



## General Paper Bulletin 2019 (JC 1)

Welcome to the first issue of TMJC's GP Bulletin for 2019! In this edition, we bring you a selection of the essays written by your schoolmates during the recent JC 1 Mid-Year Examination. A big thank you to all the students who have contributed their essays.

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

While reading these essays, you may find some of the examples and points useful for application to other questions; do be judicious in using such information in a manner that is relevant to the question you are answering.

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

All the best for the Year-End Examination!

### Editorial Team

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Ms Sukhvinder Kaur  
Mrs Annie Clayton  
Mr Teddy Tan  
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### Contents

Q1: Consider the claim that the arts are of little practical use. ....	2
Q2: 'Young people in today's world are increasingly in danger of addictions.' Do you agree? .....	5
Q5: Assess the view that technology is advancing too fast. ....	9
Q6: How well are the needs of the elderly met in your society? .....	11
Q12: Consider the value of imagination. ....	16

## **Q1 Consider the claim that the arts are of little practical use. (TMJC JC1 MYE 2019)**

The arts refer to the expression of human creativity and imagination, usually displayed in the form of literature, theatre, and film, among many others. Even though some may not be aware, the arts are part of our everyday lives, providing an immersive experience for many and the extensive impact on the people is undeniable. I espouse the view that the arts champion social causes, act as a platform that allows one to actively ponder over issues and instil a sense of belonging in the people.

Detractors of the arts may opine that it is only understood by the culturati who can appreciate it. The rest, on the other hand, view the arts to be too abstract for appreciation and lack the means to comprehend it. It is undeniable that the arts may not be gaining as much recognition as before, with a mere 16 to 17 percent of students taking the GCE O-Level Literature in English Examination since 2006, a drastic drop from the 47.9 percent in 1992. In highly competitive societies like the United States and Singapore, many see the arts as an unrealistic prospect to venture into or to make a living. They are in favour of more worthy and prestigious pursuits like Medicine. However, is it true that the arts are absolutely of no practical use? I beg to differ that the world would be better off or even the same without the existence of the arts.

The arts can act as a medium to champion social causes and mobilise support for societal change. People are gradually relying on the arts to raise public awareness on pressing issues. National Geographic explorer, Asher Jay, started an artistic campaign, 'Message in a Bottle', to spread awareness and urge people to act on the problem of increasing plastic pollution in the sea. It is an effective way to get the issue across to the public when compared with the mundane broadcasting ways. Another example is the film 'Out In The Cold' that features the homeless on the streets, presenting them from a different perspective that allows the masses to be more aware of this common yet unspoken group of people. The public is more informed about such issues through the arts and will be more inclined to societal change.

The arts reinforce one's sense of belonging to one's homeland in today's globalised world. In a pluralistic country like Singapore, where there is an increase in migrant population, Singaporeans may fear a dilution of culture. The arts allow locals to enrich their cultures while retaining their national identities. For instance, 'Grandmother Tongue' is a heartbreaking play that explores our dialects that are gradually losing their relevance. It allows the audience, especially the older generation, to be immersed in a play which highlights how our identity is bound with the language. Local director Jack Neo, produced the series 'Ah Boys to Men', which feature the mandatory National Service that all our Singaporean sons go through, providing a sense of familiarity where audiences can relate to the scenes featured in the film. People feel connected through such platforms as they share a common identity with the rest. Hence, the arts are of practical use to instil a stronger sense of belonging in the people.

Given the heavy censorship deployed by the government, the arts allow people to discuss and spread sensitive subjects that are not widely discussed. Especially in a conservative country where issues that are condemned and deemed inappropriate are heavily censored, it is necessary to have an outlet that allows people to channel their feelings. Local writer Cyril Wong, who is known for his expressive works, helps people in the LGBT community explore their sexual identity. Literature allows one to ponder over thought-provoking issues and allows one to express oneself freely. 'Theatre for the Oppressed' features people who are excluded from society and discusses taboo topics like racism and

LGBT issues. 'The Noose', a show that gained popularity in 2007, was applauded for discussing society's happenings in a lighthearted and entertaining manner through the exaggerated accents and acting. Hence, I believe that the arts allow people to truly express themselves and even allow others to relate to the message that is being carried across by the artists, making it highly effective.

Some critics may argue that the arts have no pragmatic benefits in countries where pressing issues should take precedence. This is especially so in developing countries like Vietnam and Cambodia where people are more focused on bread and butter issues, the arts should be their least concern. However, I stand by the belief that the arts provide psychological support for the people. In Nigeria, people who have been traumatized by the violence wrought by Boko Haram, a terrorist group operating in that country, undergo art therapy which has proven to provide comfort for them. Another example would be the elderly who may be neglected. Some may argue that the government should be placing priority on their needs especially for some who are living alone. However, the 'Theatre for Seniors' programme allows them to express their loneliness and fears, and enables them to interact with people in a similar predicament. Therefore, while there is no doubt that countries should be prioritising issues such as poverty and diseases, the arts should not be completely neglected as they do provide a certain level of psychological comfort.

All in all, I espouse the view that the arts are of practical use as they enable creative thinking and act as a medium to champion social causes while spreading important messages to the public. The arts allow an economy to progress and foster a stronger sense of belonging to the country. Although there may be issues that a country should place greater emphasis on, it is unfair to deem the arts as having little practical use.

**Anthea Ang**  
**19A302**

**Remarks:**

An essay that covers a wide range of ideas, issues. Well-illustrated, though there is too much focus on Singaporean examples; examples should be from a wider field.

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**Q1 Consider the claim that the arts are of little practical use. (TMJC JC1 MYE 2019)**

The arts may be beautiful forms of self-expression and entertainment. However, they serve little to no practical purpose in our world today. The arts consist of various different aspects such as performing arts, theater studies, as well as artistic expression in the form of painting. These forms of art ultimately have little usefulness when it comes to what an individual really requires in today's society.

