes this, for there is inherent value and power when throngs of people are willing to watch and listen to you and even be swayed by your opinions. Hence, I believe that social media largely gives power to the undeserving except when individuals are using social media for consciousness-raising and not for gaining personal clout. | There is a clear articulation of salient characteristics of social media and reasons for the stand.

There is a brief mention of the opposing perspective in the last line ('…except when…'). However, a little more attention to explaining this 'consciousness raising' and that it is outweighed by fame-seeking will enhance the introduction by more clearly showing why the question is debatable. |
| Social media is largely partial to content that is polarising because those are the ones that will capture the most attention and so some individuals will seek to exploit this characteristic, gaining social media fame when they do not deserve it. Social media firms such as Tiktok, Instagram, Facebook and Twitter are profit-driven at their core and will seek to develop and implement algorithms that will keep users on their sites for as long as possible since capturing our attention and collecting our data is how they turn a profit. Nobody will pay too much mind to content or headlines they are mild and neutral but surely people will be outraged at viewpoints they find highly offensive, many will then take it upon themselves to react to these content and posts, reposting it whilst providing commentary denouncing it, allowing it to reach even more people. Creators have seen this as an opportunity, putting out highly polarising and divisive content as the algorithm does its job, recommending it to more people once it tracks that influx of users engaging with it. A prime example of this is the recent rise in popularity of Andrew Tate. He is a professional kickboxer, with a large following on social media site TikTok with many videos amassing millions of views where he expresses his misogynistic and generally highly offensive and polarising opinions. The extent of his popularity extends beyond the sphere of TikTok as he boasts having more searches on the Google search engine than the likes of Donald Trump and Kim Kardashian in the month of July this year. Through his social media acumen and a marketing team backing him, he was able to rise to infamy and had a large audience, many of which young and impressionable, be swayed by his discriminatory views online. Although he was recently banned by many social media sites such as Instagram, it was too little, too late and he was already able to make a mark. When the phrase "no publicity is bad publicity" holds true in terms of gaining social media clout, those who do not deserve the power of fame are able to gain it through social media. | A strong point to start off with, and one that shows good conceptual understanding of the nature of social media.

It will help to be more accurate about the claim that firms are using data to 'turn a profit': data and attention are what allows them to raise <u>revenue</u> (this is not the same as 'profit') by making them appealing to advertisers. In addition, it will help to link how FIRMS' revenue raising influences CREATORS' content. Is it, for instance, because creators get a share of this revenue? Or about creators themselves being appealing to brands and advertisers?

Some balance offered.

Links back to the question |

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| Social media has given a disproportionate amount of power to those who do not have the talent or competency to justify it. Research findings show that short-form videos are causing our attention spans to rapidly deteriorate and parents complain that children are no longer content with regular playtime activities and have to be constantly stimulated with an iPad in front of them, playing Youtube videos. It is no secret that social media is making us more impatient and more enthralled by usual stimuli. Often, this means that a large amount of our attention and adoration goes to the beautiful and the aesthetic on social media, which includes people, as we "vote" with our likes. This can be regarded as "lookism" a form of discrimination against those who do not look visually appealing as we turn our heads to the "pretty" and the "hot" on social media. Those who receive such attention on social media may then be offered even more opportunities like to star in movies, sign with record label companies or to walk on runways. Although we cannot generalise and claim that all those who are given these opportunities through social media are undeserving, we cannot deny that many of them are, especially when we consider that social media has a reputation of being considerably one-dimensional. It is true that many celebrities before the age of social media have gained their fame through their looks but, now, we see an increase in numbers of those with fame where the only thing that they have to boost are their looks. Thus, social media gives power to those who look good and are mostly undeserving on other merits. | Clear topic sentence that signals a distinct point that answers the question.<br><br>Stating where these research findings are from will enhance credibility.<br><br>Insightful observation about the broader impact of social media content on consumers. This discussion of how we consume content complements the preceding discussion of the production of content well.<br><br>Balance is evident here; expanding on the 'one-dimensional' idea will help explain why the writer draws this conclusion. |
| However, although there are many instances where individuals are undeserving of the attention, opportunity and power they access through social media, social media still has moments of utility when it gives voice to grassroot movements and awareness-raising initiatives. This was evident in the prominent exposé on Harvey Weinstein in 2017, where multiple women came forward to accuse him of sexual harassment, sparking the MeToo movement. Many victims of sexual assault and sexual misconduct posted their stories on social media with the hashtag #MeToo, encouraging more to come forward and share their stories, raising awareness about a pertinent issue and starting conversations in order to enact change. In a similar vein, the wide reach and fast dissemination of information that social media provides allowed a couple to crowd-fund their son's gene therapy treatment for a rare and chronic disease. The treatment had to be administered soon and cost millions of dollars and so they turned to social media, hoping that the collective power and empathy of netizens would be able to save their child and they were not misguided in their faith for in the end, the social media crowd did pull through, successfully raising millions of dollars. Thus social media gives voices to those who need help to raise awareness. | Clear concession that offers balance without detracting from the stand.<br><br>You could consider sequencing this idea earlier in the essay for a cleaner transition to the conclusion. Staring with this idea that there is the capacity to give power to the deserving but going on to argue that this is outweighed by the undeserving because of the nature of algorithms and consumption patterns will enhance cogency. |
| Ultimately social media is a tool that is to be used with discernment and sound judgement. It gives a voice to those we normally do not hear from but it has unique features which, in the wrong and undeserving hands, possess the power to do great damage.<br><br>*(Gianna Sun Tianqi, 21-U6)* | A clear and adequate, if rather abrupt, conclusion. It is also questionable if 'great damage' was really demonstrated above? Undeserving doesn't necessarily mean destructive. |

## 3    Is formal education still needed when technology has made knowledge widely accessible?

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| *This is a well-balanced essay and there is a thoughtful exploration of the varied functions of formal education beyond mere knowledge acquisition. Thoughtful evaluation of the assumptions underpinning the question was evident. Some aspects of the reasoning could be better explained, but in general, this was a strong response. The effective use of signposts enhanced coherence.* | |
| As a result of rapid technological advancements in recent years, a plethora of websites that allow users to attend courses online have emerged. The credentials earned from these courses can even be used as credentials in some schools. Indeed, with technology, all our queries are just one search away, as technology has caused knowledge to be easily accessible for large numbers of people around the world, causing some to believe that formal education is no longer needed as it was in the past. They argue that the main purpose of formal education is to instil knowledge, which many online platforms can already do easily. However, I believe that this argument is flawed as the ideals of using technology to learn new knowledge may not be realised in reality. Furthermore, formal education serves many other purposes which are important to the development of an individual, such as instilling the right values and providing them with opportunities to develop 21 st century competencies. Thus, I strongly believe that formal education is still needed even when technology has made information widely accessible. | Context directly relevant to issues in the question articulated.<br><br>Clear outline of opposing perspective, the writer's perspective and reasons for the writer's stand.<br><br>An effective and concise introduction that shows a keen awareness of issues in the question and key terms! |
| Opponents of this view who doubt the value of formal education when technology has made information widely accessible assert that the main purpose of formal education, which is to provide students with academic knowledge to prepare them to contribute to society, has been replaced by technology. A plethora of online education platforms such as Khan Academy have emerged in recent years, which covers the entire American school syllabus from first grade to twelfth grade. Given the generally high Internet penetration rate in a first world country like America, many students from all across the country are able to gain access to such educational resources online. There are even educational worksheets and games available, just like in formal education to check and fill the gaps of knowledge for students. Furthermore, with the development of artificial intelligence that has allowed machines to provide instantaneous and even personalised information tailored to students to tailor to their individual learning needs, one can be equipped with knowledge that was once picked up in formal education. Thus, such people posit that formal education is no longer needed when technology has made knowledge widely accessible. | That an opposing perspective is being discussed is clearly signposted here and, importantly, in the final sentence.<br><br>Development of the idea shows good awareness of reasons for this perspective; relevant examples raised. |
| However, I believe this argument is flawed in the assumption that all students who would have gone through formal education are able to use technology wisely and responsibly, solely for the purpose of acquiring information. While in theory, admittedly, technology is able to make knowledge more widely available and accessible, in practice, there are many problematic issues | Clear signposting of a rebuttal or counter-argument to the above opposing perspective. |

that stem from the use of technology. Firstly, while there is much information online, there is also a lot of false information. Especially for students who have only just started education, many lack the digital literacy skills to discern truthful and false information. This may cause them to be equipped with knowledge that is incorrect, which may be detrimental in the long term. For example, online platforms like Quora allow people to post their queries and others can 'comment' to provide the answers. While some responses may indeed be people with deep knowledge in the field who can provide accurate information, it would be naïve to think that all would do so. For students who may not understand the importance of fact-checking and who simply accept everything on the Internet as true, they may receive a lot of false and conflicting education, which may ultimately result in less proficiency in subject mastery, which runs contrary to the aims of formal education to produce adept learners skilled in certain subjects. Formal education, however, ensures that all knowledge is verified and curated by experts first. Furthermore, this argument assumes that technology will be used responsibly, solely for acquiring knowledge. In reality, however, this is unlikely to hold true. Unlike in formal education settings where there is someone to supervise

what students are doing, to ensure that none engage with dangerous information, such supervision is lacking in the use of technology, especially when a child's parents are both out of the house and are unable to supervise their youth. The lax regulations by social media companies such as Youtube also make it easy for young adults, who tend to be very skilled at using technology, to get around regulations such as age restrictions and access inappropriate content, which can result in harmful development of a child's character especially after prolonged exposure to inappropriate content. For example, the shooter in the Buffalo, New York supermarket shooting first became inwardly radicalised as he was extremely bored during the covid-19 lockdown, when schools were using online modes of learning and he was unable to go to his high school. With much free time on his hands, he stumbled across online forums like 4chan which spread white supremacist ideologies. In contrast, formal education is a place for many after school activities like clubs and societies that can positively occupy one's time, and regulate the harmful content a student accesses for learning, thus providing more positive outcomes for a child. Thus, these flawed assumptions that students will use technology wisely for acquiring knowledge continue to render formal education necessary.

*Insightful theory-reality evaluation of the assumption that anyone can learn adequately online.*

*Balance evident in the analysis.*

*Reasoning is thoroughly explained and well-illustrated. Apt signposting like 'Firstly', 'Furthermore' enhances coherence.*

*Clear link back to the point discussed and the question.*

In addition, the view that the purpose of formal education is for acquiring knowledge is myopic as formal education for a child is not simply about acquiring knowledge, which indeed technology can readily provide. It is also about developing one's moral compass and instilling the right values in them so that in the long term, they will develop the ideal values that develop a civil society. Especially at a young age when children are impressionable and easily influenced, both parents and the government would want to ensure that the young generation are growing up with the right values so that society will become a safer place. While technology has made academic knowledge widely accessible, the same cannot be said about knowledge about morals and ethics. Furthermore, young and impressionable youth may be easily influenced with the wrong set of ideas about what is right and wrong. Unlike technology where there are only machines and algorithms at work to mark answers, formal education has educators who have been trained on how to empathise with an individual and shape their view of the world. An individual's perception of right and wrong can be so specific that they require a person to understand them and their unique situation in order to cater to their needs. For example, schools in Singapore must provide mandatory Character and Citizenship Education (CCE) as part of their curriculum to shape one's moral compass from a young age. Students are given examples of different scenarios, are tasked with discussing how to react appropriately and there is a trained educator to immediately correct one's perception if they are flawed. The curricula in formal education are designed specifically to enable such outcomes, given that the materials have been designed in consultation with experts in the field of child development, enabling a more holistic programme to be offered. Furthermore, formal education is a fertile ground for character building as it allows students to interact with others which can help them know how to react when they get into conflict, or learn that there are consequences for breaking rules, all under supervision. Simply using technology cannot provide such experiences, and will develop cold and skewed individuals.

