



General Paper Bulletin 2022 (JC 2)

Dear TMJC students, welcome to the second issue of TMJC's GP Bulletin for 2022! Following the previous edition, we bring you yet another selection of the essays written by your schoolmates during the recent **Mid-Year Examinations**. We thank the students who have contributed their essays, and who have proven that good writing is very possible despite the exam conditions!

Just like previous publications, these essays may not be perfect but do try to learn from them in terms of their content and skills. Also, please exercise discretion in using such information in a manner that is relevant to the question you are answering.

Lastly, you should not attempt to copy and pass them off as your own.

We wish you all the best for the upcoming Preliminary Exams!

Editorial Team

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Q1: 'The pursuit of the arts is only for the privileged.' Is this true?

Sample Essay	Marker's Comments
<p>In today's increasingly affluent and digitalised world, the pursuit of the arts has been a talking point. Whether it is appreciating the stunning murals of Michaelangelo, or watching the latest films on Netflix, the arts has come in many different forms, and seems to be pursuable by the common man. However, some may argue that the pursuit of the arts is exclusively for the privileged minority. Whilst such a view is not entirely wrong, it is certainly too sweeping and parochial. The arts can be pursued by the common man and will increasingly be that way.</p>	<p>Relevance to Question Requirements: A clear balanced stand: focussed on establishing a stance while also outlining opposing points of view.</p> <p>Suggestions for Improvement: Deeper contextualisation of the issues may add value to the reader's understanding of the point of contention. Why is it that the arts is often associated with the privileged? That would set the parameters for the discussion that follows.</p>
<p>For some critics, the pursuit of the arts is solely for the privileged. It seems that way, as many developing nations are too preoccupied with pressing bread and butter issues of day-to-day life to pursue the arts. In war-torn and poverty-stricken countries, the pursuit of the arts is entirely out of the equation when their own survival is at stake. People from such countries simply do not have the means, as well as the leisure to appreciate the arts when there are more urgent issues at hand. These impoverished people face such great oppression by the belligerent and corrupt leaders that there is absolutely no room to even think about the arts, much less pursue it. In countries such as Syria, the people are more concerned about their own survival and livelihood than pursuing the arts and making a living in their country that is constantly at war. In the Middle East, the masses are too preoccupied with rallying and protesting against their oppressive governments to even bother pursuing something as secondary as the arts in the Arab Spring. In countries with authoritarian governments, such as North Korea, the heavy censorship of the arts means the people do not even have the option to pursue it. Only when the basic safety and security of the people are secured, can they decide to pursue the arts. This is why the arts is reserved for the privileged of developed countries and is not to be pursued by the underprivileged.</p>	<p>Relevance to Question Requirements: Clear point and topic sentence on why the arts may be perceived to be the purview of the privileged.</p> <p>Quality of argument (Depth and Scope): Clear flow of argument showing why less developed countries may consider the arts as unimportant, especially in the face of survival challenges. There is a consideration of various challenges various societies face that may limit their ability to develop the arts.</p> <p>Use of Illustrations: Varied examples used.</p> <p>Suggestions for Improvement: Perhaps there could be further explanation as to why the arts is of secondary importance to bread-and-butter issues. Is it because of the low economic returns associated with the arts? Is it because of the highbrow nature of the arts, which means it is inaccessible to the lower/middle class, who have limited time and money to spend on the arts? Also, why is it the case that the arts may only be pursued when the safety and security of people are ensured? Does the development of the arts threaten safety and security?</p>
<p>However, the pursuit of the arts may not exclusively be just for the privileged minority. In an increasingly digitilised world, advancements in technology have allowed the arts to be increasingly accessible to the masses, hence allowing privileged and not so privileged people alike to pursue it. With social media and the internet, anyone can pursue the arts. What used to be painting and sculptures locked up in museums with exorbitant entrance fees, are now one search away on the internet. One does not have to be wealthy to simply search artworks like the Mona Lisa or the Last Supper on the Internet. Potential content creators who wish to produce art may also turn to the internet and social media to showcase their masterpieces to almost the whole world in just an instant. People do not have to be privileged to upload their music on YouTube or</p>	<p>Relevance to Question Requirements: A relevant point that covers why the arts is not just for the privileged.</p> <p>Quality of argument (Depth and Scope): There is a clear explanation and elaboration on why the arts is accessible to everyone today.</p> <p>Use of Illustrations: The examples given are appropriate and cover a few areas</p>

