

NAVIGATE: WRITE WITH YOU

2020 1ST EDITION

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Message from the GP Team

Dear Eunoians,

“The art of writing is the art of discovering what you believe.” - Gustave Flaubert

In General Paper, you find yourself called again and again to the task of sharpening your writing, and in the process, sharpening your mind. To translate a world of messy, unordered ideas onto a page and have it make sense to your reader is no minor matter. Good writing requires that you write with purpose and discipline: to cut through the clutter in determining what is most important to say, and to exert the control to say it clearly. In crafting a good argument, you present your worldview and conviction. When you do so, you discover what matters in writing, and what matters to you.

Navigate began with you. As a collection of GP essays written by some of you and your seniors, it captures a snapshot of young people like yourselves in the process of making sense of the world and your place in it. Each piece of writing offers up some valuable lessons for you, both from the triumphs of their thoughtful writers and the struggles that even they continue to work on. It is our hope that from this issue you will learn, challenge ideas and be inspired, and that Navigate will continue with you: as you practise and hone the art of argumentative writing, your work will help guide fellow Eunoians.

All the best,

Your GP Teachers ♥

Essays and Paragraphs

JC1 P1 Promo Examination

- 1 To what extent is privacy realistic in this technologically-advanced age?
 - Richard Lei, 19-A2 (Full essay)
 - Maverick Wong, 19-A4 (Full essay)
 - Choy Wen Shao, 19-O4 (2 body paragraphs)
 - Gabriel Lim, 19-E2 (1 body paragraph)
- 2 'Young people today are too disconnected from nature.' Discuss.
 - Not represented
- 3 Consider the view that people in your society rely too much on the government to solve problems.
 - Not represented
- 4 Should the character of a man discount the value of his work?
 - Not represented
- 5 'Ethnic-based policies have done more harm than good.' Do you agree?
 - Lucas Loh, 19-A4 (Full essay)
- 6 'Folktales and fairy tales have no place in the modern world.' How far do you agree?
 - Grace Wee, 19-O1 (Full essay)
 - Sim Hsin Wei Lauren, 19-O5 (Full essay)
 - Nicole Liew, 19-A3 (Introduction and 2 body paragraphs)
- 7 To what extent is dissent vital for the growth of societies?
 - Chua Wei Ting, 19-E3 (Full essay)
 - Kelly Hooy, 19-O1 (Full essay)
 - Koh Jie Hui Avigail, 19-I1 (Full essay)
 - Leticia Ng, 19-U1 (2 body paragraphs)
- 8 To what extent is loneliness among the elderly given adequate attention?
 - Not represented
- 9 Is choice always desirable?
 - Renee Ong, 19-U1 (Full essay)
- 10 'Religion divides more than it unites.' Discuss.
 - Celeste Au, 19-O2 (Full essay)
 - Emmanuella Li, 19-O2 (Full essay)
- 11 'A healthy lifestyle is a luxury we cannot afford.' How true is this of your society?

- Gavin Tan, 19-U3 (Full essay)

12 'A flourishing arts scene is the mark of a civilised society.' How far do you agree?

- Desiree Chia, 19-U1 (Full essay)

JC2 Paper 1 Preliminary Examination

2 How fair is it to say that your society is an inclusive one?

- Elizabeth Teo, 18-U2 (Full essay)

3 To what extent should the State be responsible for protecting our privacy?

- Chanel Wong Xin Yi, 18-I4 (Full essay)

4 'Artificial intelligence should be embraced, since it is inevitable.' Discuss.

- Dylan Chia, 18-E4 (Full essay)

5 'Our faith in education as the solution to poverty is misplaced.' Do you agree?

- Seah Jie Hui, 18-I2 (Full essay)

6 Discuss the view that dissenting voices should be censored in your society.

- Kenneth Hoh, 18-O5 (Full essay)

7 'Mental health is more important than physical health.' How far do you agree with this statement?

- Nolin Ho, 18-O3 (Full essay)

8 'Rights for men and women should always be equal.' What is your view?

- Jasmine Lim, 18-A3 (Full essay)

10 How far do you agree that the value of the Arts has diminished in modern society?

- Karis Goh, 18-A3 (Full essay)

11 How far should countries prioritise economic development given the serious threats posed by climate change?

- Stephanie Leong, 18-E1 (Full essay)

JC1 Paper 1 Promotional Examination

1 To what extent is privacy realistic in this technologically-advanced age?

Some good insights with apt use of examples, shows very good understanding of the subject matter and the latest developments in this field of knowledge. Response is quite balanced, the response shows good engagement with arguments as to why privacy might be difficult to attain in this technologically-advanced age, but also acknowledges how certain developments might make privacy more attainable in the near future. However, response needs to be clearer in addressing the question requirements by foreground arguments rather than examples.

Use of language is competent with some good use of varied expressions, but vocabulary can be somewhat repetitive (e.g. 'malicious' was used several times).

In 2017, the financial technology industry, or Fintech for short, grew by almost 18%. It was a 5 billion dollar jump from 2016, breaking the 30 billion dollar barrier and reaching a whopping 32 billion dollars in size. Out of the 32 billion dollars, over 50% of the industry was dedicated to online loans and payments. Meanwhile in China and India, adoption rates of Fintech related to online loans and payments skyrocketed to over 50%, with an increasingly greater amount of the population buying insurance, taking loans and making bank statements online. As our world and lives grow increasingly digitalised, the risk of cyber attacks and security breaches grow even greater. In such a world, is privacy realistic in this age? The answer to this question may well be yes, though both time and effort is needed for such a dream to become reality.

Introduction shows good engagement with the issues in the question, but could state source for statistics in introduction

Overall thesis statement needs to be clearer in providing justification for your stand

Currently, the exponential growth in technology is revolutionising the whole economy. We are in a period of time experts call 'The Fourth Industrial Revolution'. In this age, our lives have become not just digitised, but interwoven with virtual self-driving cars, automated flight check-ins, robot financial advisers, the Internet of things, as a whole. The problem with such an exponential growth is that laws and policies are not able to keep up with such rapid development. This had led to loopholes and flaws in the governmental institutions which has allowed corporations and malicious groups alike to exploit. Though on the surface, they may be recording down your search history, in reality, they could very well be using your search history to piece together an online profile of who you are before selling that information to the highest bidder, such as in the recent Cambridge Analytica scandal with Facebook. This may not be [troubling] at first, until you realise the accuracy of which these algorithms are able to discern your age, gender, preferences and all the data which describes you as a person. Furthermore, there is a distinct lack of awareness in the

Topic sentence needs to be clearer in addressing the question; the paragraph should not begin with describing an example. Flesh out a clear reason it is unrealistic/difficult to achieve privacy in this technologically advanced age

<p>general population [about] the vulnerability of their data when in the hands of such corporations. Ignoring the fact that your data is being sold for profit, many companies have poor cybersecurity protection and practices. In order to cut costs and maintain profits, many companies such as Egnifax continue using old operating systems on their computers and desktops. This is evidently not sustainable, as hackers and malicious groups are able to exploit the security flaws in these old systems, leading to security breaches and personal information being stolen. Once again, this is shown when Equifax, a company responsible for the data of millions of Americans having a cybersecurity breach in 2016. The security breach in particular caused millions of Americans to [lose] their social security number, bank account number and personal [to hackers] and such information was sold across the Internet. Hundreds if not thousands of individuals were drained of their bank account money without even realising it. If a company of such astronomical importance could be [hacked] so easily, it is not surprising to see why individuals believe that privacy is not realistic in this technologically-advanced age.</p>	<p>Shows good understanding of the subject matter and clear discussion about the dangers to privacy in this technologically advanced age</p> <p>Good in showing concretely through an example how these risks materialise</p>
<p>However, [all hope is not lost, because governments will eventually catch up to such technological advancements and put laws in place to protect privacy]. Presently, even though laws may not be fully ready to tackle the behemoth [that is] the Fourth Industrial Revolution, a [precedent] has been set for countries all around the world to begin their counterattack. This can be seen as technological giants like Facebook are having their executives brought in and questioned in front of the [US] Senate. All around the world, countries are starting to put in place laws which restrict the extent of which companies are able to track, monitor and collect the personal data of individuals. Furthermore, companies are required to [explicitly] inform users should they collect their information. Users would thus not be bogged down by [tedious] terms and conditions that [could] hide malicious agreements that users would not find out because they were [deterred to read the agreement as a result of its intimidating length]. An example of a law that helps to limit this is the end-user license agreement (EULA) that is implemented in the European Union. Companies are required by law to summarise their terms and agreements, making it [easy] to read and understand what they are consenting to, thereby [preventing] companies [from] collecting even more of the users' data unknowingly. In [the] local context, Protection from Online Falsehoods and Manipulation Act (POFMA) was put in place by the [Singapore] government in late 2018 to early 2019 to [restrict] service providers [from] requesting the personal information of users [in a relentless way]. Data like an individual's NRIC, passport number and many more [will] all have to be approved by the government before such services are able to collect that data. Furthermore, the data collected could not be used to generate profit.</p>	<p>Link of the EULA and POFMA examples to the argument is not very clear, how do these measures help make achieving privacy a more realistic goal?</p> <p>Work on writing out ideas in full rather than abbreviations (e.g. EULA, POFMA)</p> <p>Fact check year POFMA was passed in Singapore</p>

<p>On the technological front, companies and services are also starting to develop technology that could better ensure the security of the consumer's data. One example would be the blockchain security pioneered in FinTech. What blockchain security does is that it basically splits the algorithmic "key" to the data [into] four different parts. Should hackers obtain any part of the "key" and [try] to use it to obtain data from the bank, the "key" would have to [be] verified with the other "keys". This ensures that unless all "keys" are compromised and used [at the same time], which is statistically unlikely, it would be next to impossible for malicious groups to breach the bank's information vault. [In the case of consumers], there is also a movement on awareness of our own online footprint and how to [secure] one's personal privacy on the Internet. Tools like virtual private networks, alternative browsers like DuckDuckGo and awareness campaigns both by the government and non-profit organisations allow individuals to become increasingly aware of [the] risks when using certain services and browsing certain sites. Furthermore, these tools provide a base layer of protection that allows for anonymity in browsing and for the individual's privacy to be protected on a day-to-day basis.</p>	<p>As with the first paragraph, this paragraph also needs to be clearer in addressing the question requirements - how do these initiatives help make achieving privacy a more realistic goal?</p> <p>Example could be more specific (e.g. name an actual non-profit organisation that have been initiating such awareness campaigns)</p>
<p>Though the horizon for privacy in this technologically-advanced age seems bleak, it is not without hope. As technology improves and technology [that] exploits privacy increases, so does the technology which prevents these occurrences. As long as society as a whole cooperates and move[s] forward in rules, regulations and awareness of the threats we face, governments and corporations would have no choice but to move along with them. Though it may [not] seem like it, currently privacy is certainly realistic in this technologically-advanced age. All you need is a little time and effort.</p> <p><i>(Richard Lei, 19-A2)</i></p>	<p>Signpost conclusion clearly</p> <p>Logical link of the argument is not very clear (i.e. what it means that governments and corporations must follow suit)</p> <p>Ideas in the conclusion needs to be fully developed (e.g. the claim that all we need is a little time and effort - not sure whether the issue is so simplistic, and without further evaluation it is unclear what the argument is)</p>

1 To what extent is privacy realistic in this technologically-advanced age?

Response is quite elegantly argued, showing deep insights into the trade-off of privacy and use of the technology for convenience. It also shows a good understanding of the subject matter in terms of the various ways one's privacy could be compromised in this technologically-advanced age. However, the way the ideas are developed is somewhat descriptive and it needs to be clearer in addressing the requirements of the question by foregrounding the reasons why maintaining privacy is or is not realistic in this technologically-advanced age.

As our modern day society progresses down the path of rapid technological advancements, many activities in our everyday lives are now carried out online, be it communication or work. Although this advancement has no doubt brought about significant convenience in our way of life, which can be seen [by how the] vast majority of individuals [are] widely adopting the use of technology in their everyday lives, the perennial debate beckons: How much of our privacy [has] been compromised in this digitalised world? Before delving into this topic, it is important to define privacy as the degree in which a person's life can be kept to themselves, be it in the form of personal data or even their daily activities. Based on the assumption that it is unrealistic to store data offline in this technologically advanced [age], much of our data being uploaded online simply through the creation of accounts on various platforms, although it may be possible to maintain some forms of privacy, it is undoubtedly realistic to maintain a high level of privacy. In this essay, I will discuss the various reasons as to [why] privacy [in a] digitalised world is mostly unrealistic.

Context-setting is generally clear and well developed

Long sentence that affects control. Breaking down the sentence would have enabled greater clarity and readability.

Stand is clear, but needs to provide clear reasons for the stand in the thesis statement.

Firstly, privacy is unrealistic due to the sheer amounts of personal data being uploaded to online platforms. Oftentimes, providing basic personal data is a prerequisite of being able to access and utilise online services. As such, given the convenience of these online services, people often give up their information to these online service providers without thinking twice. An example of this would be the personal information of an individual's health status that would have to be given up in order to use an online health service platform. As a result of this, personal information of these individuals will be uploaded to the companies' database to be stored and retrieved when necessary. The issue [with] this is not so much that the data is being given up to these companies, as it is oftentimes used for the correct purposes, but more so when the database is hacked into by third parties with bad intentions, causing the personal information and thus privacy to be compromised. The most recent incident of this was when some hackers managed to access the database of the citizens' medical reports of several individuals in Singapore, and then subsequently leak these medical reports to the public. One of the leaked medical reports included information on our prime minister. This goes to show that the moment our personal data is being uploaded to a digital platform, it is at a constant

Can be more refined: what is the effect of large volumes of personal data being uploaded to online platforms?

The idea of prerequisite is helpful in justifying the ubiquitous use of the online services, which helps explain why so much personal data ends up vulnerable online

The clarification between the intended use and misuse is helpful in focusing the reader on what is perceived to be the more insidious and detrimental effect.

Well-developed and

<p>threat of being compromised by hackers, and thus simultaneously compromises our privacy.</p>	<p>illustrated.</p>
<p>However, some individuals may argue that there have been many policies put in place to safeguard our privacy, such as the Personal Data Protection Act (PDPA), which helps us to maintain our privacy in the technologically-advanced, digitalised world. Furthermore, they also argue that it is on the basis that companies offer guarantees [of] privacy protection to incentivise patronage, which means it is their utmost priority to protect the information of their patrons in order to maintain their consumer base. Although it is true that there have indeed been policies put in place to increase personal data protection and it is no doubt the intrinsic responsibility of companies to protect the information of their consumers, I believe that this is oftentimes a hopeless battle where the protection of privacy will always fall short. Protection of private information is an endless cycle of companies coming up with new algorithms to protect their digital database while hackers simultaneously attempt to crack the codes. As such, hackers mostly have the upper edge as they are able to attack a database at any [angle], while it is next to impossible for a company to develop an algorithm that has no loopholes or flaws, especially if they do not possess sufficient resources. Thus, as long as there are individuals in society with enough motive and knowledge to hack into a digital database, the compromise of personal data and hence privacy becomes more of an eventuality. As such, I believe that with the amount of personal data being stored on digital databases, privacy in our technologically-advanced society is unrealistic.</p>	<p>Examples could be more concrete, and should go beyond the Singapore context given the demands of the question</p> <p>Beautifully expressed.</p> <p>This is a problem that is not so much due to the amount of data online, but to hacker skill (the acquisition and development of which has become more accessible as the internet has grown). Argument could be clearer in foregrounding the reasons.</p>
<p>Secondly, I also believe that privacy in our digitalised society [is] unrealistic due to how extensively technology has [infiltrated] our everyday lives. One instance in which technology has [infiltrated] our everyday lives is [our] use of smartphones. With how widely smartphones are being used by individuals in our society in the modern day, not using a smartphone would result in so much inconvenience in the [life] of an individual. Due to the extensive usage of these devices, companies have been finding ways to improve the functionalities of the phone in order to capitalise on the potential revenue that could be generated. An example of a recent innovation of one of these functionalities is the ability of the phone to, through tracking vibration in the skeleton structure of the hip region, track early symptoms of Parkinson's disease. If this is what the smartphone is capable of in the modern day, then there is no doubt that it is also able to carry out simple tracking of the location of the device. As such, unknowingly to the user, their privacy may have been compromised simply due to the fact that their location can be easily tracked by anyone in society who is capable of doing so, resulting in them not being able to keep their daily activities a secret.</p>	<p>Relevance to privacy should be drawn out clearly, since it is not immediately obvious in this example.</p> <p>Why the ability to keep one's activities secret is important should be developed for greater clarity of the issue of an invasion of privacy: in this situation, does the benefit of having one's health conditions divulged outweigh the potential problems?</p>

<p>Furthermore, as individuals use online platforms such as Google or Facebook, their activities are tracked by an algorithm which detects their taste[s] and preferences. With this information, on future searches, these platforms offer results that suit their taste[s] and preferences identified by the algorithm. This is in a way also a form of invasion of privacy as there is no consent provided by the user for these platforms to track their usage and browsing history. More importantly, many people are unaware that this happens to them every time they browse the web, which prevents them from even being able to protect their own privacy. Furthermore, the individuals who are aware, do not see this as a problem, which just goes to show how much personal data has already been compromised by individuals in the use of technology when they become willing to give it up. Thus, I believe that the protection of one's privacy in our digitalised world is unrealistic.</p>	<p>Argument seems somewhat skewed: Are there no protocols governing the use of personal data? Warning messages and pop-ups do exist to help protect users.</p>
<p>In conclusion, I believe that the use of technology in our everyday [lives] is a double-edged sword, where on one end it is able to provide convenience, and on the other [it compromises] our privacy. I believe that the use of technology is a give and take, where individuals in society [have] somewhat collective[ly] forgone [our] privacy in search of convenience in our everyday lives. As Lee Kuan Yew once said, 'What you cannot protect, you do not own'. If an individual values the derived convenience from the use of technology over all else, it is only consequential that they will thus be unable to protect their own privacy. As such, I believe that privacy is unrealistic in our technologically-advanced society.</p> <p>(Maverick Wong, 19-A4)</p>	<p>Interesting relationship between privacy and convenience raised here, quite a nuanced argument</p>

1 To what extent is privacy realistic in this technologically-advanced age?

These two paragraphs are notable for their knowledge of how the tech industry functions, providing a deeper look at the commonly encountered context of a technologically-advanced age instead of more generic references to technology. Both paragraphs are fluently written and draw on some less visible interactions between players in the tech industry and consumers of technology to present effective arguments about the real and persistent threats to privacy that compromise the possibility of maintaining it. One key area for improvement to notice here is expression, as similar turns of phrase and vocabulary are repeated often in the writing, and more variation would make for a more engaging piece of writing.

<p>Secondly, privacy is not realistic in this technologically-advanced age as it is getting easier for individuals and companies to spy on their customers. This is especially problematic for smartphone users. Smartphones around the world are manufactured mainly by three companies: Apple, Samsung and Huawei. Due to this three-company oligopoly, most users around the world would buy their smartphones from one of these companies. Furthermore, all the smartphones that these companies manufacture come with cameras. All these factors contribute to the ease [of] people [spying] on others. This is because these three companies use two different operating systems, Apple's ios and Google's Android. Hence, the devices that these three companies [produce] have roughly the same firewall protection and defence systems. Thus, once someone is able to breach one of the devices, they are able to breach all other peoples' devices, which allows one to spy on different people's actions, and find out who they are by using the cameras installed on the smartphones. However, it is not only individuals or companies who have been accused of doing so. Governments have been accused of [forming] ties with companies to spy on users. For example, the [government of the] United States has accused the Chinese government of teaming up with Huawei to spy on the brand's users and collating data on them. This accusation has led to the [government of the] United States banning all members of Congress from using Huawei smartphones and banning American companies from doing business with Huawei. This tension has led to the US-China trade war, which has proven to be tragic for the world's economies. Hence, as shown above, it is getting easier and easier for different people to spy on others, with governments being accused as well. As such, people's privacy has been compromised, hence privacy is unrealistic in this technologically-advanced age.</p>	<p>Demonstrates the pervasiveness of threats posed to privacy by considering the participation of different groups in society. Suggesting why each of these groups would be motivated to compromise the privacy of others would have reinforced the reality of the threats.</p>
<p>However, some have argued that privacy is realistic in this technologically-advanced age. Their arguments have included the fact that more advanced programmes, [such as Norton Security,] designed to safeguard people's privacy have been developed. Furthermore, mainstream programmes that millions of users use, such as Whatsapp, have adopted various measures to combat potential hackers. In the case of Whatsapp, their parent company Facebook has implemented end-to-end encryption of private messages, which would boost the security of people's conversations, which would hence improve their privacy. While all that is stated is true, I do feel that the argument has missed a vital point. The rate of technological advancement has been on the rise. In fact, every two to three years, the processing power of a computer chip doubles. At this rate, technology that is able to bypass the current systems put in place by developers would soon be developed. This would render the systems put in place useless, and companies would have to find new ways to safeguard their users' privacy. Hence, despite the efforts made by different companies to safeguard their users, it is only a matter of time before companies have to develop new methods to</p>	

combat data breaches. Hence, privacy is not realistic in this technologically-advanced age.

(Choy Wen Shao, 19-04)

1 To what extent is privacy realistic in this technologically-advanced age?

This is an insightful paragraph that drills down to deeper reasons for why privacy might be unrealistic. The establishment of conditions that would need to be met for privacy to be realistic, followed by the systematic evaluation of why the possibilities are unrealistic are particularly illuminating. Where the paragraph falters is in the provision of evidence to back up its otherwise thoughtful arguments, and the addition of consistent examples for its numerous assertions would make it more convincing.