*Insightful point - it will be better to remove the concession 'which indeed technology can readily provide' given that the paragraph above showed that making information available is different to making knowledge acquisition easier.*

*Thoughtful analysis of the point being particularly pertinent to younger children and youth.*

*This is a sound point; however, to better make the case the technology cannot replace formal education, we may want to explore how it is not merely the creation of curricula (as this can be uploaded online), but the mediated conversations in class or connections built with peers and teachers that are difficult to replicate online or through technology.*

Finally, despite technology making information widely accessible, it is unable to provide the opportunities that formal education can provide, to develop 21st century competencies, which are essential for an individual to thrive in today's volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous (VUCA) world. In a world where changes are happening rapidly as a result of technology, it has never been more essential for students to have skills such as critical thinking, creativity and problem solving skills. In fact, things are changing so rapidly that some knowledge learned since young may become obsolete when students enter the workforce. This thus means that education should not merely be concerned about acquiring knowledge, but about providing opportunities for students to have the skills that they will be able to carry with them for life, many of which technology cannot provide. Formal education involves a curriculum that has been specifically curated by experts about how to best achieve the learning outcomes for a child. Many projects and programmes implemented in schools have been designed with the intention of developing particular skills in a child. In contrast, technology merely is concerned with providing the knowledge, and not how users acquire them. In formal education, for example, students from a young age have the opportunities to go on experiential learning journeys to see how the knowledge they learn in school is relevant in real life. Children are often filled with wonder and amazement as they can see firsthand the impacts of what they study in school. Many education systems around the world also have exchange programmes to facilitate cross-cultural exchanges with students from different backgrounds and develop communication skills when interacting with those different from them. These involve exchanges among the formal schools system and cannot be provided by technology. Furthermore, formal education systems often provide opportunities for leadership, where students are able to collaborate and learn

*Sound point, clearly articulated so that it directly addresses the question.*

*Reasoning clearly explained, showing good conceptual understanding of the purpose of education and the context of the modern world.*

*This idea that technology is not concerned with how users acquire knowledge or skills may benefit from greater elaboration / examination. Is this necessarily the case?*

| how to lead others, developing skills like communication and problem solving. Such opportunities are invaluable yet cannot be provided by technology, thus formal education is still necessary. | Experiential learning is a useful way to explore this development of skills such that it is distinct from the point above and also something technology (at least for now) cannot replace. |
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| In conclusion, the purpose of formal education is much more than instilling knowledge in students. It involves the holistic development of the individual by instilling the correct values in them and developing the necessary skills needed to thrive in today's world. While education systems may use technology to enhance the outcomes of acquiring knowledge, they do not render them unnecessary.<br><br>*(Peh Ting Xuan, 21-U6)* | Sound reiteration of key issues discussed and the stand; the idea in the last sentence about technology enhancing formal education is thoughtful and could have been discussed in the essay as well . |

## 4    'Genuine social change lies in the hands of citizens, not the government.' Discuss.

*This is a nuanced response that consistently lays out a basis of comparison in each of its arguments. That said, this comparison is not always extended throughout the explanation of the paragraph. It is also important to note that at the end of the day, this is a comparative question that requires the candidate to take a distinct stand on who is more able to enact genuine social change. This essay lacks that clarity and tends to jump from one stakeholder to the other, without directly answering the question. While it is good to question the dichotomy of an essay question, that would be better suited in the conclusion. A straightforward response to the question is still essential, especially in the introduction.*

| Should genuine social change lie in the hands of the citizens or the government? Such is the conundrum which has plagued many politicians and debaters for decades. On one hand, some argue that citizens possess greater power to enact genuine social change, more so than the government, as the power of the masses and their sheer number would greatly outweigh the government's power in enacting change. However, the other side of the argument would be that governments have a greater influence over genuine social change than the citizens as the government, especially those in a democracy, have greater power, authority and resources than its citizens to enact and enforce genuine social change. While both sides of the debate present very promising and valid arguments, such a false dichotomy between the power to enact social change only lying with either party is extremely parochial and narrow. Hence, I am of the view that genuine social change needs to be a joint enterprise between both the government and its citizens. | Rather than starting the essay by repeating the question, some sort of hook or unpacking of context would have been a little less abrupt.<br><br>While it is good to acknowledge that issues are not always binary, **the question requires you to take a clear stand**. A statement like this would fit better in the conclusion. |
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| Firstly, genuine social change lies in the hands of the citizens and not the government as by sheer numbers, the citizens would greatly outnumber the government. Thus, if the citizens are united and band together for a social cause, the effects that the citizens can have on genuine social change would easily surpass that of the government. It is a common belief that there is power in the masses which can often be observed by thousands of people marching the streets to advocate for social change during protests. A case in point would be in the wake of a mass shooting incident at a high school in Florida in 2018, where 800,000 people stormed the streets to push for more stringent regulations on firearms. As a result of the protests, Florida raised the legal age for firearms ownership from 18 to 21 years old later that year. They have also extended the waiting period for detailed background checks to be conducted on prospective firearms owners. In a similar vein, the Black Lives Matter (BLM) protests in 2020, which were fueled by the death of George Floyd in an incident with the police, saw thousands of people flocking to the streets to push for African Americans' right to live and to defund the police as a results of the recent spate of police brutality in America. These protests eventually led to the incarceration of Minneapolis police cop Derek Chauvin who was responsible for George Floyd's death and many US states slashing their fundings for the police. Both examples aptly exemplify how the power the masses hold is able to generate sufficient pressure on those in higher authority to enact genuine social change in favour of the citizens. However, the argument lies on the premise that all citizens are undivided and united for a single cause when in reality, many groups of people in society possess differing beliefs. In a society where the people are divided, this would render the efforts of the citizens pushing for genuine social change to be less effective. In that case, the government may have to assume the responsibility to unite the people or settle their disputes in order to achieve genuine social change. Going back to the example of BLM, while many had bonded together in solidarity to show their support for African American rights, there were also people who were storming the streets in support of the police. These protests were a part of the Blue Lives Matter movement. Hence, genuine social change can be more effective when it lies in the hands of the citizens and not the government, only when citizens are united for a single cause. | Basis of comparison (magnitude) defined clearly from the start.<br><br>While the effectiveness of the large number of citizens has been explained through the examples, the inability of the government to incite such social change was not touched on.<br><br>Good attempt at addressing the absolute nature of the question by providing a condition under which it would be citizens, not governments. |
| However, on the flip side of the argument, the soft power of the masses does fall short of the hard power that the government is able to wield to enact more effective genuine social change than the citizens due to their power and authority. In a democratic government, the fairly chosen government has been given the authority to represent its people by enforcing regulations and legislations. These legislations often bear greater weight than the citizens' efforts as they have tangible consequences such as ending up in jail or having to pay a fine. For example, in Singapore, the penal code and Maintenance of Racial Harmony Acts reduces instances of racism by criminalising it. These are far more effective than the social justice movements seen on social media, such as Brown Lives Matter, as all citizens of the country are required by law to be respectful and accepting to those of other races. However, this then brings into question how truly genuine social change which is obtained through legislation is. While on the surface, people may appear to be more amicable to their counterparts from other races, they may still harbour racist sentiments in the dark or engage in casual racism and microaggressions which go unnoticed by the law. Furthermore, governments may not always be willing to use their legislative power to enact such changes as some of these social causes are | Again, clear basis of comparison (type of power each stakeholder wields).<br><br>Could afford to explain how it was actually seen to be more effective than these social media movements.<br><br>Good attempt to address the key term of 'genuine'. |

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| diametrically opposed to a government's vested interest or their system of beliefs. A case in point would be Section 377A of the penal code which criminalises sex between men. The Singaporean government has only recently decided to repeal S377A after decades of debates and even so, they constitutionalised the legal definition of marriage as between one man and one woman as LGBTQ+ ideologies run contrary to Singapore's conservative stance. While admittedly, governments may be unwilling to wield their power for genuine social change, it is still undeniable that the government has the upper hand over citizens when passing laws and using their hard power to achieve genuine social change. | Deeper awareness of how change is affected through contrasting the concepts of hard and soft power.<br><br>While some in the LGBTQ+ community may view this as an ideology, this may not represent the views of the entire community. |
| Furthermore, from a pragmatic point of view, governments have the largest proportion of a country's monetary resources while the citizens' monetary contributions would pale in comparison to theirs, so they are in the most ideal position to enact genuine social change as social change can be a very costly issue to solve in our capitalistic society. As capitalistic sentiments govern almost all aspects of our lives, social change is often something which can actually be obtained with a large sum of money. Take the climate cause for instance. At the 2021 United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP26) held at Glasgow, financial institutions and governments contributed a whopping USD$130 trillion while philanthropic donations from citizens and billionaires had only amounted to USD$2.5 billion. Hence, governments are often in a superior position to their citizens as the country's reserves, which only the government and not the citizens are able to tap on, are often the biggest solutions to many of these social issues. | Topic sentence too long, though once again with a basis of comparison.<br><br>Instead of merely stating that a large sum of money is required for genuine social change, it would have been good to explain why it is necessary. The example of philanthropic donations is not the most relevant as well.<br><br>Paragraph not that well developed. |
| However, I believe that only allocating the responsibility to either the government or its citizens is a false dichotomy as only when the efforts of both entities are married together, can genuine social change occur. As mentioned previously, the government is often the one with the legislative power and monetary resources to fund such social changes. Nonetheless, their morals and values may be misplaced and it is thus up to the citizens to guide the government in enacting the social change they wish for and which is beneficial to all. A case in point would be the advocacy for women's rights which has seen major improvements over the past decades all around the world as seen in the legalisation of abortions in 66 countries as a result of the citizens advocating for women's rights to their government. Hence, a top-down approach would simply be too heavy-handed of the government who does not truly empathise with its citizens and understand what genuine social changes have to be made. A bottom-up approach would be much more preferred as it allows for the government to receive more constructive feedback as to where they should allocate resources to better target the social issue. Furthermore, governments' efforts may be ineffective due to uncooperative citizens. Thus, having both governments and citizens work together would ensure a more collaborative and cooperative effort on both parties' ends to ensure that the social change enacted truly targets the root of the issue. | Would this not mean then that it lies more with citizens than the government? Explanation is not really aligned with the argument laid out in the topic sentence. |
| In conclusion, genuine social change can be argued to lie in the hands of either party as both parties have something to contribute to the enacting of genuine social change. The power of the majority lies in the citizens and the legislative authority and abundance of resources lie with the government. Thus, generating the most effective and genuine social change would require us to take the best of both worlds and for both parties to play an equal hand in genuine social change. Thus, genuine social change does not lie solely in the hands of only the citizens or only the government, as it should be the shared responsibility of both parties.<br><br>*(Felicia Yoong Hui Zi, 21-U6)* | Effective conclusion with an attempt to question the assumptions of the question. |