<p>SoundCloud, or to create pieces of art that could be sold at high prices. This is shown by an increasing trend of indie artists and musicians as well as the recent hype of NFTs. It is due to the advent of social media and the Internet that the barriers of entry for pursuing the arts are lowered such that even those who are not privileged could pursue it. Hence, the pursuit of the arts is not solely for the privileged.</p>	<p>within the overarching point on advancements in technology.</p>
<p>The arts could also be pursued by the underprivileged depending on the type of governance in the country. Despite not having the financial means to pursue the arts, if the government views the arts as a priority, even those who are not privileged can pursue it. Whether or not a person decides to pursue the arts is less dependent on their own financial circumstance but more on the view of their government on the arts. In Singapore, government efforts have been put in place to increase the pursuit of the arts regardless of social class or socioeconomic background. It is without doubt that programmes such as the Arts Elective Programme (AEP) and the Music Elective Programme (MEP) allow privileged and underprivileged students to pursue the arts based on their interest and passion, and not incumbent on their family's financial background. By making museum entries free for citizens and beautifying the daily commute through art murals in MRT stations, Singaporeans are encouraged to appreciate and pursue the arts regardless of their level of privilege. In such a case, the pursuit of the arts is not only for the privileged and wealthy. Rather, the pursuit of the arts is highly dependent on the government's own funding and willingness to promote it and encourage its pursuit. Hence, it is the government's willingness to intervene and encourage the pursuit of the arts through funding that determines if the arts is worth pursuing by the people, not the level of privilege.</p>	<p>Relevance to Question Requirements: A relevant point on how government intervention could promote the arts to people from all walks of life.</p> <p>Quality of argument (Depth and Scope): A valid and clear topic sentence with some development on the way the arts is made accessible and made part and parcel of daily life.</p> <p>Use of Illustrations: There is a range of examples, from school programmes to museum entries to art murals that are part of the landscape.</p> <p>Suggestions for Improvement: Might be better to place this point earlier, after the OV on government priorities, to contrast against the point on developed versus less developed countries. But a fundamental point to be explained is why would the government choose to fund the arts? That must be explained.</p> <p>Perhaps a stronger link could also be established between the government's efforts and appreciation of the arts by the masses, especially since there is access to a huge variety of art forms and people are bound to find some form of the arts that they can appreciate, relate to and pursue, no matter their socio-economic background.</p>
<p>On the flip side, the underprivileged and marginalised groups of people are the ones pursuing the arts, utilising it as a tool to raise awareness towards certain issues they face. These people use the arts as a voice to broadcast their otherwise unknown plights and struggles, raising awareness towards causes they believe in. In such a case, the arts is not solely for the privileged but is harnessed by the underprivileged as a form of empowerment. For example, there has been an exponential increase in LGBTQ+ films and movies to showcase the struggles faced by the marginalised queer community. One such example is the popular Taiwanese movie 'Your name engraved herein' on Netflix, which was well received, not just by the LGBTQ+ community, but by others of the straight and cisgender community as well. The movie portrays the true love life of two gay boys and the ostracisation and disapproval they receive in an Asian conservative society, where same sex dating and marriage is taboo and widely condemned. The movie moved many people around the world, allowing them to understand the internal struggles faced by the marginalised and underprivileged of society, and their desire to be accepted for who they are. Closer to home, Singapore film 'I not stupid' portrays the challenges faced by Normal Stream students in the highly</p>	<p>Relevance to Question Requirements: A valid point on the arts as a tool of empowerment for marginalised groups.</p> <p>Quality of argument (Depth and Scope): Good consideration of perspectives that widens the scope of discussion. The less privileged is not just referring to the poor but also people who have been marginalised or are on the fringes of society.</p> <p>Use of Illustrations: Examples are well-used for explanation of points.</p>

