

# NAVIGATE

Issue #9

Eunoia Junior College  
English Department  
2021 General Paper

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# Navigate User Guide

## What is Navigate?

Navigate is a curated collection of essays and responses to the Application Question written by Eunoians like yourselves. In most cases, these pieces have been written under timed conditions, and except for a smidgen of grammatical polishing, they are left as they come. It is our hope that their raw edges, as much as their skilfully crafted facets, will serve as authentic and empowering learning resources. To help you discover these, the Navigate Team provides a preamble containing a broad overview of the strengths and flaws of each piece, as well as annotations to direct you to key features. What we hope you will take away from Navigate is not mere mimicry, but a deeper understanding of how good writing is crafted, and that you will make these skills your own.

## How do I use Navigate?

While your tutors may use some of these resources in class or direct you to them, much can also be gained from reading them independently. To get the most out of your independent reading, consider the guiding points below.

### What to read

- Not everything! Save time for reading your other packages, the news and opinion articles.
- Often it is a good idea to read the essays for the questions which you have attempted or would potentially attempt.
- Look at the 'Message from the 2021 GP Team' for a guide on the issue's key reads – it will point out interesting pieces, as well as our picks for pieces with especially strong qualities! Good introductions/conclusions, paragraph development, illustration, use of conceptual understanding, organisation of ideas and language use are some of the characteristics we point out.
- Scan the preambles for features or parts of writing that you struggle with or wish to strengthen your understanding of.
- The ones which look interesting!

### How to read

- Read the preamble before you read any text, because it will point out key strengths and areas for improvement that you should keep in mind as you read.
- Be aware of both macro and micro features of the text. You can read closely to notice the details, but you can also read to make sense of the bigger picture. Toggle between these different levels to recognise how the details fit together to make the argument effectively.
- Read actively and make annotations of your own. These can be of:
  - Writing strategies
  - Good ideas and examples
  - Argument development strategies
  - Structure and organisation

# Message from the 2021 GP Team

Dear Eunoians,

“A writer, I think, is someone who pays attention to the world.” - Susan Sontag

As true to fiction as it is to the sort of formal, practical writing that you do in GP, this quote conveys our hope that you write from a deeper awareness of the world we live in. In General Paper, we seek to not only expand your knowledge and understanding of the world that you will go out into, but also to develop the skills and capacities that will ready you for thoughtful, compassionate engagement with the issues faced today, whether that means simply to understand current events, or to go a few steps further to challenge ideas and shape the world you want to live in.

The good essays like the ones in this collection therefore often come from significant amounts of knowledge about the world and demonstrate deeper engagement with issues that matter. By paying attention to current affairs, reading widely, thinking conceptually and making connections between what they come to the writing task with and what the task demands of them, each presents a well-considered slice of the world that they know. Their strengths lie not only in knowing plenty, but also in how they have gained command of this knowledge to make fitting arguments.

Of particular note in this regard are the two essays by Sanjana from 21-O1 (p30 and 38), who translates her rich knowledge of social conflicts to insightful pieces written with a lot of conviction, as well as those contributed by Jovan from 20-O5 (p47) and Justine from 20-O1 (p58), both demonstrating the ability to incorporate their content knowledge in a manner that still ensures consistent relevance to the various keywords and demands of the questions they attempted.

When it comes to dealing with the key points of contention, Emily from 20-O4 (p53) handles this well in her response by unpacking the different facets of ‘individual responsibility’, ultimately shaping her essay around this. Additionally, Celest from 20-I4 (p70) reminds us of the value of successful bookending by not only referring to an apt quote at the start and end of her essay, but also altering this common saying so as to get her ultimate stance across convincingly.

With the arguments and the argumentation you gain as you read, reflect on and draw lessons from these essays, we hope that you will gain a better appreciation of and ability to write about the world’s complexities. We thank these writers and all the rest whose work features in Navigate both for their commendable work and their generosity in sharing their writing - and thus learning - with us all.

All the best,

Your GP Teachers ♥♥

# List of Essays and AQs

## 2021 JC1 MID-YEAR EXAMINATIONS PAPER 1

- 1 Is idleness necessarily a bad thing?
  - Not represented
- 2 How useful is understanding the past in helping us solve current problems?
  - Lynette Hoh Shu Min, 21-O4
- 3 To what extent should governments consider the views of their citizens when making policies?
  - Not represented
- 4 How far are parks and green spaces a good use of public space and resources?
  - Not represented
- 5 'The use of social media to discuss important issues has brought about more problems than benefits.' Discuss.
  - Guillermo Caryl Kristine Co, 21-E6 (2 paragraphs)
  - Thio Yi Fang, 21-O4 (2 paragraphs)
  - Gianna Sun Tianqi, 21-U6
- 6 In your society, to what extent should young people care about the concerns of the elderly?
  - Not represented
- 7 Consider the view that democracy has lost its appeal in today's world.
  - Ashley Lay, 21-O1
- 8 'Developing values, not the intellect, should be the main purpose of education.' Discuss.
  - Tiffany Lim Xin Hui, 21-E3
- 9 How far does tradition play a role in shaping national identity in your society?
  - Not represented
- 10 'Technology has developed faster than our ability to use it well.' Do you agree?
  - Mabel Sim, 21-I3 (1 paragraph)
  - He Yufan, 21-I3
  - Claire Tan, 21-E3
  - Ong Zhi Yuan Tenor, 21-U6 (1 paragraph)
- 11 Is ignoring our differences the solution to racial inequality?
  - Sanjana Rajan, 21-O1
- 12 How far do richer countries have an obligation to help poorer countries in times of crisis?
  - Bernice Lim, 21-E4

## 2021 JC1 MID-YEAR EXAMINATIONS PAPER 2 - AQ

- Response 1 - Isabelle Looi, 21-E3
- Response 2 - Xavier Hui, 21-O5

## 2021 JC1 TIMED PRACTICES

### **Essays: Term 2 Timed Assignment Paper 1 [2010 A Level Examination]**

4 'The person who dies rich dies disgraced.' Discuss.

- Sanjana Rajan, 21-O1

8 How effective are international efforts to ease the problem of global hunger?

- Desiree Soh, 21-O1

### **AQ: Term 2 Timed Assignment Paper 2 [2010 A Level Examination]**

- Response 1 - Angelica Koh, 21-A4
- Response 2 - Kyran Narayanan, 21-I2

## 2021 JC2 MID-YEAR EXAMINATIONS PAPER 1

- 1 'The world needs imagination now more than ever.' How far do you agree?
  - Not represented
- 2 In your society, to what extent is there a need for greater diversity in political leadership?
  - Lim Junheng, Jovan, 20-O5
  - Patrice Santiago, 20-E6
  - Fong Hiu Tung Jacqueline, 20-O5
- 3 'Individuals are responsible for their own health.' How far do you agree?
  - Emily Young, 20-O4
- 4 Examine the importance of the media in shaping identity in today's world.
  - Justine Koh, 20-O1
  - Yanisa Kee, 20-O5
- 5 Given the benefits of remote work, is it still desirable for people to gather in physical spaces for work?
  - Not represented
- 6 Assess the view that style matters more than substance in the modern world.
  - Not represented
- 7 Evaluate the claim that women can be as highly valued as men in the workplace.
  - Ashley Soo, 20-U5
- 8 'The law is unable to keep pace with technology.' How far do you agree?
  - Not represented
- 9 In times of economic hardship, do the Arts still matter?
  - Not represented
- 10 'Not enough is being done to tackle climate change.' How true is this of your society?
  - Amanda Lim, 20-O1
- 11 'Dishonesty can never be justified.' Discuss.
  - Not represented
- 12 Consider the view that the study of history is pointless.
  - Nicole Chao, 20-U5
  - Ang May Syi, 20-O4

## 2021 JC2 TIMED PRACTICE (2013 A LEVEL P1)

- 1        'The world would be a better place if more political leaders were women.' What is your view?
- Celest So, 20-I4
  - Tania Ho Kaye Wee, 20-E3
  - Jennifer Tan, 20-O4
- 6        How important is it to save plant and animal species which are in danger of extinction?
- John Francis, 20-E3



# Essays: 2021 JC1 Mid-Year Examinations

## 2 How useful is understanding the past in helping us solve current problems?

*A fully focused and largely well-executed response that shows a strong awareness of the key arguments in this point of contention. Each paragraph has been coherently developed and the selection and development of illustration are largely well-managed, though in a few cases even stronger evidence can be furnished. It is balanced with the acknowledgement of a key opposing view. There are occasional hints of deeper insight, but also opportunities for further development of ideas that would have elevated the response by making it more nuanced and thoughtful: what it means to understand the past could be further examined, as this will lend itself to consideration of varying depths of understanding and their effects on solving problems. Some of the further difficulties with translating lessons from history into practical solutions, beyond just their theoretical value can also be examined. In sum, this response is notable for its strong focus on the point of contention and good bones, and it presents much potential for further thought into the complexities of the issue. As it has been conducted in clear, succinct writing, this response is highly readable, and would be more so if the balance had been more consistently signposted.*

Many historians and ordinary people alike have often used the phrase 'History repeats itself'. Despite this common statement, some argue that we are so disconnected from the humans of our past that we should never apply our evaluation of the past to solve problems in our society today. Thus, they believe that the differences in context between the past and the present render history useless when applied to modern problems. However, considering the utility of history in uncovering the roots of current problems, providing valuable insight into how problems were solved and bringing light to the changes and continuities of the beliefs and values of humans, I believe that understanding the past is useful in helping us solve current problems to a large extent.

Taps on a relevant saying to introduce the issue. This shows some awareness of the context for the issue, though the context could also be more current instead of being general or broad

Good understanding of the point of contention demonstrated

Firstly, understanding the past is critical to uncovering the roots of modern problems in today's society, which ignites change when problems are better understood. This is due to the fact that the majority of problems in our society are developed over a long period of time before they are finally surfaced and dealt with. These problems include structural barriers that disenfranchised communities faced due to decades of systemic oppression, that require an understanding of their history of oppression in order for the weight of their suffering to be felt. For example, the #BlackLivesMatter movement is premised on the discrimination against African Americans since the moment they entered America as slaves centuries ago. Central to this movement is the idea that the opposition that African Americans face is so deeply entrenched in society due to its long history, and therefore change needs to be made. In this case, the understanding of post oppression has been key to galvanising the movement and increasing the number of people calling for change to eradicate systems that are discriminatory in nature. Thus, understanding the past is critical to allowing people to feel the weight and depth of current problems, which motivates people to call for solutions to these problems, creating positive change.