## 6    How effective are international efforts in addressing the wrongdoing of nations?

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| *A consistently relevant essay that demonstrates a keen awareness of the limitations of international efforts and the organisations initiating these. A range of concrete examples showcase a deeper understanding of past and current global events. Another strength in this essay lies in the links it draws between seemingly disparate examples in body paragraph one. While examples help with substantiation, consistency when it comes to ensuring that these relate clearly to the points made is equally important. Well-articulated topic sentences lend to overall coherence, but the assumptions within these could be further unpacked in some paragraphs.* | |
| For the past 77 years, the United States (US) has been the self-anointed rule-writer and enforcer of the rule-based international order. However, as China gains international stature, we are witnessing an increasing bifurcation of nations into two economic blocs – one with the US and one with China. The drawback of a world integrated on the economic side has been particularly evident in the recent breakdown of the global supply chain due to the pandemic. This is further exacerbated by the political costs of integration as the Western world imposed a series of sanctions on Russia, leading to a sharp rise in global commodity prices. This crisis raised the prospect of increased global fragmentation, hence rendering the roles of international organisations and their efforts more crucial in this capricious world. International efforts and organisations have become increasingly prevalent in the past century given the aforementioned context, and the complexity of the global issues we face today. In my opinion, international efforts have grown effete and many are incapable of addressing blunders of nations due to the lack of executive power in the jurisdictions, and institutional failures such as the veto power of the Permanent Five of the United Nation Security Council. | Introduction demonstrates an awareness of global issues that have led to the need for international organisations to intervene. This could be tighter in terms of relevance by selecting events that relate to wrongdoing.<br><br>Clearly articulated stand accompanied by a preview of arguments. |
| Defenders of international efforts may say that the fact that we have not had a third world war is sufficient to prove that international efforts put out by organisations like the UN have been successful in peacekeeping, and hence successful in addressing the tension between global superpowers today to prevent any wrongdoings as an effort to address the mistakes from the previous two world wars. AfterWorld War II, the UN was set up and committed to maintain international peace and security, and has even taken up the role of a mediator in many conflicts. Other examples of international efforts that aid in the prevention of conflicts include the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation's (NATO) effort to impose a series of sanctions on Russia in a bid to impede the Russian aggression in Ukraine. While it is true that the sanctions imposed on Russia have greatly harmed the Russian economy, it is unfair to judge the effectiveness in addressing | Paragraph clearly signposts an opposing argument.<br><br>Effort is put into developing the opposing argument and substantiating it with past and current examples. This demonstrates an |

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<td>the wrongdoing of Russia merely from one perspective. From a different point of view, the US experienced a surge in gas prices soon after the Biden administration imposed sanctions on Russian gas. The high prices then inflamed public feelings as they were already experiencing inflation from the fallout of the pandemic. To resolve this problem, US President Joe Biden conceded and made a visit to Saudi Arabia to ask for more oil supply to lower the gas prices back home. Previously, Biden pledged to make the Saudi Crown Prince Muhammed Bin Salman (MBS), the de facto leader of Saudi Arabia, an "international pariah" due to his involvement in the murder of a US-based journalist who has been a long time critic of the Saudi regime. This illustrates just how easily leaders can act against their own promises, and shows that it is not possible to balance our efforts when trying to address wrongdoings of multiple nations concurrently. While Russia's economy is suffering due to the miscalculation of invading Ukraine and undermining Ukraine's territorial integrity, Saudi Arabia is getting away with the autocratic regime as MBS uses the leverage of Saudi Arabia's rich oil supply.</td>
<td>engagement with the opposing view.

Insight is shown through this paragraph recognising how world events do not exist in silos. Rather, it recognises how international efforts have spillover effects on other situations.

Paragraph draws on pertinent details in the examples selected and ties these together with a clear argument.</td>
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<td>International efforts can be futile when its enforcers (such as international organisations) do not have the executive power in the jurisdictions required to take concrete action with their proposal. The lack of sway is often the reason why international efforts like the Budapest Memorandum and Five Point Consensus cannot be followed through. The Budapest Memorandum was an international effort by the Russian Federation, the United States and the United Kingdom to persuade Ukraine, Belarus and Kazakhstan to give up their nuclear weapons as a quid pro quo for protection from the three global superpowers. Despite this international effort to address the wrongdoing of Ukraine for developing nuclear programmes (third largest nuclear arsenal in the world at that time) which is prohibited under international law and could bring about widespread destruction, Russian President Vladimir Putin has flagrantly repudiated the promises made by his predecessors. So far, there are no punishments or punitive measures on Russia for the specific act of breaking its political agreement made in the Budapest memorandum. Similarly, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) has been unable to stop the atrocities in Myanmar as evidenced by the failure of the Five Point Consensus as the Myanmar military blatantly disregards the terms they have agreed to. In both of the examples, the lack of authority of the enforcer (signatory countries and ASEAN) has led to the failure of international efforts to achieve its desired outcome. From a consequentialist perspective, both of the international efforts have failed to
address the subjective wrongdoings of the countries involved as they have not achieved what the goals were set out to be. While the international effort to address the proliferation of nuclear weapons was "achieved" in Ukraine, Belarus and Kazakhstan, the cost of it is that the Kremlin has undermined its own terms and invaded Ukraine. In the long run, the invasion in Ukraine has led many to question the credibility of international security assurances like the Budapest Memorandum. Some nations, such as Japan, have even started considering the development of nuclear programmes to serve as a deterrent. Similarly, the failure of the Five Point Consensus has threatened ASEAN's global credibility. Therefore, international efforts are inept in addressing the wrongdoings of nations as its lack of control circumscribes it from ensuring that its target nations fully follow through its terms.</td>
<td>Relevant and clearly expressed topic sentence.

While a salient point is made about international organisations lacking the power to enforce, this could be further developed by considering why such organisations are unable to do so.

Paragraph relies on extensive knowledge to drive the argument. Examples focus on why international efforts did not work, but clearer links could be made (especially for the Budapest Memorandum) to how international efforts have fallen through due to organisations lacking the power to enforce.</td>
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<td>International efforts can prove to be ineffective in addressing mistakes of nations due to institutional structures within its enforcers (such as international organisations). A prominent example of this is the Permanent 5's veto power in the UN Security Council. While it is justifiable to have the P5 to have the veto power; as they would otherwise not be willing to be members of the UN, it renders the UN ineffective in solving many problems caused by the P5 nations and their allies. We see this manifesting in the UN's failure to stop the wrongdoing of Russia as Russia vetoed a UN resolution that would have called for Russia to withdraw its troops from Ukraine immediately. Due to the institutional power that Russia possesses to veto any resolutions in the UN, the UN has not been effective in enforcing international efforts to stop the catastrophe that is unfolding in Ukraine. Furthermore, this is not a standalone example of the P5 exploiting their veto powers to protect their own interests. There have been countless antecedents of such events occurring in the past. In this regard, the gridlocks in negotiations for international efforts have proved to be detrimental to its effectiveness, hence rendering many of the efforts fruitless.</td>
<td>Another relevant point. As with the previous paragraph, some time could be spent unpacking the assumptions within this topic sentence before jumping into the example.</td>
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<td>In conclusion, while it is true that most international efforts have good intentions of bolstering the development of a specific good cause, or to mend the mistakes committed by some nations, the complexity of the systems and structures of many political institutions, and the inherent complexity of international relations have rendered these efforts ineffective as of today. The history of international anarchy and power politics has also proven that this is unlikely to change in the future.

*(Hathaway Goh Yi Qing, 21-U6)*</td>
<td>Functional conclusion that reiterates the points in the essay and highlights the complexities involved in international intervention.</td>
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## 7    Consider the view that money undermines the spirit of sport.

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<tr>
<td colspan="2">*A strong response by a candidate who is clearly well-informed about sport. This is evident from the apt use of examples spanning a range of different types of sport. Clear parameters are drawn around what the 'spirit of sport' entails, and reasons cited are systematically and coherently unpacked.*</td>
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<td>Sport, a humble fixture born from the competitive nature of human beings, has evolved to something much greater than just the display of an individual's athleticism. Sport at its epitome, features different parties, be it individuals or teams united as one, each possessing copious amounts of talent and gains through hard work, competing fairly with sportsmanship and chivalry. This is what I believe to be the spirit of sport. However, when an externality such as money is introduced, clashing perspectives ensue. One camp believes that money has undermined the spirit of sport, diluting the very nature of it while the other believes that money enhances the spirit of sport. My stand is with the former as although money has allowed athletes to perform at even higher levels, it not only takes the focus away from the true attributes of competition but also taps on the inherent greedy nature of competitors.</td>
<td>Definition of 'spirit of sport' explained succinctly.

A brief overview of the two competing perspectives given.

Stand is clearly stated with an attempt to show some nuance in the need for money in sport.</td>
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<td>Some believe that with money, the spirit of sport is enhanced as athletes are able to perform at unprecedented high levels. Monetary wealth can undoubtedly lead to improved, more advanced training facilities & technology. Money can also be spent on the research & development in</td>
<td>A clear and relevant topic sentence.</td>
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| Essay | Commentary |
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| areas such as sporting equipment giving athletes an edge over their competition. Proponents of this argument point out that today's athletes are performing better than ever, and no small credit is given to the improved training technology and systems that money has bought. Athletes now have access to technology that provides them with the specific aspect that they need to work on. Motion capturing technology equipped with sensors with pinpoint accuracy can provide athletes with the advanced data they need to take their game to the next level. Sensors like Trackman, provides modern day golfers with crucial data such as club head speed, ball speed, smash factor, accurate to 0.1 mph. This tells the golfer the precise areas he or she needs to work on in order to improve their driving distance and accuracy. All of which cannot be done without money used in not only purchasing of such specialised training aid but also for extensive research put into developing them. Such technology allows athletes to push themselves to the very peak of what is possible for a human to achieve, raising the competitive bar. This not only forces the competition to further hone their skill sets but also redefines the term 'prime'. Athletes are able to compete with greater amounts of skills and talent, further bolstering the performance aspect of the spirit of sport with the help of money. | Elaboration is attempted though more could be written to explain why money can be used to boost the conduct of sport and why this may not undermine the spirit of sport.<br><br>Examples relevant to support the main idea of this paragraph. However, who were the people who believe that money is helpful in sport is not mentioned. |
| However, spending money on such training systems will inevitably shift the main factor of competition away. What once was a competition about who has the greatest sporting talents and gamesmanship has evolved into who has the most amount of money. The technology used to boost the performance of the athletes does not come cheap, making the advantages that come with them only available to the selected few with enough monetary means. This creates an uneven playing field for athletes from different backgrounds, diminishing the equality and fairness in the spirit of sport. Each Trackman system, as mentioned above, costs upwards of USD10,000, limiting its access to golfers without the monetary means. With more money, professional trainers and sport science experts can also be hired, providing athletes with personalised training regiments to boost their performance. Competition will then favour the side with better funding. Sport should be a competition about which party has a higher athletic prowess. However, once that athletic prowess is directly proportional to the amount of money one has, sport then becomes a competition about which party is richer, diluting the spirit of sport. | Clear signposting to signal a rebuttal. Some attempts to explain the dangers of those who have access to more money in sport vs those who do not, and how this ultimately undermines the spirit of sport. |
| Additionally, the introduction of money will tap on the inherently greedy nature of human beings. Besides being utilised for the training & development of athletes, money in sport often acts as an incentive for athletes, be it in the form of a payroll or simply prize money for winning a particular tournament. While healthy competition, in the sense that competitors train extra hard to broaden their chances of obtaining the prize is warranted, too much competition becomes detrimental to the spirit of sport. More often than not, sponsors of sport competitions will place an exorbitant amount of money on the line for the ultimate champion. This will inadvertently trigger the primal greed and over-competitiveness of the athletes. If the moral compass of the athletes is not strong enough, they will resort to unsavoury means such as cheating. This takes away the aspect of sportsmanship and fairness in the spirit of sport. Deer antler sprays and performance enhancing drugs are becoming more prevalent for baseball players looking to get scouted or drafted into a major league team with a sky high payroll. Non competition-conforming racquets used in badminton tournaments are not a rare sight these days. Athletes even resort to bribery of officials and umpires in a bid to obtain more money even if it means sacrificing a small amount of it. The 2003 World Snooker Championship saw Stephen Lee bribing the referee. This not only makes it impossible to win for the opponents but completely downplays the integrity of the competition. Sport then becomes irrelevant as the athletes are showing off their creativity in terms of cheating instead of physical performance. | A systematically developed paragraph that unpacks how money serves as an unhealthy incentive.<br><br>Some attempt to nuance the argument by pointing to the idea of healthy competition.<br><br>Link to too much sponsorship money and greed is well explained.<br><br>Paragraph places heavy emphasis on athletes making the decision to cheat. More often than not, managers, team owners and other stakeholders who have a commercial stake in an athlete's success play a big role in influencing unethical behaviour too. This could be further explored to lend insight to what is already a sound paragraph. |
| In conclusion, although money allows athletes to reach the peak of human performance, it takes away the natural athleticism aspect, as well as the fairness and equality aspect of it, undermining the spirit of sport and its true value. Officials and athletes can work together in an attempt to mitigate the detrimental effects of money on the spirit of sport, re-instilling the actual characteristics of it.<br><br>*(Chen Ding, 21-U2)* | Conclusion is functional. However, it could be improved with clearer personal voice on the future of sport and money. |