academic results-driven society of Singapore. This allows many Singaporeans to appreciate and understand their struggles in a socially elitist Singapore and take action to improve society to be more accepting and understanding. Thus, the arts gives the marginalised and underprivileged a voice, one they can utilise to galvanize positive change for the betterment of their society into a more inclusive one. Hence, the pursuit of the arts is not exclusively for the privileged.	
Since long ago, the arts has been pursued by many from the underprivileged group who eventually rose to fame and honour through their artistic talents. A famous case in point is Vincent Van Gogh, who was from a poor background. He used art as a form of escape from the harsh reality, and eventually became famous for many art pieces he created. Even though he is no longer in the living world, he utilised art as a form of enjoyment and self-expression, and developed his unique style, despite being from an underprivileged background. This goes to show that the arts is not necessarily solely to be pursued by the privileged.	A new point was raised about escape from reality which was not quite developed in earlier paragraphs. Still, the conclusion reiterated the line of argument in the essay and is consistent with the stand delineated in the introduction.
Marker's Overall Comment: Content + Good points that are valid, and close engagement with the question is often seen. + Good scope evident. +/- There is potential for more insights to be derived by elaborating and contextualising certain claims. Language + Quite complex language used throughout, with apt vocabulary pertaining to the issue at hand. +/- Fairly well organised. Chrystel Yew Hui Wen 21S303	

Q3: Given Singapore's space constraints, should playgrounds still be retained?

Sample Essay	Marker's Comments
The Little Red Dot. That is what we affectionately call Singapore, our home. As the name suggests, Singapore's availability of land is not exactly the most, in that we only take up one little red dot on the world's map! Hence, the government has been striving to make the most out of what little landscape we have. Just the number of storeys in the housing flats would explain it. Thus, critics may argue that playgrounds are no longer necessary and have no need to be retained. After all, it is now rarely used, and furthermore, those spaces could be used for other uses. Yet, I do believe playgrounds still add value to our lives. It is part of tradition, and also provides an outlet for children to explore and see the world. Furthermore, it encourages bonding between the neighbours, hence fostering a community spirit amongst them.	Relevance to Question Requirements: Brings in the condition to briefly set the context for the discussion of the question. There is a clear balanced stand: focussed on establishing a stance while also outlining opposing points of view. Suggestions for Improvement: Background information could go beyond highlighting the space constraints of Singapore to bring out other relevant characteristics as well.
Naysayers would argue that playgrounds are now rarely used, hence their redundancy. Children nowadays are entrapped in the digital world, with YouTube or Netflix capturing their attention, and playgrounds are left desolate. Parents also feed their children with the key to unlocking the digital landscape. Rather than sweating and running after their children for an hour or two under the sweltering hot sun, added on with the chore of showering them after, the smartphone that can attract their child's attention span for the same amount of time while having the freedom to do whatever they want is a very enchanting offer for the parents. Hence, many have succumbed to that. Kids channels like Cocomelon and shows like Paw Patrol are all seemingly removing the need for playgrounds as	Relevance to Question Requirements: Topic sentence clearly addresses the question requirement on whether there is any point to retain playgrounds. Quality of argument (Depth and Scope): Adequate SG characteristic brought out to substantiate the argument. Logically sound arguments which are clearly signposted to bring out the flaws in the opposing view.