The arts serve as heavy distractions away from the more important aspects of life. Be it in academics or the workforce, most individuals, young or old, have duties and responsibilities to fulfil and lives to lead. The demands that every student or worker has to meet can get overwhelming, and in order to achieve a work life balance, one cannot afford to have too many distractions. However, if one pursues the arts and wastes quality time that could be spent studying for that test or researching for that project, one may end up under performing in those tasks and feeling deeply stressed. For instance, for a

Secondary Four student who needs to take the important GCE O-Level Examination and also attend ballet sessions twice a week, the implications are that she will have insufficient time to do proper revision, not to mention complete the regularly assigned schoolwork and get sufficient rest on top of other things. Moreover, such frequently scheduled physical exertions may take a toll on her health and overall well-being. In this case, the student will not perform up to standard in her academics, and may suffer from psychological stress as well as be unable to cope physically. The arts serve as major distractions from what an individual needs to focus on and are hence extremely time consuming. In fact, they hinder one's ability to cope and do well in one's normal everyday life. Therefore, they serve little practical purpose.

The arts rarely bring one far in life, in terms of career prospects or earning a livelihood. Many jobs in the world, be it marketing or finance, business and administration, or research and development, require more academic-based skillsets and textbook knowledge. Companies rarely look for the ability to paint or sculpt when looking for potential workers. They mostly require one to have certain educational achievements and the right background before they hire an individual. When looking for a job to support oneself, the arts serve no practical purpose in increasing one's prospects or making one a more appealing worker. For example, the ability to sing well will not gain one a stable career as most companies do not require such a skillset, and the wage or success of a singer is heavily dependent on how much attention she (or he) receives from the public, which can be very subjective. In comparison, a proper university degree in accounting, for instance will enhance the chances of an individual to be hired, as such tertiary level achievements are highly sought after by employers. Moreover, it equips one with the knowledge to perform in that job and under such working conditions. The arts serve little practical use when looking for career opportunities as they provide little incentive for employers to employ an individual, hence limiting the job or choices she has.

In our day-to-day activities, we will almost never require the use of the arts. Simple tasks such as paying for a meal or navigating a route home do not require painting or acting skillset. In fact, the use of mathematics and geography would be more useful in such cases. The arts, such as dancing and singing, are more than likely leisure activities and forms of expression than necessary skills. Pursuits in the creative arts will hardly enhance one's standard of living or make an individual's daily life easier, as they cannot apply in the normal routines of our daily lives. As such, the arts are of little practical use in making daily chores and other simple activities more efficient.

Having said that, we must also acknowledge that the arts are not completely meaningless. Creative arts in the forms of drawing and painting are activities that develop one's cognitive abilities as we delve into colour theories, the artist's meaning, and hand-eye coordination, to name a few skills. One might say that such skills are good brain exercises and have holistic value. However, cognitive development can already be achieved through regular studying or working, as well as through attending workshops and seminars that many schools and companies provide. The skills and insights gleaned from the arts are hardly special or exclusive only to artists. In fact, drawing and painting requires a great amount of brainpower and focus, which could be spent on other more important things such as a biology project or business presentation.

Perhaps one may say that the arts are useful as they are forms of leisure and relaxation activities one can do to escape from the regularities of a busy life. However, most artistic pursuits can actually be incredibly pressurizing and stressful for individuals. This takes away any "relaxation" the arts may

provide. For instance, acting is a challenging thing to do, requiring facial and physical control, and a deep understanding of the script. Directors can be demanding or easily angered. It is hence difficult for actors, especially budding ones, to truly enjoy the process and call acting a “leisure activity”. Thus the arts in such cases have little practical purpose and in fact have negative implications.

The various aspects of the arts sector serve little to no significant purpose in enhancing one’s productivity or work-life balance, increasing one’s career prospects, or aiding in daily life. Some may say that the arts develop one’s thinking and provide relaxation. However, the overall benefits do not outweigh the overarching negative effects the arts have on an individual in this society.

**Clara Goh**  
**19A301**

**Remarks:**

Clear awareness of the Point in Contention (POC). Some tendency to engage with the issue on a narrow/ selective basis, which undermines its cogency. Examples could be more concrete and specific.

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**Q2 ‘Young people in today’s world are increasingly in danger of addictions.’ Do you agree? (TMJC JC1 MYE 2019)**

‘Teen charged with drug abuse.’ This is one of the many newspaper headlines commonly seen in recent times. Addictions can take many forms such as drug addiction, smoking addiction and even gaming addiction. The ease with which youths get hooked or addicted today is really a controversial topic. While some have argued that in today’s world, it is much more difficult for youths to be hooked or addicted because of how easily youths can get help, I believe that in today’s world, where technology is so readily accessible, life is getting more stressful and where youths are easily influenced by their peers, it is much easier for young people to get addicted to various bad habits. Therefore, I agree that young people in today’s world are increasingly in danger of addictions.

In today’s digital era, where technology has become so advanced, the internet has become very accessible to everyone to the point that we can search for whatever we want to know in a matter of a few taps on the screen and get answers we need in a matter of seconds. This is especially so for young people today, who are known to be more tech-savvy and rely on the internet more than books for information due to its convenience. However, websites that advocate the use of drugs as well as smoking are ubiquitous, claiming that they carry many ‘health benefits’. Young people are very likely to come across such websites and articles and may be convinced to start consuming drugs or smoking, believing that they are actually good for health. For example, some websites claim that consuming cocaine, a highly addictive drug, helps one to lose weight quickly and this is backed by statistics (dubious or false, of course) to boost the sales of drugs. In addition, it is much easier for young people to play games on their smart-mobile devices and they may get addicted to gaming as a result. These games are designed to be addictive in nature to keep players hooked onto the game for as long as possible, causing them to be addicted to gaming. In Belgium, controversies abound over the association between “loot boxes” a randomised reward system in games and the similarities to addictive slot machines. In Singapore, a survey by a United States-based content delivery network service provider, Llmelight Networks, has shown that Singaporean gamers top Asian countries in time spent playing video games daily, with an average of seven and a half hours spent playing mobile games such as ‘Mobile Legends’ and ‘PUBG’. What is horrifying is that many of these gamers feel that it is a reasonable

amount of time to be spent on gaming. Hence, due to how advanced technology has become, young people in today's world are increasingly in danger of addictions.