## 8    To what extent is protecting privacy viable today?

| Essay | Commentary |
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| *On the whole a commendable attempt, with detailed development not only of the challenges to privacy today, but also the measures available to us to counter the loss of privacy. While the full extent of the powers of the latter is not covered, there's enough for a reasonably well-informed evaluation that is fully aware of the dynamic and evolving nature of the problem. The main gripe for this essay is that the discussion often lumps privacy and data security together, when it should focus more squarely on privacy. All in all, ideas are decently well communicated, with some range of expression, though this could be further widened. Structure was fairly effective.* | |
| In today's world, technology has taken up a huge part of our lives and we are constantly surrounded by technology. Undeniably, technology has brought us much convenience. However, it is also due to this very fact that our privacy is very much invaded. Before diving deeper into this topic, it is important to note that privacy includes but is not limited to our personal data such as our medical reports, NRIC, passport numbers and our whereabouts. Technology is one of the major reasons as to why I largely disagree that protecting privacy is viable today, although there are other contributing factors such as the societal changes of an economy. | Decent awareness of contextual factors that challenge privacy today, but not much on what is being done or can be done to protect one's privacy. |
| Critics may argue that protecting privacy is viable today given the advancements in technology. Advancements in technology today have allowed for many breakthroughs in the development of online systems such that stakeholders have been able to use new discoveries and information to develop more advanced systems that can fight against online hackers who aspire to access and exploit the privacy of others. A prime example would be the improvements in Fintech's security systems. Fintech has developed a system that splits the algorithmic 'keys' into four different 'keys'. Should online hackers obtain parts of a 'key' and try to hack into their system, they will require the other 'keys' to be able to do so. Obtaining and keying in four' keys' at the same time | Ok, measures available for privacy protection<br><br>This seems to be more about security than privacy though, but detailed understanding shown. |

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| is highly unlikely to happen, hence this helps companies to protect and fight against online hackers. However, with the advancements in technology bringing about advancements in security systems, it is also accompanied by improvements in the skills and knowledge of hackers. I firmly believe that hackers will always be able to outperform developers. This is because when hackers try to access the personal data of others, they are able to attack from any and every angle. On the other hand, it is almost impossible for companies to develop a system that is completely flawless and has no loopholes. Consider how Singapore places so much emphasis on internet security and is very much known to be highly advanced and engaged in its online security systems. Yet, it is still so vulnerable to privacy breaches. This is evident from the recent breach in medical data where the personal info of 1.5 million patients were stolen, with one even including information of our prime minister. This just goes to show how difficult it is to protect privacy today, given that hackers are so highly skilled and are constantly improving alongside technology. It is just a matter of time before hackers learn of ways to breach even the strongest security system. Hence, I stand by my view and largely disagree that protecting privacy is viable today. | Assessment of viability<br><br>Good use of illustration to show that even supposedly secure systems can be threatened<br><br>While the para seems to focus on data security at first, links at the end are drawn to privacy and there is good awareness of the dynamic and developing nature of both the threats and the response, resulting in effective evaluation. |
| On top of that, sceptics may also argue that protecting privacy is viable today due to the increasing emphasis on one's privacy, prompting governments around the world to take action by devising policies to help protect their citizens' privacy. These policies can come in the form of awareness campaigns to raise awareness on how one can protect their own privacy. For instance, the Asia Pacific Privacy Authorities (APPA) holds a Protection Awareness Week (PAW) to teach the public about personal data and security in a bid to help them in protecting their own privacy. With these awareness campaigns, the public will be more knowledgeable about the topic and will know of the precautions to take in order to protect their own privacy. However, these campaigns often do not target the main root causes. Most of the time, despite knowing that their personal data may not be safe, people are still willing to trade their privacy to keep up with the world. In today's fast-paced world, people are constantly trying to keep up with their peers as well as the current affairs in the world. Hence, it is unsurprising that more than half the population in the world has access to social media platforms. However, giving up one's personal information is often, if not always, a prerequisite of obtaining a social media account. Since the world is so interconnected today, not having any social media accounts may mean that one risks falling behind others as they lose out on engagements and interactions with others online which could potentially help them build deeper connections. Hence, I largely disagree that it is viable to protect privacy today. | Odd choice of signpost. Sceptics of the perspective posed in the question would more naturally argue for why protecting privacy is not viable. 'Optimists' might be a more suitable term.<br><br>Why is there increasing emphasis on privacy?<br><br>Use of context to evaluate, but the focus on SM platforms only considers the weakest of policies. There are also things like regulations that govern the misuse of collected personal data. Evaluation could be more nuanced and aware of the real possibilities of protecting privacy |
| Furthermore, protecting privacy is not viable today as our lives are so intertwined with the use of technology. Technology is present in almost every aspect of our lives and is widely used as solutions to many pressing issues in the world. One example would be the widespread use of surveillance cameras in many countries, especially Singapore. Surveillance cameras are often used to prevent crimes such as theft or to identify any suspicious beings or objects. However, given that technology is so vulnerable to hacking, if these videotapes land in the wrong hands, the whereabouts of a person can be easily tracked, invading his or her privacy. Perhaps, an example more relevant to most will be the wide usage of handphones. The market of handphones is dominated by two companies, namely Apple and Samsung which use different softwares but are ultimately still very similar to each other. Should a hacker be able to breach the security system of one company, it is highly likely that he will be able to do so for the other companies. This would mean that billions of people risk their personal data being exploited since many use the same brands of mobile phones. Moreover, improvements made to mobile phones allow mobile phones to be so powerful such that one can easily track the location of others or spy on others via the camera feature of mobile phones. For instance, the United States government has accused China of collaborating with Huawei, a mobile phone provider, to spy on others via its camera function. This has prompted the US government to ban all congress members from using Huawei as well as companies from working with Huawei. The fact that mobile phones are such powerful devices to exploit one's privacy but yet are also indispensable in today's world makes it extremely difficult to protect one's privacy. Hence I largely disagree that protecting privacy is viable today. | Seems to repeat ideas from previous paragraph<br><br>Is surveillance often this complete?<br><br>Isn't this one means of protecting privacy (security in this case)? Relevant context and consideration of the difficulty of avoiding privacy breaches when the tools for surveillance are not only ubiquitous but embraced by society. |
| In conclusion, I largely disagree that protecting privacy is viable today. Given that we are already so involved with technology, the one tool that is extremely vulnerable towards hacking, it is next to impossible to protect privacy, even with the constant improvements to one's security system. In an increasingly dangerous world where countries are extremely susceptible to terrorist attacks and high crime rates, certain devices used to protect the physical well-being of citizens cannot be replaced. Hence, even in the long run, I believe that it is highly unlikely that we will be able to guard our privacy against highly-skilled criminals. However, this does not mean that one should give up on developing solutions to protect the privacy of others as the improvements made to systems can still serve as a barrier to potential criminals that can potentially reduce the privacy exploited to a certain extent.<br><br>*(Elyse Chua Jia Xuan, 21-O5)* | Coherent closure, with key ideas clearly raised and reinforced. |

## 10    Is wealth the best measure of success today?

*Essay is written in a cogent and coherent manner with good use of connectors to indicate flow of thought. The chain of reasoning is easy to follow. The comparative term 'best' was dealt with reasonably well with a consistent attempt to evaluate and compare wealth against other valid options as a way of measuring success. While a coherently developed chain of reasoning is key to a sound argument, concrete examples in the form of relevant current trends or events would help substantiate this and make the arguments more convincing.*

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| "Sometimes all you need is a billion dollars." Throughout our shared history, human kind have always been obsessed over how to make ourselves richer. Our grandparents always nag at us to work harder, and to make more money when we grow up so that we can be more successful. Societies' equates wealth to status. Owning a car, a house and a surplus of disposable income is | Interesting use of quotation to start the introduction. |

