

Question: Education is a lifelong journey. What kind of qualities do you think a lifelong learner should have?

1. Defining your key terms

- **Education:** not just about learning within classrooms, in schools – education as *less* of the *context* in which you are learning, but the *content* of what skills you are learning → albeit a new skill, new ideas, new knowledge about the world, scientific discovery, reading, learning about yourself – the key thing about defining education is to be able to take on a **broader perspective about it**
- **Lifelong journey:** learning does not stop once you graduate from school, it should continue throughout one's lifetime – good to keep this key term in mind when considering the qualities of a lifelong learner, because it would contain certain characteristics that would differentiate it from simply being a student in school

2. Thinking deeper – reflective questions

- Why do you think lifelong education is important? What are the practical benefits of lifelong learning? Why is education essential to us as human beings?
- Lifelong education has an increasingly **important practical benefit** in today's society
- In many of Singapore's workforce policies, to increase the quality of our human capital – the government has been introducing many **skills upgrading lessons** for the **older generation of the population**
- Eg: **Singapore Lifelong Learning credits** given free to Singaporeans 25 years old and above – to allow them to apply and take up learning courses provided + **Workforce Development Agency** regularly coming up with new courses for individuals to enhance their skills and occupational knowledge
- The emphasis on lifelong education is important to the individual for **keeping up with the quickly changing economic and labour conditions** within the country, to remain **competitive** and **employable** even as the type of jobs and skills needed with the economic restructuring that occurs
- Having an population that is able to keep **their skills updated to the rapidly shifting needs** of the global economic conditions is also advantageous to the national economy and prosperity
- Besides these practical economic benefits to the individuals and nations, lifelong learning itself is something worth pursuing

- Maximizing our knowledge and understanding of this world, discovering the mysteries of the world, making sense of our social environment and this place we live in – will require us to continue learning even beyond our classroom years
- Education, when taken on as a lifelong journey – will enhance the individual's cognitive ability, learning skills, worldly knowledge, and give them a better, fully understanding of this world that they inhabit
- Education open up windows of opportunities within the economy, but it also opens up new perspectives to the mind that helps us to evaluate the way we used to see this world and bring in refreshing insights to us

2. **Lifelong learner should also be effective learners** – effective learners mean someone who can retain their learnt knowledge well, applying it to solve real world problems, and make a positive impact with that knowledge

3. **What kind of impression does 'lifelong' give you?** The entire lifelong process, as we have mentioned earlier, should not last only during years where one is actually receiving formal education – lifelong learning means to be consistently learning new things until we absolutely cannot do so due to health reasons

- Hence, **what makes an effective lifelong learner?** → not one that simply learns throughout life, but looking at what the individual *does* with the knowledge!

Some possible qualities:

Point	Elaboration
Discipline	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➔ Even without the settings of a classroom and the punishments/incentives imposed by the teachers, a lifelong learner is able to continue to train himself/herself to pick up the new skills and knowledge that would be useful for them ➔ Many of us are only motivated when there is a rule/sanction imposed upon us to <i>have</i> to do something, and we lack initiative and the motivation to commit to learning outside the routine of formal schooling ➔ Discipline is therefore required to make sure that the individual is able to commit to the difficult learning process that every beginner would face
Passion and a genuine love for learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➔ It is important for us to be passionate about what we do ➔ Oftentimes, it is our own passion and love for the things we do that gets us through the toughest times and biggest challenges ➔ When we have the passion for learning new skills and knowing new facts, even as more and more responsibilities and duties we have to commit to start to make continuous learning a difficult thing to pursue, we would not think about stopping

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➔ Our passion for learning becomes what makes it fun – the challenges themselves become exciting and fulfilling to overcome ➔ A genuine desire to learn new things is what will continuously motivate us to keep seeking for new knowledge, keeping the flame of desire to learn alive
Effective time management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➔ To learn beyond the school setting is also about coping with other roles and responsibilities that one would have at different stages of life ➔ For instance: one has to work, be a parent, care for aged parents, all of that while learning a new skill or reading a new book can be all too much for the individual without adequate and effective planning of time ➔ One can too caught up with other roles and even distractions such as more appealing entertainment. For example: online games, videos, TVs, movies – that makes sitting down to learn to play a new instrument or to begin to take up drawing lessons seem so impossible ➔ This is when time management becomes important – being able to prioritize one's time, which tasks to do first, which responsibilities should be done above all else, and how one can effectively save up on the time spent on unnecessary distractions like social media or TV and instead spend it on more productive learning processes
Resourcefulness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➔ Continuing to learn outside of classrooms and educational institutions can be hard because <u>finding new places whereby learning materials and guidance from mentors or teachers can be difficult</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⇒ A lifelong learner should also be resourceful in order to be able to find opportunities to learn new knowledge and skills B hb ⇒ Our reliance on the education system to provide us with knowledge has led to dependency and a lack of ability to find out other places where one can also pick up new skills and information ⇒ For instance, the lifelong learner should be resourceful enough to find out about the most affordable and high-quality classes to take on for what he/she is interested in – eg: dance classes, drawing classes, etc. ➔ this is especially so when private classes for adults is very expensive, and one would have to gather the right contacts/resources in order to be the most money-for-value lessons ⇒ An effective lifelong learner should also be resourceful enough to pick up skills and knowledge in ways <u>that work within the time and financial constraints</u>
Sharing your new knowledge and encouraging others to join in	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➔ Learning on one's own can be a very lonely journey with no one to share your joys of new knowledge and the skills you've adopted <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⇒ Being able to motivate others to join in the learning process with you, bringing friends along to your new classes, encouraging them to sign up and actively continue to learn even as they get caught up in work or families ➔ making your learning more interesting and less lonely!

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⇒ Will definitely make one's learning much more fruitful and rewarding ⇒ One is able to discuss and share what you've learnt with others to their benefit as well, putting to good use your knowledge to help others improve themselves and their lives ⇒ Applying one's knowledge and skills to resolve real-life problems is perhaps one of the biggest motivation to carry on our education despite not being in school → it is knowing that what we learn can actually make a difference to the lives of others and the environment around us
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Conclusion

1. Could end off with a relevant quote: as Gandhi said, *"Learn as if you were to live forever"*
2. The learning journey that we embark from since we are born should not be limited to merely the number of years we are formally schooled
3. Learning new skills and knowledge manifests in various ways beyond simply reading the textbooks or acing examinations – learning takes place everywhere, at every stage in our lives, and it depends greatly on our own initiative
4. Being able to translate and apply what we know into real-life application is our biggest reward