Good topic sentence that makes a key judgement on usefulness and clarifies the effect it has on solving problems

Choice of example effectively illustrates the deep historical roots of a significant modern problem. It is insightfully developed, but could also point out that this historical knowledge provides powerful driving forces in the forms of appeals to a deeper sense of justice for the long-standing inequality endured as well as an appreciation of the momentousness of the movement

Relevant point. More



	recognition of the historical roots of other problems or using more examples would extend the applicability of this argument beyond this specific problem
<p>Secondly, analysing how problems were solved in the past can also be applied to modern solutions. There are similarities between the problems of the past and present problems which thus allows modern solutions to benefit from successful solutions in the past. For example, the Chinese emperor in the Qin Dynasty managed to unify China - an impressive feat due to how vast the empire of China was - through the introduction of a standardised, nationwide language. This method has been used in many countries today in an effort to create a national identity among diverse groups of people. In Singapore, emphasis placed in English after independence was not only used to allow Singapore to be competitive on a global scale, but was also used to create national identity in a very racially diverse country. These examples suggest that solutions of the past are still applicable to society even centuries later and problems of social division are similar. Thus, understanding past solutions is extremely useful in the creation of successful solutions to today's problems as there are similarities between problems of the past and current problems.</p>	<p>Explanations can be deepened: Why are there similarities in context? The enduring nature of human society, for instance, could be considered</p> <p>Though the modern solutions here are not clearly influenced by an understanding of the past, the examples do show how past strategies can still be used today. However, it would be even better if the examples could show knowledge of the past being actually applied to solving current problems</p>
<p>Some may argue that the context of the past is so different from today's context that understanding the past is useless. This is as the beliefs, priorities and values of society have evolved over time due to the changes in circumstances and environments. For example, in today's age, many developed societies worry more about human rights and democratic ideals as compared to societies in the past whose primary problems were related to survival. While humans in the past may have resorted to animal sacrifices and religious activities to solve problems of low crop yield from a drought, humans in the present utilise technology to alleviate these problems. The difference in the standard of living in the past and present as well as the technology, bureaucratic processes and power that citizens hold over their governments result in past problems and solutions being rarely applicable to today's context. Thus, understanding the past is rarely useful in analysing and solving problems in today's context as the actions, beliefs and values of the stakeholders involved in societies have changed significantly.</p>	<p>Relevant and important opposing perspective</p> <p>Note that societies of the past did also worry about governance - power and influence are quite central to human society</p> <p>Good demonstration of the differences</p> <p>Could have maintained distance from this view more consistently to avoid contradictions with the earlier points, but it is otherwise quite effective</p>
<p>However, it is important to note that there are beliefs and values that have been preserved over time, thus understanding the past gives us insight into the significance of different values to humans which help shape potential solutions for current problems. A value that has remained constant throughout history is the regard towards life as the most valuable thing that a human being can possess. The loss of life both in the past and present has often been deemed as one of the worst kinds of punishment to receive. This understanding of the sanctity of human life and its importance is only truly understood through noting its constant presence throughout history. This principle is used in solving current issues within the justice system on what kinds of crimes warrant a death penalty, or in some cases, the complete abolishment of a death penalty in the justice system. Hence, it is through an understanding of</p>	<p>Relevant rebuttal that responds directly to the opposing perspective</p> <p>Not a particularly convincing current problem, as most standards were decided in the past and are only occasionally renegotiated today</p> <p>Given that this value itself has endured, it's not clear that we have to look to the past to</p>

<p>the past that policymakers can identify the principles that should guide their decision-making processes, as the values that have withstood the test of time have proved their importance. Thus, evaluation of the past is useful in shaping solutions to modern problems as it can highlight what humans deem valuable.</p>	<p>understand the sanctity of life. Better examples can be found to illustrate the point</p> <p>An attractive idea, but not compellingly argued due to weaknesses in the reasons and illustration</p>
<p>In conclusion, humanity can rarely be understood without a proper evaluation of history. This is as many human actions and systems have their roots deeply entrenched in the past. Thus, an understanding of the past is crucial to gaining insight on the origins of modern problems, past successful policies and important principles that are key in developing successful solutions to problems. Thus, it is my belief that understanding the past is critical to solving current problems, and will continue to be important even in the future.</p> <p>(Lynette Hoh Shu Min, 21-04)</p>	<p>Coherent summary of the key points</p>

## 5 'The use of social media to discuss important issues has brought about more problems than benefits.' Discuss.

<p><i>This pair of paragraphs demonstrates a commonly raised problem brought about by the use of social media and a less-commonly attempted relevant rebuttal to it. Together, they show some in-depth awareness of how features of social media can promote real, harmful effects, as well as how our recognition of these effects have allowed for them to be addressed by the companies that run these social media platforms. While it seemed to be commonly assumed by students who attempted this question that social media is a lawless land where people can express anything they wish with little consequence, the fact is that there is regulation of various kinds that can be good to acknowledge. These two paragraphs are quite detailed in their understanding, though they can be tied more closely to the question requirements through stronger links as well as greater foregrounding of the effect of discussions specifically on such platforms, which the first paragraph here acknowledges less than the second.</i></p>	
<p>A problem that may be brought up is that social media allows for extremist content to exist, culminating in real life harms. Social media algorithms feed people content that they like in order to keep users on the [applications] longer, enabling social media companies to gain more through advertising revenue. This often results in echo chambers forming. The confirmation bias of people will make them only want to view content aligning with their current political beliefs. When social media creates echo chambers, people do not hear dissenting voices and only get fed content that validates their current beliefs, This often results in polarisation, where for example people who were right-leaning at first, due to the validation of their beliefs, get pushed further and further to the right [of the political spectrum]. Certain false, harmful narratives are then able to proliferate almost unchecked, culminating in real-life actions. The Capitol insurgency [in the US] in early January 2021 is the culmination of weeks of narratives like “the election was stolen” proliferating on social media rapidly, and by Donald Trump making such messages on every platform possible. The Capitol insurgency resulted in many injuries and even deaths. The discussion of important issues on</p>	<p>Point shows a good understanding of social media, and it is supported with a relevant example</p> <p>Can emphasise the effects of discussion and how some people are misled into thinking that the views that they encounter are</p>

social media has allowed algorithms to place people in echo chambers based on that, where the discussions may create unexpected harm to others.	representative of most people's views
<p>However, this harm has been mitigated. Firstly, social media companies have community guidelines, and regularly remove content accordingly, including extremist content. Furthermore, other companies, motivated by corporate social responsibility (CSR), have taken steps to combat the formation of echo chambers. Youtube is a site that enables people to watch videos about issues, and allows for discussions on lively comment sections. Youtube is used by many to spread information, from more reputable sources like Vox, to politically motivated sources like the Prager University. Youtube [has] said that their algorithm now will recommend content that is closer to the middle of the political spectrum, along with the other recommendations users get that are more aligned with their current, more extreme views. This shows that some social media corporations are making the move to facilitate better discourse that is not simply one-sided.</p> <p>(Guillermo Caryl Kristine Co, 21-E6)</p>	<p>Good, relevant rebuttal that is supported with an appropriate example</p> <p>Link to the question should be made more clearly at the end of the paragraph</p>

## 5 'The use of social media to discuss important issues has brought about more problems than benefits.' Discuss.

<p><i>These two paragraphs raise interesting and often detailed points in response to the question. They rigorously show an uncommon awareness of the features of social media and how these features shape the way users interact with each other, and how they conduct their discussions of important issues online to the benefit of society. Though these points are not always directly comparative of the problems and benefits, the writer has elected to address the problems and benefits separately before evaluating them later on, outside of these two paragraphs. This is a possible strategy, but it often makes for less robust comparisons. A strategy that is often more effective is to consistently address the problems and benefits that stem from the same feature/characteristic of social media use, which is briefly attempted in the second body paragraph reproduced here, though with limited success.</i></p>	
<p>One benefit of social media as a platform of discourse includes the quick and easy way to upload evidence for an issue, sparking discussion and bringing more pieces of the truth to light. This is only possible due to the ease of accessibility that social media enjoys. For example, the video of George Floyd's murder was published on social media, instead of [being] forwarded to major news outlets or the police force. Why? Because social media is accessible, and it allows people to speak up against the government, or point out flaws in the system. If this footage was passed over to the government or major news outlets, would it have [had] as big of a splash as it did? Would it have inspired such a large movement like the Black Lives Matter movement? Through social media, anyone can give evidence, and anyone can show what is hidden that should be addressed. This evidence can then spark discussion, spreading to millions worldwide, and bringing the issue into the spotlight, where it deserves to be. This would not have been possible without the usage of social media. The atmosphere of discussion already created beforehand allows for this evidence to have [a] major impact, bringing a benefit to society.</p>	<p>Instead of rhetorical or speculative questions here, it could be argued that social media is a platform that comes naturally to mind for a lot of people when they want to reach a wider audience, especially if they have reason to mistrust existing authorities and institutions to enact justice. It is insightful to note that the #power that social media puts in users' hands to control what they want to reach people cannot be underestimated</p> <p>While not explicitly about discussion, this point has at least been</p>



	<p>tied to it. It shows awareness of usage habits of social media and how it enables some benefits</p>
<p>Another benefit would be the increased speed of spreading information and awareness of issues. Social media encourages users to connect, and this connection brings information on issues that they may never have heard of before. On Twitter, Instagram, Reddit and many other social media platforms, a “trending” page or something equivalent in function exists. This page shows hot topics that are being mentioned across [a user’s] set country, and many times heavily discussed political or global issues exist there. For example, hashtags with regards to the current Myanmar crisis [have] been a nigh-permanent fixture on Singapore’s trending page on Twitter. People who are unaware of this hashtag would be filled [with] curiosity, clicking [on it] and learning more of the current issue. Even if they do not use this function, many of these users use social media as a way of getting more content [on] their interests, be it fan-made or official. [Many fan creators] are actively involved in various discussions or information posts, or at least actively engaged with it. Due to how most social media [platforms’] algorithms work, the platform will show the content to the creator’s followers, spreading information. This captures the attention of many users, educating them and bringing them into the discussion. This may also serve as a launching pad for actions that go beyond social media and into the real world. For example, Singapore’s campaign for [Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transsexual (LGBT)] rights, Pink Dot, has its roots in social media. Many LGBT individuals find Pink Dot through social media, and turn up to the in-person activities, such as the yearly gathering in Hong Lim Park. Pink Dot has used its platform and its event at Hong Lim Park to advocate for LGBT rights, including a massive light-up rally to repeal [Section] 377a. This law essentially [criminalises] homosexuality for males, and has quickly become the symbol for LGBT discrimination in Singapore. Discussions held on social media catapulted this information into the eyes and hearts of many, bringing it into people’s awareness and calling them to action, bringing change to their community. However, I do concede that this force may not be used for good. This quick spread of information allows for misinformation to slip in unnoticed, obscuring the facts and causing confusion. One prominent example is Russia using fake news to interfere in the United States’ 2016 election. Although this can be combated by increased vigilance, it is impossible to expect that no one will fall victim to this, which is a problem.</p> <p>(Thio Yi Fang, 21-04)</p>	<p>Why this is a benefit of using social media to discuss important issues could be clarified, as other sorts of discussions, even offline, can also start such events. Links to social media’s ability to host discussions that spread such info across time and space could be stronger</p> <p>Slightly awkward for this acknowledgement of the problems stemming from social media’s wide reach to be raised at the end of an already long paragraph, but it does enable a comparison by raising a common concern. How it is related to discussions, however, could be emphasised</p> <p>A layered consideration of how social media spreads awareness exceptionally well, with strong awareness of some of its relevant features and user habits. Good point</p>

## 5 ‘The use of social media to discuss important issues has brought about more problems than benefits.’ Discuss.

*In this relevant, nuanced and evaluative response, there is an in-depth understanding shown of how the psychology of social media users along with the structural characteristics of social media platforms have led to certain deleterious effects. Overall, it features a largely coherent organisation of points and effective illustration, though there are some alignment issues in body paragraphs 1 and 2. It is fully focused, with consistently clear*

*topic sentences that address the question consistently, though there is also the habit of ending each paragraph with the examples, in effect leaving out the L in PEEL. It is strongly recommended that each paragraph should end with a summing up or reiteration of the case for that paragraph with a linking statement that brings attention back to the point of contention, rather than giving the impression that the examples themselves are central or the final word. Finally, as the question is comparative in nature, a more consistent comparison within each paragraph rather than decoupling the comparison between pros and cons, would be more effective and lead to a stronger, more balanced argument when balance points are given significant airtime and development.*

With the advent of the World Wide Web in the 1990s, paving the way for the development and proliferation of social media in the subsequent years, we now live in times where everyone can be a publisher of their opinions on the Internet. Opinions on important issues the likes of politics and social justice used to only be the domain of politicians, public figures and various advocates. Presently, the democratisation of social media has opened up the playing field of discussing these topics and issues to the common man. These discussions have brought up many notions worthy of credit, however, it is my opinion that discussing these important themes can cause more harm than the benefits it can potentially bring.