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| a universal attribute of those who have "made it" in life. There is no doubt that wealth is one of the most commonly used metrics to measure one's success, especially in today's materialistic modern world. However, compared to one's education level or one's morals, does the tried and tested metric of wealth trump all other measurements? I believe the answer is yes as wealth is a more objective measure, as well as a more practical measure compared to its competition. | Clear stand given. Some attempt to present an overview of arguments of both perspectives. |
| Wealth is a measure of success because it allows us to have the capabilities to buy what we want and thus grants us financial freedom. In the past, being wealthy meant that you could make life comfortable for yourself and those around you; it meant that you could have more than those less fortunate. Today, the same still applies but with an added benefit; it frees you from the rat race that others are locked in. Achievements in technology have turned our world into one that surges forward at breakneck pace, scooping up everyone in its wake, willing or not. As such, people rarely have the chance to stop and rest, actually having to work even when away from the workplace. In this world, a respite suddenly becomes invaluable and those who have that become venerated amongst people. This respite would be the financial freedom granted by possessing wealth. By measuring the networth of a person, we can easily convert the "success" of a person into an easily understandable value that is cooperative to objective analysis and comparisons. | Clear PEEL structure demonstrated. Some use of past vs present to build elaboration.<br><br>Example could be more specific - we can refer to statistics on the high cost of living in developed countries, which requires people to have a high salary level to maintain the required standard of living in a developed nation. |
| Some people however argue that education is a better measure of success. They argue that "knowledge is power" and those who obtain higher education are better at understanding the world. They claim that wealth without knowledge and wisdom backing it could not be considered as success as people would remain ignorant. Education is also an easily quantifiable metric. One can simply look at the degree one has obtained or the grade they went to to get a similarly objective value for education. While it is true that education is important and it is also easily measured, I believe that wealth is still a better measure simply because it is more practical. Success is measured across one's expansive lifetime. Most people will stop receiving any form of formal education after they get their doctorate, which will likely come before 30. How do you measure one's success in their entire life after they have reached the limit barely at the halfway mark of their life? Our lives and success do not peak when we leave school, but measuring success by education can only be objective until that point. However, wealth does not have this issue. There is no limit to one's wealth and thus it can be used across one's entire life, becoming a much more practical metric for comparisons. | Successful attempt to compare education vs wealth as a measure of success. Reasons to choose wealth over education clearly elaborated.<br><br>A more concrete example could be given. |
| Apart from education and wealth, one's morals are also a measure of success. In the past, Aristotle argued that a good life is one that is virtuous and in today's context, the same still applies. A moral life and virtuous behaviour is still highly regarded and as such, it is safe to say that a morally upright person would definitely be considered to be a successful one. If a person were to help those in need whenever they could, provide aid to the needy, volunteer actively and serve the community, they would be considered to be successful if one were to use morality as a metric. However, this measurement is subjective as it is difficult to say how many volunteer hours helping a friend to pick up something are worth. There is no way to know just how moral a person is compared to another. Furthermore, there are rarely absolutely "right" or "wrong" decisions in our world. Should a person be considered amoral if they refused to donate to charity so as to provide his family with a better financial life? As such, morality could be fickle at times and its subjectivity renders it as a lesser metric when put against wealth. | Effective comparison between good morals and wealth by stating a clear criteria of comparison using subjective vs objective measure.<br><br>Example could be better substantiated. |
| Although wealth is a seemingly superior metric when compared to education and morality because it is more practical and objective, it is certainly far from perfection. Our lives are complex and factors of success are multifaceted. Even though wealth is the best measure comparatively speaking, it does not tell the full picture of the value that one has generated throughout their life as it only looks at one aspect of it. In the past, before advancements in technology improved the quality of life, this mattered less as wealth meant a more comfortable life in an uncomfortable world, making wealth far more important and success much more one dimensional. However, today the world has changed. Quality of life has improved massively and wealth is not as critical to our very survival anymore. The world has become more comfortable, as well as complex, thus freeing up room in the definition of success and making it less centered on one's wealth. Despite the flaws in the other metrics beyond wealth, they cannot be ignored when considering a person's success today. Simply because morality is subjective does not mean it should be ignored as people increasingly realise that the intangibles of life matter just as much as the tangibles. Education is similarly important even if it is not as practical of a measurement as it protects us from ignorance and lets us sieve out truth in a world where information overload from social media causes selective bias in our views and sway us into extremities. | Some attempt to show nuance by weighing all options to measure success. However, the link to the overall stand can be made clearer. |
| Overall, I believe that wealth is indeed the best measure of success today because it is the most applicable and objective compared to education and morality. However, this does not mean that we discredit or ignore or all other measurements in favour of wealth as success is multifaceted, especially in today's world as success cannot be cast using any singular mould, no matter its quality. Imagine just how confusing our world would be if we only used morality and education to judge our success and ignored wealth.<br><br>*(Pan Haihao, 21-U2)* | Functional conclusion. The conclusion could have been made better if there is an expansion of personal voice in the last sentence. |

# AQs: 2022 JC2 Prelim Exam Paper 2

**In response to 2022 JC2 Preliminary Examinations Paper 2:**

William Damon argues that honesty is important for society while Anna Chui believes that lying is not always bad.

How far do you agree with the opinions expressed in these two passages? Support your answer with examples drawn f own experience and that of your society.

**Response 1**

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| *This AQ response shows a deep analysis of characteristics of Filipino society. Illustration will benefit from greater specificity and a conclusion will enhance the AQ as a whole, but there is a strong focus on requirements, good grasp of terms and issues and very promising evaluation angles as the writer applies the ideas to her society.* | |
| In the context of the Philippines, I am inclined to agree with Damon that honesty is important for the functioning of our democracy. While I do concede that at the individual level, lying may | Stand is balanced and addresses AQ |

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| not always be bad, the psychological impacts of lying on Filipinos are significant, and thus lying may on the whole be less beneficial to them than honesty. | requirements thoroughly. |
| Damon argues that once we stop assuming "an essential commitment to truthfulness" in our society, this would endanger our democracy's ability to govern us. I agree with this in my societal context. The Philippines has a historical distrust in our government and its officials. Due to persistent, rampant corruption and politicians being involved in scandal after scandal, Filipinos are consistently critical of its government. Our politicians who have broken our trust are the starting point to our issue of ineffectual governance that is unable to fully execute plans nationally, leaving Filipinos struggling. The lack of trust Filipinos have in their politicians exacerbates the problem, even if they cannot be blamed for this lack of trust. The lack of trust in the government has led Filipinos to be hesitant to do their part in governance. This looks like widespread tax evasion from businesses since tax collectors demand bribes regardless and business owners do not feel the importance of increasing the government's tax revenue since they fail to be useful anyway. This thus worsens the ability of our democracy to function, where dubious politicians and cautious citizens are unable to cooperate to work towards goals. If politicians were expected to be honest, enforced both culturally and systemically, this would increase effectiveness and transparency, which could potentially rebuild the trust between citizens and the government. However, I do concede that honesty may not necessarily be the most effective solution. The Philippines pre-Duterte had an incredibly free press that acted as a government watchdog, increasing transparency and, thus, one would have hoped, honesty. Even then, the government was still inefficient and citizens still could not trust them. While Damon presents a simple theory, this is far harder to achieve in practice and thus it may be difficult to know whether the "essential commitment to truthfulness" is truly the golden key that solves all our problems. | R - text reference and stand (it will be helpful to state how far you agree) EV - reasoning based on historical context A clearer link to honesty or the lack thereof would strengthen the paragraph (e.g. if it was corruption or a lack of transparency that contributed to ineffectual governance).

EX+EV Thoughtful evaluation based on the understanding that governance is a relationship between leaders and people.

Link to honesty clearly made EV - whether honesty is as simple a solution as it may appear is evaluated. |
| Chui argues that lies, especially well intentioned lies, can bring various benefits including psychological benefits, better perception from others and better relationships with others. In the Philippines, this is not completely true, especially on a psychological level due to our Catholic-based morals. Spanish colonialism led to Catholic missionaries arriving in the Philippines to spread the word and get more people to join the church. Today, the vast majority of Filipinos are Catholic, and Catholic teachings and values pervade our education, culture, and systems. Catholic teachings align with the idea that there are strict moral rules to be followed, for example honesty. One should not lie to others, or commit the sin of omission which is not fully disclosing information. The intensity of the Catholic culture in the Philippines that glorifies having the "fear of God" means that individuals often experience Catholic guilt when they do something against teachings. This creates intense anxiety when people lie, regardless of purpose. The strict moral rules that people are taught to comply with means that deviating in any way causes distress, and increases the harm of lying. While individuals may not always condemn others for lying, especially when out of good intentions, it still causes internal guilt. Furthermore, as a society we have yet to arrive at the discussion that critiques these strict moral codes and the intense fear associated with it. Until we become more aware that there is more nuance to right and wrong, and reject some of the cultural norms and teachings we have grown up with, lying is likely to remain mentally and emotionally taxing to Filipinos and is thus still quite harmful.

*(Guillermo Caryl Kristine Co, 21-E6)* | R - text reference and stand

EV - reasoning based on societal culture

It will help to provide evidence for this claim.

EX - link to dishonesty shows understanding of the claim.

Relevant claim but lacking concrete evidence - including some personal /societal experience with what is taught or what brings about guilt will help.

This final note that a change is needed suggests that you actually agree with Chui because it suggests the adherence to truth is not good. It bears greater examination if this is necessarily true; is guilt associated with lying necessarily bad? Here is where the provision of specific examples lies that prompt guilt may help. |

# Essays: 2023 JC2 Term 1 Paper 1 Timed Assignment (2 Level)

**4        Consider the view that social media has more influence than politicians.**

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| *There is some good understanding of the unique characteristics of politicians and social media which gives them power, and a consistent attempt to compare the kind of power that they each have. While concrete examples are provided, they need to be more consistently explained in a way that illustrates the arguments. The kind of influence that could be wielded could also be better explored. Language use is generally competent, with a good use of varied vocabulary. Work on paragraphing and signposting.* | |
| In January of 2021, hundreds of extreme Trump supporters stormed the US capitol in a protest against the recent US Presidential elections, in which Donald Trump had lost. Later, it was revealed that this event had been premeditatively orchestrated through the use of social media platforms, with Trump allegedly egging on his supporters' actions on his Twitter account. This event has made it evident that both social media and politicians hold power in their hands – power to change people's mindsets, to encourage them to do things and to start monumental trends – over an extremely large group of people. Whilst it is true that politicians are able to provide the authority and trust that social media cannot, I am of the view that social media has greater influence, given how it has proved capable of galvanising people together and led to undeniable changes in society through its unique characteristics. | Good use of a concrete case study to set the context

Make explicit links between authority and trust to wielding influence. |
| Some argue that social media is simply unable to provide the same level of authority and trust that politicians can, and hence does not wield as much power over people. When it comes to making decisions for significant events, people intuitively look towards figures of authority, or | |

those they feel are reliable and capable. Consequently, politicians are generally viewed as the ones in society who should be followed after and listened to, given their qualifications and unique role. As the leaders of the nation, they are thus seen as trustworthy and worthy of their position of influence. On the other hand, social media is a mere platform that simply cannot match up to the human qualities of trustworthiness, nor can it provide a sense of authority. This can largely be attributed to the fact that while many view politicians as a voice for the people to follow, social media is seen as a platform where everybody's voices are allowed to be seen and heard. With the democratisation of the media, people today have the ability to speak out and provide opinions online. Yet, this oversaturation and overconcentration of opinions is precisely what causes social media to lose its credibility. When there exists such an overwhelming level of opinions, the layman is simply unable to discern one from the other, causing the flurry of discourse to lose most of its value. Instead, with the single and uninterrupted voice of an established politician, it makes sense to the people to listen to what he has to say when it comes to important matters of the world, or advice on what to do given the current circumstances. In this way, a politician has far more influence in the final say of things, as they are the reliable figures amongst chaos, not social media. Take for instance the COVID-19 pandemic situation in Singapore, where there were cases of discrimination against the Chinese on social media, mass spreading of fake news, and panic-buying by residents. Against a backdrop of uncertainty, many turned to social media to express their views and emotions, with the panic growing due to the spread of worries online. Although people did so initially, after Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong appeared on national television addressing the situation on the ground, such as by discouraging the panic-buying incidents, Singaporeans listened and complied. Following that, in the next two years of COVID, Singaporeans tuned in to his numerous speeches on COVID-related updates and heeded the government, rather than social media. Eventually, it can be observed how people generally did place much greater faith in the politicians and state rather than the online world.

However, while this may hold true in certain countries, it may not be the case for countries where the level of trust and authority of the politicians is not well-established. Therefore, rather than looking towards politicians for the final say in crucial matters, some citizens may be more inclined towards denouncing the politicians' words and turning towards social media as an alternative outlet. For example, in the USA, although politicians are expected to deal with crises the country faces, such as in matters of gun violence, COVID regulations or inequality, many Americans turn to social media to express opinions and search for like-minded people, rather than relying on their politicians as their main direction.