In today's world where life is usually more fast-paced and hectic, life has become more stressful than ever and young people today tend to resort to cigarettes and drugs to relieve stress. The education systems in many countries, such as South Korea and China, are usually very stressful as students usually spend half their day in school followed by completing tonnes of homework and revising for examinations once they get home. Moreover, there is a strong emphasis on academic success in these countries, especially in Singapore where we are constantly reminded that our only resource is our people. As a result, the education system is usually very rigorous and intensive, causing many students to experience a high level of stress. These students tend to resort to smoking as a way to release stress as smoking is believed to 'calm one's mind' and 'soothe the soul', allowing them to relax. This belief can lead these students to constantly use smoking to relieve stress and they can easily get addicted to smoking. Hence, the stressful lifestyles faced by many and due to the perceived benefits of smoking as an effective method of stress-relief, young people in today's world are increasingly in danger of addictions.

Young people today, especially millennials, are easily influenced by their peers and are thus increasingly in danger of addictions. Millennials want to fit in and have a fear of missing out. They definitely do not want to be considered social outcasts. For example in Singapore, it is common to see young people smoking. A person may be easily influenced to join his friends in smoking or drinking alcohol as his friends may keep offering him or her a cigarette or drink, claiming how good smoking or liquor feels and how much he or she is missing out. When faced with the many young people smoking and drinking, those who do not smoke or drink may perceive such behavior as a social norm and hence, take part in these highly addictive activities. According to a survey commissioned by Singapore-based television station, MediaCorp, 63% of smokers start the habit when they are between fourteen and seventeen years old. Their reason was simply that their peers told them that smoking was an effective method of stress relief and that they should try smoking to make their lives much easier as it can make them feel much better and they were losing out if they did not smoke. Hence, peer pressure and influence on young people is why they are increasingly in danger of addictions in today's world.

However, critics would put forward the notion that it is also easier to get help in today's world, therefore making it harder for young people to get addicted to a bad habit. Websites and hotlines are easily accessible online on the internet and people who are addicted to any bad habits can seek help from these websites and hotlines where they can get further counselling sessions to help them kick their addiction. Rehabilitation centres are also available to help young people kick their addiction and rehabilitation sessions are usually free of charge as they are usually government funded or run by governmental organisations. According to the National Addiction Management Service, the success rates of these rehabilitation centres are usually high where four in five people who attended the sessions have completely stopped smoking cigarettes, consuming alcohol or gaming excessively. I concede that help is available for young people to kick their addiction. However, use of these websites and hotlines, and participation in rehabilitation sessions is on a voluntary basis. Not many people who are addicted to bad habits would seek help as most of the time, these people do not realise that they are in fact addicted and do not see the need to seek help. Hence, help for people who are addicted may not be as effective as the young people who are addicted may not use these services in the first place. Hence, young people are still increasingly in danger of addiction despite the help that is available.

These critics would also argue that the governments are showing support to prevent young people from getting addicted to bad habits such as implementing stricter legislations. One such example would be the gradual raising of the legal age to purchase tobacco and cigarettes in Singapore. It has been raised from eighteen years to nineteen years old and subsequently to twenty one by 2021. In addition, there will be the implementation of stricter punishments for those caught or involved in substance abuse. Along with more stringent identification checks or with breathalyzer tests in schools,

these legislations usually come with punishments that would deter young people from using or buying products such as cigarettes or liquor if they do not meet the age limit. Thus, these measure can help prevent young people from getting addicted to bad habits. However, many young people who do not meet the age requirements can still get around such restrictions if they really want to smoke. They can still obtain cigarettes from friends and family who also smoke and drink alcohol or buy from retailers who are profit-motivated and do not help to enforce the law. For example, a social experiment found that in Singapore, when a baby-faced actor went to multiple shops to buy cigarettes, six in ten did not check his identity card, nor did they verbally ask him his age. This shows how the lack of cooperation from retailers as well as friends and family has affected the effectiveness of legislation by governments and rendered it almost ineffective. Hence, young people in todays' world are still increasingly in danger of addictions despite the stricter legislations implemented.

Ultimately, addiction of any kind is a socially damaging issue, more so if our young are involved. The consequences and effects are long lasting. Certainly, various measures exist to manage the threat of addictions but they are not always effective. To say that all hope is lost, is a defeatist and pointless sentiment that will not tackle the issue. However, in the face of such overwhelming evidence and growing trends, one must admit that young people now indeed face a challenge in avoiding addictions.

**Darryl Lee**  
**19S501**

**Remarks:**

Points raised are logical and there is a clear attempt to cite characteristics of today's world/ youths today. Some specific examples cited although focus was mostly on Singapore examples.

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**Q2: Young people in today's world are increasingly in danger of addictions. Do you agree?**  
**(TMJC JC1 MYE 2019)**

Addictions can come in many different forms. Someone who is addicted is generally unable to control themselves due to the extent that they have become addicted to a particular habit- it becomes a necessity or even an essential part of their lives. They feel the need to do this particular activity and would find it difficult to stop. Young people or teenagers can be said to be more likely to be more prone to addictions due to their impressionable ages. Addicts can turn one violent if their addictions are not satisfied. Although the government is taking measures to prevent addiction, the advancement of technology and peer pressure makes it even harder for the young to prevent themselves from experimenting with harmful substances and getting addicted.

Firstly, the advancement of technology in today's world and the power of the wireless network makes young people increasingly in danger of addictions. An advancement in technology would mean that technology is now made available to more people, especially online related technology. This advancement includes the creation of more games - online gaming, video gaming or even computer gaming. As more games are being invented, it leads to higher chances of people being lured into this 'trap' due to the attractiveness of the gaming industry. Games are designed in a way that would appeal more to teenagers. Technology also includes communication, where technologically savvy teenagers are able to research on drug selling stores such as cocaine and even buy drugs from illegal shops that are prohibited by law. For example, it was found that 72% of Americans take part in video gaming and

over half of them were teenagers. Games such as PUBG mobile and Fortnite are very popular currently and feature greatly in young people's addictions. There are over a million downloads for these games. Nearly one in ten youths are addicted to video gaming and this number is expected to rise. Thus, the exponential advancement of technology leads to the invention of new games and is one of the leading causes of addictions.

Secondly, pressure on the young is often the result of their addiction. Addiction takes on many forms - be it smoking, abusing drugs or gaming. In today's world, the young often get pressured by their friends to try something new and often something negative. Bad company in schools influences other students to game, smoke or even try out drugs. They claim that what they are doing is for the relieving of stress. In modern society, more and more emphasis is being placed on results, leading to increasing stress unlike in the past. It leads to dependence on substance or habits as ways of escaping from problems. In a study conducted in Singapore, it was shown that peer pressure is one of the biggest causes of stress, as the young feel left out if they do not follow the 'trend' by smoking or taking drugs. It was also found that quite a number of youths had already tried smoking during their stressful schooling years. 76% of students reported feeling anxious even if they were well prepared for examinations, as reported by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development. The need to blend into society forces one to be pressurised into doing things they previously did not want to, but addictions have made it seem necessary for youths to smoke or take drugs. Hence, peer pressure leads to youths being in danger of addiction and addiction will continue until further help is given to them.