Shows awareness of backdrop of issue, including the openness to participation in such discussions precipitated by the rise of social media

As the question is an invitation to discuss what has already happened, not so much what could possibly happen, the focus in the thesis should be more squarely and clearly on the real state of affairs, including the reasons for the stand taken

Firstly, the structure and architecture of many social media sites is constructed in a way that allows for echo chambers to form which is detrimental to the facilitation of constructive discourse. In a bid to monopolise the attention of users, social media developers create and implement algorithms that track and analyse user behaviour and habits. Now privy to the predispositions and mindsets of users, the sites then continue to recommend and prioritize content for them that is in line with and reinforces their way of thinking. Though benign if the genre of content consumed is superficial and trivial, this becomes an issue if the topic of concern is one of importance and especially if the mindset of these users are bigoted. This is unhealthy for insightful discussions to take place as often, one would only be exposed to one side of an issue, one end of a spectrum and one would likely come to conclusions that are biased and myopic. An extreme example of the manifestation of the problems this causes would be the Christchurch shooting which occurred in 2020. The perpetrator was a part of multiple social media sites and forum groups that post Islamophobic content causing him to be radicalised and constantly reinforced his problematic and prejudiced views, ultimately culminating in a tragedy that caused the loss of many innocent lives.

Good topic sentence

Nuanced

This example is not well aligned to the echo chamber-inducing algorithms of social media mentioned. The discussion of important issues could be more clearly explained or illustrated in the example

Could link back to the point instead of leaving the reader on the example

Social media has also brought upon this phenomenon of cancel culture, especially apparent in the discussion of important issues, leading to discourse that becomes increasingly one-sided, rendering such discussions ineffective. With a large proportion of social media users being of younger ages, a large part of the online population hold views that are considered more liberal. As such, when one, especially a public figure, opines something on social media that is deemed politically incorrect, it is likely that they would be met with a legion of "Social Justice

This problem overlaps with that in the previous paragraph. Cancel culture leads to antagonism and vilification and can destroy lives



<p>Warriors”, condemning their stance and sometimes even boycotting them. This thought-policing has led to many being afraid to publicly express their opinions on important issues for fear of being “cancelled”. Ultimately, this undermines the entire purpose of discourse which is for people of differing perspectives to come together to understand each other and the reasons why they hold such views. If one is silenced even before speaking up out of fear of condemnation for not conforming to a certain set of notions, it renders social media an unsuitable platform for insightful discussions. An example is the author of the famous book series <i>Harry Potter</i>, JK Rowling. A few years ago, the once widely known and loved author published her views regarding transgender people which is often deemed a sensitive topic. A prominent population of the online community was quick to call her out for her questionable and biased views against transgender people, condemning her which has caused her to lose a lot of popularity among fans and general public alike.</p>	<p>Clear explanation of the phenomenon and some of its effects</p> <p>The point about social media being an injurious platform that can cause harm to careers / reputation rather than just leading to one-sided views is a distinct idea that could have been recognised in the topic sentence</p> <p>Consider if this is really the concern, as it seems relatively insignificant in the broader scheme of things. Issues such as the fairness of mob justice would be more valuable to the question</p>
<p>Some may argue that the accessibility of social media has allowed for discourse to happen on a larger scale than ever before, giving a platform to the layman to advocate and raise awareness for causes they are passionate about. The discussion of important issues on a grassroots level has led to many commendable ground up initiatives. The #MeToo movement is a prime example of this, where discussions about sexual harassment on social media led to a large scale movement advocating for women’s rights and bringing people’s attention to the pertinent but often taboo subject of sexual harassment.</p>	<p>Good. However, balance can be more fairly developed and illustrated in proportion to other supporting paragraphs</p>
<p>However, it is important to note that although there are many instances where discussions on social media developed into positive outcomes, we can increasingly observe instances where such discussions become hollow and meaningless, sometimes even causing more harm. “Slacktivism” and performative activism are terms often used to describe actions of advocacy that did not quite seem to bring about tangible change. In an effort to do something to benefit the causes and communities one has the intention to help, one would merely repost something on social media or sign a petition which sometimes does not help at all. An example of this would be the #BlackOutTuesday fiasco where in an attempt to display their solidarity for the victim of police brutality and racism in America, George Floyd, many social media users took to sharing a photo of a black square with the hashtag #BlackOutTuesday. Ultimately it was counterproductive as it only drowned out more meaningful posts advocating for the end of police brutality and racism. Those who engage in such futile acts of advocacy are guilty of luring themselves into a false sense of moral righteousness, thinking that they did something to help a cause but in fact their actions bear little real significance.</p>	<p>Relevant response to the opposing perspective, but why there is a rising trend of this can be expanded on</p> <p>Well-illustrated and linked to the important handles in the question</p>
<p>All in all, although [the] rightful usage [of social media] can lead to insightful discussions if its users are discerning enough [...] Social media is a great platform for connecting with friends and family as well as a platform for entertainment and its rightful usage can lead to insightful discussions if its users are discerning enough. However, many of its features were not created with the discussion of important issues in mind and by doing so will often cause more harm than good.</p>	<p>Conclusion ought to reiterate the stand, key arguments including the opposing perspective and align with the thesis. It does not do that here</p>



(Gianna Sun Tianqi, 21-U6)

## 7 Consider the view that democracy has lost its appeal in today's world.

*This response is a strong effort with a consistent focus on the point of contention throughout. There is a good underlying understanding of what makes democracy appealing, and current knowledge on why its appeal seems to have been threatened. Illustrations are utilised throughout, though in the first two body paragraphs these illustrations could have been more successfully unpacked: to provide an objective assessment of the failures of such elected leaders rather than judging based on their ideologies, and to widen the scope of consideration such that the flaws of individual systems are not roughly applied to democracy as a whole. In the last body paragraph, the point that democracy has not lost its appeal can also be driven home by returning to the democratic ideals that are so appealing, especially in contrast to authoritarianism. On the whole, the response achieves decent success in answering the question and shows a level of thoughtfulness, with its main flaw being some over-generalisations based on an unrepresentative subset of the world's democracies.*

Since the fall of the Soviet Union, it has been agreed upon that the United States—and by extension democracy—is victorious. However, since the fall of the Soviet Union, much about the nature of democracy today has changed. Although democracy was once considered the ideology of the free and a symbol of civil liberties, democracy today seems to have lost its sparkle. Increasingly, populations have begun to be disillusioned with democracy, thus we ask ourselves: has democracy lost its appeal in contemporary society? Examining today's society, we see how democracy has become less popular amongst individuals as the world has seen ineffectual leadership in democracies, and contemporary democracy has been reduced to facades. However, we must acknowledge that democracy is still regarded as better than other forms of governance. Thus, although democracy has lost some of its appeal, it has not totally become unpopular.

Good historical awareness of the appeal of democracy, but could unpack this appeal slightly further to strengthen the concept of democracy here

Good contextual awareness; understanding of the point of contention appears is spot on

That being said, many critics of democracy have emerged due to recent elections of several right-wing populists, arguing that democracy has failed as democratic politicians are incapable of instituting suitable policies to benefit their populations. Today, we see a growing pattern — the rise of right-wing populist figures who, throughout their terms, have demonstrated their lack of real capability as leaders and instead spew rhetoric in order to attribute their own incapacities to others. These leaders are all products of democracy, as they are elected officials. As such, many pessimists have cited the rise of such politicians as reasons that democracy has failed in its duty to elect suitable politicians, thus losing faith in democracy. For instance, Brazil is helmed by Jair Bolsonaro, who was elected as a right-wing populist widely acknowledged to be anti-LGBT (Lesbians, Gays, Bisexuals, Transgenders) and islamophobic in Brazillian politics. His failures can be clearly pointed out in his mismanagement of the Amazon, arguably the most important rainforest in the world. Not only was he unable to meet expectations to control the wildfires, he also put blame on indigenous peoples and continued to promote business practices in the Amazon, including burning parts of it down to make way for agriculture by large companies. The election of Bolsonaro is a stunning case of the failures of democracy and its vulnerability to populism, leading to the rise of ineffectual leaders. Thus, democracy today has slowly become, in the eyes of critics, less attractive because more often do we see how democracy is unable to put actually capable leaders in charge. Moreover, we

TS shows awareness of current events

Such an assertion needs more substantiation to address whether they are all entirely devoid of capability, and whether they are truly incapable, or simply disliked

Not clear how signalling his views helps to answer the question - connections should be made explicit

Populism may not be inherently problematic, so why it means democracy is losing its appeal should be further unpacked: if he fulfils the wishes of those who elected him, is he really incapable?