Given how social media has successfully given a voice to the people, which politicians might fail to, it involves more people on the ground, bolstering its ability to influence people over that of politicians. In cases where politicians might be blind-sided, restricted or just uncaring of the issues citizens face, social media comes in as the platform that amplifies these issues. As such, social media has a much greater ability to effect change on the people's mindsets. This can be exemplified through the unprecedented rise of hashtag activism on social media, where movements from #MeToo to #BlackLivesMatter champion the awareness of issues caused by flaws in the country's system of justice. In these cases, people turn to communities on social media because they do not find that same level of security and unity in turning to politicians for help. As such, social media becomes their main form of activism, where they are able to have their own voices heard, rather than relying on a politician who may or may not share the same sentiments regarding an issue so personal to them. Another example would be the cause of #MahsaAmini, an Iranian woman who died in police custody after getting arrested for not having her hair fully covered by her hijab. In this case, social media became far more influential than Iranian politicians when it came to speaking out against the oppression of women in the country. Whilst the government shut down Internet access for its citizens and tried to quieten the incident, social media boomed with pleas from Iranians to the international community. Social media evidently played a far bigger role in getting people to take notice of what was happening in Iran, rather than the politicians who were either quelled or restricted. In this case, it is perhaps about how there was power in numbers too – where one or a group of politicians might not have the ability or power to enact much change, as compared to millions of people fighting for their cause on social media. Hence, social media is better able to reach out to huge amounts of people and enact change.

Due to its unique algorithms, social media is able to cater to everyone's views and preferences, something politicians are simply unable to do. Platforms like Youtube, Twitter and even Google are engineered to push out and recommend content to its users that it deems as suitable or has a chance of being more well-received. What this leads to in the context of politics is echo chambers being formed, where people who may lean to one side of the political spectrum would continually get the same type of content regurgitated to them. In the long run, users' views get reinforced and social media becomes more and more of a safe haven for them, where they are consistently engaged in a positive feedback loop. Against this backdrop, when certain events happen or in any circumstance, users are much more inclined to turn to social media rather than any politicians. With politicians, it is more difficult to find someone they may fully align with or like, which acts as a first barrier. Even after supporting a certain politician, it is impossible to form that emotional connection one can find online. While politicians can act as a figurehead for what one believes in, social media is the true driving force feeding and developing certain viewpoints. This can be exemplified through the formation of online group chats where extremists came together on Facebook to plan for ethnic cleansing in their country, or the 2021 US Capitol incident, where like-minded people encouraged each other to partake in the riot. It is thus evident how social media ultimately yields more power over the shaping and constructing of people's mindsets, not politicians.

*(Valerie Sng, 22-U1)*

## 5   To what extent is Artificial Intelligence (AI) replacing the role of humans?

A thoughtful and nuanced piece that captures a heightened understanding of what human roles entail. The approach to this essay is balanced and does not fall into the trap of reductively arguing how AI is / is not replacing human roles. Rather, nuance is shown through the awareness of the complementary roles that AI plays. Insight is also gleaned from the understanding shown that the threat AI poses when it comes to replacing human roles has also stirred up a stronger appreciation of human roles

| Essay | Comments |
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| Many of us would be familiar with the Roomba, a small cleaning robot many households have employed to keep their house clean. Powered by artificial intelligence, this small yet impressive invention has the ability to sweep up dust in one's house with the click of a button, quickly eliminating the need for hired help to keep one's house clean. Evidently, the ingenious ways developers have incorporated AI into our daily lives have significantly reduced our reliance on humans, and the seamless transition into the world of AI through user-friendly interfaces makes its integration much more appealing. While this may be true, we must not ignore the fact that AI has opened up a world of opportunities for us, humans, as their developers. In fact, the prevalence of AI has made society value the role of humans even more. Furthermore, AI has the potential to create more roles for humans to fill and even complement the role that we as humans play. | Introduction places more emphasis on job roles. This idea of human roles could be further expanded.<br><br>Overall stand could be more clearly articulated.<br><br>Clear preview of arguments that demonstrates an awareness of question demands. |
| Admittedly, the use of artificial intelligence has become much more prevalent in recent years as we observe the influences of AI creeping into various fields. Society is much more aware of AI's superior processing capabilities in various aspects and so more and more industries are employing the use of AI, and making it their goal for development. While the high productivity of AI may improve consumer experience, we cannot deny that it is this very trait that has stripped away the roles of so many individuals. Tesla may be one of the leading companies in self-driving technology, but many others such as Waymo and Momenta are catching up. With the presence of artificial intelligence that has the ability to always maintain full attention on driving, it is a huge improvement from the human tendency to be careless and potentially cause accidents. With such safety improvements from the use of AI, it is unlikely that drivers can maintain their current levels of job security. Perhaps something that more of us can relate to, we are already seeing more restaurants and eateries employing the use of self ordering kiosks. These machines mimic the service of actual wait staff, without the risk of complaints caused by poor service for example. On top of that, they take orders with much higher efficiency than human workers and do not even need to be paid. Evidently, artificial intelligence has developed to carry out the same tasks that humans can, with fewer liabilities in place. It is no wonder that businesses have full intent to make full use of this technology that can do jobs as well as we, if not better than most of us. As a result, humans are now facing a much bigger threat to our purpose as individuals. The development of artificial intelligence has, and will continue to one up our relevance in today's world and hence, it is true that artificial intelligence has replaced the role of humans, at least in certain skills based aspects. | Make clearer links between AI's superior processing capabilities and the 'high productivity' that is mentioned in the next sentence.<br><br>Strong in terms of articulating AI's capabilities and hence its ability to replace human roles.<br><br>Machines do not equate to AI. |
| However, what this argument fails to consider is that as artificial intelligence prompts us to question the role of humans, it simultaneously makes us value their importance even more. Oftentimes, we hear comments about how artificial intelligence is 'detached', 'impersonal', or downright cold, and while customer service takes place much more quickly, the 'human touch' is something that artificial intelligence cannot steal from us. Artificial intelligence is playing an increasingly important role in the field of medicine, and machine learning has proven itself as an invaluable addition. With the ability to diagnose illnesses with high levels of accuracy and even predict the future health status of patients, it may seem even more competent than some doctors. In spite of this, patients still seek human doctors out for diagnosis and treatment. This is possibly because the empathy expressed by a human doctor cannot be matched by the mechanical delivery of a literal robot. Evidently, AI has made us appreciate the human ability to feel and connect with others, allowing us to internalise the irreplaceable role of humans in this aspect. Not just that, the problems created as a result of AI have made society value the ability of humans to make judgements based on ethics and morals. In criminal law for example, the crime committed by the defendant would be the main focus, but other aspects such as intent, or other factors leading to the crime being committed may also be taken into consideration. The human ability to evaluate and make adjustments to the sentence cannot be replicated by artificial intelligence that can only follow its programming. The development of artificial intelligence has provided us with a basis of comparison, allowing us to realise that even as artificial intelligence may take over certain human roles, it can never truly replace the fundamentals of what makes us human. This revelation is something that reinforces the value of humans in this rapidly developing world. | Insightful point that recognises how replacing us in our roles is actually causing us to value the importance of human roles.<br><br>Any specific examples of AI programs?<br><br>Go beyond the medical field. Bring in other examples. |
| Furthermore, even as AI challenges the role of humans in certain areas, they also leave us with more important ones. Artificial intelligence works based on human input, and it is the human programming that brings them to 'life'. The rapid development of AI has made it such that the individuals behind such advances have become more important than ever. Society has come to a consensus that humans, with the capacity to make moral conditions, should be in control and that AI should not be given free reign to make autonomous decisions. Hence, the heavy responsibility of programming AI to maintain the moral fabric of society has been passed onto humans. This is essential to prevent disastrous situations due to programming errors, such as when Tay, the Microsoft AI chatbot, started to tweet racist, sexist, and sensitive comments. On an even more serious note, misprogramming could lead to false criminal accusations like when Nijeer Parks was wrongly accused of shoplifting and other crimes when his details were provided by a supposed 'facial recognition software' despite being innocent. Left to its own devices, AI | Another insightful idea that recognises how AI still relies on human input, further cementing the importance of human roles.<br><br>Is that what human developers have necessarily aspired to?<br><br>Apt use of examples with a clear link to the idea in the |

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| has proven to be volatile and unpredictable, so human supervision is especially crucial. The weight placed on this role has been created as a product of rapid AI developments, and it is primarily because of such developments that the role of humans is placed in such high regard. Hence, we can say that instead of simply replacing the role of humans, it has actually created a new purpose for us to fulfil. | paragraph.<br><br>Pertinent ideas with apt illustrations. That said, if the human touch needed only pertains to programming, how big of an impact does this have on the role of humans? |
| Lastly, rather than replace the role of humans, artificial intelligence has actually enhanced this role by implementing it. Developments in artificial intelligence and humanity need not be at odds with one another, and society has the capacity to bring out the best of both worlds. In recent years, contemporary art has taken the world by storm with many individuals flocking to such art installations. This new form of presentation has made the concept of AI generated art much more palatable, allowing artists to marry their ideas with artificial intelligence. The precipitation of art has changed over centuries, yet its fundamental concept of creativity and innovation remains consistently relevant. The human need to express ourselves and our role as advocates of the humanities can be enhanced by Computational Creativity, a niche branch of artificial intelligence. On top of that, artificial intelligence has also enhanced the role of humans as knowledge seekers, helping us satisfy our curiosity about the world we live in. A part of humanity is our inherent desire to learn more and explore, something we can achieve owing to development in artificial intelligence. Space exploration, for example, has been made possible with the help of vehicles guided by artificial intelligence. We can create machinery that acts as an extension of ourselves, that can compensate for limits of the human body. Artificial intelligence has the potential to work alongside the human race to enhance the already important role that they play, and hence should not be viewed as a competitor but an ally. | Nuanced approach that recognises how this an alternative perspective could go beyond replacing/not replacing to look at how AI can complement human roles instead.<br><br>Make clearer links to how AI complements human roles in this example.<br><br>Deeper awareness of what human roles entail. |
| Overall, artificial intelligence is an emerging field that is here to stay. While its development has unfortunately replaced the role of humans in certain aspects, we should not overlook how it has made us re-evaluate and appreciate the role of humanity, expanded our area of influence and even worked in alignment to obtain our goals. Artificial intelligence has taken, but it has also given to us even more and hence I believe that artificial intelligence has only replaced the role of humans to a small extent.<br><br>*(Chong Woei Ern, 22-I3)* | Functional conclusion that reiterates the stand and arguments. A future projection could lend more depth to the conclusion. |