Thirdly, young people in today's world are increasingly in danger of addictions due to their greater exposure to the world around them, where the media glamorises substance abuse and other addictions. Young people being active and curious would want to try new things and dabble in addictive substances. The young tend to be risk takers and curious about things they have not done before. Hence they might want to try new things and experiences and the knowledge that these substances are forbidden increases temptation. This in turn will lead to addiction as once the product is tried, it will be hard for them to stop. Although the young might know about the detrimental harms these potentially cause, they become more aware of how it works as curiosity gets the better of them. Studies have shown that a large portion of youth are aware of the existence of addictive substances and their associated harms. Thus, the knowledge about these goods and the temptations that accompany them make the young increasingly in danger of addictions as it is likely they would succumb to these temptations.

Critics that disagree that young people in today's world are increasingly in danger of addictions would say that governments are stepping up in a number of ways to prevent these addictions. These governments are can play a significant role in doing this; some ways this could be accomplished could be carrying out campaigns, enacting legislation and regulations or even ensuring the modifications of these addictive products in order to reduce the addictive or harmful qualities these possess. It cannot be denied that the government has played a role in deterring the public from consuming addictive goods. For instance, in Singapore, the government has made changes to cigarette packs such that 70% of the pack has to carry warning graphics compared to only 50% in the past. Also, the smoking age has risen to 19 as of 2019 and will continue to rise to 21 in 2021. Hence, the danger of being addicted will be reduced as there is a lesser chance of youths becoming addicted due to these warnings. Also, fines for smoking or buying drugs illegally have been set forth and punishment will be meted out for offenders. This will discourage and deter people from buying addictive goods, especially the young. This hopefully



will make addiction a less serious problem as the government wields its authority wisely; the vast majority of young people will be aware of these changes made, leaving them no choice but to stop smoking or taking drugs or at least reduce their consumption. Hence, the government has revised rules and regulations and has made great headway in alerting youths to the dangers of addictions. These measures are proving increasingly effective in decreasing the danger of youths being addicted.

Critics of young people in today's world being increasingly in danger of addictions would say that there is more awareness about addictions through education. Schools often hold assembly talks about the dangers of addiction and invite distinguished guests to educate the students. Students can learn about realistic ways to cope with addictions too. Communities are also doing their part by holding campaigns to warn citizens about addictions and ways to manage them. It cannot be denied that education does help in managing addictions. Advertisement is also used as a platform for conveying messages about addictions. For instance, counselling is given in schools to help addictions especially to do with gaming. Thus, help is given to these teenagers to prevent them from being lured into addiction as well as tips given on how they can avoid as well as overcome it.

In conclusion, young people in today's world are still largely in danger of addiction. Though the government plays its role in preventing addiction, factors such as the advancement of technology still outweigh the help that the government provides. Hence, we should look into the ways to curb addiction while the government should be even stricter in punishing those who have offended and hopefully the dangers of addiction can be minimised over time.

**Kwok Ying Jie Hillary**  
**19S204**

**Remarks:**

Relevant points raised with some depth of argument; range of points; focused on 'increasingly'. Illustrations could be more wide-ranging and concrete. Contextualise examples as to where & when, if possible. There was attempt at balance although a little awkwardly managed.

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**Q5 Assess the view that technology is advancing too fast. (TMJC JC1 MYE 2019)**

Technology is currently the main driving force of the globe. It powers many things, from workplace productivity to the stock exchange. However, as the great comic book artist Stan Lee once wrote, "With great power comes great responsibility". The human world has become slowly cognizant of the immense responsibility that technology has endowed upon the human race. As such, many fearful of such great responsibility have started questioning the speed at which technology is advancing in this day and age. I however beg to differ from the viewpoint that technology has outpaced us.

Many who argue that technology is advancing too fast often use statistics, pointing to the rate of the advancement of technology over a matter of mere years, examples of these being the mobile phone and computer technology. They fear that the breakneck speed in which technology has been advancing in recent years could lead to a Terminator-like future. However, this is not the case anytime soon due to actual physical limits. Intel's founder Gordon Moore proposed his famous Moore's Law,

stating that the computing power of chips in computers would double every year. Sure enough, this Law has been seen to be relatively valid through recent years. Conversely, Moore's Law becomes less and less applicable with the passing of time as Intel themselves have reached the limit of how thin they can cut silicon to make smaller and more powerful chips to fit into computers and smartphones. As silicon is currently the main material for CPU (central processing unit) cores, the speed in which technology is advancing in the physical sense will actually eventually slow down in the future, until future research bears fruit. This, however, is referring to the future as not enough focus has been actually placed on overcoming the limits of silicon. All in all, such a view that technology is moving too fast in the physical sense is not possible due to actual physical atomic limits and insufficient research; technology is actually slowing down.

In addition to the fears of the inability to control technology due to the exponential speed of advancement, many also fear that technology is advancing too fast to actually learn how to use it. In contrast technology throughout the years has become more user friendly, to the point that most people are able to simply pick it up and use it intuitively. Take 'Google Voice' for instance. Google has recently enabled its voice assistant to speak colloquial languages in addition to its already large repository of languages. This allows many, even if they do not speak a "proper" or standard language, to be able to use technology. As such, it seems that technology is not advancing so fast that people have difficulty picking it up. It is advancing at a rate fast enough for more people to easily learn how to use it.

Technology is not actually moving too fast; rather it is just small improvements in technologies that have already been explored or unexplored for decades. Most current innovations that polarise are based on the frameworks of Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning. When the world was suddenly stunned by AlphaGo and Sophia, the champion Go playing robot and humanoid robot respectively, most thought that it was something very new and foreign, but had however been already developed in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century, yet plagued by the economic crises and the lack of interest and funding, which has slowed down the technology required. All in all, technology is not moving too fast, for what gives people the impression of speed is that they have never been aware of the existence of such technology, and realising this existence leads to an inaccurate or erroneous sense of it being fast moving.