<p>children simply do not go there as much as before! However, while I do concede that video platforms such as YouTube and Netflix are on the rise among children, then playing at the playgrounds is not a mutually exclusive event. For those naysayers who argue their point, they have not heard the ruckus that is resounding amongst the neighbouring blocks that stem from the playgrounds. Children all flock to the playgrounds once they are done with school, with many preschool centres and primary schools conveniently situated just mere minutes away from a playground, where the children can play their hearts out and release the energy that was bubbling in them. Thus, playgrounds may seem desolate when the children are away, but it is actually buzzing with life once the main users come out to play.</p>	<p>Use of Illustrations: Examples provided though observational, are apt.</p> <p>Suggestions for Improvement: Further explanation can be provided to explain the behaviour of Singaporean parents to develop the argument further.</p>
<p>Some may also argue that playgrounds can be used for other more important uses. With the limited landscape Singapore is continuously facing, sacrifices must be made. One such sacrifice is that the newer housing flats and even private condominiums are increasingly smaller, which may not be an ideal living space for children to grow in. Children like to run around and have toys, yet with the limited space an individual family has, the child can easily run through the whole house in under 30 seconds and with minimal toys to stimulate the child, it may spell trouble for the parents. Hence, if playgrounds were not retained, the space could be used to add a few feet to the residents' homes. With that, the child may not feel as trapped in as before, and parents can also cater to the children's want for toys to stimulate and capture their attention. However, while thinking through all that, the main purpose is slowly eroding away from the parents' and children's minds, in that playgrounds were meant for the children to play and have fun. While having more space may sound appealing, what the playgrounds can offer is far more than what the residents' personal toys can offer. After all, playgrounds are not limited by the ceiling, as the saying goes, 'The sky is the limit!' This allows for the children to climb higher, run more and slide further, all of which can be achieved by the playgrounds. Thus, while it may seem as though without playgrounds, our houses may become a little bigger, the benefits of playgrounds far exceed those smaller perceived gains.</p>	<p>Relevance to Question Requirements: A relevant point that addresses the condition in the question.</p> <p>Quality of argument (Depth and Scope): Rebuttal directly addresses the OV and clearly presents the argument for why playgrounds are worth the space they occupy. Sound comparison is made between playgrounds and toys. Condition is constantly engaged and artfully interwoven into the point throughout the paragraph.</p> <p>Use of Illustrations: Examples can be more concrete by highlighting specific details or elements in the playground to substantiate the point on it offering more than toys.</p>
<p>I would argue that playgrounds are a part of many people's childhoods and is also part of tradition. Playgrounds were not incorporated recently, they have been part and parcel of living in a HDB neighbourhood, with the first few neighbourhoods already having playgrounds factored into their development plans. As Singaporeans, we have all heard of the big red dragon situated in the older neighbourhoods, acting as a tool for reminiscing the older times. For many Gen X and millennials, that serves as a marker of their childhoods and something that adds a touch of nostalgia to the modernity of Singapore today. Hence if playgrounds were not retained, to where would the children of today's age attribute a physical sense of nostalgia to? Cocomelon is most definitely out of the question. Hence, even in the ever progressively smaller housing decisions made by the government, playgrounds have been retained as a constant, as a tradition to the children living in the HDB flats as it is an innate aspect of the children's childhoods.</p>	<p>Relevance to Question Requirements: A relevant point on the importance of playgrounds.</p> <p>Quality of argument (Depth and Scope): Link back to the condition was made at the end of the paragraph to justify the playgrounds' use of space in Singapore.</p> <p>Use of Illustrations: Apt and significant example is highlighted and analysed well through highlighting the notion of nostalgia.</p> <p>Suggestions for Improvement: Argument can be further elaborated to explain how playgrounds are crucial to people's childhoods. Other SG or current world context can also be brought in to substantiate the argument.</p>
<p>Furthermore, it provides the children with an outlet to see and explore the world. In their own homes, they are only exposed to their relatives and a constant environment that they live in 24/7. It is also not financially sane for parents to bring children to amusement parks when their children feel</p>	<p>Relevance to Question Requirements: Relevant point on the function of playgrounds is highlighted.</p>