## 9    Is globalisation to be welcomed or feared today?

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| *This essay's strength is that consistent and fair comparison was achieved throughout and there was good understanding of the current state of globalisation through engagement with 'today'. The essay was also well-argued through good use of illustration which was also wide-ranging. However, on the last point on populism, perhaps it would have been better explained with regard to its effects on democracy and liberalism. The introduction and conclusion could also have been written in a more engaging way, perhaps mirroring elements of each other. Lastly, the essay could have engaged with the mechanics of globalisation better.* | |
| At the point when Donald Trump announced tariffs on Chinese goods due to the "unfair trade surplus" that China had in relation to the US, globalisation and its accompanying issues had already started to plague the world in many ways, from populist leaders rising to power through anti-globalisation rhetoric to global crises due to overdependence on one another. As much as the world has also tremendously benefited from globalisation as it has brought people, goods and ideas together, I believe that in today's polarised, uncertain and unequal world, globalisation is to be feared rather than welcomed. | Introduction is well-contextualised, but the first sentence is a little clunky and could be broken up. |
| One of the most notable arguments in support of globalisation in today's world is that globalisation can bring the world together to solve global issues in today's uncertain climate, and should thus be welcomed rather than feared. World and regional summits are held every year in order to address pertinent issues such as slowing economic growth, recovery from pandemics and crucial environmental issues. Such conferences have given a general direction for countries to work towards, increasing potential for significant issues to be solved. Instances of important conferences include the G20 summit, convenes at the United Nations (UN) and many more. Notably, such meetings have seen outcomes such as the Paris Climate Agreement in 2015 and the supplying of Covid-19 vaccines to developing countries in 2020. Such instances of collaboration and compromise have come about due to the effects of globalisation which has allowed for the convergence of ideas, solutions and world leaders to discuss world issues. In today's volatile world where change is the only constant, the opportunities for cooperation amongst countries should be embraced instead of feared. | Relevant topic sentence with the context of 'today' addressed. Comparison to 'feared' is done in the paired rebuttal paragraph below.<br><br>Good range of examples highlighted. |
| Despite the merits in this argument, I would posit that globalisation has only provided a facade of problem-solving as it has not solved the inherent power imbalances within countries. The illusion that globalisation brings to the minds of people should thus be feared instead of welcomed. Due to various historical, political and economic forces, some countries such as the United States (US), China and Britain have more influence in comparison to developing countries in Central Asia and Africa. Hence, many world summits and even world organisations are tilted towards these countries, placing their interests above that of other countries and even the collective global society. The permanent five, the US, China, Russia, France and Britain, remain the only ones with veto power in the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) and the US is the only one with significant voting power in the International Monetary Fund (IMF). With this, world meetings and conferences in the UN and other organisations become nothing more than illusions which claim solutions for the world's problems while pandering to the interests of these countries. Instances such as the UNSC's incapability of implementing binding resolutions on the Russian-Ukraine war due to Russia's veto and the IMF failing to adequately mitigate the financial crisis of 2008 are clear in showing that the numerous meetings and even the organisation itself is paralysed by influential countries with much political and economic capital. Globalisation has thus created a wall of tinted glass which depicts a beautiful picture of collaboration but can be broken easily by belligerent countries who are more interested in the benefits that they can draw from it. Such illusions should thus be feared more than welcomed as it misleads the world on its actual capabilities in solving pertinent issues. | Effective rebuttal by demonstrating the idea that the opposing argument was a 'facade'.<br><br>Well-illustrated with relevant concrete examples covering a range of international organisations.<br><br>Could have been strengthened by explaining |

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| Globalisation has also lost its effectiveness in delivering its promises of growth and wealth to different groups of people in today's severely unequal world. It should hence be feared rather than welcomed. In the past, globalisation had led to the rise of export-oriented economies which saw great opportunities in the expansion of trade routes and mechanisms, leading to the rise of the four Asian Tigers, namely Singapore, South Korea, Hong Kong and Taiwan. These regions experienced high economic growth and were able to benefit their populations greatly by these from rags to riches. However, today's world has experienced a great paradigm shift where the distribution of such wealth is incredibly unequal amongst societies, and within a society itself. Within societies such as the US and South Korea, the rich-poor divide continues to widen with a loss of job opportunities. Globalisation has a part to play in this, seeing the amount of workers in the Rust Belt who lost their means in making a living as companies outsource labour to other countries. Outsourcing has been made possible with globalisation as people are free to travel to and from countries. This has led to the poor in South Korea being able to afford rundown houses in the outskirts of town and wealth being concentrated in the hands of the one-percent in the US. Globalisation has broken its promise of wealth to the average person and thus should be feared rather than welcomed as its effects are more detrimental than they seem. | Comparison is very well fleshed out in this paragraph, though there could have been more explanation on <u>how</u> globalisation 'led to the rise of export-oriented economies'.<br><br>Good that there is more than one example to illustrate this point. |
| Lastly, globalisation should be feared rather than welcomed as it has turned into a weapon for today's populist leaders to sow discord in societies. Globalisation has brought new people to new lands, enabling the creation of multicultural societies with immense diversity. However, such diversity has been exploited numerous times by today's populist leaders which cannot be avoided. Leaders who have risen up to power in this manner include Modi of India, Donald Trump of the US and many other European leaders. These politicians have exploited differences in race, religion and background to frame themselves as 'defenders of culture'. Trump's trade war with China hurt America's poor farmers while lives of ordinary Hindus did not improve under Modi. Globalisation has fallen into the hands of dubious leaders who ultimately decide how to manipulate it in their favour. With the inherent unavoidability along with the superficial benefits that it brings politically, globalisation should be feared rather than welcomed. | Good comparison once again.<br><br><br><br><br><br>Could be explained further - what is so bad about populism with regard to globalisation? |
| Globalisation is a trend which has been horribly mismanaged. Its capacity to strike fear comes in the empty promises that it makes along with the rise of incompetent leaders who use it as a means to their political ends. Globalisation then, should be feared rather than welcomed.<br><br>*(Peh Xin Rong, 22-A1)* | A rushed and rather awkward end to the essay, though it is good that at least the stand was reiterated. |

## 10      Should both parents take equal responsibility for raising their children?

| *There is some good understanding of what parenting entails and why equal responsibility might seem more ideal. There is also some good use of examples to illustrate arguments. However greater focus on addressing the 'should' angle and more nuance about 'equal responsibility' will enhance the response.*<br>*Language is fluent and competent throughout. Organisation of ideas is clear.* | |
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| It is perhaps undeniable that the expectations and challenges faced by people have evolved from generation to generation. The role of a parent, however, has remained largely constant from the dawn of civilisation until now. The importance of a parent's presence in their child's life is rather obvious; it helps with key emotional and cognitive development in the child, as well as providing guidance through life. To constantly ensure that their parental duties are being carried out, while maintaining a precarious balance between their own careers and emotional needs may prove to be a daunting task for the parent to undertake alone. It is for this reason that it would be much more prudent if both parents were to shoulder the responsibility of raising their children equally and ensure an overall healthier family structure. | Context setting is logical but needs to be more concrete - what kind of expectations and challenges, for example.<br><br>Overall stand needs to outline all your arguments. |
| Those who are more adapted to the traditional family dynamic may argue that the childcare responsibility should fall on one parent more than the other- typically the mother. These people would reason that since a male worker would typically earn more money than his female coworkers, and may also have the physique to undertake more jobs which could earn more money for the family, it would seem more practical if the burden of raising a child fell heavily on the mother more so than the father. This would ensure that the father figure could devote his time and attention to his career so that he could maximise the amount of money earned to support the entire family financially. This is observable in more conservative countries like South Korea and Japan, where for every unit of money earned by a male, his female counterpart would receive 0.7 units of money or less for working the same job. Unsurprisingly, these are also countries where single-income married couples with children are most often observed, hence implying that the gender wage gap in these countries encourage mothers to bear a heavier responsibility in raising their children at home instead of working. | Good, this argument shows a good understanding of where the question is coming from.<br><br><br><br><br><br><br>Paragraph ends abruptly. A link back to the topic sentence would tie the ideas in the paragraph together. |
| Nonetheless, this is an outdated view that does not reflect the changing workforce dynamics in society today. While such family structures may be prevalent in some countries, the situation is only so because of unfair wage policies that most countries today are working hard to rectify. Studies show that the wage inequality gap has improved by at least 30% in the last two decades and at least 68% of families with children in developed countries have both parents that hold full-time positions. This means that not only is there now more than enough money to support the family, but also that if the same expectations of one parent taking more responsibility for raising the child were to be imposed, it would be extremely taxing on that parent. This parent would have to work long hours in the day, and still have to focus on their children's needs at home. In the long run, this would affect the physical and mental health of the parent and is unnecessary given that there is a second parent right there that could be helping with the childcare burden. If both parents were to share the responsibility of taking care of the child more equally, then there would not be this unneeded pressure on one specific parent. Hence the conservative ideas of a family structure is not a good justification of why parents should not need to share equal responsibility for raising their child. | Clearly signposted as a rebuttal, with a relevant reason. Make clearer links to the question.<br><br><br><br><br><br>Train of thought is a bit difficult to follow here. It would help if some of the sentences were broken up. |

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| Taking equal responsibility for raising their children is a way of ensuring that both parents maintain a healthy balance between juggling their own needs with their children's. A forum with first-time mothers organised by the Ministry for Social and Family Development in Singapore saw first-time parenthood being described to be 'frustrating' and 'tiring', but also noted that many mothers expressed gratitude to their spouses for their support through their joint journey through parenthood. From this, we could extrapolate that a two-parent childcare system allows both parents to shoulder the task of caring for their children equally and depend on each other for emotional and physical support. Such a system may better allow parents to retain more of their social lives when they take turns to focus on the child, potentially reducing caregiver fatigue or burnout. This reduction would prevent a buildup of negative feelings as a result of consistent and compounding frustration, which is especially important for parents who have to look after special needs children since they require even more time and effort to raise. Hence, the equal-responsibility model should be adopted by parents since it seems to provide the parents with much more balance in life when raising their child. | Missing signpost<br><br><br><br><br>Logical discussion, but 'should' could be more clearly unpacked. |
| Moreover, from the children's standpoint, having both parents equally involved in their lives may be more beneficial for their cognitive and emotional development. A report published by the United States' Centre for Children's Health stated that children who felt 'a sense of absence' from one parent often faced more problems with emotional introspection and were more likely to exhibit behavioural oddities or violent and perverse tendencies. It is likely that interacting with one parent more than the other could create feelings of neglect and abandonment within the child, which could further build up into rage and resentment, and eventually manifest into physical or verbal violence. In addition, the distance between the more 'absent' parent and child may eventually create a rift in the family dynamic, which can further trigger feelings of frustration and unwillingness to communicate. Conversely, ample interaction with both parents would reassure the child of a healthy and supportive family structure, since the child would grow up comfortable communicating with both parents and is aware of their presence as key support pillars. Hence with both parents' equal presence in the child's life, he would be better able to develop emotionally and communicate with ease. This thus justifies the need for parents to shift to adopting equal responsibility for raising their child. | So they should? Again, the contention needs to be addressed more directly.<br><br><br><br><br><br><br><br><br>Good, this argument is generally well-explained and supported with a relevant example |
| Lastly, both parents assuming equal responsibility in raising their children could give them a more holistic education beyond academics. Paediatric experts claim that young children would often look closely at the speech and actions of their parents and imitate it to some extent, especially during their formative years. When both parents take part in raising the child, it is likely that the child would get to hear more varied experiences from both parents and establish some sort of understanding based on their own conclusions from the two perspectives. These include key education aspects such as values and character, or even important global concerns like basic politics and life skills, which the child may be able to obtain a more complete and balanced understanding of compared to a child that bases their understanding of the world through one sole parent. Since parents have a responsibility to ensure that their child is prepared for the world outside, they should adopt equal responsibility for raising the child to ensure a better chance of that. | Logical argument about the benefit of dual parenting. |
| Hence, despite the still-prevalent conservative family structure where one parent assumes more responsibility for child-raising than the other, parents should share equal responsibility for raising their children since it is much more beneficial for both parents and children to do so.<br><br>*(Angie Toh, 22-U1)* | Conclusion needs to be more specific in reiterating your argument |