<p>see the weakening of democracy not only in Brazil, but also the United States of America (USA), the symbol and ultimate driver of democracy. The election of Trump and his term again reveal that <b>democracy is weakening</b>. Trump was yet another politician elected due to his far-right beliefs, including those linked to homophobia, xenophobia, racism and even sexism. His time in office further exhibits his ineffectual leadership. Pandering to Southern states which were reliant on coal for employment, he instituted the Affordable Clean Energy Act as a direct counter to Obama's previous efforts which aimed at reducing carbon emissions. His term was largely motivated by right-wing beliefs and hate, even ending the January 6th insurrection incident. Trump's election is thus another example of questionable leaders gaining influence in democracies, using his time in office to spew rhetoric of hatred instead of resurrecting the economy as he promised. Furthermore, the fact that the USA fell to his populist ways also reveals the ever-damning weakness of democracy that individuals choose their leaders. <b>Individuals have feelings. They are obliged to choose leaders that speak most to them, whether such leaders are capable or not.</b> Thus, especially when a record number of populist politicians are gaining power in democracies, critics are starting to doubt the value of democracy.</p>	<p>How this 'weakening' of democracy affects the loss of appeal of democracy is not straightforward and could be clarified</p> <p>How feelings featured in the elections of these leaders could be better explained</p> <p>The broad idea here is valid, but the execution could emphasise how their leadership has been <b>objectively</b> bad for the countries that elected them, rather than largely suggesting that just holding and acting on beliefs on the right of the political spectrum make them incapable. Do not assume that the reader has similar views on their political beliefs and capability; instead, provide evidence for your beliefs</p>
<p>Moreover, democracy has become less popular today as it has failed in its most fundamental mission of representing the people. Instead, contemporary democracy has come to represent the interests of only a few powerful individuals, leading to disillusionment in democracy. The appeal of democracy is rooted in its ability to give regular people a voice. However, democracy today has slowly lost its ability to do so. Instead, we hear the voices of the rich and powerful more than the ordinary citizen. In the landmark Citizens United Supreme Court decision in the US, it was decided that organisations such as Citizens United and their activities are permitted. Citizens United allows ultra-rich individuals to donate to non-profit [organisations] of their choice and earn tax rebates while doing so. Many at times, such nonprofits include right libertarian think tanks which will then help billionaires circulate ideas such as trickle down economics in the political sphere, which then gives them a bigger say in politics to have policies that favour their businesses. Thus, rich and powerful individuals are more likely to have their voices heard than a regular Joe, leading to a disparity between the rich and the poor in terms of their involvement in democracy. This goes against the very fundamentals of democracy, which allows every single citizen an equal vote and say in politics and the policies that affect them. Moreover, this tendency to give richer individuals a bigger say in politics is also seen in the successful nomination of Betsy DeVos as US Secretary for Education, despite having absolutely no experience as an educator and having attended private schools her whole life. She is undoubtedly an unsuitable candidate for the job, but was only able to be appointed due to her family's contributions to many Republican politicians over many years. Thus, her appointment is an example of elitism and favouring the rich in politics as she was then able to institute policies in the Education Department that were favourable to her family and their businesses. <b>This again shows how contemporary democracy has shifted away from its original ideals, and instead has morphed into a monster of inequality.</b> Thus, it is natural that people start moving away from democracy. Therefore,</p>	<p>Relevant TS, but can be more closely tied to today's world: Why is this a modern development?</p> <p>Example could have been more helpful with more detail/ context</p> <p>Good awareness of how the ideals of democracy have been sidelined, though this is a US-centric point</p> <p>Seems quite extreme a judgement, especially as this was only based on examples from the US, when the US model of democracy may not represent democracy everywhere</p> <p>A valid consideration showing deeper knowledge of a particular failure of democracy, but the</p>



<p>today's democracy has been reduced to a facade that individuals have begun to doubt the value of, leading to disillusionment in democracy.</p>	<p>point seems restricted to the US</p>
<p>However, the reduction in attraction towards democracy is not towards the notion of democracy itself, but rather democracy in its state today. All around the world, people are still extremely supportive of democracy, especially when looking at its opposition, authoritarianism.</p>	<p>Good awareness that the question is not just whether democracy is liked, as the absence of democracy will mean that some other political system is in place. Nuanced distinction between the ideal of democracy and its imperfect manifestations today</p> <p>No need for an awkward transition paragraph. This can be followed immediately by the next idea</p>
<p>Democracy today is actually growing in popularity, which can be seen from the rejection of authoritarianism all around the world. Today's world has become increasingly liberalised, a trait which many have attributed to the increase in education levels and social media. Thus, in fact, more people than ever are in support of democracy, as seen in the denouncement of authoritarian leaders and growing desire for liberalisation. In the wake of The Washington Post journalist Khashoggi's assassination, many have voiced their concern. Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed Bin Salman (MBS) was once hailed as a much needed reformer, yet right after the news of the assassination, many countries including Finland and Denmark have condemned him, [with] both countries [announcing] that they will halt arm sales to the Kingdom. The killing of Khashoggi is seen as a direct opposition to free speech and a symbol of authoritarianism, thus opposition to it would be seen as being in support of democracy. The fact that countries would go as far as to halt arms deals which are highly profitable <b>reveal the unwavering support that democracy has</b>, thus democracy has never lost its appeal. This is also seen in the anti-extradition bill protests in Hong Kong which call for increase in democratisation and free speech in the face of increased control from Beijing. The support from the United Kingdom, and the USA as well as how the protests went on despite reports of police brutality show the determination in support of democracy, thus it will be ridiculous to claim that democracy is unpopular. As such, when democracy is placed in opposition to authoritarianism, it is obvious that it is actually becoming more fiercely defended than ever, showing that democracy has not lost its appeal, but has instead become so desirable that people would risk their lives to obtain it.</p>	<p>While there may be some link to the value of democracy, it is a stretch to view their actions as being in clear support of democracy; it could merely be sanctions on ethical grounds</p> <p>Good argument made with relevant examples and useful relevance to the modern context of increased information, though this could have been emphasised for a stronger argument</p>
<p>In conclusion, although democracy may have lost its appeal amongst contemporary society because it lacks the ability to appoint suitable leaders and has in some cases been reduced to a mere facade, democracy has not lost its appeal. Democracy is in fact more fiercely protected than ever, and especially when seen in contrast to authoritarianism, is over-popular. Thus, democracy has not lost its appeal in today's world. After about 30 years since the end of the cold war, democracy still seems triumphant.</p> <p><i>(Ashley Lay, 21-01)</i></p>	<p>This is an extreme statement, as there are many other functioning democracies; the statement can be toned down to more accurately reflect the state of the world</p> <p>There is an attempt to bookend the essay, but it is an abrupt and</p>

**8      ‘Developing values, not the intellect, should be the main purpose of education.’  
Discuss.**

*This competent response has some notable strengths: it consistently seeks to compare the pros and cons of developing intellect and developing values, and conducts good discussion about why developing values is particularly important in today’s context. Combined with some good understanding of what the education system exists to do, it shows a bigger-picture awareness of how current developments may be shaping education today. The arguments made are therefore fairly cognisant of the issue. However, they can often be better executed with illustrations that relate more clearly to what education systems are doing, rather than only to other phenomena in society that suggest the importance of values, as the question is fundamentally about education.*

Nelson Mandela once said, “Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world.” The sentiments of this quote ring true today. With an increasing number of nations realising the value of educating their population in driving the economy and for the overall well-being of their citizens, coupled with literacy rates rising globally, the question of education’s necessity has been refocused, highlighting a new concern: what is the key function of education? It is widely agreed that the main purpose and outcomes of education are to provide an avenue to stimulate the minds of the young, with the ultimate intention of raising a generation of individuals who will be able to contribute meaningfully to society, economically or otherwise. Some believe that in order to fulfil this purpose, education ought to be geared towards developing the intellect and cognitive abilities of the young, while others argue that instilling and developing the right values and character in an individual should be education’s main function. I opine that the changing nature of our social and economic landscapes indicate that developing one’s values is highly important and education systems must place greater emphasis on moral education. However, this does not mean that developing one’s intellect is obsolete in the purpose of education as intellectual stimulation complements the cultivation of one’s morals, and vice versa. Therefore, the main purpose of education cannot be said to be the development of values or the stimulation of intellect, rather, it is a marriage of both that will truly fulfil the purpose of education.

Good, context-setting shows understanding of the relevant issues and current trends

Fairly broad understanding of education

Overall TS is quite clear and insightful. It takes a balanced perspective, but crucially not before acknowledging the need to compare the two purposes to arrive at the stand

Critics argue that developing one’s intellect should be the main purpose of education as it has the ability to tap into the potential of young minds and allow them to achieve great accomplishments in the future, or at least improve their own lives for the better. This school of thought believes that education is a gateway to improve one’s life and circumstance, which is achieved by training one’s intellectual capabilities and equipping one with empirical knowledge that will enable these young individuals to secure better employment, effectively improving the lives of the youth and generations to come. Indeed, it is true that the development of one’s intellect through structured curricula and access to a wealth of information in the form of textbooks or consulting teachers will undoubtedly produce a more inquisitive individual with a greater awareness of the world around them. Through thought provoking questions and a thirst to acquire more knowledge, schools effectively stimulate one’s intellectual development which will serve an individual well by improving employment

These examples seem to be about how developing the intellect could be an important social leveller. This is relevant to the point, but it can also be illustrated more broadly to demonstrate how intellectual



<p>prospects. For instance, research has shown that for every additional year of schooling, women's wages rise by 12%, illustrating how powerful the intellectual stimulation provided by education can be in boosting one's income, ultimately translating to better quality of life. This is also seen from the results of a recent survey by a San Francisco based company where it was revealed that those from the bottom fifth of the population in terms of wealth are six times more likely to reach the top fifth if they graduate from college. Moreover, critics believe that values can be taught at home, and teachers should not need to shoulder the additional responsibility of teaching and cultivating good values as they already deal with administrative duties on top of marking assignments and conducting lessons.</p>	<p>development allows students of all kinds, rather than just less advantaged ones, to gain access to better opportunities</p> <p>Valid extension to the point to address the importance of values in education, but the link to the argument could be drawn better</p>
<p>However, given the wealth of knowledge now made available anytime, anywhere by the internet, people are able to stimulate their minds and develop cognitive skills outside of educational institutions. By being able to find the answer to any question they may have with a quick Google search, students and other members of society are able to satisfy their quest for knowledge and develop their intellects when information can be so effortlessly accessed. Moreover, a positive feedback loop is created as people will be driven to ask more questions when the answers are so readily available to them[, h]ence allowing one's cognitive skills to be developed even outside formal institutions. Additionally, given that students spend a large proportion of their day and most of their childhood and adolescence in schools, the education they receive should also develop their values and morals, especially since years of psychological evidence [have] proven that we develop core values like empathy and a sense of justice, or moral compass, when we are young - during our schooling years. Therefore, developing values, not the intellect, should be emphasised and focused on in education as we can receive cognitive stimulation outside of school, and schooling years are the opportune time to teach and cultivate a student's values.</p>	<p>Links to the question could be more direct to clarify the discussion: Does that mean that the role of schools in developing intellect is now usurped?</p> <p>It is not very convincing to say that the role of schools has been completely usurped - can young people truly gain access to this wealth of knowledge online well without at least the foundational literacy, numeracy and self-effectiveness skills taught in schools?</p>
<p>Education's main purpose should be to develop values due to the changing employment landscape. With today's rising literacy rates and increasing number of degree holders in society, the job market is shifting its demands from academic qualifications to place a greater emphasis on the values and attitudes of applicants. With academic inflation, recruiters are now relying on an individual's character and attitude, which are largely influenced by one's values, to sieve out worthy applicants amongst the sea of other degree holders. Hence, one's values have now become a key differentiating factor in one's career prospects, which in turn affect one's future. Our moral compass and values we identify as core to us greatly impact and dictate how we perceive and respond to our surroundings and treat others. Essentially, our behaviour and attitude reflect our values. Increasingly, job interviews focus more on understanding and assessing an applicant's personality. Recruiters have achieved this through innovative ways such as observing whether applicants tuck in their chairs before leaving the room. Nowadays, a glowing resume of academic achievements and straight A [grade]s is insufficient to secure employment, as our values take precedence over our intellectual achievements. Therefore, since it is the goal of education to prepare students for the workforce, the purpose of education should shift towards developing every child's values and morals so as to prepare them for the dynamic, new criteria for employment today, while not discounting the importance of cognitive engagement.</p>	<p>Valid argument but it does not seem to completely discount the role of intellect, as there seems to be a basic level of academic achievement already expected before the distinction made by values come into play</p> <p>Example could be more well-chosen, as etiquette is not necessarily the same as values</p> <p>Point is based on some understanding of the changing context of society such that the discussion is current, but there are some gaps in the logic that need to be plugged</p>