Many may agree with the view that privacy is realistic if we follow a two-pronged approach of good governance and individual responsibility. Good governance may come in the form of updating and revamping laws, legislations and regulations as the European Union, consisting of 28 nations, did in 2018. Redefining and reevaluating what constitutes privacy violations will solidify the [?] and reduce grey areas and loopholes and enforce boundaries between demarcating what is and is not considered privacy violations. Governments could impose national standards or certain requirements websites have to pass to force companies and firms to be more responsible for data protection by improving cybersecurity. From an individual standpoint, digital literacy, defined as the ability of individuals to utilise technology, is critical. Closing the gap in digital literacy is crucial as individuals [who] do not possess such knowledge are more susceptible to agreeing to agreements they do not understand and giving up their personal data unbeknownst to them. It is also good to reinforce the practice for individuals to assess if what they are posting is absolutely necessary. For example, individuals should cultivate habits of not perpetually posting their location online if it is not essential. Assuming such a two-pronged approach is followed, the first steps towards privacy in this technologically-advanced age would be possible. While it is possible, I do not believe that it is realistic. This is because such an approach ignores the power of self-interest. The rational behaviour of individuals is to maximise the joy and utility in partaking in an activity. Therefore, if having a cab by Uber every day increases their convenience and saves them valuable time in our fast-paced lives of today, and foregoing their privacy and exposing their daily travel routes is the only trade-off, they would gladly accept it. Firms [on the other hand] seek to profit-maximise. Hence, even if the content of the Big Data they provide is bordering on the line of being unethical, they are likely to take the chance and sell the data in order to gain the large amounts of profits acquired from the sale of such data. In some cases, such as that of Grab, selling of user information

'good governance' is a bit of a general term, and could be better chosen to accurately reflect the focus here on legislation being kept up to date, and properly armed and enforced.

Good, insightful evaluation of 'realistic' based on more enduring character of people and firms. Would be better if real, rather than hypothetical evidence was provided for the behaviour of individuals.

Signposting helps to draw connections between ideas.

comprises their main revenue stream so they are unlikely to forgo [it]. Hence, although the aforementioned two-pronged approach is possible, such an approach is unrealistic as individuals and firms are unlikely to abide by such regulations in the presence of self-interest. Even nations would be unwilling to give up their spying and monitoring capabilities although they are the source of public outcry regarding privacy invasion, as they would lose strategic advantages and open themselves up to increased vulnerability. Hence, while privacy is possible, I believe to a large extent that privacy is unrealistic in this technologically-advanced age.

(Gabriel Lim, 19-E2)

5 'Ethnic-based policies have done more harm than good.' Do you agree?

An essay that raises perceptive observations and which reads very well, showing commendable understanding of the subject matter and the situation of ethnic-based policies around the world. However, the essay suffers from limited engagement with the question requirements, and would certainly benefit from a more conscious and consistent attempt to evaluate if these ethnic-based policies have done more harm than good. The conclusion also trails off a little weakly, which was potentially an issue of time management.

In an increasingly globalised world, governments of nations are seeing greater diversity in population demographics, especially with the migration of people enabled by advanced transport technologies. This has resulted in the need for ethnically-sensitive or even ethnically-motivated public policies to cater to this rising populace. At its core, these public policies are intended to benefit the greater good of the nation, yet it may not always fulfill this intended purpose. Overall, ethnic-based public policies often do more good than harm, as they focus on recognising and reconciling ethnic differences for the greater welfare of the people and reducing inequality by promoting social mobility among the ethnically disadvantaged.

Introduction is well-executed, clear context-setting

Thesis statement is well-articulated and clear in presenting reasons for overall stand

Closest to home, Singapore is often cited as a racial success story as a small city-state that is home to an ethnically diverse population. Singapore's ethnic-based policies often focus on preserving social harmony by encouraging tolerance of compromise on various fronts, [one] of which is public housing. In public housing in Singapore, the government enforces policies that require specific racial mixes within a housing block, in a bid to prevent homogeneity and racial enclaves from forming. This has forced people of different ethnicities to live together. By doing so, the government promotes social cohesion by forcing people of different ethnicities to learn to be tolerant and accepting of people of other races and understanding of the traditions of others. This policy, despite causing some inconveniences, such as race-based quotas in the sale of housing, has been well-received by the public as it benefits wider society by forcing people to confront and resolve their differences. This is evidence that ethnic-based policies can be effective in increasing the overall welfare of the people as Singapore enjoys social and racial harmony, with some neighbours even celebrating and joining in the traditions of the other races, fostering a progressive and healthy community that can not only tolerate, but also enhance other ethnicities and their practices. In addition, it has been increasingly fashionable for young people to don the traditional outfits of other races, such as the Chinese donning the baju kurung of the Malays during Hari Raya and the Malays showing off their Qi Paos during Chinese New Year. While some may point out that this policy-mandated sharing of spaces has indeed caused conflicts to arise, these are minor setbacks and are to be expected in the process of reconciliation. One commonly cited example is the curry pot incident where a Chinese family residing

Paragraph is case-study driven. Foreground a reason why ethnic-based policies does more harm or good

Could be clearer in explaining the mechanics of this policy, when it was implemented and its rationale etc. Give more context so the discussion of the local context is not alienating to your examiners.

Very long paragraph, work on being more

<p>near an Indian family wanted the Indian family to stop cooking curry as they were not appreciative of the fragrance of the spices used in the curry. This conflict was mediated by the town council, ultimately finding a compromise where the Malay family agreed to cook curry on only specific days of the week. Hence, even in these conflicts, confrontation and resolution have taken place, showing that ethnic-based policies can indeed do more good than harm, where inadvertent social tension and conflict are resolved so as to promote peace and harmony in the wider society.</p>	<p>succinct. Argument in the paragraph should have been stated at the start, not just at the end.</p>
<p>Another way in which ethnic policies are necessary is in the rising inequality between the ethnic majority and minorities, seen in many nations, including the United States of America (USA). The USA has long had staggering inequalities between its ethnic groups, since the days of slavery. As a result of old discriminatory policies such as suburban redlining, there exists a large income gap between Caucasians and African-Americans. Hence, in recent times, new policies have been enacted to tackle this inequality head on, such as through affirmative action and ethnographic adjustment to the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) scores. These policies are beneficial to a nation as they directly address ethnically-driven inequality using ethnically-informed policies. African-Americans on average do much worse than their Caucasian counterparts in the SATs due to an insidious zoning policy known as redlining. 70 years ago, the US government sanctioned the zoning of specific areas for Caucasians only, creating suburbs such as Lansingville. This resulted in the homogenisation of communities and as the Caucasians had greater access to disposable income as compared to the African-Americans, their public schools were better funded and they had more access to opportunities which were out of reach of the African-Americans due to the economic shadow of slavery. As a result, this compounded into Caucasians having better access to educational resources as compared to African-Americans, giving them an advantage in the SATs due to their income demographic. As a result, the modern SAT scoring system adjusts for this by awarding a 400-point advantage to African-Americans, where Caucasians start from 0 points. This has allowed African-American students to close the gap and earn a fighting chance for entry into top universities, which will eventually translate into better job opportunities for much needed social mobility so as to allow inequality to be narrowed. Evidently, these systemically-created ethnic differences have been mitigated by systemic closure of the inequality gap. While some may argue that in the case of African-Americans, they were initially persecuted by discriminatory ethnic-based policies such as redlining, it may be worth noting that such policies were not intended as ethnic-based policies. Hence, ethnic-based policies are effective in resolving ethnic-based issues, with a direct and laser-like approach.</p>	<p>Paragraph needs to be framed to address the question directly: how does necessity relate to policies doing more harm or good?</p> <p>An interesting example, but its relevance to the question requirements needs to be drawn out.</p> <p>Another very long paragraph that focuses on describing the example.</p> <p>Needs clearer evaluating whether more harm than good (or vice versa) had been done. The paragraph does not show this comparison effectively.</p>

<p>However, the case for ethnic-based policies cannot be overstated as we need to acknowledge the state sanctioned ethnocratic policies that have been employed in the past and present to persecute a minority for a larger government agenda. Other policies may give advantages to the majority, increasing inequality and the economic dominance of an ethnic group. One example is the Special Assistance Programme (SAP) in Singapore, which at its core is more akin to a Chinese Assistance programme as it allocates preferential funding to SAP schools that place emphasis on the study of Chinese and China. This policy allows Chinese students who study Higher Chinese in primary schools to gain bonus points in the nation's streaming exercise, the Primary School Leaving Examination (PSLE), for preferential admission into secondary schools. However, these bonus points and extra funding are only available to Chinese students and Chinese-oriented schools, while there is no equivalent for Malays or other minority groups in Singapore, suggesting a possible bias. The government argues that this is due to the lack of demand for the establishment of Malay-oriented secondary schools, but this does not explain why this SAP is oriented exclusively to the Chinese, or why the programme has not been established at the Muslim missionary schools run by mosques. In this case, because the Chinese have access to better schools by taking Higher Chinese, and because SAP schools have greater funding, this policy provides unfair advantages to the ethnic majority, widening inequality. At the same time, it is worth noting that as partial as this may appear to be, this has technically benefited the majority of people in Singapore as they are Chinese, and that in spite of the ethnic-based nature of the policy, it was born out of more altruistic intentions to promote bilingual education.</p>	<p>Point is well-argued, but again it needs to be framed to address the question directly - does this lead to more harm than good?</p>
<p>All of the aforementioned policies are explicitly ethnic-based for the purposes of fairly balancing them against each other, but we also need to acknowledge the underworld of insidious implicit ethnic-based policies where governments attempt to deny the ethnic nature of these policies as they do harm to a minority in support of the government's agenda. One such policy is the persecution of the Uighurs in China, a Muslim minority that has been the target of a militaristic persecution of Muslims, rounding them up in re-education camps and running a police state in their hometowns. These policies are evidently ethnic-based. However, even the governments are unwilling to address their ethnic-driven nature; hence, there is no room for discussion whether these policies are harmful due to their immoral nature. These policies are the subject of human rights inquiries by the United Nations and even if they do more good than harm in utilitarian ethics, they do not benefit the welfare and sound development of a nation. Thus, they ultimately do much more harm than good in other non-materialistic perspectives such as ethics and cultural development.</p>	<p>Paragraph is again example and case-study driven, needs to present a clear argument at the start of the paragraph</p> <p>Discussion here about doing more harm than good based on utilitarian ethics is unclear, idea needs further development</p>

<p>Overall, it is evident that ethnic-based policies are beneficial as they allow governments to foster social harmony and reduce inequality in a country especially when the issues are ethnic-based. These are insidious and implicit ethnic policies in the world even today, but since the ethnic nature of these policies are not acknowledged by the government itself, it can be inferred that these implied policies do more harm than good and have greater ethical ramifications. Hence, in general, ethnic-based policies in the public sphere today are largely beneficial.</p> <p>(Lucas Loh, 19-A4)</p>	<p>Unclear reasoning (the part about how governments do not acknowledge these policies), ideas need further development</p>
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6 'Folktales and fairy tales have no place in the modern world.' How far do you agree?

<p><i>The response is nuanced and insightful, showing a good understanding of the subject matter and the role that folktales and fairy tales play on the individual and societal level. Use of language is sophisticated with good use of varied sentence structures and strong personal voice that brings out the subtleties of the issue with ease. Although the response shows a laser-eyed engagement with the question requirements, its arguments could be further supported through better substantiation of examples - the reader will only be persuaded by the analysis of folktales and fairy tales if the writer gives them a clearer understanding of the examples in discussion.</i></p>	
<p>A defining characteristic of homo sapiens that places us at the apex of Earth's creatures is arguably our capacity for creative thinking and imagination. For a testament to that, one need not look further than our pantheon of folktales and fairy tales, fictional stories that have endured the test of time and have permeated throughout cultures, some even gaining global acknowledgement. Despite their name alluding to childhood naivety or ungrounded, unrealistic fantasies, their sheer tenacity in withstanding the tides of time suggest there is an undeniably inherent value in keeping them alive. However, skeptics may argue that modernity, typified by the glorification of scientific achievement and rationality, is proving to be an unwelcoming climate for continued perpetuation of these stories. Nevertheless, I am of the opinion that folktales and fairy tales still retain their foothold in the modern world due to the timelessness of the values they impart, the feelings they inspire and their close ties to larger cultures.</p>	<p>Well-written and eloquent introduction that was effective in setting the context and fully addresses the requirements of the question</p>

<p>We are currently experiencing the Fourth Technological Revolution, on the threshold of achieving monumental breakthroughs in artificial intelligence and cosmopolitan cities across the globe are transitioning into digitally empowered smart cities. In an age where science has reached its zenith, the tomes of folklore that predated it seem archaic in comparison. At best, these unempirical works of fiction [seemingly] only retain nostalgic value and should have no place in modern society, or at best be relegated to the sidelines to entertain the imaginative minds of children. [In fact], even children and youth today have outgrown the tales of Hans Christian Anderson in favour of new media's cast of characters, for example [those of] the fanatically popular Marvel Cinematic Universe. Although its band of heroes requires a viewer's suspension of disbelief, its situation in a modern context means that science, in the form of cutting edge weapons or genetically modified super powers, is tightly woven into its narrative. As such, folktales and fairy tales are [less relevant' for their purely fictional premises and hence have seemed to have lost [their] place in modern society.</p>	<p>Note: this was added. Without this hedging word, the argument could be seen as self-contradictory.</p> <p>Argument is logical, but could also consider whether there is a problem if modern media replaces or marginalises folktales and fairytales, to deepen your argument</p>
<p>However, more judicious observers will point out that one need not believe in the fiction of folklore and fairy tales in order to reap [their] benefits in the modern world. Folklore and fairy tales simply use the medium of fiction to convey values, truths and lessons, hence they should receive the same respect mankind owes to other forms of storytelling like parables. When one views folktales and fairy tales as vessels for deeper meaning, it becomes apparent that they always should have a place in modern society. In fact, it can be argued that with the demands of modern society, fairy tales and folktales are gaining a newfound appreciation.</p>	<p>The argument is quite insightful and certainly logical, but would benefit from discussing concrete examples to flesh out the ideas more</p>
<p>With modern society encouraging a lifelong rat race, many youth and adults alike find comfort in the stories of fairy tales and folktales that hearken back to simpler times. It is common to see netizens share quotes from these stories on social media, [with] popular picks including French novel 'The Little Prince' and the endearing 'Winnie the Pooh'. These characters share the commonality of having a pure, innocent and compassionate worldview, values that often take the backseat in a world that places a premium on academic and economic success. Hence, while folktales and fairy tales retain a nostalgic value that seems to skeptics as inconsequential in defending the enduring value of these stories, people's continued gravitation towards them are a poignant reflection of what we hold dear to our hearts.</p>	<p>The argument makes sense, but how these stories provide comfort would be more clearly fleshed out if you provided more details in your examples.</p>

<p>Beyond just imbuing timeless values, these tales are also useful vessels to denote a shift in values by subverting the familiar premises of these stories to reflect progressive change. For example, Disney's movie 'Wreck-it Ralph 2' in 2018 portrayed the well-lived princesses of age-old fairy tales in a new light. Instead of their traditional representation of damsels in distress, awaiting salvation from a prince, they inversely saved the protagonist Ralph, a burly male character. Using familiar source material to subvert gender stereotypes, Disney reflected the ongoing international fight for women's rights, its ability to attract children making fairytales all the more an effective medium in this case.</p>	<p>Argument is relevant and insightful, but could be developed further. For instance, it is interesting how the brave warrior princess is ironically becoming a new stereotype!</p> <p>A sophisticated, well-controlled and highly engaging paragraph (it was split into 3 based on the examiner's comments)</p>
<p>Lastly, folktales and fairy tales still have an irreplaceable role in society due to their irrevocable ties with larger portions of culture. These stories cannot be divorced from or perceived as separate entities from the cultures that conceptualized them. In many countries, these stories are still exalted and deeply intertwined with the practices and traditions of its people, [and their] becoming obsolete [would be] equivalent to the demise of [the] larger culture. Despite developed countries like China being at the forefront of scientific achievement, their success in that field does not correspond to an alienation from cultural folktales. The Chinese still dearly hold onto folklore surrounding the Chinese Zodiac, using it to read their fortunes for the year ahead and bringing the story to life during Lunar New Year celebrations. By acting as a proxy for culture at large, folktales arguably are a source of national unity, promoting a sense of belonging through stories unique to one's culture.</p>	<p>An insightful argument that shows a good understanding of the enduring role of folktales</p> <p>Could deepen argument by discussing the implications of foregoing these folktales</p>
<p>As such, [when we view] folktales and fairy tales as vessels for deeper meaning and culture, [they] arguably still have a cherished place in modern society.</p> <p><i>(Grace Wee, 19-01)</i></p>	<p>Abrupt conclusion, needs to flesh out arguments more clearly to provide a satisfying closure</p>

6 ‘Folktales and fairy tales have no place in the modern world.’ How far do you agree?

This is a thoughtful and insightful essay that covers a broad range of relevant points, showing an understanding of the enduring value which folktales and fairy tales have. Although the body paragraphs are sensibly developed, they would be stronger if they addressed the issues raised by the previous paragraphs, and create inter-paragraph links instead of leaving these issues hanging. While the modern world context is acknowledged consistently, it needs to be convincingly addressed with sufficient evaluation and illustration.

Delve into the world of fairies, princesses and talking animals, a world carefully woven together using the strings of fantasy under the pen of an author. Fairy tales and folktales have always been a significant part of our world, opening up a world of imagination to young minds while teaching a lesson between the lines on every page. However, in these magical lands of goodness and creativity, where do terrorists, violence and hate fit in? Our modern society is fast-paced, pragmatic and convenient, but it is also shrouded with uncertainty and fear. As much as times have changed and society has progressed, I believe that there is an inherent value in fairy tales and folktales that will always be relevant in today’s society. Hence, I disagree to a large extent that folktales and fairy tales have no place in the modern world.

Good question raised here, but how is it addressed in relation to the contention in the essay question?

Clear thesis in response to the essay question but a clearer link can be established with the earlier part of the introduction

Some may assert that folktales and fairy tales are no longer relevant to our modern society as they do not inculcate in the young certain characteristics needed in today’s world. Volatile, uncertain, changing and ambiguous (VUCA) [--that] is how our world is today. In modern society, traits such as innovation, creativity, novelty are highly prized and valued as they would place one in a position to succeed in our world. The ability to create something new makes one valuable in the ever changing economic and digital sphere. This is evident from the shift in emphasis in education systems worldwide, from pure textbook knowledge to developing students’ 21st century competencies, some of which include innovation and communication. However, folktales and fairy tales are often set in fictitious kingdoms, castles and villages, trapped in the world of the 1800s, when the author penned those stories. One may argue that juxtaposed with our bustling metropolis and looming skyscrapers, these stories are no longer relevant. Furthermore, folktales and fairy tales largely do not embody the above mentioned values which are considered important to our economically driven, pragmatic society. Hence, the development of society and its emphasis has undermined the value and importance of folktales and fairy tales in our modern world.

Clear treatment of the modern world context, linked to why these tales are perceived as losing relevance.

Perhaps the ending link could be a little more clearly signposted as an opposing argument.

<p>However, I beg to differ. Folktales and fairy tales are still useful in our modern world, in fact even more so, as tools of social change. In our modern world, people strive for social change on issues such as gender stereotypes and discrimination. Fairy tales can act as important tools in shaping and changing the mindsets of many in a light-hearted manner, especially for the younger generation. [] Princess Jasmine from <i>Aladdin</i> embodies courage as she seeks to break out of the gender stereotype of women in her society, which tells her to ‘be quiet and look pretty’. <i>Beauty and the Beast</i> teaches people to see the inherent beauty and value of a person, instead of judging another for their appearance. There are parallels to be drawn to our modern world. Breaking gender stereotypes and tackling discrimination are ongoing fights and fairy tales do play a part in supporting these efforts. Although some may argue that fairy tales and folktales may sometimes perpetuate the traditional stereotypical narrative of a ‘damsel in distress’ who is saved by a Prince Charming, it is important to also realise that this is changing. Newer fairy tales such as <i>Brave</i> and <i>Moana</i>, tell of princesses who challenge boundaries and fight for what they believe in. One key feature to note would be that none of these fairy tales have a ‘Prince Charming’. Fairy tales and folktales are useful in shifting mindsets and shaping the young impressionable minds of our next generation in a light-hearted way. This is vital in creating social change and awareness in our modern world, hence fairy tales and folktales still have a place in our world today.</p>	<p>This point is well-made and exemplified in this paragraph. However, how does it address the problems raised in the previous paragraph so as to rebut the opposing argument?</p> <p>Link this paragraph to the notion of innovation, pragmatism and economic value (mentioned in the previous paragraph) for greater coherence.</p>
<p>Another key feature not to be overlooked in fairytales and folktales would be the age-old values they embody. As society develops, profits and progress may cloud our judgement, taking its place at the top of our priorities. Money, money, more money. Such an environment creates high stress to perform well and attain economic success and may even come at the cost of our morals and values. Fairy tales and folktales seek to inculcate in readers simple yet important principles to guide them through life. For example, the story of <i>The Tortoise and the Hare</i> warns against arrogance, while [<i>The Boy Who Cried Wolf</i>] seeks to highlight the value of honesty. Fairy tales such as <i>Cinderella</i> speak of kindness to all, regardless of their status or background. Humility, honesty and kindness --such values will always be central to our human existence and they form the very foundation for a caring harmonious society. Fairy tales and folktales help to ground one in sound values as they seek to navigate the highly competitive and profit-driven society. By doing so, corruption, apathy towards social issues and blindness to the suffering of the less fortunate can be reduced, allowing us to build a more inclusive and caring environment while striving for economic development and personal progress. Hence, fairy tales and folktales have a place in our modern society.</p>	<p>While the value of these tales is well-explained, a stronger paragraph would show why such value persists despite the changes in the modern world.</p>

<p>The use of fairy tales and folktales in early education also benefits the development of young children. These stories provide a world of endless possibilities, allowing the children to explore the depths of their creativity and imagination. In fairy tales, beanstalks can grow to penetrate the skies; in folktales, talking animals are no surprise. These things, though seemingly insignificant, allow children to develop their imagination by giving them a safe space to do so. Some critics may argue that to introduce such a world to children is not practical as the reality is a stark contrast to what is portrayed in the sparkly pages of a pop-up fairy tale book. While it is true that the context differs from reality, I believe that having the freedom to think and imagine before having the rigidity of reality being thrust upon our minds is important. Studies have shown that giving children the space to discover new things and be exposed to new ideas has lifetime benefits. In our modern world where academic efficacy is prioritised, education systems provide model answers and a linear way of thinking for students to score in examinations. Fairy tales and folktales may be the answer to encourag[ing] thinking out of the box in such environments. Hence, fairy tales and folktales are valuable in our modern world.</p>	<p>The link to the context of the modern world is mainly established towards the end of the paragraph. Making a more consistent link would strengthen this argument.</p>
<p>Modern society values efficiency, convenience and everything pragmatic, while fairy tales and folktales speak tales of fantasy. On the surface, fairy tales and folktales may seem irrelevant as society progresses, with people preferring to leave them in the past as we move into a world characterised by pragmatism. However, this is based on a false dichotomy between fantasy and reality. I believe that fantasy can be used as an effective medium to not only teach important life lessons but also open up new worlds to the younger generation. Fairy tales and folktales keep a flame of hope and curiosity burning bright, allowing one to better navigate the darkness and monotony of our fast-paced world.</p> <p>(Sim Hsin Wei Lauren, 19-05)</p>	<p>This conclusion reiterates the arguments quite incisively.</p> <p>The point about the false dichotomy between fantasy and reality could have been given voice in the essay itself rather than appearing only in the conclusion.</p>

6 'Folktales and fairy tales have no place in the modern world.' How far do you agree?