It is clear that many people describe the tech industry as advancing too fast just by judging the sheer volume of information that is gathered every day. While this is true, it is also due to the great accessibility of technology in the world. With just a computer, the internet and cheaply available accessories, one can easily step into the world of computer development. Technology has progressed at a normal rate or even slowed down due to a multitude of factors but with the sheer number of people working on the problem, it has accelerated technology in the world around us. An example is the online machine learning site Kaggle, which has over a million users solving machine learning problems, which has undoubtedly sped up technological advances via open source codes. All in all, it is logical to say that technology is advancing too fast due to the sheer number of users.

In addition, many also point to the current trending DeepFake phenomenon, whereby technology is used to impersonate someone. The DeepFake technology has currently been misused to impersonate political figures and even undress others. In this sense, many can claim that technology is advancing too fast as tools developed can easily go out of control and be used for malicious purposes. However, leaders in the technology sectors have become cognizant of such pernicious aftereffects and have acted to remedy it. Elon Musk, founder of Tesla and SpaceX, has repeatedly called for the

technology sector to ensure their product is adequately used. The creators of the DeepFake App that undresses people has already pulled the application off the Application Store. In the field of molecular biology, the CRISPR Cas9 gene editing technology has been put on hold by its creators to prevent other negative side effects. As such, though technology is indeed moving fast, there are actions taken to prevent it from moving too fast and unleashing pernicious effects on the world.

To conclude, technology is currently moving faster than before in the increasingly peaceful and prosperous world we live in. Like everything that has the potential to change the world, its progress frightens many who are fearful of the new and clamour to stop this advancement. With its apparent benefits, the view that technology is moving too fast will soon be extinct as it will integrate into our lives and allow us to better tackle future challenges as yet witnessed. Its benefits will soon be recognised as the speed it moves at will ultimately be justified. After all, as technology changes and evolves, this view about it will also evolve in accordance to its ability to satisfy human needs.

**Goh Zhen Rong**  
**19S304**

**Remarks:**

A somewhat mature consideration of the issue. Shows a clear understanding and wide knowledge of the issue. Good examples.

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**Q6. How well are the needs of the elderly met in your society? (TMJC JC1 MYE 2019)**

Singapore is one of the many nations dealing with a rapidly ageing population. Experts claim that Singapore's elderly population (consisting of people aged 65 and above) will make up 40% of the entire population by 2020. Therefore, it is important to ensure the needs of the elderly are strongly met in Singapore. Currently, I think the healthcare and social needs of the elderly in Singapore are adequately met. However, while certain needs such as those in the economic and employment aspects are met, they can be further improved or more could be done.

The healthcare needs of the elderly in Singapore are certainly met as proven by the fact that Singaporeans have an average lifespan of 83 years, which is remarkable considering it is one of the highest in the world. Singapore is able to cater to the growing healthcare demands by introducing a series of measures and policies. One of them is 'Medisave'. 'Medisave' is a national medical savings scheme that helps individuals pay for their various medical expenses. When Singaporeans receive their monthly salary, a portion of it goes into the 'Medisave' account. Even though they can use these funds to pay for their medical bills while they are still working or have not retired, there is a minimum sum that is set aside for their healthcare needs in old age too. In addition, Singapore is well-known for having a well-established medical infrastructure that is affordable and easily accessible. The government-owned polyclinics even offer subsidies and free consultations for low-income elderly. Hence, I believe the healthcare needs of the elderly in Singapore are well met.

Secondly, I believe the social needs of the elderly in Singapore are sufficiently met. Social needs refer to the need to have relationships with others once the physiological and safety needs have been fulfilled. In Singapore, there are many elderly activity centres in various neighbourhoods. These activity centres are equipped with a wide variety of facilities and equipment such as mini gyms and mahjong tiles and tables. This allows many of the elderly folks to interact with each other and make new friends.

Through playing games and having fun with their fellow elderly members, they can foster a sense of companionship which they may otherwise lack. Many of them are not able to interact with their children often due to their children's busy lifestyle. Also, there are many volunteering activities in Singapore where students and young people go to old folks home to spend some time with the elderly. Many of them would prepare entertaining skits and performances for the elderly to watch and brighten up their day. Based on the many social activities the elderly in Singapore can participate in, I reckon the social needs of the elderly in Singapore are well met.

Some argue that the employment needs of the elderly are not well met and should be improved. It is believed that one should embark on lifelong learning and continue to hone one's skills even when one is older. In many cases, Singaporean employers are seen firing their older employees, deeming them as being slow and useless, and replacing them with younger people. These employers do not provide their elderly workers with additional training to upgrade their skills and knowledge but instead choose to replace them with more efficient younger workers. However, this is not the case for the whole of Singapore's society. If employers refuse to or cannot provide additional training for the elderly workers, they can still sign up for one of the 'SkillsFuture' programmes by the government. In this programme, the elderly can attend a series of workshops and seminars relevant to their profession to further hone their skills and knowledge. The elderly can even interact with potential employers and showcase their skills to them. After completing the training, the government will even help look for suitable jobs for the participants. Therefore, I believe that there are still many employment opportunities to satisfy the needs of the elderly despite the ill-treatment of some employers.

Many claim that some of the elderly in Singapore are unable to satisfy their economic needs and are living in poverty. Many of these elderly reside in one-room flats and have no children to take care of them. In many cases, they also have chronic diseases such as diabetes which puts a heavy load on their finances. After spending a large sum of money paying off medical bills, these elderly have little to no money for other expenses such as food and electricity. However, this kind of situation only happens to a small portion of the elderly who are living alone. These less fortunate elderly can request for financial assistance from the government which will definitely improve their living conditions. In addition, there are many charitable organisations in Singapore, such as 'Willing Hearts', which help look after the less fortunate elderly. They deliver hot meals to the doorstep of the elderly and even help clean their houses for free. Although the economic needs of certain elderly people are not met, all in all most of the elderly are able to get by financially with the help of some charitable organisations and the government.

In conclusion, after looking at the different needs that the elderly of Singapore have in terms of healthcare, social, economic and employment, I believe our society has sufficient well-placed infrastructure to satisfy those needs and will continue to provide for them for years to come.