<p>the urge to run around and play. Thus, playgrounds are the perfect solution. Not only is it free of charge, the children also get to feel different surfaces and touch a variety of things - the roughness of the rubber on the ground, the smoothness of the slide, the heat of the stairs, and even fun and enriching materials on the walls of the set-up - all these with the sounds of different children screaming and laughing with joy. All of these are quite impossible for parents to replicate in their cozy homes, not to mention, the scale of the playgrounds. With the government recently announcing the building of a huge playground right in the heartlands despite their space wariness, this proves the need for playgrounds to be retained as it adds so much value to the children growing up and allow them to explore and use their senses in ways that they would otherwise be rarely used.</p>	<p>Quality of argument (Depth and Scope): Key features of playgrounds are highlighted to develop the argument insightfully.</p> <p>Use of Illustrations: Example is updated and adequately brings out the significance of playgrounds, even in the eyes of the government.</p>
<p>Last but not least, playgrounds have an intrinsic nature of helping neighbours bond with others. Nowadays, even though everyone is packed next to one another, people are not interacting with one another as much. There could be up to 10 families on a singular level, which is a lot, but their interactions are getting fewer and fewer. With playgrounds, parents who bring their children downstairs can converse with other parents who do the same. And even if they do not, children are blessed with the gift of not knowing many social cues. Hence, making friends with other children seems almost instantaneous. Through this, their parents would get to know other parents, one way or another. This fosters friendships and more importantly, the community spirit amongst the neighbours. The space constraints could then be seen as a blessing in disguise, as families are closer to one another, mentally and physically. They would therefore not be troubled by distance, thus forging even tighter relationships amongst the neighbours and community, who were brought together by playgrounds in their neighbourhoods.</p>	<p>Relevance to Question Requirements: Topic sentence clearly addresses the question requirement.</p> <p>Quality of argument (Depth and Scope): Able to bring out the characteristics of young children to substantiate the argument. Good links are made to the condition of space constraints as well.</p> <p>Suggestions for Improvement: More characteristics of the Singapore society could be highlighted to develop the argument more insightfully (to explain why interactions are fewer and why there is a need to forge tighter bonds among neighbours and the community). Certain features of the playground (its location) could also be raised to explain why it is able to bring people together.</p>
<p>In conclusion, while the space issue is of much importance in Singapore, some sacrifices must be made. However, playgrounds are most definitely not a sacrifice, as it can and does provide us and the younger generations with many uses and benefits. Thus, playgrounds should still be retained, as the arguments against them simply hold no grounds.</p>	<p>A clear conclusion that summarises the key requirements of the question to show understanding of the question.</p>
<p>Marker's Overall Comment:</p> <p>Content</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> + A clear understanding of the condition 'space constraints' is present. Condition was tightly interwoven into the Arguments. + Good conceptual understanding of playgrounds. + Grounded in Singapore context. <p>Language</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> + Writing is clear, with some flair. <p>Esther Toh Mei Qi 21A302</p>	

8. Is it ever acceptable for social activists to break the law? (TMJC J2 MYE 2021)

Sample Essay	Marker's Comments
<p>'Woke'- being cognisant and informed on various pressing issues, be it social, political or economic, and fighting for the cause. This is the vernacular being thrown around in today's era. Thanks to the increased access to information because of the mighty Internet and social media, as well as increased social pressure to champion causes due to the shifting consciousness of society, the number of 'woke' activists has mushroomed. With the havoc they wreck to pursue their causes, which can result in the erosion of social order, are their actions still justifiable? When the cost of not breaking the law is miniscule compared to the benefits or when the law is unjust by modern standards, it should be acceptable.</p>	<p>Relevance to Question Requirements: Apt context of the current world is set to bring out the point of contention in the question. Stand is clear.</p>
<p>The severity of the problem these social activists are fighting for should be taken into consideration when deciding on which camp we decide to fall into. When considering what or who is at stake, whose protection is indisputable, activists should be allowed to fight for the cause, even if it means breaking the law, free from any social judgment. It could involve civilian lives or children that should transcend our need to abide by the rules. Amid the worsening Russian-Ukraine War, hackers, who deem themselves as ethical, are penetrating Russian systems to disrupt their war effort. They have done an array of things such as closing down train systems responsible for transporting ammunition for the Russian army and leaking secret conversations between generals who plan to silence Russian protestors who are against the war. The thousands of lives stolen away because of Russia's encroachment on Ukraine should be more than enough to justify the unlawful hacking being done to oppose the war. Therefore, in such a case where inherently important things such as lives are at stake, activists should be allowed to break the law.</p>	<p>Relevance to Question Requirements: Topic sentence clearly answers the question.</p> <p>Quality of argument (Depth and Scope): Argument is qualified well to provide a compelling reason for when laws can be broken by social activists.</p> <p>Use of Illustrations: Example used clearly brings out the point to show how it is justified for laws to be broken in order to save lives.</p> <p>Suggestions for Improvement: Perhaps other ways of contributing to the severity of the problem could be examined in the development of the point.</p>
<p>Another case where unlawful acts are warranted is if the law unjustly silences activists. Social activists are integral in a society as they shine light on ignored woes and difficulties. Their efforts help shape society to be desirable for everyone. When authorities hush their valuable voices, we as a society will struggle to advance. Reporters are, in many ways, social activists by the fact that they spread information and news to groups in society to help spark change in society. However, in many countries, censorship laws meddle with reporters' freedom to fairly and comprehensively report on issues. In China, social activists, including reporters, face jail time, among other punishments, for speaking out or supporting social causes which are not in tandem with the Party's beliefs and aims. There have been many cases of activists being locked up for years, as many as 15 years, without proper trial just for speaking out. In such situations where the people in power are clearly set on restricting the views of independent minds, which can have dire effects on society, an activist should, rightly so, break laws to shine light on important social causes.</p>	<p>Relevance to Question Requirements: Simple but clear and relevant topic sentence.</p> <p>Quality of argument (Depth and Scope): Sound justification is given to highlight the role and importance of social activists in the society. This helps to address the question on whether it is acceptable for them to break the law or not.</p> <p>Use of Illustrations: Example is clearly relevant.</p> <p>Suggestions for improvement: Could provide specific individuals or incidents of activists being unjustly imprisoned.</p>
<p>However, opponents may posit that these laws that tame social activists, should be abided by to maintain social order. When civil dissent, meant to make social causes noticed, reaches a point where calamity ensues on the whole society, it should not be acceptable for activists to champion their cause. Following the death of George Floyd, protestors, who were fighting to correct racial injustice that is prevalent in America and caused the death of an innocent man, filled the streets to make noise to raise</p>	<p>Relevance to Question Requirements: Valid opposing view is raised for consideration.</p> <p>Quality of argument (Depth and Scope): Rebuttal is sound and sensible. It directly counters the opposing view raised by</p>

