

Name: _____ () Class: _____

**ASSUMPTION ENGLISH SCHOOL
PRELIMINARY EXAMINATION 2019**

**HUMANITIES
SOCIAL STUDIES
(2272/01)
(2273/01)**



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LEVEL : Secondary 4 Express
Secondary 5 Normal (Academic)

DATE : 27 August 2019

CLASS(ES) : Secondary 4/1, 4/2 and 5/1

DURATION : 1 hour 45 minutes

Additional materials provided: 4 sheets of writing paper and 1 cover page

INSTRUCTIONS TO CANDIDATES

Do not open this booklet until you are told to do so.

Write your name, index number and class at the top of this page.

Write your name and index number clearly on the top of every paper used.

Write in dark blue or black ink on both sides of the paper.

Do not use staples, paper clips, highlighters, glue or correction fluid and tape.

At the end of the examination, secure all writing paper with the string provided and submit the answer script and question paper separately.

The number of marks is given in brackets [] at the end of each question or part question.

SECTION A (35 marks)

Answer **all parts** of Question 1.

SECTION B (15 marks)

Answer **both parts** of Question 2.

For Examiner's use:	
Section A	/ 35
Section B	/ 15
Total	/ 50

This Question Paper consists of 9 printed pages including this page.

[Turn over

SECTION A (Source-Based Case Study)

Question 1 is **compulsory** for all candidates.

1 Living in a Diverse Society

Study the Background Information and the sources carefully, and then answer all the questions.

You may use any of the sources to help you answer the questions, in addition to those sources you are told to use. In answering the questions you should use your knowledge of the issue to help you interpret and evaluate the sources.

(a) Study Source A.

What is the message of the source? Explain your answer, using details from the source. [5]

(b) Study Sources B and C.

How different are Sources B and C? Explain your answer. [6]

(c) Study Source D.

How useful is this source as evidence about the possibility of Subject-based banding in eliminating social stigma? Explain your answer. [7]

(d) Study Sources E and F.

After reading Source E, are you surprised by Source F? Explain your answer. [7]

(e) 'Subject-based banding is for the good of society.'

Using sources in this case study, explain how far the sources support this statement. [10]

Can Subject-based banding completely eradicate social stigma?**BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

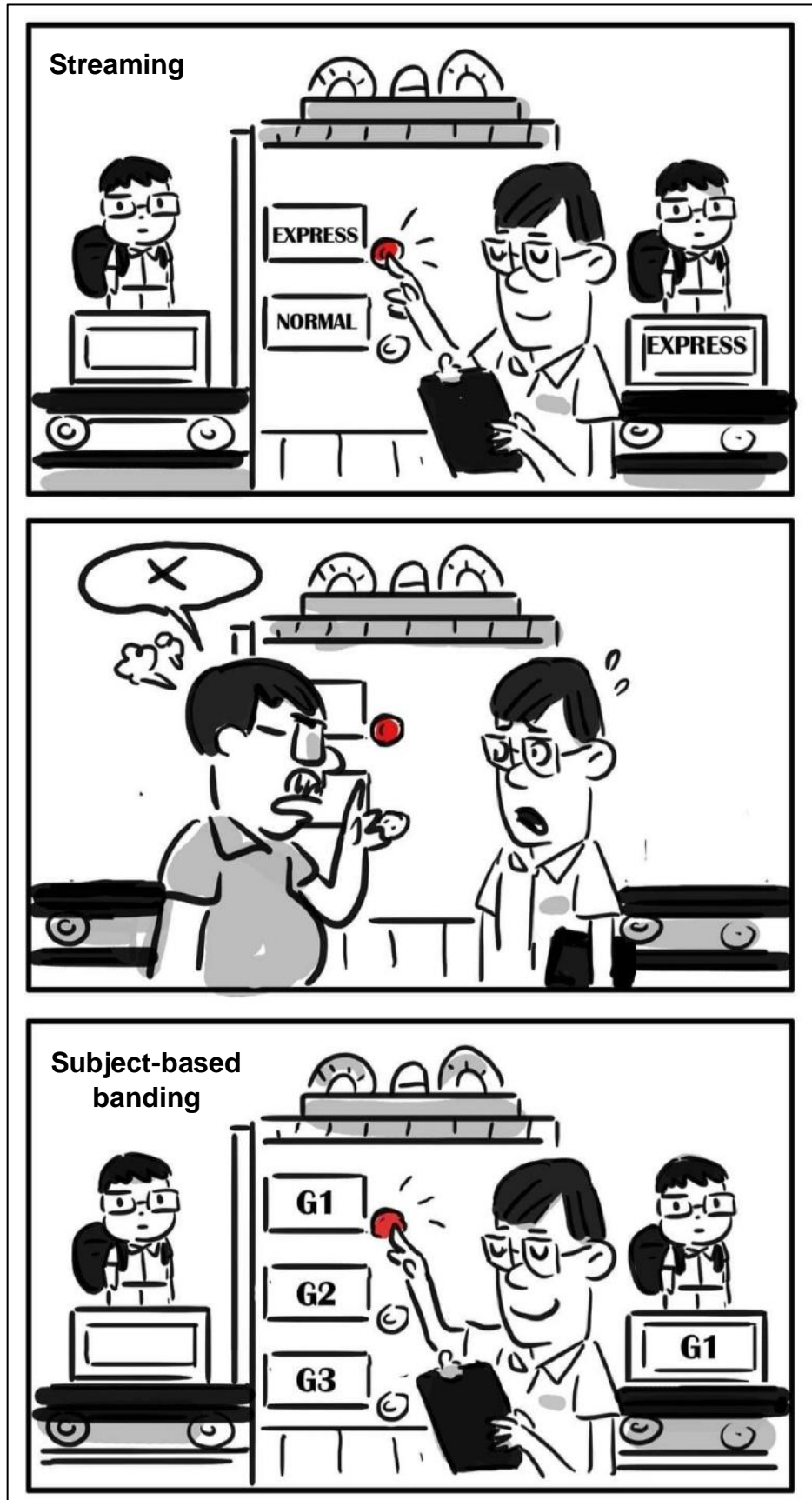
Read this carefully. It may help you to answer some of the questions.