This introduction and two body paragraphs demonstrate a both a strong awareness of the challenges posed to folk- and fairy tales by modernity and their value in spite of and even because of the modern day context. Though it is not wholly successful in developing the examples to prove a point, the local examples used in the body paragraphs offer the opportunity of being more well understood such that the value of the tales to society can be drawn out. Still, it is important to note that the entire essay should contain a variety of examples from different contexts to more accurately cover the global scope indicated in the question.

<p>In a world that has progressed so far with science and technology, it is common knowledge that sacrifices had to be made to get to where we are today. In the interest of moving forward, society has prioritised pragmatism and [has been] forced to make decisions based on what [it] values the most. In the modern world where time is fleeting, having a place in society is attributed to having substantial value. With time being scarce and technology instilling logic in thinking, skeptics believe that fairytales and folktales seem to have no place in the world today, as people do not want to waste time on something fictitious. However, these same skeptics fail to realise the value that these stories bring to our lives today. Hence, I agree that folktales and fairytales have no place in the modern world to a small extent.</p>	<p>How this works, and how it conflicts with folk- and fairy tales could have been more clearly explained.</p> <p>Stance is awkward and can be more naturally and logically expressed</p>
<p>Although I have some reservations, folktales and fairy tales do play an integral part [in] educating young minds. In countries such as Singapore, folktales and fairytales have been integrated into the school syllabus at young ages. The education system makes use of these stories to cultivate interest in the young for the subject they are studying. These stories are most common in language texts such as Chinese or Malay textbooks. By doing so, the system kills two birds with one stone; children are not only more interested in the language they are learning, but also develop an appreciation for the deep-rooted heritage of our country. For example, 'The origins of Redhill' was a story in Chinese textbooks that told young readers about the boy who courageously fought off swordfish attacks to protect the island. In a fit of jealousy, the king wrongfully executed him and his blood stained the hills red with [injustice]. This story teaches children about the local subcommunities in Singapore and the importance of bravery and doing what is right. Additionally, Literature is also a popular subject that is made compulsory [in] some institutions. It is believed that studying Literature can boost one's creativity and linguistic ability. As such, value is seen to be placed on fairy tales and folktales as vehicles of knowledge. Although stories like 'The origins of Redhill' might not constantly be in one's thoughts, an interesting story like this would certainly be etched somewhere in the back of one's mind as a memory that can be associated with Redhill itself. Ultimately, impressionable children are still impacted by what they see and hear. As such, folktales and fairy tales are relatable in inculcating values and imparting knowledge and therefore have a place in modern society.</p>	<p>These could be briefly alluded to, so as to not leave readers hanging, since these reservations are not immediately obvious</p> <p>The illustration enriches the argument, but how it manages to achieve such effects could have been more closely explained</p> <p>Care should be taken to not muddle all texts studied with Literature with folktales and fairy tales, which does no justice to either</p> <p>The paragraph could have been tied together better with consideration of how such a means of educating children is still relevant today.</p>

Fairy tales and folktales also have tremendous value in the development and passing down of culture and heritage. In Asian cultures, many stories still circulate between generations especially during seasonal festivities. Folktales such as that of the Chinese New Year Nian monster [are] about the origins of the Lunar New Year and how it is celebrated. This story is often told at reunion dinners during that festive period to young children to teach them the significance of Chinese New Year and for adults to reminisce of their childhood. Stories like this not only close generation gaps but are able to impart the same appreciation for culture and knowledge in the youth. Another example would be the story of Chang'er and the origins of the Mooncake Festival that have the same effects as the Nian monster. However, some may argue that these effects do not last long. As time goes by quicker each day, it is arguable that the same children who used to be fascinated by these stories grow up to be more [apathetic] about the same subject as they begin to worry about the competitiveness of the modern world or pressure given to them by society. Most of the time, they would place lesser value on a story that is only told once a year during [a] celebration that they might not even enjoy due to their hectic [lives]. Despite the possibility of the diminishing interest, it is still worthy to note that it is folktales and fairy tales like these that shape the memories that youths and adults have of these traditional festivals today. These tales play an important role in encompassing the richness of one's culture and making it easier to pass down these traditions to the younger generations. In a modern world where technology may seem all too foreign for the older generation to use to connect to young phone addicts, it is fairy tales and folktales like these that provide the elderly and the youth a platform to bond through the passing down of culture during the scarce time they share on seasonal holidays.

(Nicole Liew, 19-A3)

There is some overlap between this argument and the previous, which can either be better organised or signposted to avoid repetition.

The significance of these tales to cultural traditions can be explained a little further to demonstrate their relevance better.

A thoughtful point, though it is a little heavily driven by stereotypes. These can be minimised through the use of hedging.

7 To what extent is dissent vital for the growth of societies?

Save the paragraph on international aid, this essay is built on a thoughtful understanding of dissent and its impact on the growth of societies. However, the response needs to be more balanced in recognising how dissent has brought about good change. Arguments could also be better supported by well-explained examples to enhance credibility.

Under the relentless heat of the Middle Eastern sun, a man set himself on fire in front of the government building. His intention - to draw attention to the dire financial situation of Tunisian food vendors. His silent dissent catalysed a series of large-scale uprisings - many of them violent - against the leaders of various governments in the Middle East, with the initial purpose of fighting for political reform and societal transformations. Indeed, a phoenix can only rise out of ashes. Unfortunately, this was not the case for many of these countries, with Egypt's economic decline, then stagnation, and Yemen grappling with the horrors of the civil war. This essay, therefore, argues that dissent, for the most part, is not vital for the growth of societies, and may even lead societies into decline

Arresting beginning that paints a poignant picture of how dissent was used to spark change, although the comparison to other countries could be clearer

Clear overall thesis statement

In the first place, dissent is extremely unlikely to allow the growth of societies when those in charge turn a blind eye to it. In today's world, the majority of political and social transformations stem from the introduction or amendment of government policies and principles. For dissent to be essential for growth, it first has to be taken into consideration by policymakers. In Singapore, the annual Pink Dot rally - a manifestation of the criticism of Article 377A, which criminalises gay sex between two men - draws thousands each year, and is a diluted form of political dissent here, where demonstrations are heavily restricted. However, the government has refused to amend or remove the article, citing reasons such as 'Singapore is not ready'. Thus, apathy of some governments towards dissent marginalises its capacity for social progress. Should the government notice, perhaps there would be a smaller degree of stigmatisation of gay men, especially among those who are more conservative, which translates into social progress of becoming a more accepting society. Thus, dissent cannot be vital for the growth of societies if it means nothing to the key change-makers - the government.

Presents an insightful argument about how the effects of dissent in sparking change might be limited

The argument is supported by a relevant example, but the reasons for the government's reluctance could be further explored to introduce more nuance

<p>In addition, when dissidents lose sight of their initial purpose, dissent, instead of fuelling societal growth, can catalyse the downfall of societies. Much of political dissent manifests in the form of protests. However, when these protests turn disruptive - when protesters will stop at nothing to achieve their goals - is when instability will be at its zenith. Currently, the Hong Kong protests have led to significant economic and social instability. A key event was the airport demonstrations, when hundreds of flights had to be cancelled, resulting in astronomical economic losses for Hong Kong, which they have not recovered from. As street protests continue, non-protesters are plagued with fear and paranoia of ending up injured, or worse, dead. When dissent is unrestricted in its severity, it has the potential of tipping societies over, down the slippery slope of decline. Indeed, the miniscule possibility of growth after decline still exists, but the chances are almost next to nothing. After all, this year's protests shook Hong Kong, still reeling from the undercurrents of political dissent from the 2014 Umbrella Protests, and only time will tell if this dissent has led to any growth in the political, social or economic spheres. Thus, when dissent is uncontrolled, it is extremely difficult for it to fuel the growth of societies.</p>	<p>The argument is logical but the illustration needs to be more clearly developed. What did the Hong Kong protests initially set out to achieve, and how did it spiral into such a state of anarchy such that dissent in this form cannot bring about positive change?</p>
<p>Furthermore, in the event that dissent is successful in promoting social progress, it is not the most important factor in determining the growth of societies in different realms. Progress can be measured by different indicators, and a common one used to determine a society's economic growth is the change in its Gross Domestic Product (GDP) over time. An essential factor for economic progress, especially for less economically developed countries, is international aid. For example, Ethiopia's economy has grown 10% per year for the past decade, as it invests most of the international monetary aid it receives into its healthcare and education sectors, generating income and creating jobs. It is unlikely for dissent to be as successful as money itself in promoting economic growth, since it is known, instead, to disrupt economic progress. Therefore, for the economic realm, dissent is largely unnecessary and unimportant for progress.</p>	<p>This question does not require consideration of other potentially vital factors; it is losing track of the question which requires a focused discussion on the role of dissent in promoting progress</p>

<p>Nevertheless, this essay acknowledges the power of dissent in notable societal events, when policies are changed and disruption to other aspects of society, like the economy, are kept to a minimum. First-wave feminism, better known as the Women's Suffrage movement, was a form of dissent against the government's policies on voting rights in the 20th century. Fortunately, the American government was malleable enough for the policy to be amended without any significant violence to be necessary, which would have disrupted the economy and society. However, it is still largely incorrect to say that dissent is vital for the growth of societies, since these successes are extremely limited.</p>	<p>More details are needed, such as the form of dissent and the change that it brought. Missing details render the example less effective.</p> <p>Without proper consideration of the good that dissent has brought, the conclusion that the success is extremely limited appears biased and unfair in downplaying dissent's value.</p>
<p>In a nutshell, it is predominantly idealistic to say that dissent is vital for the growth of societies, as its success in catalysing societal growth depends on many unpredictable factors. After all, dissent, if uncontrolled, is a beast loosed upon the world, and hopefully we are not foolish enough to allow it to manifest and ravage our lives.</p> <p><i>(Chua Wei Ting, 19-E3)</i></p>	<p>Good analogy helps to end the argument on a strong note, but the conclusion needs to be clearer in reiterating all the lines of arguments</p>

7 To what extent is dissent vital for the growth of societies?

Response shows a quite good understanding of the subject matter and presents a balanced discussion of the value that dissent brings to societal growth. In particular, good insight is presented in discussing the conditions necessary for dissent to be beneficial for societal growth, showing clear reasoning and evaluative skills. However, the response would benefit from sustained relevance and engagement with the topic of dissent (namely who and what constitutes dissenting voices) - there were several instances of misinterpretation. Use of language is very competent, with skillful use of varied sentence structures and beautiful figurative expressions. Personal conviction in the subject matter was also very evident. This was a joy to read.

Our world is and has never been a static one. The history of humanity has been characterised by constant change, as we have witnessed from the rising and falling of dynasties in ancient China to the expansion and [collapse] of Western empires. The growth of societies denote a transformation, typically a positive one, from the status quo - the shifting of paradigms, the reformation of systems and the alteration of societal values. For such a change to happen, opposition to what is perceived as the norm [must be] a necessary catalyst. Some critics may argue that dissent, the outward expression of opposition, especially to sensitive issues, may merely ruffle the feathers of society and, instead, not only prove completely futile but also lead to greater issues of uncontrolled conflict between people. Hence, in some cases, people are advised to keep mum about sensitive topics to preserve an ostensible sense of peace in a society. However, I am of the view that societies will never be able to grow in an efficient and effective manner without the voices of dissent to push for change, as long as opposition is shown in a civil and mediated manner, and I believe that dissent is not only vital for the progress of societies, but it is in fact the chief prerequisite for any form of change.

Well-articulated, good use of figurative expressions

Strong, daring position, but overall thesis statement is somewhat unwieldy. Consider writing two separate sentences instead.

First and foremost, the most prominent and persuasive argument for the importance of dissent in driving societal growth is that dissent seems to highlight existing faults in the status quo, calling for these faults to either be fixed or necessitating certain reformations and re-evaluations of current societal systems. Humans are naturally inclined to [pursue] comfort as an end goal. Most of the time, those in power, or those who have the authority to engender change in a society exist in a bubble of comfort and are [complacent or resistant to change] because of the stability and wealth [they enjoy]. However, this may lead to the complacency of a government, which ends up with the stagnation of societies. For example, China has been known to base the economy on protectionist principles - such that it walled up its markets to restrict them to domestic activities. While the economy remained self-sufficient and thus created an impression of sustainability, there was limited growth of the economy and consequently the society due to the isolated nature of the economy. Only when Deng Xiao Ping made the revolutionary move to deviate from the norm

Not the best exemplification of your argument because Deng Xiao Ping's proposals can hardly be considered 'dissent', as he was from the group that wields the power to

<p>and push for the 'Open Door Policy', China saw massive economic growth, and the effects of that policy continue to be felt today as China is taking strides to becoming the largest marketplace in the world with over a billion consumers, comparable to the once-hailed superpower, the United States. If dissent against the economic practices that had been nationally accepted for centuries had not been shown by revolutionaries like Deng Xiao Ping, China would have a smaller likelihood of enjoying the prosperity and fruits from a vibrant economy today, and may still be wallowing in regrettable stagnation, believing adamantly in its old ways. Therefore, dissent towards what is regarded as the 'best' way forward, the questioning of the status quo and the thirst for change is imperative for new, more innovative ideas to be discovered that fuel societal growth.</p>	<p>effect change</p> <p>Argument is valid, but for anything to constitute 'dissent', it should come from the powerless, not the anointed leaders</p>
<p>Nevertheless, I concede to the fact that not all forms of dissent are desirable and effective in engendering the progress of societies, especially if they are executed in a violent, disorganised fashion. The simple logic that change must first happen with a challenge to the norm holds true, but there are underlying prerequisites to the manner in which the norm is investigated and opposed to that will greatly affect its success in catalysing societal growth. Dissent is more effective when carried out in a collected, assertive and deliberate way, rather than through the use of force, politically charged uprisings or impulsive, uncalculated assaults. This points to the concept of 'soft power', as coined by Joseph Nye in the late 20th century, which is the use of non-violent, non-physical coercion and persuasion through the means of words and interpersonal strategies to achieve one's objectives. This case is aptly illustrated when comparing the revolutionary change that Aung San Suu Kyi brought to Burma (Myanmar) to the senseless protests in Hong Kong. In the early 200s, Aung San Suu Kyi, once a politician unknown to the world, achieved democracy in her homeland Burma, through non-violent negotiations and peace talks. Her great success [made] her a Nobel Peace Prize recipient and one of the most lauded humanitarians in the world, characterised by her ability to enact change and societal growth in an organised [and] assertive manner. She can be seen as the embodiment of soft power. In diametrical opposition, Hong Kong is currently battling a swarm of protestors that [gather] weekly to fight for their nation's sovereignty and freedom from the grasp of the Community Party in China. While their cause is understandable in terms of preserving their national identity and personal freedoms, the way these protests are operated [had] only been inimical to [achieving] their goals. As seen in the news, these protests are often violent and aggressive, involving the use of weapons and herd-like chants. The police have also inadvertently worsened the situation by responding with equal violence, even causing a woman to go blind in one eye. This caused [great national outrage], with thousands of Hong Kong citizens retaliating with the totemic symbol of the woman with a bleeding eye to criticise police brutality. These protests have plagued the city for months, causing economic</p>	<p>Nuanced discussion of points of tension in the question, ideas are logical and clearly evaluated</p> <p>Again, this example might not be the most appropriate because <u>soft</u> power still comes from those in authority (when dissent is initiated by the powerless)</p> <p>Example needs a lot more exploration of how she successfully carried out dissent and achieved her means, to show how change was brought about as a result of dissent</p>

<p>growth to slow down in Hong Kong. Moreover, social growth is also stunted by divisions within society between people with different political leanings also start to grow. Perhaps if dissent was carried out in a calmer fashion, Hong Kong may be closer to achieving the results they desire, such as how Aung San Suu Kyi achieved hers. Therefore, the manner in which dissent is expressed is pivotal to [realising] the goal of societal growth.</p>	<p>Well-developed argument, achieved through the use of an opposing narrative to flesh out how dissent should be practiced to achieve societal growth</p>
<p>Assuming that dissent is carried out in a civil manner as illustrated in the aforementioned argument, dissent can help create synergy between a government and its citizens if handled with an open-minded approach. In the 21st century, the waves of globalisation have ushered in an age of populism in which governments are expected, as an obligation, to first and foremost, to address the needs of the citizens whom they govern. In order for societal growth to be realised, there needs to be cooperation among various institutions such as governments, business corporations and the citizenry of a country, such that each stakeholder has an outlet to voice their needs and desires about the direction in which they want the society to march forward. If the government body fails to recognise the need for compromises and reformations, not only can it be deemed as an autocracy, but it will also fail to progress in a unified, inclusive manner, such that no one gets left behind. Inclusivity is one of the key tenets of societal growth, as exemplified by the French President Emmanuel Macron. The 2018 Yellow Vest demonstrations were indicative of public disapproval of rising tax rates and hence the exploitation of the working class in France. Before the protests could get any more violent and unabated, Macron held the 'Great National Debate' in town halls to create opportunities for dialogue and mediated dissent to be [articulated]. Instead of turning a blind eye to these protestors, he extended a listening ear to the dissatisfied, with the objective of including all opinions, even those of opposition, in the chorus of voices that [guide] France in the right direction of progress, such that harmony and a collective sense of appeasement are not excluded from political considerations regarding policies and laws that directly influence the lives of people. As a result, the French people have tamed the flames of their discontentment and have responded well to the government's invitation to make their voices heard. Hence, dissent, if dealt with an open-minded, welcoming attitude by those in power to enact structural and systemic changes can lead to synergetic movements towards sustainable societal growth.</p>	<p>This is very beautifully articulated</p> <p>Argument is logical, but also acknowledge that these governments could eventually get voted out (therefore entertaining dissent might be to the benefit of the ruling government too)</p> <p>Overall, paragraph is well-articulated and supported by a very relevant and well-explained illustration</p>

<p>In conclusion, dissent is indeed one of the key conditions for societal growth to occur, but the manner in which dissent is outwardly expressed can greatly determine whether or not such goals can be reached while causing minimal harm to societal welfare, if they can even be reached at all. Societal growth should be reached an inclusive, sustainable manner and dissent is critical to achieving such aims.</p> <p>(Kelly Hooy, 19-01)</p>	<p>Conclusion is somewhat abrupt, could elaborate on why dissent is critical to achieving such aims and based on the discussion above, why the conditions you have stated are necessary to ensure dissent is being practiced in a way that beneficial to achieve societal growth</p>
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7 To what extent is dissent vital for the growth of societies?