**Joe Choo**  
**19S205**

**Remarks:**

Needs of the elderly are generally articulated. There are some clear attempts at evaluating government measures/ policies. There could be more consideration of non-government programmes to meet the needs of the elderly. Good language ability, well-controlled, clear structure throughout.

**Q6. How well are the needs of the elderly met in your society? (TMJC JC1 MYE 2019)**

In this current day and age, the elderly make up a huge proportion of my society. One in every five Singaporeans is an elderly person who is more than 65 years. With the large number of elderly people, resources have to be allocated to address their needs. The government has dedicated a significant number of measures to manage the physical, financial and emotional needs. Hence I think that the needs of the elderly in my society are met to a large extent.

Firstly, the physical needs of the elderly in my society are met. As the elderly are generally weaker because of their deteriorating strength and immunity, which comes with age, more care has to be provided for them. Their bones become more brittle, their muscles become weaker and their strength fades. They tend to develop problems such as bone deformities, aches and pains and some even have dementia, thus losing some or most of their memories. These problems that come with old age can however be delayed or curbed by physical exercise. Exercise strengthens bones and muscles, as well as boosts one's mood due to the endorphins that are released. The government has hence dedicated numerous fitness centres specially for the elderly. Neighbourhood parks usually have an 'Elderly Zone' for the elderly to exercise, with machines suitable for them. In addition, there is also infrastructure built specifically for them. There are grab bars installed in the majority of the public toilets to aid them and prevent them from slipping and falling down. Extended time is also factored in for the elderly to cross the road safely. With all these actions taken by the government, I think that their physical needs are met to a large extent.

Secondly, the financial needs of the elderly are met in my society as well. The elderly usually either do not work anymore due to their frail health or are preparing for retirement. Regardless of their specific situation, they will be working less than before as their bodies can no longer take long working hours. Their income would thus be at a lower level than before and they would experience greater strains in paying their bills. As the cost of living in Singapore is quite high, things are becoming more expensive. They may then have trouble managing their daily expenses along with their other bills, such as electricity bills or treatment fees. Recognising these problems, the government has implemented a slew of healthcare financial aid schemes for the elderly. The 'Pioneer Generation Package' provide subsidies for them, relieving their financial burden. The generous subsidies ensure affordable healthcare for the elderly and encourage them to go for check-ups and seek treatment with a lowered cost. This then ensures that their health is in check and at the same time allows them greater financial stability. 'Medisave' is another scheme set up by the government. It helps individuals save and pay for their medical expenses especially in their old age. With these schemes and programmes the government thus addresses their financial needs and capability.

Thirdly, the social needs of the elderly in my society are also met. As mentioned above, they are unable to work long hours and sometimes do not have a job, spending most of their day alone. Those with children spend the whole day alone until their children return from work at night, while some completely live alone. This is unhealthy for their social well-being as prolonged periods of time spent alone may lead to boredom or feelings of isolation. When they feel isolated. They may become sad and withdrawn. When they are bored, their creativity and thinking skills are hindered as they have nothing to do as they are cooped up at home. Therefore, the government has set up places to meet the social needs of the elderly through Senior Care Centres and Senior Activity Centres. More and more of such

places are being built usually at the void decks of apartment blocks. One example is the Lions Befrienders Seniors Activity Centre at Tampines. Instead of doing nothing productive at home, the elderly are very much engaged at these centres. These places provide recreation for the elderly as they get to interact with other elderly people and make friends, enhancing their communication skills. These places also provide games and entertainment to ensure that the elderly get to spend their time more meaningfully, which enhances their mood. These interactions help them foster a greater sense of belonging to the community, deterring any feelings of isolation. Hence, the social needs of the elderly in my society are met due to the activities catered for them, ensuring their welfare is taken care of.

Some people may say that the needs of the elderly are not met sufficiently. There are many technologically advanced devices that we use in our daily lives which the elderly may be unfamiliar with or are unsure how to use. For example some restaurants now use electronic self-ordering machines instead of the traditional going-to-counter to order their food. These critics say the elderly are not tech-savvy enough and these technologies are causing them inconvenience. However, there are now many courses for the elderly to take up, regarding how to keep up with the advancing world. These courses teach them the basic technological skills that they need, increasing their level of technological adaptation, allowing them to keep in touch with the current digital age.

Other critics have also mentioned that the recreational needs of the elderly are not met. They believe that with Singapore becoming an increasingly developed country, most of the recreational activities are targeted for adults or children, not the aged. They feel that recreational activities such as the Prudential Marina Bay Carnival and even shopping malls mainly cater to the interests of youngsters. Shopping malls are mainly filled with restaurants and stalls that do not really meet the dietary requirements of the elderly. The only places that might cater to the needs of the elderly would be the food court or salons, which may be expensive for some of the elderly. However, I think that it is not true that there are no activities for the elderly. There are many events dedicated for the elderly now such as dancing sessions held in malls. For example, in Sembawang, there are Zumba sessions held in Sun Plaza mall. Hence their recreational needs are met.

In conclusion, I think that the needs of the elderly in my society are met to a large extent, given that the government has taken the initiative to tackle the elderly's social, physical and financial needs. The numerous initiatives have been really effective in ensuring the well-being of the elderly and thus I believe that their needs are addressed significantly.

**Jovial Ang**  
**19S413**

**Remarks:**

Good that you attempted to explain needs specific to the elderly in Singapore and what is being done to meet these needs. Measures mentioned tend to be government-centric in general. Would be good to consider how SG society or the community is doing in terms of meeting the needs of the elderly. Also, a stronger essay would consider more carefully the impact and effectiveness of these measures that you've mentioned.

## **Q6 How well are the needs of the elderly met in your society? (TMJC JC1 MYE 2019)**

It is estimated that by the end of 2020, over 50% of the citizens in Singapore will be 65 years old and above. It is a well-known fact that the silver generation are getting increasingly old, many are already in their golden years. They are physically weaker, their savings are decreasing rapidly and they are at higher risk of life-threatening health conditions. So, are they prepared for it? I firmly believe that Singapore has done many things well enough to meet the needs of the elderly in the last phase of their lives.