<p>In addition, developing one's values alongside developing one's intellectual capabilities is crucial and should be the main function of education as they complement each other in the process of learning. If developing the intellect was to be the main function of education, ignoring the cultivation of one's values, it has the potential of producing highly intelligent individuals who, without morals, abuse their intellect, wielding it as a weapon that endangers society instead. For instance, serial killer Ted Bundy was known to be highly intelligent, even having graduated from university. Yet, he abused his intellect and used his knowledge of human psychology to manipulate young female victims, eventually kidnapping and murdering multiple women. This clearly exemplifies the destructive power of intellect that is unchecked by a lack of a moral compass. Additionally, if education's main goal is to produce individuals who add value to their communities, surely a society with individuals who possess strong moral compasses and positive values of graciousness, integrity and loyalty will be much more pleasant and prosperous than one that is full of individuals who use their knowledge to incite conflict. Therefore, this illustrates how important it is for education to emphasise on the development of one's values, alongside stimulating intellect, as having the intellect to understand why possessing the right values is important and facilitates acceptance and embodiment of positive values.</p>	<p>Argument is clear and shows more understanding of the importance of developing values, as well as some nuanced awareness of how the two complement each other</p>
<p>In conclusion, education is in fact a powerful weapon [and] it is of high importance that we develop our youth today with good values and intellect. Hopefully, one day, when moral education is more significant in school curricul[a], society will be full of individuals with high values and great capabilities.</p> <p>(Tiffany Lim, 21-E3)</p>	<p>Conclusion can reiterate the arguments raised more faithfully</p>

## 10 'Technology has developed faster than our ability to use it well.' Do you agree?

<p><i>This paragraph demonstrates very good engagement with the ethical angle in the question, which is a key part of its point of contention. It articulates a clear reason for why our ability to use technology well has fallen short as it has developed, supporting it with an apt and detailed example. Though this particular example is a commonly used one, this particular explanation of it demonstrates deeper understanding of why it is ethically problematic on a couple of counts. For even greater depth, the psychology that drives us to pursue such ethically problematic uses for technological developments can also be explored, as characteristics such as a desire to outdo others can lend themselves well to a broader understanding of why technology, and especially new, powerful, less regulated technology, is often exploited.</i></p>	
<p>Firstly, the rapid technological advancements have caused us to be unable to uphold the ethical beliefs that a society should follow in order to ensure that the people are kept morally upright. CRISPR technology, albeit still in its nascent stage, had already shown the potential to select favourable and desirable traits to 'input' into babies, thus giving rise to the existence of 'designer babies'. These 'designer babies' are tailor-made to perfection and contain only the best traits that are desired by their parents. Although it is seemingly used to humans' advantage to create a society filled with flawless individuals, it violates the law of nature that reproduction is necessary not only for the continuation of humankind but also the biodiversity</p>	<p>A clear topic sentence</p> <p>Apt example</p> <p>Shows deeper awareness of the controversy and how what looks like development can</p>



<p>that is created from genetic variation. CRISPR technology however, denies genetic variation since it produces babies that all possess desirable traits such as higher intelligence and an enhanced appearance. This then prompts us to rethink whether this advanced form of technology has truly been made use of well since it is ethically erroneous and is effectively robbing humankind of the fundamental element of uniqueness and individuality. Hence, the unethical aspect of this advanced technology which is exploited by humans and [which] brings about detrimental effects to the identity of individuals is an overt testament to the fact that technology has not been used well with the rapid rate at which it is developing.</p> <p>(Mabel Sim, 21-13)</p>	<p>actually be counterproductive</p> <p>Link to the question is clear</p>
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## 10 'Technology has developed faster than our ability to use it well.' Do you agree?

<p><i>For the large part, this response demonstrates a very consistent and intentional focus on the question. The discussion was evaluative, and a wide range of relevant examples is used. The points raised show a good awareness of the issues that come with technological advancement, but they can often be developed in more detail to reach greater insight. For fuller relevance, there can also be greater recognition of rapid technological advancements through looking at recent developments in technology, and through evaluating reasons for our ability to use these well.</i></p>	
<p>The advancement of technology has heralded a new era. It has made ventures into fields such as genetic modification, space technology and many more, breaking frontiers that were barely a dream generations ago. The unprecedented speed at which technology has been developing today has brought about many concerns regarding whether we are really able to manage and regulate the use of it such that it brings more benefit than harm. Proponents of rapid technological advancement may postulate that with regulation put in place, technology can be carefully regulated [and kept] under control. However, with instances where technology can be exploited by humans to cause pernicious effects, I believe that technology has indeed developed faster than our ability to use it well.</p>	<p>Focused start</p> <p>Some awareness shown of the challenges brought about by rapid tech development that precipitate the point of contention</p> <p>Clear stance</p>
<p>Critics of my view may assert that the birth of social media has revolutionised the way of communication and we are able to use this to our advantage. In the case of social media, it facilitates two way communication as opposed to traditional media's monodirectional dissemination of information, allowing us to be exposed to a variety of ideas and promote social discourse. For instance in 2017, National Geographic posted a cover picture of its special edition on Facebook, featuring a transgender individual. It has led to an avalanche of opinions as people weigh in their perspective, thereby enabling discussions for such controversial topics. It allows people to relook at the idea of gender roles in society and catalyse change using such potent platforms. Furthermore, while there are issues such as fake news being prevalent on social media, which is birthed by the advancement of technology, there are regulations put in place by various governments around the globe to curb people from using it for ill intents. For instance in Singapore, the Protection from Online Falsehoods and Manipulation Act was put in place in May 2019, thereby encouraging people to use platforms such as social media responsibly. With rules and regulations put in place, it may be seen that</p>	<p>It is often a good idea to start with the perspective embedded in the question, as that will cement the understanding of the point of contention, rather than possibly seeming to miss it. There should also be a clearer reason for why we have been able to use it to our advantage</p> <p>Relevant point</p> <p>Link creates a clear engagement with the question</p>



while technology is progressing very fast, we still have the ability to control and utilise it well.	
<p>However, with technological inventions available for all to use, it can be easily exploited by people with malicious intents. Detractors of rapid technological advancement have already warned people that with the advent of space technology, terrorists can use them to carry out illegal activities. For instance in 2007, British bases in Basra were attacked and it was later revealed that terrorists managed to locate the place and plan for the attack using aerial images obtained from Google Earth. The original intention of such applications like Google Earth was to improve the quality of lives of people by allowing for easier navigation of routes. However, as illustrated in the example above, how others may exploit the use of such technology is beyond our imagination and hence there is no effective solution to curb the misuse of technology in aiding terrorists activities. Given that we have no solution to tackle the implications brought about by our technological inventions, it is a fair claim to say that technology has developed faster than our ability to use it well.</p>	<p>Relevant point that could have been followed with more developed reasoning for why rapid advancement allows for such exploitation</p> <p>Relevant illustration</p> <p>Good point which can be linked to the lack of morals in using technology as well, to better align with the first half of the paragraph about exploiting new tech</p>
<p>Furthemore, technology wields the power to challenge our moral parameters. With technology exploring fields such as genetic modification, we still have yet to establish a set of criteria to dictate what we can and cannot do with it, thus making it even more vulnerable to exploitation. One prime example is the CRISPR technology. Though it is only at the stage of infancy, it has the power to remove genes and insert favourable ones, allowing parents to be effectively, the designers of their babies. The thought of this is a terrifying one as it poses a lot of questions regarding morality. By doing so, it challenges the notion of nature and seems to reduce humans to merely objects. Moreover, it may give rise to more issues such as discrimination against those of normal traits as there are others with advantageous characteristics. Given that we are not ready to tackle such issues regarding ethics in the use of technology, it can be argued that technology has developed quicker than our ability to use it well.</p>	<p>Valid point</p> <p>Can draw relations to discussions on ethics and elaborate on this for a more detailed response</p> <p>Overall, a cogent point</p>
<p>Furthermore, technology can be manipulated by those who are in control and civilians have no say about it. Tech giants such as Google and Amazon are capitalising on online platforms to make profits. They essentially rob people of their freedom by controlling what one can view on the internet. With in-built algorithms, these companies deliver targeted advertisements to excessively promote products. This therefore hinders consumers from making rational decisions on their consumption. Furthermore, filter bubbles are also becoming increasingly prevalent. Materials consumers see are carefully curated based on their online behaviours. According to PEW Research Center, 47% of the conservatives are likely to see views that are aligned with theirs. This reinforces their confirmation biases, and denies them of opportunity to be exposed to a plethora of opinions that they may have desired. Yet, consumers are powerless to hold these companies accountable for such deeds. Having been manipulated by those in power and leaving these issues unchecked, technology has indeed developed faster than our ability to regulate it well for us to truly benefit us.</p>	<p>Why this is important can be clarified</p> <p>This is about the feature of social media, not so much our ability to use it well</p> <p>This argument seems to be more about the downsides of tech than our ability to use it well. The idea that rapidly developing tech is out of the hands of the everyman has potential, but it has not been well supported here</p>
<p>Technology has always been a double-edged sword[:] it wields the power to be a good servant and a bad master. Like any other things, the use of technology needs to be regulated and kept under control for it to truly benefit us. Considering that technology can literally be accessed by anyone, the idea that it can be kept under control is a fallacious one. Hence, I seek to argue that the speed technology has developed superseded our ability to regulate and use it well.</p>	



## 10 'Technology has developed faster than our ability to use it well.' Do you agree?

*This response's greatest strength lies in the wealth of knowledge about technological development that is greatly evident throughout. It addresses a good range of the most active and controversial areas of technological development today, showing good and detailed knowledge of the surrounding context of the question, making for an argument that is current and significant today. The supporting points raised show a consistent awareness of the point of contention, especially the oft-neglected time aspect, as it is able to point out how the dynamic nature of the developments is itself a challenge. However, some weaknesses should also be noted: firstly, the opposing perspective is a weak link in the argument, as it is not developed clearly enough to stand as a point, making balance in this essay relatively poor. Secondly, there is a degree of overlap in the 2nd and 3rd body paragraphs, which though detailed in their understanding of the problems associated with developments in war technology and cyber security, essentially make the same point that rapid developments have left us unable to properly regulate and account for possible negative impacts. It would be best if clear distinct reasons can be found. Though the response is largely written in clear language, there are some long sentences that can be helpfully broken down to facilitate reading.*

"Any sufficiently advanced technology is indistinguishable from magic." This sweeping statement by British science fiction author Arthur C. Clarke encapsulates the sheer benefits of one of man's greatest inventions – technology. As a result of groundbreaking innovations, new developments such as Artificial Intelligence are constant changes that we observe in our daily lives. Some may view this as a boon, as it brings greater efficiency and thus progress to our lives. However, some may also argue that such rapid developments can only bring about negative impacts due to its potential adverse side effects, such as technological singularity or harm caused to human life if such developments are kept unchecked. Hence, [ ] I agree that technology has indeed developed faster than our ability to use it well, where such rampant developments when not utilised well in the correct manner result[ ] in detrimental effects to our society.