<p><i>The response is relevant and well-planned, where arguments are generally clear and supported by a good selection of examples to illustrate your arguments. However, the response would benefit from the more accurate use of facts to enhance credibility, and further explaining ideas to deepen evaluation.</i></p>	
<p>At face value, the image of dissent appears rather bleak - a throng of people crowding and clogging streets and highways, angry protestors and activists demanding for better from governments, [corporations] and the United Nations. While dissent is not limited to the physical worlds but manifests also within the vast expanses of cyberspace, its effects are undeniably far-reaching and significant, especially in areas of economic, political and social growth. Yet, I strongly believe dissent, while understandably important, is not vital for the growth of society.</p>	<p>Context-setting is poetic, but lacking specificity (e.g. what are they demanding for?). Can transit more smoothly - there is an abrupt shift in perspectives.</p> <p>Nuanced views stated in the thesis statement, but it needs to be clearer in providing reasons for your stand</p>
<p>Dissent is not vital [to] and may even stunt a nation's economic growth. Trade unions or communists often organise worker's strikes, destabilising and crippling an economy - in turn reducing the conduciveness of a location for business, and limiting Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) into the country due to the unstable environment. Singapore is widely said to adopt self-authoritarianism as a governing approach, often placing heavy limits on the boundaries of dissent. This can be seen from the closure of trade unions and how the government appoints people to amass large shares of the Singapore press, effectively giving the government a significant, though indirect, control over media, a channel in which dissent is traditionally expressed. A minister had once said that "the irresponsible excesses of trade unions are a luxury we cannot afford" - by adopting this approach and limiting dissent, Singapore charts incredible economic growth by preserving the speed of action and disallowing dissent</p>	<p>This argument is too specific, somewhat example-driven</p> <p>This point about trade unions and control of the media can be presented in a way that is more nuanced. Do note that trade unions (though compliant), do exist. They take a conciliatory route instead of displays of</p>

<p>to cripple the economy through destabilising it. The legitimacy of this can be illustrated by how even the trade unions recognised this, and though begrudgingly, dissolved without any real resistance. Another alternate example explains this point - the United States (US) government shutdown this year severely crippled their economy and plunged the nation further into debt. Dissent and disunity within the parliament between the Democrats and Republicans led to a [refusal] to pass the budget, rendering the thousands of people employed by the government without their monthly paycheck. Hence, the dissent against an 'imposed' budget or the refusal to accept the status quo has resulted in even slower economic growth for the country, exacerbating economic stagnation.</p>	<p>dissent</p> <p>The quote has a questionable origins - source cannot be found on the Internet</p> <p>Example about the US could be better explained - the distinction between dissent and disagreement is blurred here</p>
<p>However, it cannot be denied that dissent is still somewhat important. Some may argue that dissent is even vital to the growth and sustainability of civilisation. There is a validity to that statement - dissent can hold irresponsible governments accountable for their actions through exposing blunders in policy and decision making through protests, and contribute to a wider range of perspectives which could serve to strengthen countries' policies and hence stimulate economic growth. Dissent and political activism could grow and potentially ripen a nation towards democracy and unity - a clear example being the 1989 Eastern Europe Revolutions. In Romania, millions of impoverished Romanians gathered in the streets to support the removal of their dictator, Nicolae Ceaușescu. Due to public dissent, he was eventually captured, ultimately removing a barrier [to] growth for Romania. His repressive policies, ignorance against economic logic and persecution against intellectuals resulted in a shrinking domestic economy and the breakdown of the family unit (he had encouraged institutionalised care in overcrowded orphanages). The dissent that facilitated his removal was indeed vital for the growth of Romanian society, not just by economic standards, but in social spheres as well, by keeping the nation's government accountable to the people. This was also similar in the Philippines, where while popular dissent did damage their economy in the short run, it resulted in stronger growth in the long run. The gunning down of Aquino (a political rival) in Manila Airport triggered a spark of protests that culminated in Marcos' removal. His rule had been marked by slow economic growth and the maintenance of inequity. The People's Power movements galvanised an entire nation towards a common goal, becoming arguably vital in creating later economic growth and fostering political consciousness of the people by giving them a stake in their country.</p>	<p>It is logical, but ideas could be developed in a more evaluative way (why is a certain level of accountability in the government important?)</p> <p>Well-expressed</p> <p>Interesting, lesser-used examples employed to good effect</p> <p>Paragraph should end by reiterating the argument, not leave the example hanging</p>

<p>While there is validity in the argument stated above, it only holds given certain exceptions and circumstances - like if the government is committing unacceptable injustice, or if international or regional factors are in the favour of the dissent. However, this is not always the case. A substitute for dissent - constructive, public discourse, is far more sustainable and vital for the growth of societies in the long run. Consultative politics, feedback and government engagement with the people on policy direction is a largely superior solution, which steps around the negative impacts of dissent. In Singapore, the government has created a Feedback Unit, and numerous online platforms like the 'Our Singapore Conversation' [initiative] to consult public opinion while explaining the rationale behind policies. While I concede that this only works if the government is reliable and receptive to most feedback, it is undoubtedly a better alternative than internal civil war.</p>	<p>The argument is logical but the idea and examples need to be fully developed to deepen the argument - what has been the result of such attempts at public discourse?</p>
<p>In conclusion, while dissent is important, it is not vital for the growth of societies. The power of dissent to change and chart a nation's future is profound, both in positive and negative ways. While it can bring about desired change, fostering a growing political consciousness and economic growth, it is more often than not a clunky way to achieve the same aims. Other more sustainable substitutes render dissent a largely non-vital aspect of growth. With the advent of technology and increasing speed of fake news, popular dissent may even stunt political consciousness by perpetuating the spread of misinformation.</p> <p>(Koh Jie Hui Avigail, 19-11)</p>	<p>Summarises the argument well, recognising the potential but selective value of dissent.</p>

7 To what extent is dissent vital for the growth of societies?

<p><i>These two body paragraphs are insightful and well-expressed. The first paragraph is competent in providing a wide range of examples to illustrate the argument. Both paragraphs have also sought to unpack the key word 'vital' by emphasising on the crucial role of dissent. However, evaluation could be deepened by developing ideas further and a more consistent use of examples in the second paragraph.</i></p>	
<p>Indeed, many argue that dissent and opposition voices are pivotal for the growth of societies, allowing them to progress on the front of human rights. Throughout history, we have seen this manifest in the Women's Suffrage movement as well as the Civil Rights movement in the 1960s. Both cases reveal instances when public dissent and protests have served as the impetus for the uplifting of previously marginalised groups of people in society. Since then, society has certainly progressed to be more accepting, inclusive and to stand for equal rights and justice. More recently, the LGBT community worldwide has expressed their dissent in a more subtle way. Pride parades held annually all over the globe are a request for equal</p>	<p>Well-argued with strong illustration in terms of presenting the role of dissent in engendering change from past till present.</p> <p>An explanation of why alternatives to dissent would not have sufficed would have sharpened the paragraph.</p>

<p>rights to be granted to those [in] the community. In many western countries, they have succeeded, with gay marriage being legalised and laws established to protect the rights of transgender and genderfluid individuals. Dissent was certainly vital in such cases to voice the opinions and demands for the marginalised and sidelined in society, resulting in concessions being made. Such instances were a wake up call for society to move towards acceptance, tolerance, to strive for human rights and justice - the hallmarks of a progressive and cultured society.</p>	
<p>[...]</p>	
<p>Some skeptics also argue that dissent is not vital to societal growth as by itself, it cannot enact real change without political will. They echo the sentiments of former UN Secretary General, Ban Ki-Moon, that “we have funding. We have technology. All we lack is political will.” They posit that the crucial hindrance to societal growth is mainly the lack of backing from society’s leaders to enforce changes that will allow society progress. While there is an element of truth to this, we must recognise that the power of the common man lies in his ability to voice his opinion and make himself heard. In order to attain and procure the attention of leaders, dissent is still a key tool. Dissent empowers us to have the ability to contribute to making a change by exerting political pressure that translates into action. Thus, I believe we should not downplay the importance of dissent in light of the need for political conviction and backing, but rather concede that dissent is crucial in obtaining said political will in the first place. After all, governments will listen and act to give the people what they want.</p> <p><i>(Leticia Ng, 19-U1)</i></p>	<p>Good use of a relevant quotation, and the paragraph is also eloquently expressed</p> <p>The argument needs to be better supported by a discussion of concrete examples that demonstrate how expressing dissent has allowed citizens to break down political resistance and engender change</p>

9 Is choice always desirable?

This essay makes a few perceptive arguments with an awareness of contemporary concerns and discussions around the topic of choice. Though not all the illustrations hit their mark, many of them are relevant and current, demonstrating the effects and implications of choice. It is cogently argued, laying out the arguments for the desirability of always having the ability to choose against some potentially undesirable effects arising from choice before weighing the two, which is reflective of the balanced manner in which the arguments were laid out in the introduction, though not all of the ideas in the introduction were revisited and developed later on in the essay.

We are faced with millions of choices every day; options for each and every aspect of life, a plethora of options are given to us and most of us are bestowed with the privilege and luxury [of being able] to decide which options we [would like] to pick. Especially in societies that are becoming increasingly liberal and open-minded, coupled with advancements in technology, we are spoilt for choice as compared to times past when we were bound by circumstance and had one set path carved out for us. I believe that having the opportunity to choose is desirable most of the time because it gives citizens the power to determine and have a say in political spheres and even in society. However, I do acknowledge that there are always pitfalls and side effects to these choices which will be explored in this essay.

Good, balanced introduction that is rooted in present-day developments.

Having the freedom and options to choose is **beneficial** because it gives people an avenue to make their preferences heard, instead of being subjected to an only option, which is a trait mostly seen in governments that might not subscribe to the ideals of democracy. Having a choice is thus desired, especially when the people are deprived of it as there are always better options that might [better] meet the needs of the people. This is especially [evident in] the recent protests in Hong Kong which [surface] the deep-seated resentment and injustice felt by Hong Kongers who were promised the right to vote. Yet, they were not consulted in the process in which Carrie Lam, current leader of Hong Kong, was elected. This [result] was thus forced upon the people as the government failed to deliver leadership options and the protests have demonstrated how Hong Kongers felt that Carrie Lam was unable to represent their needs and was merely representing China's interests. Evidently, the Hong Kongers [who] want more options and authority to choose a better leader, but more than that, a better life that is not ridden with troubles of rising costs of living and health and income inequality. Thus, choice is desirable because it ensures that the best methods are chosen to tackle an issue and bring society progress. Otherwise, preferences cannot be captured and many societies could end up in a state of unrest [and] violence [as] in the case of a beaten and battered Hong Kong.

Not what the question is asking for - should be more sharply focused on the absolute desirability of choice.

<p>Choice is also desirable most of the time because it can also empower weaker communities and the minorities. Since time immemorial, societal norms and expectations have often robbed people of the option to be different, to take on an identity that will be respected and to be who they truly want to be, beneath the masks that society has mandated all of us to wear. However, an increasingly liberal and accepting mindset [has] been emerging and people are no longer as restricted as before by the options imposed by societal prejudice. For instance, the Canadian government has provided an option on immigration forms for the people to indicate an 'X' as their gender, should they wish to express their gender neutrality. This option was not available before and the fact that [people] are now given this option is uplifting for the communities such as the LGBTQ+ minorities who can now be accorded greater respect and dignity to be who they are and who they [choose] to be. Hence, choices are desirable most of the time as it breaks the cycle of entrapment under a society's rules and expectations and is also a vehicle for a paradigm shift that nurtures pride in these communities to freely express their identity beyond [the] confines of society.</p>	
<p>However, detractors [of] my argument might [claim] that having more options could be akin to opening a can of worms, with inevitable side effects such as ethical considerations and dilemma. While this argument is definitely valid, much like how we offer [false] dilemmas and pine over the many equally attractive food options we are faced with, I believe that there are only several instances when having a choice is more a bane than a boon. Opponents to my argument might raise several examples, such as how science and technology has offered more options and alternatives to the way we lead our lives, introducing options such as genetically-modified babies or euthanasia and assisted suicide. Hence, advancements in scientific research and the development of such medical technology could open up a Pandora's box where we start to debate over which choice and option is the best or morally accepted one. In such situations where there are no easy answers, families are often burdened by this tug-of war between wanting to end a patient's painful life in exchange for peace, or to avoid being the 'murderer' that critics might call them. Hence, such a choice often entails a painful process of decision-making, but more than that, society has to start grappling with such ethical dilemmas. Would it then be better if such an option was not present, and we let nature take its course as it always has?</p>	<p>While comparisons can be helpful in helping a reader to understand the point being made, this one is not clear.</p>

<p>While there is definitely merit in this argument, I believe that these choices that science and technology [offer] are largely desirable, because these have opened up pathways for humanity to question and develop new ideas about how we live our [lives], as well as have the option to do what we feel is best for [patients]. In addition, science and technology [have] also offered better alternatives to how food and things are manufactured, offering healthier options such as genetically modified corn and greener electric car options. The less privileged also have the option to pursue education such as in the Hole in the Wall Project. Hence, the options are endless and there will always be trade-offs to every choice made, but every choice presents an opportunity for us to lead better lives and make the best choice that aligns with our values and beliefs.</p>	<p>Relevance of this illustration is questionable.</p> <p>The link strays slightly from the focus of the question - whether choice is always desirable</p>
<p>Therefore, for the aforementioned reasons, I believe that while choices present dilemmas and might not be desirable in some instances, it is mostly desirable. Furthermore, there are ways to reduce the opportunity cost and minimise the side effects as we work through the complexities of decision making in a world where we are presented with more options every day from developments in the way we think and in technology. Hence, I believe we should not shun having choices but should embrace it and work with the options that present exciting [opportunities].</p> <p>(Renee Ong, 19-U1)</p>	<p>Awkward expression which can be made more naturally.</p> <p>This vague claim could have been clarified.</p>

10 'Religion divides more than it unites.' Discuss.

<p><i>This essay maintains a constant focus on the tension between 'divides' and 'unites' in the question and displays insight and perceptiveness at times when comparing the two. The body paragraphs generally demonstrate a systematic development of the argument, although the later arguments could be strengthened. Overall, a competent response with the potential for greater sophistication of argumentation and structure.</i></p>	
<p>In light of the rapid advancements in technology in recent years, globalisation has made travelling around the world easier than ever. This has allowed for the large scale movement of people from all walks of life, often resulting in many cities becoming melting pots of culture, with each member bringing their unique religion and culture to the table. While religion has been lauded for bringing people of similar beliefs together, it is undeniable that it has also threatened to tear apart the social fabric in our volatile world today. In recent years, conflicts arising due to religious reasons have been on the rise. This is testament to the fact that religion does indeed divide us more than it unites, given that its unifying power has simultaneously led to the unexpected segregation of society.</p>	<p>This introduction demonstrates an understanding of tensions between 'unifying' and 'divisiveness' and states the stand clearly. The reasons for the stand could be elaborated on a little further.</p>

<p>In a society plagued by a myriad of social issues, religion serves as a moral compass to guide individuals and instill [] beliefs and values in them. In [some] cases, however, these archaic beliefs and values have threatened to tear apart the social fabric, especially when conflict and tension begin to arise as a result of differences in beliefs. A case in point would be that of the disagreements between Christians and Muslims, and the LGBT community. Both the Muslim and Christian faith have expressed strong disapproval towards gay marriage, stating that it goes against the fundamental principles of what a family should look like. They believe that the only acceptable marriage should be between a male and a female, for the purpose of reproduction, and are hostile to these new ideas of gay marriage. Such beliefs have brought about tension between the LGBT community and Muslims and Christians, perpetuating the divide between them. This has led to many derogatory and anti-gay comments on social media, worsening the stigma against the LGBT community and escalating tensions amongst the various groups in society. As seen, religion does have the power to shape one's beliefs and values, which in some cases, can lead to conflicts and deep-seated hatred amongst people. This proves that religion is able to drive a wedge between groups of people, thus dividing society. Admittedly, religion does indeed unite groups of people with similar beliefs, but in doing so, [it] might result in escalating tensions among others. Hence, I believe that religion has proven itself to divide more than it unites.</p>	<p>Explain/ point out how this is a <u>unified</u> belief to a large extent -- among Muslims and Christians</p> <p>An effective concession and negotiation of the tension.</p>
<p>In today's volatile world, where conflict and tension are increasing exponentially, people are quick to judge and even quicker to blame such conflicts on religion, engendering deep-seated tensions between various groups of people. When faced with brutal and traumatic acts against humanity such as shootings and bombings, it is human nature to find something to put the blame on. In many cases, this results in unprecedented hatred towards a [particular] religion, creating fault lines in our society today. For instance, due to the numerous terrorist attacks by the Islamic state of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) there has been growing islamophobia, where people are quick to generalise and assume that all Muslims are radicalised terrorists, ready to pull off yet another terrorist attack. Obviously, the islamophobia that many people have is unwarranted as it is an absurd generalisation of the Muslim community. Yet, tensions persist between Muslims and the rest of society, which have led to violent crimes such as bombings of mosques. As such, religion, when used as a tool to put the blame on a particular group of peoples, can engender bone-chilling hate and conflict between groups of people, thus dividing more than it unites.</p>	<p>Why are conflict and tension 'increasing exponentially'?</p> <p>Perceptive evaluation of the significance of religion according to various perspectives.</p> <p>Is islamophobia very common? Give specific eg.s of how islamophobia is exhibited and causes division.</p> <p>Good focus on the question.</p>

<p>On the other hand, in a more positive light, religion has the power to unite us as jubilant celebrations and festivals of each religion serve as platforms to bring people closer together, acting as a social glue to unite the masses. For instance, Hari Raya is a period of celebration for Muslims, and is an occasion where Muslims visit their relatives and friends in joyous celebration. Such a happy occasion undoubtedly brings people together, as well wishes and generous gifts are commonplace, even amongst neighbours, instead of just family. People from other religions might also be keen to learn more about the various religions through these festivals. A case in point would be that of Singapore, where activities are often organised at community clubs to encourage people from all walks of life to learn about religions different from their own, through experiencing these religious festivals. Religion can thus provide a potent platform to unite the masses through the celebration of religious festivals that can help people to put aside their differences and immerse themselves in celebrations of these festivals.</p>	<p>Quite a well-developed argument, but is there any possible rebuttal? What are some assumptions made in this paragraph?</p>
<p>Additionally, religion helps to bring people with common beliefs and values together, allowing those of the same faith to worship their god together. This brings the masses closer together, and serves as a common ground to bring people together. In the case of Christianity, Christians must attend church every week, and for the youth, there are youth groups and programmes that help to deepen their faith. These youth groups also provide opportunities for the youth to do community work, such as volunteering at old folks' homes. This reinforces the social fabric, by drawing people from all walks of life together, and providing opportunities for interaction in our society, allowing religion to unite the masses.</p>	<p>Rather hasty leap -- the front part was about unity <i>within</i> the religion, but the paragraph ended with unity <i>across</i> religions</p>
<p>At the end of the day, while religion has undoubtedly been lambasted for being the driving force of many conflicts in society today, it is sheer fallacy to say that it is unable to unite the masses. Ultimately, religion is not inherently good or bad. Rather, it is the way we interpret religion and whether we choose to use it as a binding force or a cause for division amongst different groups in society. That being said, a delicate balance has to be achieved to ensure that people do not overstep their boundaries and cause conflict and tension in the name of religion. For the most part, religious teachings emphasise love and acceptance of everyone around us, providing us with a ray of hope that maybe someday, religious conflicts can be curbed and that religion will serve to unite more than it divides.</p> <p>(Celeste Au, 19-02)</p>	

10 'Religion divides more than it unites.' Discuss.

The greatest strength of this essay lies in its clear depth of understanding and detailed explanations that apply the Universal Concepts effectively. There is a clear evolution and development of the argument across the paragraphs, with the ideas building on each other. The effective signposting especially helps indicate how the various parts of the argument are interwoven. Also, the use of many different synonyms and ways of expressing unity and division throughout the essay maintains a constant focus on the question's demands without being repetitive. Points to improve in this essay would include crafting a more focussed introduction that puts forth the thesis with a stronger argumentative voice, as well as deepening the comparisons so as to address the question requirements better.

Religion is a set of beliefs that people hold regarding God and the wider world. In today's society, religion occurs most frequently in the form of organised religion, in which a large group of people subscribe to the same belief or believe in the same God. Religions, such as Christianity, Buddhism and Islam, have often been proclaimed by [their] believers as a unifying force, one that transcends gender, race and physical borders. However, these religions have also been seen to be the cause of conflict and divisions around the world. With religion being able to simultaneously create consensus and conflict, I still argue that religion divides more than it unites.

A little vague. Beliefs about the wider world aren't necessarily religious ones.

This introduction could have been better developed by bringing in the modern context and explaining how it affects how religion unites and divides.

Slightly awkward expression 'I still argue' since there is no preceding statement of this argument.

Some may argue that religion has the ability to unite people in a common belief. Religion, and most significantly organised religion, often involve the formation of a religious community. In the Catholic Church, this might refer to the interactions during Sunday Masses, for Islam, the fellowship during prayers in Mosques. Regardless, these religious customs allow the interaction of people who hold the same religious beliefs to form a united religious community. For believers of the respective religions, these religious customs allow for them to be united in a common denominator greater than themselves, which in this case would be God. The shared beliefs result[] in individuals who are part of the community uniting in the face of threats. For example, the Catholic Church was galvanised by the rise in pro-choice legislation being passed around the world. Members of the Catholic community were united by the common perceived threat against the sanctity of life and acted in consensus to respond to it. In the United States, members of the church went in unison to pray outside abortion clinics while others staged protests. This can also be seen in other countries such as Ecuador, where debates on abortion bills spurred [members of religious communities] to protest together. The common thread

TS doesn't make a clear comparison between dividing and uniting.

Why is this sense of unity powerful and important?

What is 'pro-choice'? A little more context - why would the Catholic Church be against choice?

There's a very clear effort to articulate what the examples are meant to show so that the points are made effectively. The last two sentences reinforce the

<p>amongst the above examples is the fact that the shared beliefs, brought about by religion, united people of different genders, backgrounds and even countries towards a common goal. This therefore demonstrates the power of religion in unifying people who subscribe to the same beliefs.</p>	<p>significance of the unifying power of religion.</p>
<p>However, the above argument is flawed in failing to recognise the fact that intra-religious tensions and divisions also exist. Even though people who hold the same belief can be united through [their] shared religion, a religion is not necessarily perceived to be the same by different people. In fact, a single religion is often interpreted in different ways by different people, resulting in the different religious denominations that we observe in today's world. [From] Shia versus Sunni Muslims [to] Protestants versus Anglicans and other forms of Christianity, intra-religious fault lines do exist. [Going back to] using the earlier pro-life example, among the Church, there is a spectrum of views regarding the issue. Extreme conservatives support an all-out abortion ban, similar to the one passed in Alabama, others would offer exceptions in the case of rape or medical emergencies, while more liberal conservatives may even toe the line between pro-life and pro-choice policies. These differing ideas can exist even within the same religion and create divisions. Fundamentally, to many, religion is often seen as an absolute truth given by God to those who subscribe to the religion. Hence, when different interpretations do arise forming different sects, people find it much more difficult to reconcile what they view to be 'absolutely correct' with a perceived 'inaccurate interpretation'. This difficulty in reconciling differences often [pushes] believers to prove their version of the religion superior vis-a-vis the other sects. Such intra-religious divisions can cause or even worsen conflicts as seen in the worsening of the instability within the Middle-Eastern regions, due to clashes between different sects of the Islam faith who view the instability as an opportunity to 'overcome' other sects. Hence, although on the surface religion may seem to unite its believers, more often than not, this image hides the cracks that occur within the religion itself.</p>	<p>A good point about the perceptions and assumptions people hold regarding religion.</p> <p>So which is greater, the unifying effect or the divisive effect? Proper evaluation of these extensive examples has not been made yet.</p> <p>Valuable recognition of the cognitive dissonance.</p> <p>Clever comparison against the point raised in the previous paragraph has been achieved.</p>
<p>Furthermore, religion can create inter-religious divisions due to its exclusionary nature. Even if we agree that religion can unite its believers to a certain degree, one has to recognise that to create a community of people who share the same beliefs, [the community] has to exclude those who do not. In fact, the example of the church being united under the pro-life movement demonstrates this. By being Pro-life, they necessarily exclude those who are pro-choice which is the root of the conflict in the first place. When it is established that religious communities create an 'us' and a 'them', one has to wonder why inter-religious conflicts are all the more divisive when such exclusions occur all the time [among other sorts of groups]. The answer is simple. Religion often forms an integral part of one's identity, shaping [one's] beliefs and morals. Hence, when others come into conflict with this belief, one they deem absolutely true and part of their identity, the conflict becomes more personal and the</p>	<p>Potentially contradictory, since it has been pointed out earlier that there is a spectrum of views even among followers of the same faith.</p> <p>This deep insight into the nature of religion creates a powerful</p>

<p>reaction more visceral. It is because of this that the 'us vs them' mentality is strengthened in the context of religious conflicts. The fact that religion can create such visceral reactions is one often weaponised by politicians. In history and in the modern day, wars or conflicts have often been framed as religious. This is because politicians know that doing so will allow the people to feel as though their very identity is under threat and become more personally involved in the issue. The Kashmir dispute is one such example. President Modi of India gathered strong support from the Buddhist nationals during the elections for his promise to revoke the status of Kashmir, a Muslim-majority region which is also claimed by Pakistan. To many Buddhist Indian nationals, the conflict between India and Pakistan is not merely a political conflict but a religious one, which undermines the stability of their religion. Such an example is not the only instance in which religious differences have been exploited to further political conflicts. The Palestine and Israeli conflict over the West Bank is another example in which religious tensions, this time between Muslims and Christians, have been worsened to further political gain. Furthermore, this is often done in an inflammatory manner to prey on often pre-existing religious tensions and an individual's religious beliefs. Doing so can worsen the 'us vs them' mentality and further cements religious divisions. Hence, the nature of religion, alongside external influences, often result[s] in inter-religious conflicts being all the more divisive.</p>	<p>justification for why religious conflicts can be so greatly divisive.</p> <p>Why 'framed' instead of real?</p> <p>How is this part of the paragraph relevant to the question regarding religion's unifying or divisive power?</p> <p>Is this division then caused by religion? Argument can be more forcefully relevant</p> <p>How does this weigh against how religion can also bring about inter-religious unity?</p>
<p>The exclusionary nature of religion results in religion simultaneously uniting people while dividing others. Although we cannot reject the fact that religion has been effective in uniting people who share the same religious beliefs, the fact that religious teachings are open to interpretation makes it equally likely to divide those who have differing opinions on the same belief. Beyond that, conflict also occurs frequently between the in- and out-groups formed through different religions. The fact that religion is such a sensitive topic only makes it ripe for the picking by external forces who further these divisions for their own agenda. Therefore, as much as religion unites, its nature often results in much more deep-rooted divisions, hence dividing more than it unites.</p> <p>(Emmanuella Li, 19-02)</p>	<p>Signposting could have been used to mark the transition to a conclusion.</p> <p>This vulnerability to exploitation has not really been convincingly explored to a similar depth.</p> <p>Why aren't the unifying powers as deep-rooted? A deeper evaluation of this in the body paragraphs would justify this conclusion.</p>

11 'A healthy lifestyle is a luxury we cannot afford.' How true is this of your society?