One major concern the elderly have is that they are at higher risk of falling ill. As the average life expectancy of the population has increased to 85 years, people are living longer lives. The older they are, the more the immune system struggles to keep up. This results in them more being susceptible to diseases. In addition, with the rising cost of living, healthcare is becoming more and more unaffordable. The government has taken concrete steps to reduce such a potential problem. For example, there are various subsidies and schemes such as Medisave and Medishield. These provide a safety net that allows them to get subsidies for major operations as well as providing free checkups once in a while. This ensures that healthcare becomes affordable for the elderly, addressing one of their main concerns.

Another need that I feel that has been well met is the need for infrastructure. As one grows older, one's muscles gradually deteriorate, especially when one does not exercise. The elderly will struggle harder to do physical activities and little injuries that do not worry the younger generation may even affect their mobility. The government has ensured that the burden on the elderly is reduced. For instance, the government has made it mandatory to have a ramp at every HDB block and at most sheltered walkways with stairs. This is to ensure that the elderly would not need to risk their lives climbing up the stairs. One simple fall may cause them to be paralyzed from their lower half down. Another infrastructural adaptation is the seats in the public buses, which are yellow in colour as well as the side seats on the Mass Rapid Transport (MRT) which are reserved mainly for the elderly so that they would not have to suffer from standing way past their physical limits. Therefore, these are some of the many caring considerations society has carried out to meet the needs of the elderly in the infrastructural aspect.

The government has also put in effort to reduce the problem of poor finances some elderly have to face. As they are living longer, sometimes their savings are not enough to cover the daily expenditure they will have to incur. It could come in the form of utility bills, laundry powder or daily necessities like food. As such, to meet these financial needs, Schemes have been implemented to help the elderly reduce living costs. For example, it is required for citizens to set aside a portion of their income into the Central Provident Fund (CPF); after they retire, they will get a monthly payout of about 1000 to 2000 dollars a month for the rest of their lives. This is to help the elderly or soon-to-be elderly have a plan for retirement, which is usually the case when one does not have a habit of saving. Each elderly also has a card that allows them to use public transport for free to reduce some of the travelling expenditure, especially when they rely heavily on such modes of transport. In addition, the Merdeka Package has been given to the elderly born before a certain year and this gives the elderly some money and helps them cover living costs. Hence, with such schemes, the financial situation of the elderly will be improved and they will be able to make ends meet.

Critics claim that one important need that is not well addressed in Singapore is the sociability factor. When the old age dependency ratio increases, the younger working population are pressured to work to help provide for their families, especially when the living costs are rising rapidly. This results in them working longer hours or multiple jobs. Consequently, less time will be spent with their parents and their children. One of the common wishes that many elderly have is to be able to talk and have fun with their family, which seems less and less possible in this day and age. In the worst case scenario, the elderly might be placed in elderly homes when the younger breadwinner could not earn enough for the family to cover living costs. However, concrete steps have now been carried out to reduce this problem. There are volunteer opportunities at elderly homes organized by the One People Association to create interactions between people of all walks of life. Neighborhood community centers have also created activities to encourage interactions between the elderly. For example, Siglap Community Center organizes baking classes for the elderly who are interested in sharing their knowledge on cooking and exchanging tips on preparation methods. There is even the monthly brisk walking where people across generations come together to exercise and bond with each other. Thus although the problem of loneliness cannot easily be solved, the activities organized will at least brighten up their lives and increase the sociability factor for these elderly people.

Some people also argue that the elderly are unable to keep up with the technological trend. This is quite true as it is not something they grew up with. It is quite obvious that a technological barrier is not very easily overcome and could make the elderly feel left out in today's world. However, different provisions have been made regarding the use of mobile phones such as providing different language or dialect options or free lessons that educate the elderly in using common technology. It is generally perceived that the elderly are not as adept at using modern technology and are not ready to meet changes in lifestyle due to more advanced technology popping up every day. Thus, the struggles they have with new technology are ongoing and not very well addressed.

In conclusion, Singapore has placed a lot of emphasis on the aging population, catering to almost all aspects of their lives including healthcare, infrastructure and finance. However, some factors such as having company and the technological barrier still needs further addressing in order for all of the significant needs of the elderly to be well met.

**Darryl Tjin Ming Jun**  
**19S304**

**Remarks:**

Balanced essay that mainly hits the right note for this question.

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**Q12. Consider the value of imagination. (TMJC JC1 MYE 2019)**

Emotions, intellect, sensation; the capabilities of the human mind are endless, and we are all blessed with a gift that our minds enable us to do - to imagine. When one ponders upon the term 'imagination', possible ideas that come to mind initially, largely have to do with the perception of a child who has yet to experience the world and thus faces endless possibilities. However, upon further analysis of the word, a few correlations can be made, such as the terms 'innovation' and 'creativity'. Imagination



is in its very essence, thinking as it spurs us to think and develop. It is not merely something associated only with childhood. In our rapidly changing world, the value of 'imagination' becomes even more significant and ought to be appreciated by us.

Imagination is what enables creativity. It is the sole tool, which comes in the form of the human mind, that allows us to think and expand our capabilities. Without it, what would our world be? Its value is very significant and fundamental as it is something we apply to every aspect of our lives. Even something as trivial as pondering upon what one should eat for the day requires the ability of imagination! Creativity is a skill that has led us to where we are today, the 4th Industrial Revolution. It requires thinking, which fundamentally links to imagination. The 4th Industrial Revolution is largely characterised by technological advancements, utilising the power of technology to improve the way our world works, from businesses and corporations to the domestic fields. To reach this stage of modernization and quality of living required decades of research and development, culminating into what we have today. Step by step, ideas which sprouted from many minds were built upon and were slowly improved on, achieving evolutionary progress. This all started from the essence of imagination. A century ago, who could have ever thought light bulbs would become a reality? Who would have ever thought people would be able to connect with one another at the push of a button? Imagination is essentially what made all these possible.

Imagination is also the essence of motivation. In order to spur oneself, one would require evaluation of the present and subsequently, the possible future, in order to find a contrast. This contrast is what people use in order to determine what steps are needed and how much effort is required to reach a desired level. To visualise these requires imagination; a lot of it. For example, in the aspect of social advocacy movements, what spurs people to embark on their mission of raising awareness is the thought of a world that addresses their cause, taking steps to mitigate existing problems. Such movements are largely led by millennials who have the passion and confidence to act upon their imagination of a better world for all. A specific example would be the legalization of same-sex marriages in Taiwan, which is a huge feat achieved by the LGBT movement, considering Asia's relatively more conservative culture. Imagination is what motivates and spurs such movements and its effect is evidently playing out in the world scene.