<p>awareness on the age-old issue. However, chaos ensued when protestors looted shops and destroyed infrastructure to make a point. Although this may be extreme, deplorable acts like these can be testament to the urgency of the situation. They can help governments realise the severity of the problem and understand the general mood surrounding the problem. With international coverage due to the notoriety of the protests, such as the coverage on the Black Lives Matter protests, the government may feel pressured to finally correct the wrongs in society. Therefore, the social costs that come with activists eroding social order may not necessarily outweigh the benefits of doing so to make their causes known.</p>	<p>showing how the social costs of the erosion of social order may not always outweigh the benefits of creating chaos.</p> <p>Use of Illustrations: Pertinent and relevant details of the Black Lives Matter movement is aptly selected to highlight the chaos that ensued as a result of the protests.</p>
<p>Opponents may also disagree with such a position because they believe that doing so only shines a negative light on the issue. This may push people away from understanding the cause which hinders any progress in changing the problem being advocated by activists. However, this can be a conversation starter to get people talking about it and the cause will be able to gain traction among many. Many may choose to consider the merits of their cause and see past the unlawful acts done to bring the said cause to light. Thus the negative light shone may not be a significant problem if it generates enough positive noise on the issue.</p>	<p>Relevance to Question Requirements: A valid opposing view is raised.</p> <p>Quality of argument (Depth and Scope): An effective rebuttal that presents another perspective, highlighting how generating some noise on the issue could lead to the cause gaining traction.</p> <p>Suggestions for Improvement: Concrete examples could be provided to substantiate the points.</p>
<p>All that said, there is still hope that social activism and the law can exist harmoniously. If governments have the desire to learn from their opposers and proponents alike, and strive to achieve social goals laid out by social activists, which usually are an echo of the general populace, such a beautiful relationship between activism, law and governance can be moulded. That is the dream.</p>	<p>An effective conclusion that sums up the issue nicely with a sound suggestion.</p>
<p>Marker's Overall Comment:</p> <p>Content</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> + Well-written essay that presents a range of sensible and logical arguments. + Paragraphs assume a clear structure which makes reading the essay a breeze. +/- Can include more specific and concrete examples especially in the OV paragraphs to achieve a higher content mark. <p>Language</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> + Use of apt vocabulary and complex sentences throughout. <p>Afza Hadirah Binte Hassim 21S204</p>	