The development of arguments in this essay demonstrates a clear understanding that there are tradeoffs which cannot be afforded and so render a healthy lifestyle 'a luxury we cannot afford'. The presentation of balance was commendable, as each paragraph negotiated the tensions between both perspectives. However, at times the rebuttal comes across as oversimplifying the struggles involved. The

arguments could have been strengthened with more thorough evaluation: by looking at the Social World Model and the UCs of SSF and B&V to consider why it might be argued that Singaporeans cannot afford a healthy lifestyle. The complexity of the issue is not merely about money and time, but possibly even about the entire structure and fabric of our society, given that the phrase was borrowed from a very well-known statement that poetry is a luxury we cannot afford, made by the late PM Lee.

With the advent of an increased rate of scientific research suggesting the benefits of healthy living, it has become a growing trend for people to become more health conscious with their lifestyle choices like the food they consume. However, some of these healthier choices may not always be more available or accessible to people, especially those who lack the finances to, although they want to. Despite this, I feel that my society is affluent and capable enough to afford many different luxuries, and a healthy lifestyle is one of them.

The 'rate' is not really the point here is it? But yes, the growing scientific research pointing in this direction does raise such awareness.

Recognises some conditions for affording a healthy lifestyle. Could do with a bit more unpacking of what a healthy lifestyle is, beyond diet.

The term 'healthy lifestyle' is commonly associated with consuming healthy food and incorporating regular exercise into people's routine[s]. Food manufacturers and retailers capitalise on the former to differentiate their products, justifying the more premium price tags with claims that it boosts people's health one way or another. As such, it has put off the more thrifty of us, who would rather settle for the cheaper, more conventional options, even though they may now seem more 'unhealthy' in comparison. However, these more 'conventional' food options do not need the latest scientific research to prove [their] countless health benefits, as they can simply come in the form of choosing to fill the plate with more fruits and vegetables, and cutting down on fried or oily foods. In my society, it is not difficult to find many economical eateries that offer a wide variety of food that includes numerous different healthier options. As such, it is not difficult or expensive to find healthier options for meals and it boils down to the choice of the individual. This makes healthy eating a cheap and attainable luxury that is only contested by the individual's food preference.

Interesting perspective

Perhaps 'average' is a better substitute for 'conventional', unless the novelty of the marketed alternatives can be explained.

Can point out how much the average healthy meal can cost as a way of illustration

Well-developed, but can also acknowledge the struggle of the low-income and the implications of 'luxury'.

<p>Another aspect of a healthy lifestyle is the commitment and discipline to infuse exercise into people's schedules regularly. My society is largely affluent enough to afford the most basic of sporting equipment, and many households do own some form of sporting equipment, be it in the form of simple running shoes to basketballs or rackets that are easy to purchase and store, to the more premium golf clubs and road bikes that can range beyond four digit figures. Evidently, money is not a large issue in my society, but what prevents many from fully utilising their ten-grand sporting equipment is time. My society's financial affluence did not come easily, and many people have to frequently work long hours, and even follow up with work-related issues on weekends that would otherwise have been used for recreational activities instead. However, the government has done its part well to make time less of an obstacle to people trying to achieve their commitment to an active lifestyle. They do so in the form of building more sporting facilities like gymnasiums and sports complexes, and making them more accessible through a more extensive public transportation network. They even provided monetary incentives as much as \$100 into people's ActiveSG account[s] which can be used to book or rent sporting facilities. As such, the people in my society can easily find an opportunity to do their favourite sport or exercise as these facilities are made closer and more accessible to them, saving the time wastes and [hassle] of getting there and coming back.</p>	<p>Rather than assume that 'money is not a large issue', it's to your credit if you recognise upfront that not everyone is affluent in Singapore, and there are people who struggle.</p> <p>Doesn't address all the issues to do with a lack of time, but does help to present evidence that the barriers to pursuing a healthy lifestyle have been lowered -- might want to modify your argument in this case for greater coherence.</p>
<p>One aspect of a healthy lifestyle that is often overlooked is the mental and emotional well-being of people trying to achieve a healthy lifestyle overall. Admittedly, it is more difficult to achieve and not as [simple as] the physical aspect of it discussed earlier, but nonetheless equally if not more important. Especially in my society which praises achievement and success [at] work, many are willing to sacrifice other things in order to chase their dreams of success in work or academic-related fields. Some take it too far, and jeopardise their sleep and personal relations in order to give maximum priority and attention to their ambitious goals. Many more who attempt going down that path stumble halfway, and realise how hard it is to strike a work-life balance, and as such view the healthy mental and emotional well-being associated with it as a luxury that is virtually unattainable. Admittedly, this can be hard to achieve, and in serious cases the opposite may result: feelings of depression and [a] lack of self-worth. However, should people feel the need to keep their mental and emotional well-being in check, there are plenty of ways they can reach out to others for a helping hand or just to communicate with people they are close to to keep themselves and everyone sane. There are various different helplines that troubled youth can call to seek guidance or emotional counselling, and in dire circumstances there are also avenues for people contemplating suicide to seek help and counselling. For the working class, there are numerous areas near workplaces for people to [relax] and catch up after work, as seen by the vibrant nightlife in town areas like Clarke</p>	<p>Can be a bit less cavalier and less dismissive of these struggles, and recognise that it is not so easy -- take note of how certain expressions such as 'plenty of ways', 'just a simple meal' can come across as</p>

Quay, or it can be just a simple meal with family and friends at nearby eateries. As such, even when the emotional and mental well-being of the people in my society are threatened by high stress from work and other external factors, it is not difficult for them to find ways to keep them resilient enough to overcome such challenges with the accessibility of communication with others, as doing so would greatly boost their mental and emotional well-being.	trivialising the difficulty of reaching for these options.
<p>In conclusion, my society is well and adequately equipped to afford its people with an opportunity to lead a healthy lifestyle, both physically and emotionally. However, how well people in my society utilise these privileges depends on their own personal choices and decisions, and whether or not they have the discipline to manage themselves physically and mentally. As such, a healthy lifestyle is a luxury that can be afforded in my society, provided that the people in my society are willing to capitalise on it to help them lead the healthy lifestyles that the vast majority of us dream of achieving.</p> <p>(Gavin Tan, 19-U3)</p>	

12 'A flourishing arts scene is the mark of a civilised society.' How far do you agree?

<p><i>This essay provides good arguments for why a flourishing arts scene is the mark of a civilised society, but it needs to pay closer attention to the difference between 'a' and 'the' so as to not risk digressing from the question. There is a mix of rational arguments and descriptive segments in this essay; the latter needs sharper focus on the question. Although the stand adopted disagrees with the statement in the question, the first few paragraphs argue so effectively for a flourishing arts scene being the mark of a civilised society that the contrary stand taken does not convince -- this suggests that adopting the stand that agrees with the statement would have been a wiser choice since the arguments are stronger for that.</i></p>	
<p>Against the mechanistic backdrop of concrete cityscapes thrums the lively rhythm of an eclectic arts scene, from art galleries in Soho to bookshops bursting with internationally-acclaimed literature. This is New York City, where the arts scene flourishes as vibrantly as the pulse of the city. Some posit that a flourishing arts scene is the mark of a civilised society, whose people embody the cultural quotient to appreciate and create art, the sense of humanity that drives the search for meaning and identity beyond the pragmatic and the mundane banalities of everyday life through expression and art. On the other hand, others hold the opinion that there exist other, more salient markers of a civilised society, such as the way societies treat their people, especially their children, minority groups and the disadvantaged. Hence,</p>	<p>Reconsider the cause-effect relationship here. Is this cultural quotient likely to be an impact of a thriving arts scene, rather than its cause? Could it be both? The stand is too abruptly introduced because there is nothing in the</p>

<p>I largely disagree with the notion that a flourishing arts scene is the mark of a civilised society.</p>	<p>development of the paragraph that leads up to this.</p>
<p>Firstly, before arguing that a flourishing arts scene is the mark of a civilised society, one must examine the rationale behind why some cling tightly to the opinion that a vibrant arts scene reflects a civilised society. A flourishing arts scene reflects the ability of a society's people to create and appreciate art as a whole. The implication of this statement is that the society in question would be generally educated and well-versed in the arts, as interpreting visual arts, literary texts and theatre require a certain amount of knowledge about the art form. In order to fully appreciate and create art, and in turn enable a society's arts scene to flourish, the assumption is that the people are educated and interested in the arts. For instance, literature and theatre often cater to a cultural elite with a strong understanding of the genres and literary knowledge. For a society to appreciate the arts and allow the arts scene to flourish as a whole, its people must possess sufficient cultural capital and interest to engage with the arts. This, in turn, reflects a civilised society whose people are educated and unimagined, and whose basic needs are generally met and taken care of, such that they have the capacity to participate in the arts scene. Hence, a flourishing arts scene may be an indicator of a civilised society.</p>	<p>This paragraph is mostly descriptive of what a flourishing arts scene is. The link to 'civilised society' needs to be established more clearly.</p> <p>Note that the question asks if it is <i>the</i> mark of a civilised society, not <i>an indicator</i>, such that this statement does not on its own answer the question.</p>
<p>Furthermore, a flourishing arts scene could be seen as the mark of a civilised society as it reflects a sense of humanity and introspection, and a desire to search for meaning and moral and social identity beyond the pragmatic and the superficial. More often than not, art is created to serve a purpose - to convey a message, to advocate for a cause, to seek meaning - beyond mere aesthetic appearances. Operating under this assumption, a flourishing arts scene would then reflect a society's desire and ability to engage with history, culture and pertinent issues plaguing our world today, so as to be introspective and shed light on problems. These uniquely human qualities of empathy, introspection and compassion are thus conveyed through the existence of a flourishing arts scene. A case in point would be Britain, which is home to a flourishing arts and cultural scene. A recent exhibition in Britain [sought] to create art using women's stockings to shed light on issues of gender inequality, with pieces representing past inequities women faced. The exhibition thus aims to provoke thought and advocate the need for a greater action to close the gender gap and eradicate cases of sexual harassment and discrimination. Hence, a flourishing arts scene could be seen as a mark of a civilised society as it reflects a society's moral identity and search for meaning through expression.</p>	<p>Beautifully put, this addresses the question eloquently.</p> <p>A single exhibition cannot be evidence of a civilised society.</p> <p>Consider the difference between being <i>a</i> mark of a civilised society and being <i>the</i> mark of a civilised society.</p>

<p>Conversely, a flourishing arts scene may not be the mark of a civilised society as a more important and true indicator would be the way a society treats its people, especially its children and its disadvantaged. For instance, one can hardly deny that America is home to one of the most vibrant and flourishing arts scenes in the world. Yet, the way America treats its children and its minorities [is] deserving of censure, and not reflective of a civilised society. In light of the numerous cases of school shootings, the survivors of the Parkland School Shooting championed a movement, March For Our Lives, advocating stricter gun restrictions in the states. While the movement was generally well-received by the international community, [it was] met with fierce opposition from conservatives who claimed it was their right under the Second Amendment, enshrined in the Constitution in 1791, to own firearms. A society that values its freedom to own assault rifles over the freedom of its children to attend school safely based on an archaic law can hardly be said to be civilised, regardless of how vibrant its arts scene is. Hence, a flourishing arts scene is not the mark of a civilised society as there may exist devastating problems in such societies that are treated in apathetic, morally reprehensible and uncivilised ways. Hence, a flourishing arts scene is an unreliable mark of a civilised society as it does not necessarily reflect a sense of humanity or rationalism. Instead, a more accurate mark of a society's soul and civility lies in the way it treats its children and people as a whole.</p>	<p>Not just conservatives.</p> <p>This reason could be given more attention in this paragraph so as to develop the argumentation.</p>
<p>In addition, there exist societies that are undeniably civilised, yet lack a flourishing arts scene due to its narratives and focus. This thus renders a flourishing arts scene an unreliable and untrue mark of a civilised society. A case in point would be Singapore, whose national narratives and focus on pragmatism and economic growth have led it to be deemed a cultural desert. While Singapore's art scene certainly cannot be said to be flourishing despite minor improvements in recent years - such as the establishment of the School of the Arts (SOTA) and grants by the National Arts Council for artists - the society is generally civilised in the sense that heavy emphasis is placed on equality, education, meritocracy and respect for others regardless of their differences in race and religion. While a flourishing arts scene may allude to a civilised society, the true mark of a civilised society is hence its approach to inequities and flaws within the society. Hence, a flourishing arts scene is not the mark of a civilised society.</p>	<p>Meaning is rather unclear: what do 'narratives and focus' refer to here?</p> <p>The state of the arts scene in Singapore is not well understood here.</p> <p>Consider what 'inequities and flaws' Singapore has failed to address.</p>
<p>In conclusion, the measure of a civilised society's soul lies in the way it treats and respects its people, especially its willingness to listen to minority groups and tackle problems of inequality, discrimination and atrocities. A flourishing arts scene perhaps alludes to knowledge and culture, yet does not equate to a civilised society's moral north, civic responsibility and sense of humanity, thus rendering it an unreliable mark of a society's civility and beliefs.</p> <p><i>(Desiree Chia, 19-U1)</i></p>	

JC2 Paper 1 Preliminary Examination

2 How fair is it to say that your society is an inclusive one?

This essay reflects an astute awareness of the Singapore context, with effective connections established between a wide range of examples and specific characteristics of the Singapore society at multiple levels. A clear line of argument is established and it aptly addresses the question's contention by building on how the semblance of inclusivity in Singapore is subverted by the underlying tensions between different groups. This idea could be more consistently referred to at the end of the paragraphs so as to reinforce the arguments made.

"All animals are equal", as proudly declared by Napoleon in George Orwell's Animal Farm. This bold statement of equality for all is certainly upheld as one of the key values in the Singaporean society. Singapore is a small meritocratic country and home to a diverse group of individuals, thus it is no wonder that she appears to be one of the safest, most inclusive societies in the world. With values of acceptance, open-mindedness and equality present in even our national pledge, it seems only logical to conclude that Singapore is a safe haven for minority groups. Yet, if one were to take off the rose-tinted lenses [presenting] Singapore's superficially 'inclusive' society, one would then discover the true deep-rooted tensions between racial, societal groups and observe the true extent of [the] deep-seated conservative mindsets [persisting] among the majority of the population.

Interesting opening, but it might not be as apt since the second half of the quote is "some animals are more equal than others".

Over the past 54 years, Singapore has prided itself on being a multicultural, multiracial [and] harmonious society, with a variety of systems and structures in place ready to integrate minority groups into the community. There is a carefully constructed social fabric, weaving in the people of different backgrounds, racial groups, religions and beliefs together, intertwining us into coexisting in this tiny island we call Home. Such delicate, seemingly perfect harmony is achieved through government support and the constant **brainwashing** in the education system to be accepting and inclusive to the people in our community. Discrimination in schools and the workplace is frowned upon and even considered to be a criminal offence. In schools, students are told to recite the national pledge [which declares unity] "regardless of race, language or religion" [...]. Over time, it is evident that the mantra of inclusivity, acceptance of people regardless of their backgrounds, becomes ingrained in every Singaporean. This can also be seen on a governmental [or] societal level. Singapore is founded on the basis of meritocracy, where people are rewarded with regards to their talent and abilities without a second glance to their background or social standing. Thus, such a platform can be said to be a social leveller, allowing low-income groups the chance to rise out of the cycle of poverty and enables them to establish their own spheres of influence based on their merit rather than being

This has a negative connotation, which doesn't seem to be intentional here.

Strengthen the link between meritocracy and the earlier part of this paragraph by adding that meritocracy also disregards race/ethnicity socioeconomic backgrounds too,

<p>constrained by their background. Recently, in the National Day Rally 2019, Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong announced greater bursaries and financial support for low-income families, even citing the specific examples of a large subsidy for local medical school fees. Such a move is clearly in line with the concept of inclusivity as providing extensive support systems to minority groups depicts Singapore's accepting stance and willingness to provide more equitable opportunities for all.</p>	<p>and with increasing focus on equity, the support rendered to the disadvantaged minority reinforces inclusivity.</p>
<p>However, such examples of inclusivity are merely superficial and thousands of dollars being donated to a specific group of individuals or a community is not representative of the very thing that shapes our society - the mindset of Singaporeans. It is because Singapore is home to so many different cultures, religions [and] races that there is a thin line to balance it all. It is ultimately impossible to please everyone and as a society, we have not yet reached true inclusivity and open-mindedness. There are in fact, deep rooted tensions between social groups in Singapore, as seen from the recent uproar over the issue of 'brownface' in the media. There was a controversial advertisement where Mediacorp used a Chinese man to portray the Malay and Indian minority groups by artificially changing the colour of the actor's skin using paint and such a move resulted in an explosion in the discussion of racism in Singapore. This event uncovered the ugly truth to the harmony and level of acceptance in Singapore as it opened [a] Pandora's box of years of unnoticed discrimination felt by the minority groups. After this event, social media webpages of minority groups speaking out about daily racism faced sprung out, showing the true gaps in the Singapore society. If such a seemingly small [incident] was already able to catalyse societal unrest and disrupt social harmony in Singapore, is this not testament to the fragile social fabric in place? Such [incidents] merely show that Singaporeans are not as open-minded, not as accepting as we make ourselves out to be, as if we were truly as inclusive as described in the media, discrimination as described would have been passed off as one-off [incidents] and brushed off as a [faux pas] by Mediacorp. Yet, as the ramifications of discrimination are still being felt today, this shows that Singaporeans still need to work on being more accepting and change needs to be done on a deep intuitive level.</p>	<p>Even more fundamentally, perhaps such incidents would not have happened if society were truly inclusive.</p> <p>Comment on the fairness of the perception of Singapore as inclusive to link back to the question.</p>
<p>[Perhaps], [it is] true [that] one hundred percent inclusivity and equity cannot be obtained. We live in a world of polarising news and as humans, it seems only innate to want the best for oneself and one's family. Hence, when it comes to choosing between supporting oneself and a foreigner, the answer is obvious. Singapore opens her doors to thousands of foreign workers every year, providing blue collar and white collar job opportunities to many that visit her shores. Yet, ironically, there is xenophobia deeply embedded in the Singapore society. One in five employers said that they would not hire a foreign worker despite both the local and foreign worker being on par in terms of skill set. There is a hidden, sinister prejudice against foreign</p>	<p>A well-evaluated paragraph.</p>

<p>labour, for fear of them “taking over our jobs”, a touchy subject for the competitive, ‘kiasu’ and selfish Singaporean. With an already present high cost of living and large stress on success felt in society it is only natural that Singaporeans tend to exclude minority groups such as foreign workers, not just in terms of employment but also in terms of integration into the community. Although it must be acknowledged that there are policies [and] events in place to attempt to integrate minority groups - such as racial harmony day, a day to commemorate the cohabitation of different races in Singapore, [and] the Migrant Culture Show, an event to showcase talents of migrant workers and many more, such events are often not in high attendance. As such, Singapore is not entirely accepting of others' differences, due to an innate fear of the unknown and as we are equipped with a [...] false dichotomy of supporting one group over the other.</p>	<p>Reinforce link: when it comes to extending inclusivity to newcomers, it might not be fair to claim that Sg is an inclusive society at the moment.</p>
<p>Additionally, Singapore is a conservative country with conservative mindsets. Being a predominantly Asian populated country, the majority of Singapore holds onto traditional, stricter and less inclusive beliefs and values. An example would be our reluctance to be open to new and different mindsets. Recently when a Singaporean man was granted legal custody of his biological son despite being in a relationship with his male partner, which is seen as a crime under Section 377A in the Singapore Penal Code, this called for some activists to try to advocate for the repeal of Section 377A, a law criminalising homosexuality in Singapore. This faced large public rejection as a poll done online actually showed that [the] majority of Singaporeans wanted to keep the law, depicting my society’s firm stance on traditional beliefs. As such, this showcases Singaporeans’ [...] mindset in rejecting different views and ideologies. Such a behaviour could also be exacerbated by censorship in the media today. Censorship plays a huge role in my society. The Singapore government is known to censor information in books, news and websites that do not comply [with] societal norms. For example, the government withdrew funding from the graphic novel the Art of Charlie Chan Hock Chye, which described an alternate universe where Singapore was funded by a different political leader. Additionally, there have been bans on certain Art performances such as Josef Ng’s performance where he challenged societal norms in a controversial performance including snipping off his pubic hair publicly as a statement about homosexuality in Singapore. Hence, the ban simply showcases Singapore’s reluctance and inability to accept different views and ideologies, perhaps stemming from the fear of disrupting our fragile social harmony.</p>	<p>Section 377A criminalises sexual acts between men.</p> <p>The act of censorship itself is also an act of exclusion, denial/rejection from public discourse.</p>

Therefore, while Singapore appears to be a harmonious, accepting society, there is in fact a large chasm dividing social groups in Singapore unbeknownst to the untrained eye. There are deep rooted conflicts between racial, religious groups and castes stemming from an innate selfishness and a conservative, inflexible mindset of Singaporeans. Hence, in order to truly achieve inclusivity, acceptance, equal opportunities for all, regardless of background, race, religion, beliefs, we must go back to the fundamentals and change our own mindsets, altering them to be more open minded. As youths of today, the leaders of the world, we must work with the government to take steps towards achieving greater equality. If not, the rifts in society will not stay under the radar for much longer, as even though all animals are equal, afterall, some are still more equal than others.