On a personal level, imagination allows us to connect deeply with others, synchronising our thoughts and emotions with those of others, which is a critical skill in establishing and developing relationships. Imagination is what allows rational thinking, inhibiting us from acting upon our emotions impulsively. In a fit of anger, when one takes a step back to reflect and 'imagine' what the other party is going through, conflicts can be avoided and in place of hostility, a deeper connection is created instead. When a friend is in need, we 'imagine' what we would do if we were to be in their shoes, enabling us to provide comfort and perhaps even offer meaningful advice that could largely impact him or her. Imagination is a useful tool that allows us to not just perceive others at a superficial level but with emotional depth. Such a skill is even more vital considering the increase in mental health issues as a result of the advent of the Internet and recent increase of academic stress, especially in countries like South Korea and China which have seen suicide cases rising as a consequence of academic stress. Many face insecurity issues due to the portrayal of the supposedly ideal physical appearance increasingly predominant in social media. In the world we live in, we need imagination to aid those experiencing demons of their own, allowing us to empathise with them and connect with them.

On the contrary, there is also the view that imagination causes people to be unrealistic, impractical and self-indulgent. Although imagination takes place in the mind, it effectively influences and determines the actions of people. Some may aim for levels that are unfortunately and realistically speaking, way beyond their capabilities. As a result, they waste time on a desired goal which they have a high chance of not achieving. However, what is the basis of 'unrealism'? Unrealistic imaginings can be harmful, or at the very least, disappointing. For example, unrealistic imagination could see an unfit person imagining being able to run as fast as Usain Bolt in the matter of a month's practice. Thus,

without some realistic boundaries put in place, imagination can serve to waste an individual's time and disappoint them. Yet, we have no right to discourage others' dreams and quell imagination. Furthermore, even if one were to be 'unrealistic' in his or her imagination, with sufficient effort and perseverance, he or she may still achieve a great feat, despite not attaining the desired goal. Thus, the value of imagination is still significant.

However, it can be conceded that imagination causes people to go overboard, fueling their abnormal obsessions and even spurring them to commit crimes. This is true in a sense that imagination can lead to obsessions due to excessive thinking and inappropriate desires. What spurs psychopaths is their imagination of the outcome of their actions which can cause them to lose sight of proper morals. They end up being too caught up in the confines of their own minds, having no sense of basic right or wrong, resulting in crimes.

All in all, imagination is a tool we should treasure and utilise with great care. It is a gift we are all blessed with and when used appropriately, results in fruitful achievements. Imagination spurs life on and our world is where it is at today as a result of it.

**Eliza Faith Fetalsana**  
**19S303**

**Remarks:**

Some really insightful arguments raised and balance is achieved. However, examples could be better explained and linked to the POC. Fluent, with some good vocabulary used.

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**Q12 Consider the value of imagination (TMJC JC1 MYE 2019)**

Whether it be idle daydreaming or creating beautiful works of art, the human mind is constantly engaging its imagination. I believe that imagination plays an important part in our daily lives as well as in the advancement of society and it should thus be cherished.

In the past, back when horse carriages and the steam engine reigned supreme, a man named Jules Verne dreamed up a ship that could travel great distances under water. He published his book titled, "20 000 Leagues Under the Sea" and it was placed in the science fiction genre as such a vehicle was considered impossible for the technology of its time. Now, in the modern world, there are various submarines of different makes and models that exceed any imagined in Jules Verne's wildest imagination. This shows that imagination can act as a catalyst for innovation, advancing humanity in ways that might not have been thought of before. Thus, this shows the practical aspect of imagination's value.

Imagination can also breed individuality. A group of researchers conducted a test with twenty different volunteers. They were each told to draw a circle, a square, a triangle and a rectangle all on the same paper in that order. Even though the instructions were the same for all participating subjects, the researchers ended up with many different designs made out of these basic shapes. If this test were to be done on computers, twenty identical copies would most likely have been made. This shows that everyone has a markedly different imagination which is what defines them and makes them unique. If everyone came up with the same ideas and solutions, the world would be indeed a very dull place.

Therefore, imagination is important as it helps people shape their views of the world and how they approach different situations; as the saying goes, "Variety is the spice of life".

Imagination can bring life to life. It is through imagination that great works of art are produced. It is through imagination that many poems and plays can be written. It is through imagination that incredible worlds and multi-faceted characters can be stored within the confines of a book. Humour, literature, dreams and ideas all stem from the sea of imagination from their creators. Without imagination, mankind may have stagnated back in the Stone Age, staring at nothing and never wondering if there was more to life. Thus, imagination is important as it allows us to enjoy life to the fullest, moving past basic physiological needs and into emotional fulfilment.

Despite that, there are some people who are of the opinion that imagination is useless. Why sit around doing nothing but thinking of ideas when the traditional tried and true methods have been working reliably? They believe that having an imagination is childish and impractical for the real world as there is no room in the modern fast-paced society to slow down. They might also feel that having an imagination is no longer needed as everything that could be done has already been done, thus there is no point in trying to dream up something of their own. I disagree with both of these viewpoints. Although it is true that most idle daydreamers are simply wasting time and procrastinating, there are other occasions when they have come up with alternative, more efficient methods to solve whatever issues they are facing which more than makes up for the time they have spent just by thinking hard. Bill Gates was famously quoted saying that he would rather hire the lazy as they would be more likely to think of alternate solutions and use their imaginations to lessen their workload. Likewise, even though many things have already been envisioned and achieved, there is always room for growth. For example, it was previously thought that sub-atomic particles such as neutrons were the smallest things in existence. Recently, a team of scientists have been able to find matter that is even smaller, showing that previously established facts and ideas can always be challenged.

To put it simply, I still firmly believe that the human imagination is priceless and should be valued simply because it is what makes us human. It defines us, helps us reach greater heights and separates us from the other creatures we share the planet with, even though sometimes it can be more of a hindrance than a help. Through all the sleepless nights cooking up ideas, the stories and legends told through the ages and the great halls and towers erected in the urban landscape, humanity has indeed left its mark through the use of human imagination.

**Leroy Toh**  
**19S401**

**Remarks:**

A number of good points raised, backed by decent examples. Perhaps another OVR would help. Relatively fluent.