Insulting for no good reason

Note that this is unnecessarily polarised and extreme when the question does not suggest that it can only be one or the other

Intro shows awareness of the point of contention, where there are challenges that have come with rapidly developing tech

Firstly, some individuals may argue that rapid developments in technology positively impact[ ] our usage of technology, given that certain technology is already at its maximum capacity and has room for improvement. Despite Man's efforts to continuously update and renew certain technologies, there are [limitations] such as the lack of information that hinder[ ] this process, meaning that due to our positive usage of technology to its limit, it has thus been used well and that further developments are in dire need to boost its utility. An example would be the Mars Curiosity Rover, in the sphere of space exploration. Originally, the Rover was utilising a state of technology that yielded very subpar results, where the random selection software it was utilising yielded a mere 24% success rate in its purpose of selecting geological materials for analysis. This reveals that scientists' ability to use the current technology at that level was already at its limit, and thus was not used well, and hence more developments were needed. Such requirements were met when in 2016, the Rover was finally installed with the rudimentary AEGIS software which greatly boosted its ability to select target materials, with an increase in utility as shown by the all-new 93% record accuracy, enabling scientists to to

Quite an interesting idea, but it can be better explained - the point seems to be about how tech is only being developed to the extent that we need it, so it is designed for humankind to use well when it meets our needs

Confusing perspective taken here, as the logic is very difficult to follow

Not clear what this has



<p>more effectively and efficiently analyse such materials and conduct further extensive research in Mars' viability for supporting life. Hence, I do not agree with such a claim that our ability to use such technology well is faster than its development, as it really depends on external factors. Due to the fact that there is still an ever-expanding portion of our universe that remains unknown to us, [] the impediments in space exploration may not be due to the slow development of technology as such people would argue, but it could be [] Man's own flaws and lack of knowledge that acts as a hindrance from being able to maximise the current state of technology. Hence, this viewpoint has flaws which leads me to explain why negative impacts of our current use of technology in today's global affairs have led to my viewpoint that technology has indeed developed faster than our ability to use it well.</p>	<p>to do with the question's point of contention</p> <p>Awkward, convoluted sentence</p> <p>The opposing view raised in this paragraph has been inadequately established and linked to the point of contention, resulting in confusion when the rebuttal is brought in</p>
<p>Moving on, technology, when used for nefarious purposes, brings about harm to human lives. Such negative impacts are definitely brought about by the rapid developments of technology, whereby humans are unable to keep pace with such powerful advancements that ethical boundaries cannot be established in the context of the use of technology in warfare. In our increasingly globalised world, conflict is a constant and technology plays a large role in it. Technology is highly utilised in weapon manufacturing, whereby autonomous weapons and robots have proliferated into the arsenals of military-advanced nations, thanks to the fast development of technology. As a result, these autonomous weapons enable countries to fight soldier-less wars, which has brought about devastating impacts. This is evident where the usage of drones in warfare was increased substantially under the Obama administration in the war against terror. In November 2010, during a fight against the Tehrik-I-Taliban in Pakistan, an airdrone strike originally targeted at 41 men killed more than 1000 people instead, [with] innocent civilians among the collateral damage. Thus, limitations such as the programming's lack of ability to make algorithmic processes and predictions resulted in misfires. Such drastic impacts hence arise from Man's lack of ability to use technology well, which stems from the fact that its rapid developments have led us to utilise it without first establishing proper ethical boundaries and weighing its potential risks. Thus, technology has definitely developed faster and [is] thus more dangerous, resulting in our ability to use it well being slower in the case of military warfare.</p>	<p>Relevant point that shows definite awareness of the rapidity of the development</p> <p>Detailed illustration that does show the destructive power of the technology, but it should be clearly linked to the lack in or failure of ethical guidelines, as that is the point being made in this paragraph</p> <p>This makes a good point that needed to be more clearly established, as the lack of ethical boundaries was not adequately brought across by the example</p>
<p>Additionally, such rapid developments do not provide us with sufficient time to cover the potential loopholes of cyberspace, resulting in cybercrimes that detrimentally impact the lives of people instead of enhancing its utility, revealing that we are indeed unable to utilise it well at all. Technology has improved in leaps and bounds over the past decade with life-changing inventions such as the Internet. This has brought about a wave of information and entertainment right to our fingertips. However, our digital footprints are easily compiled and stored into databases via autonomous means due to quick advancements of technology. Individuals with nefarious intentions are able to exploit such information to perpetuate crimes such as phishing or ransomware due to our [limited] ability to protect private information. As such, private data such as financial records or even classified information pertaining to national security are leaked, compromising the safety and well-being of a nation and its citizens. For example, FACC, an Austrian aircraft manufacturing company was hit by a cyber fraud that cost them 42 million euros of monetary losses, leading to huge financial debts as</p>	<p>Relevant point, though with a very similar argument to the previous paragraph, just in a different domain</p> <p>Well explained</p> <p>Good illustration of the real cost that such weaknesses in cyber security can result in, but it would have been more compelling to clearly establish that the fraud was possible due to loopholes that exist, rather than just the determination of criminals</p>



<p>seen from the 17% share price dip. Such impacts thus lead to the retrenchment of thousands of employees, stripping them of any means of financial stability to support their families. Hence, it is extremely clear that such rapid developments in technology have led to our inability to keep up with its fast pace, resulting in loopholes in its security capabilities. When exploited, crimes are perpetuated, bringing about adverse and devastating impacts on countries, firms and people alike. This reiterates my stand that due to the negligence of proper security due to the faster development of technology, we are hence unable to install appropriate measures to ensure its safety. This translates into the fact that the speed at which we are using it well is much slower than its rapid development, resulting in adverse consequences.</p>	<p>Awkward expression</p> <p>Relevant argument which can be extended to point out that this is an ongoing battle that creates more loopholes as the rate of new developments continues to rise</p>
<p>Moving on, rapid developments of technology [have] led to many of its users utilising it in extremely irresponsible and offensive ways. Such misuse can ultimately lead to conflicts between different communities in our society. With an influx of Artificial Intelligence (AI), tech companies are continuously attempting to incorporate AI into the technology that we use everyday. However, due to AI's self-learning and self-innovative capabilities, this has led to ethical disputes over its increasingly sophisticated nature. For example, Microsoft created an artificial chatbot named Tay in 2016, where Tay was released on Twitter. However, Tay had to be taken down a mere 16 hours after its launch, as it had begun assimilating inflammatory and hateful speech against certain communities after interacting with online users. This reveals that the rapid developments in AI, together with scientists' enthusiasm to incorporate such innovations into our daily lives can end up with detrimental effects on the welfare of people. If left unchecked, such fresh technologies like Tay's adaptive learning capabilities may result in the the diffusion of divisive sentiments and prejudices in our society, weaving a thread of discord and forming a wedge between diverse communities such as race, religion and ethnicities, undermining the very social fabric of society. It is of utmost importance to note that such impacts are indeed a result of overzealous developments of technology and the introduction of it into our lives, leading to people being slower in utilising it in a conducive environment given the unfamiliarity that people have with it. This leads to irresponsible usage of the technology that could potentially tear an entire society apart, thus exemplifying the root cause of such rampant and negative effects – the fact that technology develops faster than we are able to adapt to and hence use well.</p>	<p>Signposting can be more helpful in connecting different parts of the argument, rather than implying merely that the writer has tired of the previous point</p> <p>When no clear reason is articulated early in the paragraph, there is a risk of creating an example-driven argument. In this case, the illustration does not clearly bring across that it is poor adaptation to new tech that is causing such harmful effects, as is later argued</p> <p>This paragraph does eventually make a good point about users' inability to adapt well to the new technology, but the illustration could have been more clearly aligned with the point being made</p>
<p>In conclusion, the advancement of technology in today's world is definitely something which we must acknowledge. At times, developments bring about positive benefits and can be deemed as "magic", as evident from the amazing feats it can accomplish in terms of space exploration and the expansion of Man's pre-existing scientific knowledge, as long as humans have maximised its utility. However, despite this positive notion of our ability to utilise technology well being faster than its developments, we must face the ugly truth that the unchecked developments of technology and our own reckless incorporation of such advancements exceeds the rate at which we are able to use it in a safe, controlled and positive manner. This thereby results in phenomena such as collateral damage in military warfare, rising cybercrime rates, as well as the possibilities of tearing entire societies apart, all</p>	<p>Could better articulate the reasoning for why humans are able to access the benefits of these tech developments</p> <p>Good summary of the points raised</p>



due to the basic fact that technology has indeed developed faster than our ability to use it well in our world today.

(Claire Tan, 21-E3)

## 10 'Technology has developed faster than our ability to use it well.' Do you agree?

*This paragraph brings up a very interesting observation that technological developments have often been used to environmental detriment before their harmful effects have been fully understood. The point has the advantage of being very traceable across human history, though only one example is developed here. This means that it does fall a bit short of reaching its fuller potential of recognising that technology has nearly always challenged our ability to use it well, and that as we are in an age of very rapid developments, the potential for fallout is even greater. Nevertheless, it provides a relevant response to the question that shows good awareness of the point of contention.*

Some people might argue, however, that the rapid development of technology has been used inappropriately, with the most significant problem being that of the damage done to our environment, due to the use of many new technologies that were rapidly discovered and developed, which has led to severe pollution of our atmosphere, water supply, and has also resulted in devastating problems such as global warming which has deadly global ramifications. For example, the invention of plastics, as an alternative material that was cheap to manufacture, has led to severe pollution due to the non-biodegradable nature of plastics and the refusal or reluctance of the general public to recycle. Another example would be the discovery of chloro-fluoro-carbons (CFCs), which were developed to be used as refrigerants. As it was discovered rapidly due to the fast development of technology, we quickly started to use it, without considering its ramifications to the environment. It was only after many years, that we realised that CFCs damaged our ozone layer severely, and were too polluting to be used. While this is true, and the use of such technology that was rapidly developed did significant damage to our environment and showed our inability to use it well, it is also precisely because of its rapid development that we are able to come up with solutions to the problem. Upon the discovery that CFCs were so harmful, governments proceeded to ban it immediately. Additionally, technology that is in development such as driverless cars, or existing futuristic technology such as electric cars have also been developed to help reduce the impacts of the climate problem, by reducing traffic congestion and pollution. Land reclamation and seawalls have also helped to guard against rising sea levels caused by global warming. That being said, the harms done to the environment are still largely caused by the discovery of new technologies, and we should thus still consider the problem rather than dismissing it entirely.