(Elizabeth Teo, 18-U2)

A good attempt to bookend the essay. Perhaps a reference to the riots/uprising that happens in the book would better illustrate the implications of this underlying inequality and lack of inclusivity.

3 To what extent should the State be responsible for protecting our privacy?

This essay makes an informed argument that considers various channels through which personal privacy could be compromised, and addresses the justification for the responsibility of protecting such privacy to be allocated to the State and the individual. In particular, the considerations of the pragmatic limitations of the State in preempting and countering privacy threats, and the moral obligations of the individual in making informed choices, make strong arguments in this essay.

As advertisements after advertisements capture our attention, featuring our favourite brands and current muses as we scroll to read the latest articles on the Internet, it is frightening to sense the detailed understanding the online world beholds of us. The pervasive digitalised economy and monetized media burgeon[] at the expense of unethical tactics such as [personal] data collection as well as infringement of confidential details. This brings about the question[] of responsibility[:] is the state, our governmental body[,] to hold the accountability of protecting the citizens' privacy? While many individuals posit that the almighty State should be in complete control of the protection of information of the citizens, in my opinion, it is too heavy a duty for governmental bodies given the media conglomerates. On the other hand, parents of children and teenagers should work hand in hand with the authorities to educate children on privacy protection, for a more [holistic] approach where privacy protection begins at a tender age. At the same time, individuals are ultimately the ones [with] the most autonomy in choosing to practice information protective measures and it is unfair to offload all the responsibility to the State.

This introduction is effective in setting up the context of how the media intrudes on our privacy, and how this leads to the tension expressed as the need to protect personal privacy. Together with the clear stand, this sets the direction for the rest of the essay.

Strong, vehement believers of the government may be falsely deceived into hailing a divine-like power to the state, resulting in their overly trusting attitudes towards the government. Naturally, they [assume] the protection of their intellectual assets and confidential details to be safe as long as the government, the ruling power[,] is in control to oversee the entire online traffic of information. Yet, what they fail to realise is the monstrous power the media holds, where sources of information may be anonymous, and data transactions is a priority that is achieved with the brute force of technology experts. The undeniable, oftentimes unethical practices of data analoging and management is illuminated in the data analysing for artificial intelligence company iMerit, based in India that delegates tasks to the workers to "teach" systems of artificial intelligence. This is done by labour work in front of the computer such as analysing coughs, in manually telling a good cough from a bad cough (one that signals a disease) or circling polyps in [CT scans of] intestines of patients [who] are wholly unaware of their breach in information, or [identifying] doors of homes in satellite images of streets or even pedestrians caught on surveillance cameras. iMerit admitted to being uninformed of where all these healthcare [and] medical sources are from, and is only focused on doing their job. This illustrates the anonymity [and] the hushed monetized transactions of data that

Debating the power of the media against the power of the state.

Examples point out the insidious nature of information gatherers that may collate info without approval from the person.

Evaluation negotiates how clandestine government

<p>happens behind closed doors. If companies themselves are not even capable of recognising the sources of medical data, how is it fair to impose this curbing of the widespread, pervasive underground system of extraction data to governmental bodies? Where the online traffic of information is done in the name of profit-making since advertising companies and technological giants feed on them, given the appetite of these capitalism-driven heavyweights, I find it inevitable for data to be handled without our consent, that privacy protection is truly out of the control of governmental bodies, due to the power dynamics of those in the field of data extraction. The weighing balance tilts heavily to the right, where Big Techs and data firms collaborate for mutual economic interests, while the State is ostensibly more helpless in managing these faults [that contribute to] privacy breach.</p>	<p>organisations may be in the gathering of information to prove a case against having the government be responsible for our privacy, since it is unable to preempt completely such clandestine doings.</p>
<p>Parents should take more responsibilities in ensuring the online privacy of their children being protected. Instead of shifting all the accountability to the State itself, there should be a collaborative effort maintained to ensure maximum shield of the vulnerable young ones falling victim to the invisible but money-driven social media forces. The younger, more ignorant children often get enveloped in the whirlpool of information extraction by the false veneer of “signing up” for an online character adorned in adorable, unassuming graphical designs. The recent update to the legislation by Senator Hawkey in the COPPA (Children Online Privacy Protection Act) sees a hasher stance that authorities are taking to protect the privacy of children. By introducing an all-out ban of advertisements targeted at children, and requiring parental consent for filling in details about oneself, especially [for] children under 13, it restricts the tech giants from manipulating the children. Hence, parents should be in full support of the government’s movement towards a commercial-free childhood by educating children and warning them of the perils of giving up information in this instant digitalised age. As seen by now, parental consent is a vital part [of] the new step up for the protection of children’s online privacy to gain momentum[;] parents and guardians are key turning points for a safer, more healthy relationship children can have with the Internet.</p>	<p>The zooming in on this particular demographic is quite abrupt, especially since what was mentioned in the previous paragraph could affect society in general.</p> <p>The shift from the extraction of personal data by advertisers to the extraction of personal data from online gaming could be more clearly established.</p>
<p>Privacy is an intimate subject matter[.] Naturally, the State should not be utterly held responsible for choices of individuals alone, as individuals have the autonomy to control their decisions in information sharing. From the membership cards in retail stores like Sephora, Topshop and Forever 21, to booking restaurant seats through online applications like Eatigo and Chope1, individuals are offering up their personal contact information freely and without a second thought, as if it is [a] habitual routine. This calls into question - is the government to be held accountable for the decisions that citizens make for themselves? At least for me, I am steadfast in my belief that the free will and independence of the increasingly liberalised world, where citizens are more [adept] in online transactions that boast data encrypt[ion] and promising privacy protection, should not be a duty of the State. Instead it is</p>	<p>A compelling argument that negotiates the responsibilities of the individual vs those of the State, and argues for the individual’s informed choice to be made in his or her own responsibility.</p>

<p>[expected] of the individual to manage their intellectual assets, financial privacy properly, because it is clear that the government did not exploit us or make us give up our information. Hence, we should take responsibility for the shift in culture to a more convenient one, albeit at the potential threatening expense of the loss of our personal information. In Singapore, the booming popularity of a cash-free transaction system where people transfer money via applications like “Paynow” and “Paylah”[, or through the simple tap and pay system of ApplePay and WeChatpay, is achieved at the known potential dangers of data loss. Yet, as the country embraces the convenience of such a system that may put our online monetary assets and information at a position of fragility, the State should not be held dutiful in safekeeping these online information as it is not their job to do so. The giving up of information for convenient, cashless transactions that may infringe on privacy is continuously fed by the global appetite for effectiveness, where Shanghai is now barely running on cash and applications like Grab and Deliveroo promise rebates on cashless payments. The enticing allure and succumbing to benefits and incentives are all within the control of the individual. The choices lie[] within the individual, utterly untethered by the State. With a global, collective acceleration towards online, digitalised everything, there is only so much authorities can do to enforce safety. The ultimatum lies within the individual and lifestyle choices that may produce repercussions.</p>	
<p>The State should not be held fully responsible for protecting our privacy. Instead a more holistic approach would be to work hand in hand with parents to protect [the] privacy of a tender aged child. Privacy breach is manipulated by large forces and companies that are incentivised by profits, at the same time, privacy protection is [the] duty of the individual, not the state. [...]</p> <p><i>(Chanel Wong Xin Yi, 18-14)</i></p>	

4 ‘Artificial intelligence should be embraced, since it is inevitable.’ Discuss.

The writer’s extensive content knowledge and genuine interest in the topic are instrumental in forming strong arguments in response to the question’s contention. However, at some points in the essay, the focus on the question needs to be sustained and the links between the elaboration of examples and the arguments put forth could be strengthened. The transitions and the occasionally informal tone could also be refined to avoid making the essay sound like a speech. A point to note for writers who select questions in which they have great interest and knowledge in: exercising restraint in terms of selecting the most apt examples and focusing on addressing the question is key.

In the words of the 21st century technological visionary and billionaire, Elon Musk, “Artificial Intelligence will be the greatest threat mankind would have ever faced.” A grave warning is sounded about the dangers that come with the uncertainty and threat brought about with Mankind’s newest scientific endeavour into the modern Pandora’s box. Whilst Artificial Intelligence has been often on the news lately it has often been used as a buzz word to describe anything related to computers and what they can do. To clarify this [loaded] [...] term, I would like to define Artificial Intelligence as the computer’s emulation of the human brain; that is to perform tasks that are deemed by us to be only doable previously by us, such as to make rational decisions, to see and analyse what is around us, and to act like one of us. The contention and controversy behind Artificial Intelligence after all boils down to [its] ability to supplant us eventually and result in numerous threats and problems to the survival and livelihood of our species. I believe that while Artificial Intelligence is inevitable, we should cautiously embrace it and only up to the extent that our survival as a species is guaranteed and the threat it poses is kept to a minimum.

Clear outline of the conditions for this stand.

<p>The inevitability of Artificial Intelligence was not obvious in the past. Prominent philosophers and religious leaders in antiquity often held human consciousness and by extension intelligence as something that is innate within our soul, thus the Christian and Islamic beliefs that when you pass [away], your consciousness is transferred to a different realm, bringing your ability to act as an individual to that realm. This thinking that intelligence and consciousness is innate and unique to human beings led to the consensus that artificial forms of intelligence were never possible to begin with. However, this is starting to change with the invention of the modern deep computing industry. With IBM's chess computing machine Deep Blue besting even the best human chessmasters at their own game despite only being trained on for less than a few months, the belief that machines cannot think is starting to [waver]. With further advances in computing power and even technologies relating to the simulation of the human brain in an Artificial Intelligence (AI) [technology] known as Recursive Convolutional Neural Network to better the rational ability of AI, it seems obvious that in the future, AI will redefine mankind in an unprecedented way. Recent AIs that have performed artificial synthesis of [i]mages and [s]ounds not previously known may even suggest that AIs have the ability to "dream" and be creative (simply search for Deepdream AI), cementing its place as true competitor to human intelligence and making it rather inevitable that it will take our place, given that they come with other perks such as being able to be cloned indefinitely on other computers and only require electricity rather than wasteful and unnecessary human processes such as eating, drinking, sleeping, reproducing and conflict.</p>	<p>Good evaluation of the perceptions regarding intelligence</p> <p>Apt choice of examples and, more importantly, the evaluation of their implications in terms of the inevitability of AI. This sets the context for the evaluation of whether AI should be embraced.</p>
<p>While the above portion may have been rather transhumanist in nature, [...] I will now focus on the more immediate question of whether we should embrace AI.</p>	
<p>From an [economic] perspective, AI poses a huge opportunity for us to rapidly expand our economy due to the efficiency that AI can bring to our industry. First of all, they can work 24 hours a day, 7 days a week for 365 days a year without any threat of unionizing against your company as they do not complain about unfair work hours. For more simple and straightforward tasks such as accounting, which involves number counting which computers are great at. This efficiency it brings can be unprecedented and cut down on human involvement with such menial tasks and instead focus on innovation and more. Furthermore, with the betterment of AI and its expansion into more areas of expertise such as language and image processing allowing automated drivers for example, the value [that] AI can add to [the] economy would be tremendous, with a famous international study suggesting that AI can bring about over 13 trillion USD to the global economy in 2030. This is also fantastic for countries facing a manpower crunch such as Japan and Singapore which have low birth rates and an ageing population as their labour forces can be supplemented by AI workers to bring about huge economic and efficiency gains.</p>	<p>The tone here approaches the informal.</p> <p>Note that the abilities/features of AI need to be the focus/cause of these effects. Otherwise, the argument about increased productivity could apply to some other technological advancements too.</p>

<p>On the other hand, AI will also lead to a major disruption in the economies of countries that cannot keep up with technology. Countries with lackluster technological capabilities that do not invest in AI will be left in the dust as their international counterparts massively outrun them in efficiency, leading to imbalances in power between countries that can lead a global conflict to take place. There will be a struggle over the technologies associated with AI which can result in industrial level bans and protectionist measures being on full display, with the recent example of US sanctioning Huawei Technologies over their lead on 5G technology in order to protect domestic 5G technology (although ostensibly it was due to spying by Huawei which the US has not furnished any evidence of). This may even extend into full trade wars which is the case between America and China now and touch wood, even a global conflict of World War 3 over the control of such indispensable AI technologies granting a major economic advantage to whomever possesses them. This is a danger to be aware of and countries should seek technological sharing and dialogue instead of acquiring technology lest it brings about the destruction of mankind. Thus, a cautious approach has to be taken to temper the imbalance on technological inequality.</p>	<p>Tone here is informal.</p> <p>Take note that this technological inequality needs to be focused on AI technology.</p>
<p>On a social front, on an individual level, AI will bring about greater social inequity. As I have previously mentioned, simple and straightforward tasks for now are what AI is going to supplement. This generally includes low paying jobs that are often repetitive in nature, such as factory operations (automated/production lines), cleaning (cleaning robots for example) and others as well. With these low income earners being replaced by AI first, this will create more individual disparities in wealth as they are now unable to provide for their family and [regress] on a societal level. Even more concerning is how the rich can gain from investing in AI and building factories to use AI to further maximise their economic efficiency and wealth. The [saying that the] rich get richer and the poor get poorer [...] is [...] true but with technologies like AI accelerating the demise of the poor and the fortunes of the rich, it would be no surprise to see the wealth gap widen. In fact, this is already on full display by Amazon CEO, Jeff [Bezos], who has recently become the richest man in the world and is heavily invested in AI seeking to replace the low earning warehouse employees with AI robots instead to further maximise profits. This is unsustainable as it will lead to social uproar and perhaps even upheaval. Karl Marx's ideology of communism [was] disastrous but was popular because of the disparity in wealth between the nobility and [bourgeois], and there is a risk we run here with such ideologies resurging if nothing is done to stop the gaps in wealth from widening. Thus, we have to be cautious in embracing AI lest it lead to a creation of communist world order or more realistically a fragmented society.</p>	<p>Explain this social regression.</p> <p>The progression of ideas in this paragraph from the individual to the social and to the global requires some hedging.</p>

<p>From a philosophical perspective, [developing] AI can be seen as playing god and we are perhaps wishing to supplant and extend beyond what is humanly possible in violation of nature's principles. As Issac Asimov has warned in his book <i>The Rise Of The Machines</i>, such a trend of seeking to better our race in pursuit of technological advances can lead to disastrous and unexpected outcomes especially if we do not temper our ambitions of empowering AI with consciousness and for instance, grant it control of the military with such an outcome being explored in the Terminator movie series and the Matrix where AI takes over the human race.</p>	<p>The philosophical element of this paragraph could be strengthened: What does the perceived violation of nature's principles mean for humanity? What values are reflected? What questions are raised?</p> <p>Split/ shorten the second sentence for clarity.</p>
<p>This is where my transhumanist ideals come in. Bringing again an example from Elon Musk, he has created a company named Neuralink seeking to implant human machine connections in humans allowing us to communicate with machines and thus bringing the unification of human intelligence and artificial intelligence. Whilst the safety [of the procedure] is still being worked out, they were able to read brainwaves from lab mice and have them control robotic arms. I am excited for what the future holds for humanity as we are on the cusps of greatness and perhaps the dawn of a new civilization. Just imagine the possibilities of improved efficiencies and other benefits it will bring!</p>	<p>Although the writer's enthusiasm about the subject matter is evident here, it detracts from the question's focus on whether AI should be embraced. The link to the transhumanist ideals mentioned at the start of the paragraph needs to be established too.</p>
<p>Ultimately, we still have to control our ambition and make cautious steps in the adoption of AI otherwise it will bring about major inequality/conflict and even social [upheaval]. So long as we can integrate with AI, humanity can be redefined as a new species and seek for a new age. So long as caution is exercised [...]</p> <p><i>(Dylan Chia, 18-E4)</i></p>	

5 'Our faith in education as the solution to poverty is misplaced.' Do you agree?

The use of language in this essay demonstrates an assured and well-controlled personal voice with flair in its deployment of an extensive range of vocabulary and expressions. The cohesive links between the introduction and the conclusion also add to the overall coherence. In terms of content, while there was an insightful consideration of the root causes of poverty and the overestimation of education's ability to resolve poverty, the development of the arguments could be refined with greater consistency.

In Albert Camus' *The Myth of Sisyphus*, Camus writes of the Absurdi[st] philosophy, where humans are trapped and bound to try to make meaning of the inherently meaningless reality of the universe. I see the similarities too, in our fight against poverty. Just as how we people are forever unable to quell the internal conflict between finding constructed meaning in a world sterile of meaning, we too seem to be unable to fully solve and eradicate poverty from our society, despite all the measures done. Education has been placed, foremostly, as a panpharmacon to poverty, in global efforts to rid us of poverty. Yet, it seems that in spite of such efforts to educate the world's poorest, there always seems to be more people trapped, inextricably, in this vicious cycle of poverty. Is our reverence [for] education as a means to fully solve poverty then [] misplaced? Many may argue no but I am of the belief that a belief in education as a panacea to poverty is indeed misplaced. Perhaps then, it would be problematic to label whatever measures to solve poverty as total solutions, considering the vastness of poverty requires more than one measure to 'solve' it. Consequently, I posit that such faith in education as a solution to poverty is misplaced as education does not have sufficient power to change political systems that entrench poverty – that lies in the government's power – and that education is unable to tackle the root cause of poverty, which is the economic system of the world.

The philosophical opening is linked to the subject matter to provide a relevant contextualisation, albeit a rather pessimistic one.

A clear stand, followed by an outline of the reasons for this stand, establishes the direction of this essay.

Many supporters of education claim it [is] the solution to poverty. They see it as a way of teaching the world's poorest on methods to escape such a cycle of poverty and debt. By equipping [such people with] relevant skill sets [], they assert, [] only then will the world's poorest make themselves relevant to the global economy. This will then ensure their employment. Furthermore, with a meritocratic belief in society, if such people work hard enough, they will be able to escape poverty and gain their just rewards. While I do laud their sense of optimism, I am unable to share fully their views. I do concede that education can achieve this, with stories of people seemingly stuck in poverty, but able to conjure up a rags-to-riches story with the help of education. Yet, such cases tend to be exceptions. Education is able to equip students in poverty with the relevant skills to get employed, and cultivate in them appropriate attitudes and knowledge for them to set far in life. However, this simplistic view obscures the fact that poverty is not only caused by a lack of

While there is an attempt to engage the opposing argument, the reasons stated here are not elaborated on. This

<p>knowledge or skill sets, but also by other reasons, such as the social conditions in which many of the poorest people live in. These people may be educated but are nonetheless unable to get out of poverty because of many other reasons, such as structural inequality that discriminates against them, or the lack of employment opportunities, in a country devoid of them. Hence, I do believe that our overly simplistic faith in education as a solution to poverty is [,]indeed, a misplaced one.</p>	<p>approach addresses 'misplaced', but results in an underdeveloped attempt at balance.</p>
<p>Furthermore, our faith in education as the panacea to poverty is misplaced as education alone is insufficient in power to change the political structures that entrench poverty. It is true that education has the ability to raise awareness in students over the privileges that some more well-endowed people have, over those that are less well-endowed. These people can then raise such concerns and spread awareness to others, and then the government. Yet education is unable to do any more beyond just that. Political systems exist that do not allow for much progress over tackling poverty. In many instances, people in poverty are those who are also marginalised – systematically or by society. Such people are powerless against the structures in society that exist and against the policies that governments have put in place. For example, many indigenous people and people from minority races are usually trapped in poverty, not due to a lack of sufficient education but rather due to structural inequality placed upon them by governments that rule by utilitarianism. Such a tyranny of the majority ensures that the voices of the minorities are not heard but often drowned out by concerns from the majority race. These minorities often then have their rights infringed upon, with a dearth of support , employment, and funding given to them due to a lack of policies that aim to support such people. In Singapore, a belief in a meritocratic education system has entrenched in her citizens a belief that people who are poor are only poor because they have not worked or studied hard enough. Such inequality is institutionalized in the welfare schemes of the country, in which means testing is employed to determine if one is worthy of aid and governmental support. Regretfully, such a regime misses out on the fundamental fact that dependence and aid from governments are not to be looked down upon, but [are] vital in the state's duty of care towards her fellow citizens. Such structural inequality only serves to marginalize these people in poverty, and distance them from us. Thus, it can be seen that we have misplaced our faith in education as a solution to poverty, as there are more pervasive and harder to tackle causes of poverty that lie in state policies and political structures in the countries today, which education has no power to alleviate. Instead, it is up to the jurisdiction of governments to solve it, as they have more power to change policies and change mindsets towards the poor.</p>	<p>Attempt to address 'misplaced' by considering what people think education can achieve, and whether this expectation is met in reality.</p> <p>The explanation of this example shows clear development of why education is limited in reality, by engaging the Universal Concept, #SSF.</p> <p>The example does not match the explanation fully here, as it does not really illustrate how minorities are trapped in poverty due to our systems.</p>

<p>Consequently, our faith in education as the solution to poverty is misplaced, as education is unable to tackle the root cause of poverty - which is the economic systems in the world today. Poverty is often seen as a result of inequality, where people who are poor get poorer as they cannot achieve upward social mobility. This is then attributed to the capitalistic system of the current global economy. David Harvey's theory of the political economy supports this argument, where the capitalist nature of the economy allows a few people, who own the means of production, to obtain fiscal surpluses, at the expense of workers. This then manifests in relative spatial inequality, where wealthier firms and countries collect surpluses, at the expense of other countries. This is supported too by Andre Frank's Dependency Theory, where he argues that poverty and underdevelopment in countries are not due to luck or unfortunate circumstances, but rather due to the nature of current global economic systems that allow for richer nations to accumulate wealth by extracting them from poorer nations. This notion of inequality can be seen throughout the world. For example, the Rasa building collapse in Bangladesh, which killed over a thousand garment workers, was caused by poor building maintenance. These building collapses are common in Bangladesh, where transnational corporations have the impunity to do what they want, without legal ramifications, from the domestic governments that focus on economic development. This manifests in the gross abuse in human rights of people in poverty, who are powerless in the face of ruthless firms. Such examples can be linked to a trend in the world, where firms are able to do whatever they want, in the name of profit-making. From environmental degradation, to human rights abuses, it is seen that the implication of such actions are borne disproportionately by the world's poorest. This is something education alone cannot fix and hence our faith in it as the solution to poverty is misplaced as only changes in the economic system can fix these issues.</p>	<p>Although the explanation of the root cause of poverty is rather persuasive here (and engages #systems), the argument does not link to education.</p> <p>The evaluation of the example clearly links to the root cause of poverty, but education and the idea of our faith in it being 'misplaced' are not addressed.</p>
<p>It is important then to note that the word "solution" to poverty is itself, problematic. Poverty is a pervasive and widespread problem, and there are no permanent solutions to it. Perhaps, poverty is inevitable in [the] current political and economic systems. Education is at best, something done to alleviate poverty. There is a need for a multi-pronged approach – and of our concerted efforts – to cure the world of such a problem.</p>	<p>This section might be better suited for the conclusion instead.</p>

In conclusion, I believe that despite education's benefits and potential in bringing people out of poverty, I am unable to share the unbridled optimism of the supporters of education as the catholicon to poverty. This is as education lacks both the sufficient power and the targeted means to tackle and change the political systems and economic systems that are our root causes of poverty. Perhaps, it is also salient to note that there may never be one 'solution' to poverty, as the problem of poverty is too widespread to be tackled by just one problem alone. Methods to alleviate poverty require multi-pronged approaches, and I look forward to a future where we work together towards eradicating this issue. Ultimately, I see [it] is just as Sisyphus [was] doomed to struggle against an uphill and monumental task, [only] to see [his] efforts go to naught. What then is commendable is instead our will, as Camus notes in his philosophy, to appreciate this an inherent struggle against such a task. In our own Camus-esque Sisyphean tragedy, what is best to take away from is our wills.