The Ministry of Education has made the decision to implement full Subject-based banding (SBB) forty years after streaming was introduced. This is a shift away from the Normal (Technical), Normal (Academic) and Express streams. All Secondary 1 students in the 2024 batch will take subjects at three levels – G1, G2 or G3, with G standing for “General”. G1 will roughly correspond to today’s N(T) standard, G2 to N(A) standard and G3 to Express standard. The students will be able to take a combination of subjects across different bands as they develop their strengths and interests. They would take a common examination and graduate with a common secondary school certificate when they reach Secondary 4 in 2027.

There are many Singaporeans who expressed mixed feelings about the newly introduced SBB. Some applauded the government for moving away from the one-size-fits-all system and mitigating the unintended consequences of labelling and stigmatisation. Others expressed concerns that the SBB is just an effort to repackage the streams and it would not lead to a significant reduction in the social stigma, as students are still labelled according to the number of subjects taken at G1, G2 and G3.

Study the following sources to assess whether Subject-based banding can completely eradicate social stigma.

Source A: A cartoonist's perspective after the announcement of Subject-based banding to replace streaming in secondary schools, 5 March 2019. The caption of the cartoon is "No more 'express' or 'normal'... just G1, G2 and G3 streaming instead...."



Source B: *Adapted from a comment by Associate Professor Jason Tan from the National Institute of Education (NIE) in response to the Subject-based banding, 5 March 2019.*

It is understood by many that streaming tends to be rather stigmatising. It tells us that many of the students were unnecessarily pigeonholed. There will be a replacement of one kind of stigma associated with streaming with another kind — that of subject combinations that students take in school. This might lead to a scenario where parents, or students, compare how many higher-level subjects they take, or aim for the maximum number of G3 (higher-level) subjects. In spite of that, I think MOE is trying to blur the lines even more than before and that is a good thing. This goes a long way in reducing stigma, but I do not think the stigma will be removed completely even with this major move. For the changes to have the intended effect, it has to take place together with a review of social attitudes.