## 11 Assess the importance of food within Singaporean culture.

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| *The essay fulfils the question's requirement very well. The Singapore context was very meaningfully discussed and the keyword "importance" was dealt with well. Balance was well handled here too. Broadening the range of examples and addressing the lapses in logic in segments will enhance the essay.* | |
| Food, a commodity seen so frequently and easily everywhere in Singapore society, is something that we as Singaporeans are so used to in our lives, so much so that we might not have stopped to consider every aspect of it beyond the mere product. This then sparks the question: how important is food within our Singaporean culture exactly? While everyone will agree that food is used as means of survival, it would be myopic to argue that food has no other importance beyond fulfilling our survival needs. In fact, I am of the opinion that food is rather important in our Singaporean culture, given how it acts as a vessel to preserve heritage amidst our rapidly modernising country and how it reflects innovation in our stagnant culture, beyond its mere surface value of satisfying hunger. | Not a commodity<br><br>Could this be more contextualised to SG?<br><br>Good - balanced and clear |
| Some will argue that food is not really important within Singaporean culture, due to the easy access of it made available by our general affluence, that portrays its only 'use' as a means of satisfying our physiological needs. With income levels rising over time, Singaporeans are getting increasingly affluent which opens up a range of options for food. Coupled with the Singapore government's intention to build the country into a food paradise, which translates and manifests itself in the diversity of food available here, there is essentially a type of food that suits every social group here - ranging from the more affordable hawker food to the more classy, expensive buffets like the Carousel buffet at Royal Scotts Hotel. This then makes some feel that the variety of food is merely to fill our stomachs here in Singapore, causing us to lose sight of the other significance of food. As such, our affluence contributes to the popular belief that food does not really hold much importance in Singaporean culture, beyond its mere function of satisfying physiological needs. | Well-linked to SG trait<br><br><br><br><br><br>Logic: why is a wide variety = it only fills our stomach? |
| While I concede that food is indeed crucially important for survival, there is more to that. Food is important in our Singaporean culture as it acts as a vessel to preserve heritage, an act much-needed in Singapore society amidst our rapid modernisation. Over the past fifty years, Singapore has progressed so much, as seen in the popular narrative from a fishing village to a first world nation. This rapid modernisation has seen the past Singapore transformed into a brand-new | Well put. SG context evident. |

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| society, one that is a melting pot of culture. It can be very easy to forget our roots - what being a Singaporean means. In this case, the diversity of food here - from Nasi Lemak to Roti Prata and Yong Tau Foo - are a reflection of our unique range of cultures that coexist here. Food can be seen as an invisible glue that binds all together, reminding us of our true identities lest we lose it in the face of modernity. In fact, the very places that we dine in, be it in restaurants or hawker centres, also serves as a common space for us to interact over our meals, forging a stronger sense of connection and belonging as fellow Singaporeans. The recognition of hawker centres as a UNESCO heritage site is a prime evidence of this. Hence, food is important within Singaporean culture because it preserves a form of heritage that is necessary to remind ourselves of our true identities amidst modernity. | Logic: what does this show of the importance of food? |
| In addition, food is also important within Singaporean culture as it demonstrates innovation amidst our rather stagnant culture. Singapore was once termed a "culture desert" be it in the arts or music scene, as we were not seen to have any representative works on the world stage. This stagnation in culture could possibly have arised from our stressful lifestyles, that we are simply too caught up in our everyday lives to even showcase our creative expressions. Food then becomes one important area that we show our creativity in, inspiring others to innovate new types of food or simply acting as a breath of fresh air amongst all other commonly heard food. One example would be a local chef who came up with Char Siew Burger and Squid Ink Mantou, both of which demonstrates clever incorporation of Western culture with Chinese and Malay cultures. Fusion food is therefore significant in Singapore as it highlights creativity that others might be inspired from, sparking further innovations possibly. In fact, in the former example, the chef went on to win awards in internationally renowned magazines, so food can even be argued as important in earning one a reputation or branding that Singaporeans are so desperately after due to our 'kiasu' culture that forces us to be in a constant pursuit for success. Therefore, food is important within Singaporean culture as a showcase of innovation amidst our rather stagnant culture and lifestyles. | This is a really good and insightful point.<br><br>Could use a wider range of fusion/creative examples<br><br><br><br>Well contextualised |
| In conclusion, I am of the view that there is more to the mere importance of food in fulfilling our physiological needs, and it can in fact be a way of staying true to our identities amidst changing times, as well as a source of inspiration to fuel our stagnant culture. It is my hope that Singaporeans would pay more attention to the layers of significance behind food next time they have a meal, beyond its mere attractive appearance or exotic flavours.<br><br>*(Tee Wan Yu, 22-U4)* | |

## 12    Can fiction teach us anything meaningful about the real world?

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| *This is a thoughtful and well-expressed essay that demonstrates a deeper awareness of what fiction is and what its affordances are. In addition to examining the traits of fiction, response also looks at features of the real world. While these are unpacked in some detail, the key term, 'meaningful' is alluded to but not explicitly unpacked. This essay explores what 'teaching us anything meaningful' entails in the conclusion, but this should have been consistently unpacked throughout. That said, examples are clearly linked to ideas presented. Ideas are coherently unpacked and consistently relevant. With its eloquently articulated ideas, this essay makes for an engaging read.* | |
| Fictional stories are something many associate with playful imagination and deep immersion into the make-belief. They come in many forms and their stories are whimsical and unrealistic to varying degrees. Whether the "fiction" lies in the world, the premise, the story, the characters or all of them, there is an understanding that these stray far from biographies or historical records of real world events. However, when you remember that those who were behind creating these tales draw reference from their share of knowledge, experience and understanding of the real world we all live in, who's to say fiction is completely meaningless in its portrayal of reality, despite it being different from our own? In my opinion, the real world is very much what inspires fiction, and when there are comparisons to be made between the two, it can serve to inspire in ways drab reality often cannot by portraying real world concepts in a different light, or serving as meaningful social commentary. | Conceptual awareness of fiction and its creators.<br><br>Deft link made to reality<br><br>A clear preview of arguments, but stand could make clearer references to fiction being 'meaningful'. |
| There are reasons why most children's books are written in fiction compared to non-fiction. At such a young age, where children have limited life experiences to inform their understanding of our complex world, the type of information they receive must be as simple to digest as possible. And throughout human history, it appears that fictional tales have been effective in teaching important life lessons to young children, extending even to many adults who continue to connect more deeply with the genre. Fiction gives leeway for the imagination to grasp real world life lessons and values, using unrealistic scenarios to visualise real-world concepts. For one, a fictional story of pigs with the architectural expertise to build a house is incredibly far-fetched, but it only served to make clear the lesson behind a story such as The Three Little Pigs. It tells of a tale where hard work and the right materials are both important stepping stones to success using simplistic ideas children know. Basic knowledge that wolves hunt and eat pigs alongside basic observation that most houses are built with hard brick is enough to inform children on the importance of planning and preparation, even with highly limited real-world context, which children do not have. This simplification is what makes fiction effective in both its storytelling and its message. Adult fiction may show more realistic scenarios of the loss of a loved one and teach them how to cope with pain and grief in a healthy way, or display the great importance of courage in facing adversity through high-fantasy fiction, as is the case with video games such as Final Fantasy. When framed in seemingly 'made-up' scenarios, these lessons are enriched and amplified through impactful storytelling, therefore more effectively teaching complicated life lessons to our simple minds. | Makes reference to a trait of the real world.<br><br>Brings in a trait of fiction and links it to how this helps us to navigate the complexities of the real world. Some explanation as to why making complex ideas more digestible makes things meaningful for readers would add to overall relevance.<br><br>Relevant but rather simple example.<br><br>Goes beyond books to examine the other mediums through which fiction is represented |
| Secondly, fiction serves as valuable commentary on society's cultures or structures through using compelling settings and premises that the real-world does not have. Science fiction has long been one such genre that explores the impacts highly advanced and futuristic technology could have on our society. Books from the late 20th century postulate dystopian societies around the same time conglomeration of many news outlets were beginning to take place. Common themes in most influential dystopian novels of the time portray the extreme loss of | Paragraph shows deeper thought as to what fiction entails and how it serves as social commentary. More elaboration on why social commentary is meaningful |

individualism in the mindless pursuit of productivity and peace. They tell tales of a bleak future where a single system with a stronghold on every corner of society dictates the type of information we receive and we take it in without question for there was nothing and no one else who dared say otherwise. All this time, technology was indeed advancing at unprecedented pace and in the market of news outlets, many were tussling to gain monopoly by eliminating their competition through mergers and acquisition. In this way, fiction is not unrealistic in its concerns. Its conflicts and tensions are often derived from real-world issues, simply placed in a setting where it may be isolated and amplified to highlight the problem. It allows for greater exploration into the way our human condition may be affected through plot centred around real problems. Hierarchies and social structure is a topic of interest in much timeless fiction, from Shakespeare's play on Hamlet to Pride and Prejudice by Jane Austen, for these continue to remain relevant. Therefore fiction provides a platform for real social issues to be encapsulated in a more compelling light.

*would tie the paragraph together.*

*Any specific work of fiction?*

*Very nicely phrased*

However, I concede that when fiction becomes purely escapism and exaggerates aspects of reality in ways that can portray the wrong ideas, that is when it is not only meaningless, but at worst, it is damaging to misguided, uninformed readers. This happens most often in much of young adult and teen fiction, where many real world ideas are taken and romanticised to unrealistic degrees, giving many impressionable youths the wrong idea about navigating reality. This is most apparent in the romance genre, where oftentimes, poorly written fictional romance is layered with a deeply troubling or toxic dynamic that goes under the guise of characters learning to embrace each other's flaws. A mainstream example is Twilight, where a vampire and human try navigating their feelings and the direction of their relationship, yet it is consistently apparent that one party poses a real threat to the other, who is blindly complicit to everything that could go wrong on the basis that they trust their significant other. Toxic, controlling relationship tropes are unrealistic in their resolutions since the issue is never addressed through healthy communication, but by blind faith that one can change for the other. This dictates to young people the wrong idea about love.

*Clearly articulated topic sentence that captures a trait of fiction and links it to the real world.*

*Apt substantiation. A listing of similar tales would lend breadth to the discussion.*

In the grand scheme of things, I think it is unfair for fiction to be deemed as a poor caricature of our reality simply because it can exaggerate and embellish its portrayal. It is in the nature of this genre to peel back the many layers of our world, to present a single distilled concept, unmuddled by the numerous other grievances of reality. It is where the abstract ways of our real world can be freely expressed in more tangible, graspable forms. For something to teach us anything "meaningful" about the real world, "meaning" goes beyond the facts and it is not just about being "useful". It is about purpose and actualisation, something very intangible, seemingly "unreal", yet it continues to form the basis of our human existence. Our need to have something to strive for, fight for and live for is something that only fiction has successfully inspired to such powerful degrees. And that is something non-fictional stories cannot ever hope to take away.

*(Yu Xin Yu, 22-I3)*

*Another beautifully phrased sentence that captures a trait of fiction.*

*This exploration of 'teaching us anything meaningful' should have taken place in the body paragraphs too!*