(Seah Jie Hui, 18-12)

This section repeats what was stated in the previous paragraph.

The ending lines of the conclusion links back to the opening lines of the introduction effectively, though in a very pessimistic way. Do take note not to overlook other redeeming factors by casting this perspective over the issue.

6 Discuss the view that dissenting voices should be censored in your society.

An outstanding piece that faithfully deals with every element of the question (“dissenting”, “censorship” and “your society”) consistently and fairly throughout the essay. The writer is able to grapple with these issues in the ‘grey zone’ very well – negotiating nuances, compromises and the need for balance in many of these areas with the skillful use of language. The end result is a very compelling response that belies maturity and leaves the reader with a sense of having entered into a very civil and respectful discourse.

<p>Since Singapore’s independence, our political establishment and leaders have proudly championed a diffractive interpretation of western democracy. In contrast to the liberal ideals of the absolute and universal freedom of speech, Singapore has shown little hesitation in clamping down on statements and public articulations that are contrary to the prevailing political norms and attitudes. Such a model was an accepted part of our government’s social contract - that not all contrarian views deserve to be heard. Yet, in recent times, an increasing proportion of Singaporeans recognise, with fervour, the need for a more open approach to discourse, one that allows for greater freedom in the exchange of ideas. Considering the changing demographics of our society, the increasing politically active populace, and the nature of problems and opportunities we as a nation face today, the paternalistic approach of quelling dissent would no longer be beneficial and thus can no longer be justified.</p>	<p>Sets out SG’s context from the outset.</p> <p>Explains the historical reasons for such a context, and the current forces that have given rise to the question.</p> <p>Very clear thesis statement that shows the general direction of the essay.</p>
<p>The most prominent argument in favour of censorship is one that deals with our nation’s obsession with efficacy in governance. Proponents of strict regulatory laws argue that, in a vulnerable, racially and religiously diverse, and young nation like ours, strong and decisive leadership is necessary to implement effective policies without fear of impediment. Such supporters then posit that any form of dissent lodged in public may distract the government from solving critical issues, and would force the government to engage in debate, which is often perceived to be unnecessary. Such beliefs may have been shaped by our country’s racial and cultural ties to Asian cultures and countries like India and China, which have centuries of history functioning as a one-state, top-down society adopting a similar, if not harsher approach to dissent. Another claim such proponents often assert in conjunction with the above argument is the idea that dissenting views are often riddled with lies and half-truths to deceive, thus lowering the moral and practical legitimacy of these voices. These supporters contend that, given the impracticality and/or inaccuracy of opposing views, the government allocating time and being forced to engage with said views would result in less effective governance, thus justifying the belief that opposing views should be quelled in Singapore.</p>	<p>Deals with the most ‘obvious’/ prominent argument first.</p> <p>Gives a conceptual #B&V analysis on where this argument comes from.</p> <p>Gives another reason for this argument.</p> <p>Notice that the writer has consistently attributed these views to ‘proponents’ and ‘supporters’, creating a sense of distance from himself.</p>
<p>First and foremost, the view that opposing voices are always riddled in lies can be highly patronising and is not a reasonable one to make. It is natural that malicious parties, on either side, may attempt to lie and deceive. However with a reasonably</p>	<p>Such signposting indicates that this is now his take on the argument, as he refers to and</p>

<p>highly educated populace in Singapore, as well as a populace that is reasonably politically active, there already exists a self-correcting mechanism - that of the people. Singaporeans hold their government to high standards, and it is not difficult to see how such high standards of accountability, factual accuracy and faith can similarly be applied to any opposing voices which are to gain traction. Furthermore, such concerns may more appropriately justify laws that tackle the proliferation of falsehoods, which must be discussed separately from that of censorship. For instance, the recently introduced Prevention of Online Falsehoods and Manipulation bill, otherwise known as POFMA, would have sufficient leeway to prosecute against deceitful claims of significance. It is easy to conflate the two, but recognising that they are different in principle would prove valuable in time and moral credence to the legitimate and factually accurate views that run contrary to the establishment norms. In fact, the relaxation of laws on the freedom of speech and the concurrent fostering of a healthy and active opposite voice would allow for internal checks-and-balances to be developed organically. For instance, in advanced democracies like that of Germany and France, parties of opposing perspectives develop porous fact-checking processes to reveal the material promises and claims they make in public, thereby ensuring that discourse is relatively free from unfounded allegations. It is not difficult to imagine such a system developing organically in Singapore as well, where opposition parties, who already recognise the enormous uphill climb they face in the seemingly 'one-party' state, will organically self-select to ensure that they meet the standards of truth and accountability that they so demand from the state. Hence, is it possible that lies may be masked as truths? Perhaps. However, fears that such lies would have a significant and developing impact on our democracy can be allayed through deeper study of our political system and that of other countries around the world. This is an insufficient justification for the restriction of free speech.</p>	<p>evaluates 'the view' that was raised earlier.</p> <p>Current characteristics of our society.</p> <p>Delineates issues clearly.</p> <p>A very apt example to show how the opposing argument is defective and well taken care of by means other than censorship.</p> <p>The writer engages in detailed analysis of the issue which then in turn strengthens his argument.</p> <p>Frank acknowledgement of the limits of his argument shows reasonableness.</p>
<p>While the argument of preserving the stability of political establishments may have been applicable in the past, where we were a very young and less educated nation, the complex political and technological developments in our modern world render the argument moot. The assumption within it is that the state would otherwise be stable, even with censorship. With rapid advancements in technology and the rapid proliferation of information online, such an assumption can no longer hold. A quick analysis of both historical and contemporary developments would show that any reprieve which is tone-deaf — or even perceived to be tone-deaf to people's views is fundamentally unstable. A significant example of this would be the Arab Spring, when millions of young, active and deeply concerned protestors coordinated through online platforms to overwhelm and overthrow long standing political regimes. Such protests were fuelled by resentment over many other things, the perceived inability of the states to consider their own views and hopes for a fairer and more liberal economic and social system. More recently, the massive protests in Hong Kong have also been</p>	<p>The writer moves from a historical backdrop to the modern context of SG. A logical progression.</p> <p>Points out dangers of the opposing view.</p> <p>Brings in a Middle Eastern example to illustrate the dangers.</p> <p>Hong Kong example</p>

<p>amplified by fears over censorship after the alleged arrests and disappearances of prominent separatist writers who promoted views antithetical to the Chinese establishment. It is not difficult to imagine a situation of similar magnitude occurring in Singapore — and such political aspects have occurred before. For instance, in the lead-up to the local General Election of 2011, public resentment about high levels of immigration were simultaneously reflected on and worsened by the blog posts and social media comments of thousands of Singaporeans, who took to Facebook and other online platforms to air their resentment. In particular, many complained at length about the perceived neglect and censorship of their ideas, noting how coverage of controversial issues like that of immigration in state media outlets was minimal at best. The end-product of such resentment was a marked decrease in levels of support for the ruling party, as well as the loss of a key Minister — Mr. George Yeo — who was allegedly slated to be a key member of the next batch of leaders. Ostensibly, the loss in stability and efficacy of governance from Mr Yeo's defect outweighs the loss in stability, that the government may have been accrued if they had addressed controversial issues openly and without fear of dissent. Such examples demonstrate how it is not only patronising, but is highly dangerous for one to assume that a monopolistic political voice in discourse would lead to good and effective governance. In a world where views can be shared more easily, and particularly in a country like ours with a high internet penetration rate and high level of education, quelling dissent would not lead to stability; on the contrary, it may further instability. The absolute repression of dissenting views, therefore, cannot be justified.</p>	<p>is even more up to date and shows a keen awareness of current events.</p> <p>Draws links with Singapore, strengthening argument in our context.</p> <p>Reference to 2011 elections strengthens the writer's point about possible future repercussions.</p> <p>Consequences of the 2011 elections.</p> <p>The writer reiterates his point about the dangers.</p> <p>Reiterates the current characteristic of our society.</p>
<p>Notwithstanding the political considerations of such policies, some continue to assert that opposing views must be restricted, not because of their political consequences but merely so because of [their] potential to divide our society along [the] lines of identity. In a racially, religiously and to some extent politically diverse Singapore, speech that is incendiary and contrary to our shared values on political and social issues could be utilised to offend and to incite hatred and separation. Hence they claim that the potential for such remarks to divide justifies the state in repressing such concerns, even if it rears a curtailing of the opposing views.</p>	<p>Clear signposting shows that this is not the writer's view.</p> <p>Characteristic of our society and its implication on dissent.</p>
<p>To this end, it must be acknowledged that we continue to live in a society with large swathes of conservatives, and where, in line with Asian values of restraint, such speech can be considered taboo. In addition, the racial tensions and grievances in our country cannot be overlooked. Hence, the concern of offensive speech, particularly along racial lines, is valid. However, while this justifies the occasional restriction of meaningless, intentionally provoking comments, we must also acknowledge that in order to have a mature, open discussion of social issues, some element of disagreement may occur, and some form of 'offense' may be taken. Take for instance the recent video by a local rapper "Preetipls", who used a video laced with vulgarities</p>	<p>The writer concedes some merits of the argument above.</p> <p>The writer brings in his main response to the argument.</p> <p>Perhaps the writer could have spent</p>

<p>to criticize the extent of Chinese privilege in Singapore, alluding to the failures of a state-manufactured picture of racial and religious harmony. It was later censored due to its potential to offend. However, such topics of such nature could invariably lead to some level of discomfort — this discomfort is necessary. We as a society wish to confront the issues pertaining to social gaps and divides.</p>	<p>some time fleshing out why he feels that such discomfort is necessary.</p>
<p>Furthermore, implicit in the argument is the assumption that censoring would remove it from public view entirely. This is not true in a modernised world where echo chambers can easily form online. In fact, the act of censorship may embolden the claims of oppression that various identity groups use to further these claims. A prime example is the alt-right in the United States, which uses a narrative of persecution and discrimination to rally predominantly White people to its cause. By highlighting instances of its material being censored on platforms like Youtube due to their seemingly offensive nature, they empower fellow supporters to believe that an increasingly racially diverse United States is waging a culture war with the Whites. Such an example demonstrates how censorship may lead to the amplification of resentment felt by various identity groups in society, which may deepen and widen fault lines in our society's shared fabric. In an increasingly globalised and diverse Singapore, coupled with already prevalent economic disparities between different racial groups, it is not difficult to imagine a similar situation occurring [] as a result of censorship. Hence such restrictions on opposing views should not be placed.</p>	<p>The writer attacks the underlying assumption of censorship – about its function – while referencing yet another characteristic of our society today.</p> <p>Draws on a US example to show potential dangers.</p> <p>The writer draws explicit links to the SG context and why this is plausible here too.</p>
<p>Finally, beyond the social sphere, open discussions are necessary due to the increasingly complex world we live in. In a world where artificial intelligence is rapidly proliferating, the South East Asian region is rapidly modernising, and we grapple with issues like Climate Change, Singapore as a vulnerable and highly globalised nation will require the best of ideas to be debated, openly discussed, and openly decided on. Our Finance Minister recognises that the government no longer has a monopoly on wisdom, calling for a more consultative democracy and a nation open to different perspectives. Given this context, it becomes critical that we accept ideas and perspectives from all. While political censorship may not have a direct effect on the level of participation of citizens in our society, fostering an open community and a culture of voicing one's views begins with adopting open laws on the freedom of speech, since such laws set the tone and style of governance and participation in our country. Hence, [the] censorship of dissenting voices is not wise in the complex world we live in today.</p>	<p>Another characteristic of our current context.</p> <p>Example shows acknowledgement of this concern from the top echelons of our political leadership.</p> <p>The writer has rightfully left this much more vague and tenuous point to make as his last one.</p>
<p>Singapore has witnessed a favourable transformation from third-world to first. Since our independence our economic and social structures have evolved with the times to prepare us for a changing region and a changing world. I do not doubt the intentions of those calling for a top-down view of governance. However, it is clear that, just like</p>	<p>The essay ends in a similar way that it started about Singapore's rise.</p> <p>Gives credit to his opponents where it</p>

our economy, our political norms must adapt to the times as well. Legitimate ideas and perspectives should not be restricted in our society, even if they run contrary to our current norms or attitudes. Only in doing so can we foster a community unafraid of being open, a society which is stable and as a nation prepared for the world of tomorrow.

(Kenneth Hoh, 18-05)

is due, and respectfully puts forth his argument winsomely.

Ends with a touch of personal hope.

7 ‘Mental health is more important than physical health.’ How far do you agree with this statement?

This essay addresses the question by establishing a comparison of mental and physical health, although the focus is not cast equally on the two, even though there is an argument for their equal importance. The scope of the arguments could also be expanded so as to allow for the development of more nuanced arguments based on examples beyond that of dieting and eating disorders. In terms of language, while there is general clarity and confidence, the organisation and expression of ideas could be refined. For example, instead of ‘Firstly’, ‘Secondly’, ‘Thirdly’, which demarcate a list, adopting argumentative signposting can help to convey the links between arguments more effectively.

Increasingly, we are seeing the awareness of mental issues grow, especially amongst the youths. Public figures on social media platforms have come forth to share about their own mental health issues to educate their audience. YouTube star Anna Akana openly discusses her mental issues and how she deals with them, encouraging her viewers to attend therapy or seek help from others. Our world is constantly developing[;] no doubt we are now living in a more fast-paced world than the previous generations did. Hence now there is more focus on mental health, since many more are being diagnosed with depression, anxiety and other such disorders. There is an importance in maintaining a healthy mind, to meditate, to be grateful, to ensure that we can function well in society. But we cannot undermine the significance of physical health just because mental health seems so crucial. The value of the different types of health should not be compared to each other, [as we] need to be strong both in the mind and in the body. I believe that having physical health can bring about mental health.

There is a heavy focus on mental health awareness here, which helps in setting the context to discuss the importance of mental health. However, given that the thesis puts forth an argument for the importance of physical health, the absence of contextualisation for physical health seems a little stark.

Firstly, it is true that mental health is extremely important, and many are facing mental health issues without the help that they need. Societies are getting increasingly competitive, [and] it is inevitable that parents are putting more pressure on themselves and their children to be over-achieving. This, however, puts a lot of stress and burden on both the parents and their children, causing them to be more prone to facing mental issues like depression, from not being able to meet the standards they expect to achieve. Many would agree that facing mental issues like depression may cause one to cease to function on a day-to-day basis, and it is tough to escape such mental issues without professional help. Keeping a healthy mind, whether that may be by talking to others, meditating, practicing mindfulness or taking time to relax and unwind, is important in allowing one to function, and keeping loved ones worry-free. However, we cannot disregard the importance of physical health in this aspect as well. Being physically healthy also plays a significant role in mental health. Exercising reduces stress levels and lifts one’s mood. Many have even compared the feelings of joy they felt from exercising to be as intense as that when they are intoxicated. Physical health not only boosts one’s strength and

The value of tackling mental health issues is demonstrated through examining the societal context that brought about the increased susceptibility to mental illnesses.

Why would we dismiss physical health as being less important

<p>fitness, it allows one to be mentally stable as well. Hence, I believe that we should not simply dismiss physical health as having less value compared to mental health. After all, a healthy body can lead to a healthy mind.</p>	<p>than mental health in the first place?</p>
<p>Secondly, mental and physical health are equally important when it comes to influencing the youth. There are many mental health issues that stem from issues surrounding physical health. Youths are easily impressionable and easily influenced by what their role models tell them. Many may fall into the trap of eating disorders because they believe they need to have the same body proportions as their idols to have enough confidence in themselves. Hence, they start unreasonable diet plans or overwork their bodies just to achieve a certain body type. However, they forgo both their mental and physical health in the process. The mindset that they have to be a certain weight or have the 'perfect' body measurements may lead to them being physically unhealthy. Trends are popping up on social media platforms where youths attempt the extreme diets that Korean idols undertake for their performances. One such diet plan is the 'IU' diet, where the K-pop idol eats nothing but apples and sweet potatoes. Youths are taught that maintaining a slim figure is the most ideal body type that they should strive to achieve, but this reduces their immunity and physical strength, and is not ideal in the long run. Hence, being both mentally and physically healthy, or sharing ways to overcome mental issues will aid youths in understanding the importance of being in shape as well as having the right mindset. Role models play a significant role in shaping the beliefs and values of the youth, hence they have a responsibility in being healthy in the mind and in the body, or encouraging their audience to take care of themselves. Thus, I believe that mental and physical health are both important, as they are very closely linked to each other.</p>	<p>Before explaining how mental and physical health are equally important to youths, the equal importance of the two types of health needs to be established first.</p> <p>The earlier paragraph states that a healthy body leads to a healthy mind, whereas here the mind shapes the body. Are the two relationships the same? More could be said to examine these relationships.</p>
<p>Lastly, mental and physical health are both equally significant in creating a more cohesive and tight-knit society. Many who are facing mental and physical health issues usually feel very isolated, and that the issue they are facing is impossible to overcome. The topic of therapy or seeking professional help is also very taboo in many countries, and is often a touchy subject. After all, one would not openly disclose their own private issues to just anyone. Many are also intimidated to go to the gym, because they feel demoralised when they see [] fit and healthy people working out. Mental health and physical health are hence both extremely important, as they allow people to shed [] the feelings of loneliness, and as the loved ones of others, we can aid those that need someone to be there for them. Having mental strength allows us to absorb the woes that others may have without damaging our own mental health. We can create tighter bonds with our loved ones whilst helping them process their issues and maybe even solving them. Being physically healthy allows us to share our knowledge on how to achieve a healthy lifestyle. Many are unaware of the importance of understanding the methods and dangers of attempting to be healthy, and may fall into traps like starting a 'yo-yo' diet, where</p>	<p>This argument takes an interesting point of view by looking at physical and mental health from a communal perspective. This allows the significance of physical and mental health to be evaluated too.</p> <p>The scope of illustration could be expanded. This essay</p>

<p>their weight bounces back up after crash dieting and thereafter excessive binge eating, or sustain physical injuries because they do not know how to handle gym equipment and overexert due to being overzealous. Educating ourselves and then experimenting and uncovering the tips and tricks to achieving a healthy body may allow us to help others, and hence this may bring society closer together. Hence, in this aspect, I believe physical and mental health are both equally important, as they both allow us to bring people together.</p>	<p>has been focussed on diets and eating disorders thus far, but there are other aspects in which mental and physical health play a significant role too.</p>
<p>In conclusion, I strongly believe that there is no need to put a value to the importance of the various types of health that we should have. As humans, we all face our individual issues, and to devalue one type of health over another is akin to disregarding all the issues and hardships those that face physical health issues have to experience on a daily basis. In general, I believe that not only should we be emphasizing the importance of health in general, there should be more conversations on these issues to bring to light how one can overcome these issues should they face them, or how we can help others that face these issues. Both mental and physical health are important, and especially now that we have access to the Internet, I believe we all have a part to play in ensuring that we educate ourselves on these issues. There is also an increasing ease in exposing ourselves to information that can help both ourselves and our loved ones, hence I think we should all step up to grow healthier minds and bodies together.</p> <p><i>(Nolin Ho, 18-03)</i></p>	<p>This conclusion helps to consolidate the arguments raised in this essay, and ends off appropriately with a projection of the arguments in the context of greater accessibility of information.</p>

8 'Rights for men and women should always be equal.' What is your view?