Source C: *Adapted from an article by SMU Behavioural Sciences Institute Director Professor David Chan on the issues surrounding the replacement of streaming at secondary school with the Subject-based banding system, 16 March 2019.*

The stigma associated with social labelling resulting from streaming has been corrosive in many people's lives and for society. The new Subject-based banding system can go a long way to reduce stigma. It is self-defeating if we disregard facts and insist that Subject-based banding is just old wine in new bottles. Even if parents try to compare and categorise students by their overall ability, it will be difficult to do so in the Subject-based banding system. They will not be confined to an ability category and labelled accordingly, unlike the case in Normal or Express streaming where students are placed into clear groupings, creating the perception of "us versus them". We hope that in order for systems and society to change for the better, we should revisit our assumptions, attitudes and actions. We can initiate action and change and inculcate positive values and attitudes in ourselves and those around us.

Source D: *Adapted from an article about Subject-based banding by Lionel Oh published on the Singapore Policy Journal, a publication by researchers from some of the best universities, 9 March 2019.*

Subject-based banding is a step in the right direction. Streaming worked when Singapore's focus was on efficiency, and providing different tiers from which students could graduate to benefit the workforce. However, the context of the present and demands of the future no longer adhere with the circumstances of the past. Streaming is straining Singapore's social cohesion.

Students will be able to learn better given a banding system that de-emphasises academic segregation. It is vital that the shift to banding must not be taken superficially. It should not simply be a new terminology fit into the existing way of measuring success. Taking all subjects at G3 level cannot be perceived as the epitome of academic achievement – this would be missing the point. The banding dismantles the stigma associated with streaming labels. This move represents the government's recognition of the current education system's shortcoming and a genuine intent to improve it.

Source E: *Adapted from a speech by Mr Ong Ye Kung, Minister for Education on the decision to end streaming in secondary schools from 2024 during a debate on his ministry's budget in Parliament published in The Straits Times, 5 March 2019.*

What is the difference between Subject-based banding and streaming? Here is a cookie jar analogy. Streaming separates education into different courses, and we put students into each course. So each course is like a big jar. You can put different cookies into the jar, but when you close and label the jar as pineapple tarts, all the goodies in it get labelled as pineapple tarts too, accurately or inaccurately.

Subject-based banding changes this fundamentally. Essentially, we break the jar, students come out of it, take subjects of varying difficulty, based on their academic ability. Taking one or two subjects at the Foundation level is not equivalent to labelling the child. We continued to reap the benefits of customisation of education, but minimised the downsides of labelling.

Source F: *Adapted from a commentary by Jee Leong Koh, the founder of Singapore Unbound which upholds freedom of expression.*

Singapore Unbound supports the abolition of streaming, which has undermined and stigmatized students by labelling them as Express, Normal (Academic) and Normal (Technical). The belated change to subject-based banding is an improvement.

However, we should not look to schools as the solution to all social ills. Schools are naturally traditional institutions which is a reflection of our society. If Singapore schools treat education in a highly competitive manner, they merely reflect society's competitiveness. The change must be cultural, starting with the people. Otherwise, any change in the educational system will be twisted from its good intentions by its implementation and reception. Sadly, it is hard to see a change in societal attitudes in the near future.

SECTION B (Structured-Response Question)

Question 2 is **compulsory** for all candidates.

2 Exploring Citizenship and Governance

Study the extract carefully, and then answer the question.

Extract 1

Hawker culture involving the practice of dining and mingling at hawker centres over food prepared by hawkers, is an integral part of the Singapore way of life. Hawker culture reflects the multicultural make-up of Singapore, comprising mainly Chinese, Malay and Indian as well as various other cultures.

Extract 2

The Community Health Assist Scheme (CHAS) enables Singapore citizens from lower- and middle-income households to receive subsidies for medical and dental care at participating General Practitioners (GPs) and dental clinics near their home. Singaporeans benefit from affordable medical and dental services.

Extract 3

The Parliament passed amendments to the Protection from Harassment Act (Poha) on 7 May 2019 to streamline procedures for victims of online bullying and harassment, and to tackle offences such as doxxing*. The criminalisation of doxxing was introduced as online shaming is becoming more widespread in the society.

**Doxxing is the act of publishing personal information like photos, contact numbers or employment details with the intention to harass, put the victim in fear of violence or provoke the use of violence against the victim.*

- (a) Extract 1 states that the hawker food culture has strengthened our national identity.

In your opinion, how can Singapore continue to preserve our hawker food culture? Explain your answer using **two** ways. [7]

- (b) Extracts 2 and 3 highlight the role of government in working for the good of society.

Do you think the role of government in providing goods and services for the public is more important than safeguarding the interests of citizens? Explain your answer. [8]

End of Paper

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