(Ong Zhi Yuan Tenor, 21-U6)

The topic sentence can be more focused, as it seems largely descriptive at this point rather than offering a clear reason for saying that tech has developed faster than our ability to use it well

The **point** here that we tend to use technology without considering its ramifications is a relevant and interesting one, and should perhaps be the central idea of this para

Can be more clearly explained, as it is unclear how the **rapid development** allows for the creation of solutions such as bans

**Good observation** that could have been backed up with a historical assessment of how various developments have caused damage by benign used before they were fully understood



## 11 Is ignoring our differences the solution to racial inequality?

*This essay is particularly noteworthy for its wealth of knowledge on the topic, which has been used very coherently to present a well-reasoned argument supported at every point with suitable examples. The exemplification is uncommonly rich, often with several examples used to drive home a point. Some of these pop culture references are interesting and give a sense of the writer's deep and current awareness of cultural symbols that represent the racial conflicts. It should be noted however that there are a couple of criticisms: first, relevance can be strengthened with more consistent reference to the question, as the point of the question is not to present alternative solutions, but to assess the effectiveness of colour/race-blindness as a solution to racial inequality. This solution is occasionally hinted at at some points, but making clear links to its limitations would remove all doubt about the focus of the response. Second, the essay is heavily influenced by the racial situation in the US. Though it is no doubt a hotbed for such issues and therefore a tantalising case study, the response would have been better supported with a broader range of examples beyond racial inequality towards people of African descent, particularly those in the US. Nevertheless, it is a strong and commendable effort conducted in confident and nuanced use of the language.*

Racial inequality is a structural issue, ingrained into our political systems, institutions, and even our individual biases. The cultural revolution that led to the reckoning with racial inequality is largely considered to be the civil rights movement of the 1950s to 1960s, heralded by African-American leaders like Martin Luther King Jr. in the USA. With the most recent rise of the Black Lives Matter movement that sparked protests, rallies and cries for police reform, an old ideology popular during the civil rights movement has begun to rear its head again - colorblind movements. These movements believe that ignoring racial difference is the only way to truly solve racial inequality. A similar sentiment has spread across the globe, with even European and Asian nations buying into the idea that ignoring racial difference is key to solving the issue of racial inequality. In this essay, I will explain how 'color blindness' as a concept is nearly always a denial of historical precedence that informs current racialised inequities, and postulate instead that understanding, accepting, and grappling with the very real concept of systemic racism is the sole manner in which we can progress past racial inequality.

Intro shows good awareness of both historical and modern context, with a good point raised on the shortcomings of the proposed solution. The other part of the thesis however threatens to hijack the question as the question is not about finding other solutions, but about evaluating the possibility of ignoring our differences as the solution

Proponents of the belief in ignoring racial differences to solve racial inequality will argue that to amplify or exacerbate these racial differences by discussing them is to perpetuate the notion that there is something inherently 'different' in someone of a different, often minority race. As such, by ignoring these distinctions and differences, and choosing 'not to see colour', these individuals believe the barriers between different races can be broken, now that they are viewed as one and the same. This viewpoint recently saw a resurgence in America, for when Black Lives Matter protestors attempted to explain the structural and systemic discrimination they face as a result of their skin color, they were fervently shut down by proponents of the 'colorblind' movement. They retaliated with [the] 'All Lives Matter' protest, arguing that differentiating 'Black Lives' from 'All Lives' was akin to perpetuating racial inequality, by exemplifying and widening the perceived disparity between the races. This idea that discussing racial differences only worsens racial inequality is, however, not new. Arguably in pop culture, there has been a push from African-American artists themselves to push forth the 'colorblind' ideology. Michael Jackson's hit 'Black or White' was widely beloved by

Excellent explanation

Good analysis, though much of this stemmed perhaps not from those who see race-blindness as a solution, but from a flawed or racially motivated reading of BLM to mean that other lives mattered less

Interesting example - would have been great to quote the relevant lines and explain the cultural importance



<p>audiened for its message that race should not matter. More recently, African-American YouTuber and rapper Prince Ea released a song with a video entitled 'I Am NOT Black, you are NOT White', which has garnered over 17M views on the video sharing platform Youtube. The reach and appeal of these movements is hence extremely clear - well-intentioned individuals believe that by not paying attention to the issues that divide us racially but rather issues that unite us despite race, we can reach an a-racial utopia where race is no longer a differentiating factor. Despite the positive sentiment and ultimately similar end goal of eliminating racial inequality, this argument misses several crucial understandings about the way that racism is perpetuated - through a deliberate, institutional system that cannot be changed by pretending that race does not exist.</p>	<p>Note that 'ignoring our differences' should not be simply confused for ignoring the problem: the act of choosing to ignore race is already an acknowledgement of the problem</p> <p>Strong understanding, supported well with varied examples (though all about African-Americans). It's not too clear though why ignoring our differences means not paying attention to the issues that divide us</p>
<p>It is most crucial, in tackling colorblind movements and moving towards racial equality, that we understand where racial inequality stems from. Often, beyond being a series of racist or discriminatory mindsets, racism is institutionalised, built into our political and social systems, [making it tough to counter on an individual level and by pretending that racial differences simply do not exist.] These differences extend to the past, where[] in South Africa in the 1910s, 148 apartheid laws were used to deliberately and systemically segregate Black Africans from white Africans. As a result, the material resources and wealth these individuals had access to were also disparate and distinct. Predominantly white-occupied towns like Johannesburg were well-equipped with transportation infrastructure, electricity, and most importantly, were linked to diamond mining sites. Conversely, 'Bantustans' (or homelands) that Black Africans were forcibly repatriated to, like Nomzamo, were largely rural and hence lacked proper electricity, water, or food supplies and were greatly underfunded. The historical differences in treatment lead us to the South Africa of today, still divided largely by race and class, which tend to be one and the same due to intergenerational wealth accumulation by white communities. A similar issue arose with policies like redlining in Chicago in the 1990s, that prevented African-American communities from accumulating wealth in the same way that white Americans were able to. As such, arguing that we should ignore these historical and present differences in terms of the material conditions that surround marginalised communities and contribute to this racial inequality can seem almost absurd. To pretend that there are no material, socio-economic, or political differences that contribute to the exact same racial inequality 'colorblind' movements aim to eradicate means that they fail to be able to comprehend or change these root causes leading to racialised discrimination and inequality.</p>	<p>Some misunderstanding of the question's point of contention: it is racial inequality that needs to be tackled, and colourblindness is positioned as a solution</p> <p>Detailed example, but what it is meant to illustrate, beyond the existence of systemic racism should be clarified</p> <p>Good point!</p> <p>This paragraph makes an excellent point that the historical events and their present effects cannot simply be overlooked</p>
<p>As such, it is important for us to instil into the youth of today the very obvious and persistent differences between races due to historical conditions, to get them to understand and accept that in spite of these differences, we must not unjustly differentiate between races. One of the core debates currently surrounding the issue is that of 'critical race theory' and whether it should be taught in American elementary, high school, and college curriculums. Aggravated conservatives have fervently denounced the addition of critical race theory to these curricula as they believe that it is laying out to these youth very clearly, the differences between the</p>	<p>A less appropriate topic sentence, as it is not directly related to assessing the value of ignoring our differences</p> <p>Note that it is not actually being added to curriculums, and very often is not even being brought up in classrooms</p>



<p> races. As Fox News anchor Tucker Carlson put it, critical race theory is ‘teaching children to hate each other based on race’. Far from that, however, critical race theory stems from the idea that slavery and the ghettoisation of Black communities has led to the racial discrimination and poverty cycles within the community today, and points to segregationist laws and slavery as the basis for this inequality. Rather than exacerbating racial differences, critical race theory being taught to youth ensures that they do not ignore race but rather create a better understanding between individuals of different races. Only by recognising, not ignoring, these differences and inequalities exist can youth begin to unlearn the racism that has been built into the very structure of our societies and begin to tackle these inequalities by speaking out against it themselves. Forging this understanding of inequality and fundamental difference in youth is important. In nations like Singapore, where despite being a multiracial state that claims ‘not to see race’, and provid[ing] equality of opportunity despite race, it is undoubted that institutionalised discrimination has been taught to students from a young age. The clearest example of this are the Special Assistance Programme (SAP) schools in Singapore, which cater solely to Mandarin-speaking students. As a result, a study by Mansoori and Jenkins found that, barring teachers, 80% of the 184 female students surveyed in a SAP school had never interacted with someone of a different race, essentially forming racialised enclaves in school systems. The lack of understanding of the trials, struggles and difficulties others face due to their race in Singapore can also hence be attributed to the lack of racial integration and mixing among youth. In Singapore’s attempt to reach an almost post-racial, or a-racial society, there seems to be a neglect of forging understanding of the differences between racial groups that experience very diverse struggles. This creates a society where it is racial inequality ignored, not the differences. Hence, by instilling some sense that there exists a racial difference due to institutions, historical conditions and socio-economic circumstances in our youth, we may see a shift in individual and collective approaches to tackling racial inequality. </p>	<p> Links to the failures of ignoring our differences as a solution can be emphasised to address the question better </p> <p> Can be more precise: Singapore does not claim to be race-blind as the state itself makes racial distinctions, but we do claim to try and act regardless of it </p> <p> Good, detailed example </p> <p> Interesting observation, but could bear further development of why and where it is seen </p> <p> Well developed point, but more consistent articulation of the link to the question will help to maintain a stronger focus on the question </p>
<p> Given that the issue of racial inequality is so ingrained into our systems, by choosing to ignore the differences in the way the system treats individuals of different races, we will be unable to tackle the root causes of this racial inequality. By choosing to ignore the fact that people of colour face a different treatment under our institutions, we fail to recognise the flaws of the system and hence do not work to change these issues. Rather than tackling the symptoms of the issue, tackling the underlying cause for it is the only way to truly reach racial equality. In America, the way that the prison system treats racial minorities is incomparable to how they treat white individuals. In being incarcerated, the probability in the lifetime of every Black man is 1 in 3, as opposed to 1 in 17 white men. This difference alone is appalling, and speaks to the biases ingrained into the police system, that has criminalised, brutalised, and disproportionately jailed people of colour. Arising from the issue of disproportionate incarceration is also the issue of the disenfranchisement of the Black community on the whole. By incarcerating more Black individuals, it perpetuates a cycle of unstable, broken homes, leading to cycles of trauma and often poverty without a father or stable male figure in the household. This contributes to the social immobility experienced by Black communities and families. This leaves them steadily entrenched in a racist and classist system, preventing them from accessing the meritocracy that America promises. The cycle of trauma is also extremely real, and also stems from the corrupt prison-industrial complex that excessively </p>	<p> Good topic sentence that raises another dimension of the problem </p> <p> This seems to veer off into discussing other solutions </p> <p> This would be more compelling with info on their actual tendency to commit crimes </p> <p> A lot of info and knowledge is brought up here, but it should be made more relevant with clearer links to ignoring our differences </p>