This response carries a strong personal voice that is passionate and speaks with great conviction of the necessity and urgency of the stand it takes. It is well-substantiated and reasoned throughout, using a variety of argument types. The progression of arguments flows well and shows thoughtful planning.

In modern times, many have embraced the idea of equality between genders and hence, jumped on the bandwagon to advocate for it. The olden belief of men being more valued than women and favoured still stands inherently in different places in the world, making the fight for equality a justifiable one. Women are discriminated against solely based on their gender, depriving them of opportunities and even more gravely, a right to live. This led to the proposition of equal rights for both genders in all situations by many activists. Despite this being a sound argument, I posit that the fight for equal rights should definitely continue, yet with a few exceptions that should further protect the rights of women. Hence I argue that rights for men and women should mostly be equal but not in all situations.

The writer begins with modern developments in gender equality.

Moves into the question of rights.

Unclear why 'despite' is used when the 2 sentences don't seem to contradict.

The right to life should never be governed by one's gender and should be equal on all grounds. In a case like this, rights for women and men should always be equal. In many cases, where a country is ridden with overpopulation, many tend to favour males over females when choosing to give birth. The inequality in this decision is usually backed up with an inherent stereotype that men are open to more opportunities and hence, are favoured as they would grow up to be more worthy. This stereotype is biased against women simply due to the fact that they are women. The abortion of female children in China due to the system of the 'one child policy' completely revokes the right of female children, taking away life simply due to gender. In such cases and situations, rights for men and women should definitely be equal. One's gender does not limit one's potential, yet females are disregarded and barred from a chance at life, being aborted before birth or even abandoned after birth. This blatant discrimination against females calls for a need to be addressed. Hence, I posit that the rights to live for men and women should always be equal in such a situation.

The writer singles out a particular right to discuss. Could a broader argument be made before doing this?

The writer gives #B&V backdrop from China to explain why it is necessary for this right to be made equal in all cases.

Furthermore, respect for people should not be granted on the basis of gender and [biological functions unique to the different genders] should never be discriminated against. Rights should always be equal on the basis of natural processes that people go through, like menstruation in women. The fact that gender is ostracised and made to feel ashamed about a natural process is a problem itself, justifying the right to advocate for the equality of rights amongst men and women. A stark contrast between the rights allowed to men and women lie in many less developed countries like Syria, India and [parts of] Africa. Menstrual huts are found in impoverished places, where girls and women are sent to and confined in during their menstrual

The writer argues based on existing 'deficits' that women face.

Good range of examples shown, with helpful level of detail included.

<p>period. Such huts are low in sanity and ridden with diseases, leading to the death of many during the confinement period. There are problems that only women have to face, while the coming-of-age of men are advocated and celebrated in the very same countries by rituals and village parties. The shocking contrast between the treatment of genders is almost unbelievable, and it stems from the idea that women are entitled to less than men. As such, in a society where the infringement of [the] rights of a gender has grown to such shocking extents, rights between genders should always be equal in terms of respect for natural processes.</p>	<p>Once again, draws from a #B&V analysis.</p>
<p>Moving away from the perspective of a less developed country, many have already developed the idea to support women in developed nations, by offering jobs to women that are deemed by many to be prestigious. Yet, behind closed doors, the rights of women are still discriminated against despite the push for equal rights. This suggests that the problem of inequality lies even in developed countries that embody forward thinking values, justifying the need for [women] and men to always have equal rights. Jobs are secretly withheld from females and [their] earnings are deflated compared to men, discrimination against females lies about almost everywhere, be it apparent or kept mum about behind closed doors. Jennifer Lawrence, a coveted female actor in the hit series <i>The Hunger Games</i>, was reportedly paid a significantly smaller amount than her male co-stars, despite putting in the same, or even more effort. Medical schools in the United States were reported by a leak to accept more male than female students, despite the same credentials and similar background. Despite the push forward to offer coveted jobs like movie stars and doctors to women, it is still a known secret that payouts and opportunities are halved for women despite the ability they possess. Inequality remains latent and unaddressed even in developed countries that are advocating for change, making rights for both men and women justifiable to be equal on such grounds.</p>	<p>The writer progresses from LDCs to DCs quite naturally.</p> <p>(Note: you can't discriminate 'rights', only people)</p> <p>An impressive range of examples are given.</p> <p>Shouldn't such inherent inequality suggest that women deserve additional rights for protection?</p>
<p>Yet, despite the many scenarios presented, it seems that rights for women are usually ignored and dismissed, causing women to have the short-end of the stick. In the argument that rights for men and women should always be equal in each and every situation, there lies a flaw. In situations where women have the upper hand and are protected, should the rights for men and women be equal too? I posit that the argument that rights for both genders should always be equal is flawed and does not consider inequality of rights across the whole spectrum, [but] instead focuses on the situations in which males possess the upper hand. For example, in a divorce, the men have to pay the women a sum of money known as alimony. This is a well established law that binds the marriage contract. In a South Korean case, Ahn Jae Hyun and his wife, two coveted actors, had a fallout on social media over divorce. Ahn was accused [of having] celebrated her birthday with other women and [leaving] much of the household activities to his wife, who had to abstain from drama schedules to attend to these household activities and incur a loss in income. Due to the law, Ahn had to</p>	<p>The writer now engages with the idea of equal rights, not just equality. However, it would still be helpful to have some kind of topic sentence to sum up her argument in this paragraph first before delving into examples.</p>

<p>pay his wife a sum of money as compensation while his wife did not need to make any compensation. In such a situation, it can be argued that men are on the losing end and there is inequality in this law that protects women. Yet, if the wife were not to be protected by this law, the time that she [had] spent home and the jobs she gave up will not be compensated for, arguably justifying this law and the right it gives the woman. Hence, to advocate for rights between men and women to be equal on all grounds, is a flawed argument as this case proves otherwise. Hence, I argue that the rights for men and women need not be advocated for in all situations.</p>	
<p>Overall, in many situations and contexts, women are discriminated against due to old [outdated] beliefs of the superiority of men. In such situations, it is simple to argue for the rights of men and women to be equal on all grounds. Yet, such an argument glosses over and omits situations where women are protected against men[;] it makes assumptions that due to women always being on the losing end to men, equality should be present in all situations. In light of the severity and persistence of inequality amongst genders today, I advocate for the rights for men and women to be equal when deemed necessary, but women should still be protected by the law in certain situations. Hence, not all situations call for the need of equality amongst genders, and the need for it should be deemed by a case-by-case basis.</p> <p><i>(Jasmine Lim, 18-A3)</i></p>	<p>The writer ends in a similar way to how she began.</p> <p>But this time she adds onto it to show how her arguments have contributed to the initial proposition of gender equality.</p> <p>Reiterates her main stand and arguments clearly.</p>

10 How far do you agree that the value of the Arts has diminished in modern society?

The evaluation of the Arts' significance as well as functions, in relation to how they are perceived in modern society, is done competently in this essay, with a sustained reference to the conditions of modern society. The rich descriptions of examples are effectively linked to the arguments in general, and so add to the substantiation of the arguments. (Such links are what distinguishes an argument from an example-driven paragraph!)

In a world that is obsessed with economic growth, expansion and technological advancements, it is no wonder nor surprise that modern society champions the practical and useful through placing large emphasis on the [disciplines of] Mathematic[s] and Sciences, leaving the Arts marginalized or overshadowed. However, beyond the seemingly frivolous and myopic view of Art as a mere source of entertainment or a piece of 'decoration' to add colour to a dull society, Art holds value in its innate ability to provoke the mind, inspire creativity and[,] on a larger scale, give social communities an identity. The question assumes that the progression of mankind in the fields of Science and technology [has] resulted in the dilution of the value of the Arts. In other words, the Arts held greater importance and value before the Industrial Revolution. On the contrary, I believe that the Arts has emerged stronger and ever so prominent in today's society and that its value has not only been retained but has been celebrated and practised even more today.

Precise contextualisation of the shifting priorities of contemporary society.

The reasons for the stand which appears at the end of this paragraph.

Is there a rationale for the choice of the timeframe to define the past here?

A clear stand made here, generated in response to the question's assumption.

Before the tides of modernisation and urbanisation [] swept the globe, people led relatively simpler lives. [Without] the hustle and bustle of day-to-day chores, work commitment and the need to always stay competitive for survival, one had more time to pursue other domains in life. Some may argue that times as such were the golden ages of the Arts. Simply due to the sheer time and energy one had in excess, people could spend hours sitting at home admiring the beauty in Mozart's intricate pieces or Chopart's melodious tunes. One could spend their weekends travelling to town to watch the local opera or bask in the glory that is the work of Vincent Van Goh's Starry Starry Night painting. In contrast to the scene we observe today, the pace and craze of life has left us unable to enjoy the luxury of Art appreciation. Gradually, people have started to lose touch with the Arts, [with] some even labelling it as a waste of time and resources. Hence, it is no wonder how many could believe that the value of Arts [has] been diminished in modern society. However, in my opinion, the value of Art in the past was not so much truly understood and celebrated though [Art was] paid more attention. Simply assuming the loss of value of the Arts in a society due to the lack of attention and time spent on it is too myopic of a view. On the other hand, I believe, albeit it remains true that less time is spent on appreciating the Arts in the

While this illustration is effective in referencing the past to evaluate perspectives and attitudes to the Arts, do take note to avoid oversimplification.

There is a potential argument here. More should be said to develop this assertion.

<p>form of pieces in the museum or musicals, the value of Art has never been more prominent in modern society.</p>	
<p>The value of the Arts include[s] its ability to build a nation's identity and culture. The power of the Arts has only been recently recognised by many states and [the Arts] have since been used as an instrument to craft a nation's colour and identity. The Arts through many ways can add dimensions and layers to a country in terms of its culture. This is essential especially to young countries like Singapore that [are] accused as culturally bereft and lacking in tradition due to its young age of 54. Desperate for an identity, Singapore has relied on the power of the Arts to forge that identity. A local artist [] painted a picture that is renowned for its conflicting artistry, using Chinese traditional brush strokes to paint a modernised landscape of modern Singapore. His piece encapsulates the cutting edge design of modern buildings through the gentle brush strokes of the Chinese art form, calligraphy. Such an art piece demonstrates the identity of Singapore as an urban society with its deep Chinese traditions and culture. Such polar traits that now form the identity of Singapore can only be presented through the Arts. Hence, it is evident that the value of the Arts has not diminished in value but has been recognised for its ability to create an identity for a country. Countries like China, with a vast history, [have] the Arts play a direct and vital role for identity-making. China has always been known for its rich Art that has transcended through time in the forms of traditional Chinese Opera and face-changing shows. Such forms of the Arts has become China's main identity marker with a multitude of tourists leaving China with mementos of face-changing dolls from a uniquely China experience, it is the Art that has become China's identity. Hence, I stand by my belief that the value of Art has increased in value in modern society.</p>	<p>This is a crucial link as it highlights how it is through the Arts that complex and even contradictory qualities can be expressed effectively.</p>
<p>In an increasingly liberal society, the value of the Arts as a medium of expression without limits has been largely celebrated in many societies. The Arts allows one to express oneself in the form of song, dance or poetry. With increasing conflict in ideologies today, many have taken the Arts as a means to speak up and out on pressing issues of the world. Disney's <i>Aladdin</i> recently hit the theatres this 2019. This hit remake features old songs in the classic 1998 version such as 'Friend Like Me' and 'Whole New World' and brand new songs that address seemingly pressing issues in modern society today. 'Speechless' performed by actress singer Naomi Scott belts out on the right to speak up and stand up against men who seek to contain and constrain the strength and power of women. This truly moving and empowering song on women's rights created a media frenzy and is now a female anthem for all girls in the world. With issues such as gender inequality still left unsolved in our modern world in places such as Saudi Arabia where girls are deprived of education and an equal chance in the world[...] The Arts are able to send a global message and to spark a movement towards the betterment of our modern society. The Arts empower one with the voice and the platform to express one's thoughts and ideas to make a</p>	<p>The continued relevance of the Arts is established as an indicator of its persisting value, as the platform for expression that the</p>

<p>change in the world where dissonance between genders and social classes plague so many communities. Hence the Arts has not diminished in value in modern society as its ability to provide a voice to people has been proven vital, very necessary and needed in a modern society.</p>	<p>Arts provide is complementary to the increasing drive towards voicing previously neglected issues.</p>
<p>Imagination is an aspect of humanity that sets humans apart from robots and animals. The Arts is the main brewer of imagination. In a VUCA world, imagination, innovation and creativity are all 21st Century traits that are important for survival. I posit that the value of the Arts has not only not diminished but is celebrated in modern society due to its innate ability to spur innovation and encourage creativity. The limitless nature of the Arts encourages one to take risks and to venture into the unknown, to attempt to make the impossible a possibility. The freedom in the Arts gives one the space and flexibility to think beyond conventional limitations and create magic. Thus [the] value of the Arts has been largely celebrated and invested in modern society. Singapore's government spent billions of dollars in the building of the Science and Art Museum in Singapore. Many would label the constitution of a giant lotus flower as a poor project design. However, I believe Art as a form of architecture has defied the conventional [expectations] of a building. Its odd curvy petals are seemingly small, fool[ing] one into believing the restriction in space the museum must suffer due to the poor design. However, once one enters the tip of the petals, one could bask in the glory of the Arts and its ability to fool as the space is anything but [constrained]. Such projects, driven by innovation and creativity, balance the idea of space and design in ways conventional methods and thinking would frown upon. The Arts has found its way into our buildings and structures, defying the laws of convention. The value of the Arts has not diminished as behind the great works of many, lies the value of the Arts' creativity and imagination.</p>	<p>This further develops the argument for the continued relevance of the Arts that was raised in the previous paragraph. In this paragraph, the relevance of the Arts stems from necessity, as it inculcates essential values that one needs so as to thrive in the modern world.</p> <p>More could be said about how the Arts prepare one to meet the challenges of a VUCA world, so as to develop what was set out at the start of this paragraph.</p>
<p>The value of the Arts is ubiquitous in our modern society. To say that the advancement in technology and science and the urbanisation of the world has diminished the value of the Arts is false to a large extent as never [have we] appreciated and treasured the value of Art more than now. The value of the Arts will not be eroded with time and development as its timeless values still hold relevance and a place in our modern society. From the Arts being a mode of expression, a cultural and identity maker and encouragement of creativity, the value of the Arts has not diminished in modern society and will continue to be celebrated.</p> <p><i>(Karis Goh, 18-A3)</i></p>	<p>A clear consolidation of the arguments raised in this essay, with a projection of the Arts' continued value beyond the present.</p>

11 How far should countries prioritise economic development given the serious threats posed by climate change?

There is generally a clear engagement of the question's key words and point of contention. The condition of climate change's serious threats is also accounted for in the arguments put forth, with considerable insight about the interdependence between the importance of economic growth and the threats posed by climate change. To further improve this response, sharpen the focus and reinforce the connections between the examples and the argument in each paragraph.

During this year's National Day Parade (NDP) Rally, Lee Hsien Long, the Prime Minister of Singapore, explicitly stated that 'we should treat Climate Change defences like we treat the SAF (Singapore Armed Forces) — with utmost seriousness'. While his words were a grave reminder of the stark reality of the effects of this overhanging threat to nations everywhere, and how even the smallest of countries should be prepared to battle it, one may wonder how great an opportunity cost choosing to channel efforts into the war on climate change might incur, especially on a country's economic development. However, despite the increasing competitiveness of the global economy, and the pressing need for countries to affirm their position in it lest they lose out, climate change is still, quite possibly, the greatest threat to countries worldwide, and counteracting its worsening impact should take precedence over any national matter in order to ensure the safety and welfare of both current and future generations in the long run. Thus, economic development should only be prioritised when a country is able to balance out the expansion and growth of its economy with mitigating and adapting to the potentially catastrophic effects of climate change.

This outlines the reasons for the opposing argument.

How the threats associated with climate change outweigh the priority of economic development could be outlined with clearer reasons.

Good qualification of the stand with the condition stated.

Should countries be unable to attain a middle ground between these two conflicting targets, and [choose] to prioritise and heavily invest in economic developments over addressing the mounting impacts of climate change, this will undoubtedly exacerbate and speed up the latter's effects further. This is bound to occur should a country's economic development be unsustainable, and only focus[ed] on harnessing the finite resources of the Earth in order to fuel a country's growth. Without a healthy circular metabolism functioning in society, in time, this will definitely lead to the irreversible deterioration of the natural environment, and only serve to feed the ravenous mouth of climate change. Despite the irrefutable logic that this doomsday declaration radiates, some still choose to adopt a cynical, or even worse, skeptical and blind perspective on the matter, an archetypical example of that being the United States of America's (USA's) President Donald Trump explicitly denying the catastrophic reality of climate change, claiming that it is a fabrication crafted by so-called experts. With such an influential figure governing such a large, powerful and established nation, it is no wonder that the USA remains one of the highest contributors to global carbon emissions, which only serves to exacerbate the growing hazard of climate change as

This assumes that economic progress and climate change concerns are conflicting targets. Why might this be so?

<p>seen from July 2019 being the hottest month recorded. However, what cynics and skeptics alike who follow this fatally flawed ideology fail to realise is that in the short-term, even though it may seem like the more efficient and practical method to harness non-renewable resources to generate revenue to maintain the expansion of a country's economy, in the long-run, this unsustainable, 'throw-away' consumerist culture will eventually lead to the downfall of a society. [...] At that point, its effect may be so severe that reversing its effects, let alone economic development, may not be able to occur anymore whatsoever. Thus, economic development, especially that which does not account for the preservation and maintenance of the environment should not be prioritised over [the need to address] climate damage, unless it can be balanced out with sustainable, environmentally-friendly tactics to prevent the acceleration of climate change.</p>	<p>In the span of this sentence, the focus shifts from looking at the non-renewable resources used to generate revenue to the consumerist culture. Both address different aspects of the unsustainable nature of such economic development, and lumping them together might risk conflating them.</p>
<p>The failure of countries to wholeheartedly address the impacts of climate change by continuing unsustainable economic development will not only represent the matter itself, but may also have adverse impacts on the welfare and standard of living (SOL) of citizens living in that society. [...] Should a country choose to invest in unethical environmentally degrading malpractices to further its economic growth, this will often result in a myriad of spillover effects [for] the citizens of numerous societies, as they eventually suffer the consequences of the various impacts of climate change. Furthermore, if a country chooses to continue channelling resources and finances into attaining economic growth regardless of the environmental cost, this can only worsen the people's distrust of the state, as it maintains primary control over the decisions made for the economy, and reduce[s] them to mere bystanders, [while] the effects of climate change grow too large for them to handle as a mere individual. A prime example of this would be the recent debacle of the Amazon Rainforest where an inferno has been raging for over three weeks on end. Due to this, many native tribes lost much of their land, and Sao Paulo has been blanketed with a thick smog. However, the Brazilian government has done little to cease it. On the surface, it may seem like the government is doing its part to help, having announced that they will channel \$20 billion into fire-fighting efforts. However, in reality, these are merely perfunctory, crowd-pleasing actions, as the government had actually authorised the clearing of much of the rainforest via the slash-and-burn technique for agriculture and individual use. This catastrophic example only serves to highlight the indifference of some countries to the effects of climate change in their relentless pursuit of economic growth, and attempting to further their nation's development without addressing the more pressing matters of the consequences citizens are facing as a result of increased pollution and climate change. Therefore, economic developments should never be a priority for countries when it comes at the expense of explicitly neglecting the welfare of individuals in societies, and allowing them to suffer the devastating impacts of a selfish, utilitarian country that prioritises long-term</p>	<p>Good point about how the failure to address climate change threatens and subverts the intended outcomes of economic progress.</p> <p>The example shows the government's failure/ superficial attempts to mitigate the negative impact of climate change, but it does not show how these countries prioritise economic growth.</p> <p>This point has the potential for further development.</p>

<p>economic development over the short-term [and] eventually long-term needs of its people.</p>	
<p>However, should a country be able to channel climate-change righting measures into the development of their nation's economy and achieve sustainable growth, economic development should be a priority, as it can help the country grow without exacerbating the impacts of climate change. Despite the skepticism of some who doubt that economic growth will never be able to occur without infringing on the environmental sustainability and preservation, there are numerous countries out there that have exemplified the notion that it is possible to achieve economic growth without turning [] Earth into an overcrowded lifeboat where a multitude of individuals are taxing its ability to provide space and resources for all. With long-term planning and sufficient foresight, it is still possible to balance the growth of a nation to cement its place in the global economy while addressing the growth of threats posed by climate change. A noteworthy example of one nation possessing the potential for this is Singapore. During the aforementioned 2019 National Day Rally, the plan to build the Greater Southern Waterbank, or 'Punggol By The Bay' that will be a 30 kilometre barrier that extends from Gardens By The to Bay to Pasir Panjang as part of Singapore's ongoing defence against sea level rise — one major impact of climate change — was announced. This, however, was not the only major development or investment made — as other plans to spur local economic development such as subsidising tertiary education and boosting CPF (Central Provident Funds) were implemented as well. Thus it is very possible to achieve a marriage of ideal aspects of economic growth[,] that is, the addressing and mitigation of climate change, and the practical side of it that involves kindling the growth of a nation. However, it is imperative to note that this seemingly utopian idyll can only be achieved if the state chooses to adopt a less myopic, more long-term efficient plan that involves maintaining a less conservative mindset that accepts the reality of climate change, and is willing to work towards a sustainable, growth-oriented future that does not compromise the welfare of citizens or worsen the effects of climate change.</p>	<p>How do these measures boost economic growth? Also, how do they show that economic and environmental (specifically climate change) issues can co-exist with the concerns about climate change?</p>
<p>In conclusion, economic development in a country should only be prioritised if sustainable, environmentally-friendly methods that do not endanger a country's environment or welfare are used, now that climate change has evolved into the omnipresent lochemoth that it is today. If countries wish to put the 18-month grace period we have before climate change reaches its tipping point to good use, more states should start shifting away from unsustainable, unethical practices that fuel economic development, and begin looking towards [...]</p> <p><i>(Stephanie Leong, 18-E1)</i></p>	<p>Quite a clear conclusion which would have summed up the writer's argument well if completed.</p>