<p>punishes Black and brown communities. They experience far higher rates of carceral violence, and also face long-term solitary confinement disproportionately. This contributes to cycles of trauma and violence inflicted on Black communities. While Black men make up only 48% of the prison population, they make up 58% of the individuals punished with solitary confinement, with Black and Latine men in total making up 82% of the solitary confinement population, according to a crucial study by the American Civil Liberties Union. This is largely due to perception of the Black population as inherently more violent. Without first understanding that these systemic and structural barriers exist for Black people, individuals of other races simply cannot begin to grapple with the outcomes of these systems. While ‘colorblind’ movement supporters look at the outcomes of such systems, in this case that more Black people are jailed, without understanding the material and structural differences that lead to this outcome, they believe that emphasising this difference in incarceration rates would worsen the racism minorities are subjected to. However, once the reality of racial inequality is accepted, that it is an issue that stems from differences in the way that systems treat racial minorities, is the point in which individuals can come together to tackle these unjust systems. Despite the prison-industrial complex being only one of the examples of systemic discrimination and inequality enacted against racial minorities, it exemplifies the importance of reckoning and confronting the system as a means to tackle racial inequality, which simply ignoring our differences outrightly discourages.</p>	<p>Signposting could be better chosen</p> <p>The paragraph shows a great depth of understanding, but could have benefited greatly from a couple of closer links to the question</p>
<p>Hence, I would argue that confronting our differences and explicitly calling out these disparities in treatment is a better way to tackle racial inequality [than ignoring our differences]. Rather than hiding from these differences, explicitly laying them out in front of others and forcing them to grapple with their complicity in these systems is a step to completely eradicating racial inequalities. By forcing individuals of the majority race to confront, not ignore, their biases, assumptions and acceptance of racial inequalities, it helps to get them to understand and sympathise with these differences, generating the collective understanding and critical mass needed to successfully take down racial inequality. This is perhaps best done through popular culture like books, movies or music, that helps those of the majority race see the world through a person of colour’s perspective to understand and confront these differences in lived experience due to race. In the Childish Gambino music video, ‘This is America’, with over 500M views on YouTube, the rapper makes direct and evocative references to the Jim Crow era of slavery. This music video shows the persecution enacted on Black communities and the sense of alienation, marginalisation and disenfranchisement their community faces. By making art that is so blatant in its explanation of racial differences, Gambino was able to effectively capture America through the lens of a Black person. Similarly, novels like ‘The Vanishing Half’ by Brit Bennet, or ‘Such a Fun Age’ by Kiley Reid exemplify the over policing of Black people, blatantly and explicitly directing those of the majority race to grapple with the racial differences in treatment, and the reality of these differences that lead to racialised inequality. Movies like Get Out and Moonlight also re-emphasize that the effects of slavery have yet to disappear, and show white viewers their complicity in the system of racial inequality. Through pop culture, which tends to be widely accessible, Black artists have long since been giving white people a lens into the lived experiences and differences that racial minorities face. However, it is up to the white</p>	<p>Examples are effective in proving the point, but it is less clear if the point is strongly focused on the question</p> <p>Statement is somewhat sweeping</p> <p>Richly illustrated, but can be more focused on evaluating ‘ignoring our</p>



individual to look through these lenses to understand how the racial differences they try so desperately to ignore tend to contribute directly to the racial inequality they so fervently attempt to dismantle.	differences' as a solution - this can mean comparisons of why it falls short of other solutions
<p>Historical precedence will always continue to inform our current lived experiences. Ignoring the racial differences that arise is to deny history, and deny the very real discrimination and marginalisation that all racial minorities face on the daily. By denying racial difference and ignoring it in an attempt to counter inequalities, we inadvertently deny people of colour the progress they deserve in dismantling unjust structures that act as barriers to racial equality. Confronting racial difference head-on as the root factor leading to racial inequality through education, discussion, and acceptance, we are able to work as a collective human race and grapple with the systems themselves that perpetuate and exacerbate racialised inequalities.</p> <p>(Sanjana Rajan, 21-01)</p>	Excellent summary of the arguments made. Coherent and effective

## 12 How far do richer countries have an obligation to help poorer countries in times of crisis?

<p><i>These two paragraphs show a good awareness of the question, if not a complete understanding of what an obligation is, why it exists and what factors affect a country's obligation. As laid out in the examiner's report for the question, obligations have a moral or legal basis. The first of these paragraphs addresses the moral imperative experienced by richer nations, and its explanations are often detailed and thoughtful. However, do note that practical reasons for helping have little to do with their moral or legal duty to help. The second paragraph reproduced here weighs a country's obligation to help against its obligation towards its own people. This is a productive argument, and could be taken to greater heights with a good understanding of state sovereignty and the social contract, both of which help to explain why the obligation to pay attention to the needs of their own citizens usually outweighs any international expectation to do something for other nations.</i></p>	
<p>From a moral standpoint, it is only correct [] that a country with a larger monetary capacity and ability [] lend a helping hand to countries who are poorer and are in crisis. Since the world is such an interconnected network of places where countries do heavily rely on one another for the prosperity of their country, it is only right to concur that richer countries have the need to provide help to poorer countries to ameliorate their situation. The more capable party should always help its less capable counterpart. An example of how not giving aid to poorer countries can lead to negative consequences [was when] in 2015, during the Rohingya refugee crisis in Myanmar, its neighbouring countries like Malaysia, Indonesia and Thailand closed [their] borders to desperate refugees on rickety boats. These refugees left in the open sea were then vulnerable, and easy targets of human trafficking, with many others [made to] work[] in the Thai fishing industry as slaves. This shows that when a country [in] a better position closes its doors to countries in a plight, it causes people of that country to suffer tremendously. A positive example would be when Colombia opened its doors to Venezuelan refugees and went above and beyond just the literal sense of opening its borders, but also helped integrate the migrant children into its society by providing formal education, with an enrollment rate of about 80%. This action by the Colombian government has been lauded by</p>	<p>Relevant argument. The explanation could expand more on why there is such a moral obligation, rather than focusing on how richer countries have something to gain from the exchange</p> <p>Good recognition of the negative consequences, but the argument that helping fellow human beings avoid such suffering is a moral imperative for richer nations should be articulated</p> <p>Good use of examples to demonstrate the starkly different</p>



<p>the United Nations' Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization. With the power and ability that these countries have, the people of the poorer countries can not only overcome these times of crisis, but also be able to break away from the vicious cycle of penury through better education. However, being morally just <b>might not always be the best possible choice</b> as helping poorer countries in times of crisis might cause the downfall of the richer countries who provided the help. With an influx of citizens of lower education and lower skill into the richer countries, these people might not be able to provide substantial help to the host country but instead suck the country of its resources. An example would be when Angela Merkel, the Prime Minister who graciously opened her doors to desperate refugees and accepted a disastrously large number of them. <b>This caused the economy of her country to greatly plunge, negatively affecting citizens of her country.</b> This shows that even though it is ethically right to help less advantaged countries, <b>richer countries do not have full obligation</b> in certain cases like the example above. But, overall, it is still an obligation of richer countries to offer any possible help to poorer countries in times of crisis.</p>	<p>outcomes of helping and not helping</p> <p>This <b>attempt at balance</b> is less relevant to the point of contention, which is about the duty possessed by richer nations to help others - whether it is the best choice for them or not to help does not affect the extent to which they are obligated to</p> <p><b>Should not be exaggerated</b></p> <p>Why possible harms might diminish their <b>obligation</b> to help should be explained[</p>
<p>[...]</p>	
<p>However, when the whole planet is in a dire situation, richer countries <b>should not be obliged</b> to help the poorer countries solely based on the reason that these richer countries have a larger monetary benefit than the poorer countries as wealthier countries have a greater obligation to safeguard the needs and interests of their people. It is only natural for countries to help another country out when the former is in a better position to provide the help. However, when the countries with more money are not in a better situation, it is crucial for that country to provide help to itself first before wanting to extend the help to poorer countries. Only when the country has the capability to get itself out of the damaging situation, can it then reach out to help other countries who are less wealthy. So before the richer countries can stay afloat in these times of crisis, it should focus on only its country and do its rightful obligation of protecting the wants of its citizens. By providing help such as financial help to poorer countries, this leads to the richer countries having less money to give support within the country, and this might cause citizens to have resentment against the government, which would not be beneficial to the country. For instance, during Covid-19, most of the countries including Singapore closed its borders to block travellers coming in from countries where there are many Covid-19 cases to prevent further spread of the virus within its country. Countries restricted travellers from other countries who might be going there to seek shelter against the spread of the virus in their respective countries, denying them help. Since these travellers might have the possibility of being carriers of the virus and competing with citizens of the host country in terms of healthcare services, they are denied from entering the country so that such precious healthcare services provided by each country is only reserved for residents in that country. To help oneself before helping others is a natural instinct, hence richer countries do not have the obligation to help poorer countries if the former and latter are in the same circumstances.</p> <p><i>(Bernice Lim, 21-E4)</i></p>	<p>Note that the question asks if they have the obligation, rather than if they <b>should have the obligation</b>. The answer should fit the question</p> <p>Comparison of obligations is a thoughtful point, as it clearly delineates a country's responsibility to its own people first</p> <p>Could have supported the argument with more detailed explanations of why countries are obligated to focus on their own citizens' needs first, based on the principle of sovereignty and the existence of the social contract, rather than a relatively vague sense of natural instinct</p> <p>Paragraph shows good consideration of the possibility that both nations are in crisis, and how countries weigh their obligations</p>



# AQs 2021 JC1 Mid-Year Examinations

**Stephen Hopper argues that the traditional university degree is losing relevance. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the author's views, relating your arguments to education in your own society?**

## Response 1

*This is a well thought out AQ that clearly outlines the content of the claims and substantiates its balance with examples in a logical manner. Balance is brought up consistently, showing a nuanced view of each of these claims within the context of Singapore. However, this response is less successful in employing examples to support the writer's own stand, which are necessary to substantiate the stand by showing proof of the observation in Singapore society.*

Hopper argues that the traditional university degree is losing relevance as young people today are 'more entrepreneurial and less willing to tie themselves down to a company for life'. In essence, he argues that the traditional university degree does not cater to the youth's aspirations of starting their own businesses and exploration. I largely agree with this claim in the context of Singapore's higher education landscape. In Singapore, the traditional university degree is still four-years long and is a full-time endeavour. However, there has been a recent push for innovation to ensure that Singapore, a resource-scarce nation that relies heavily on its human capital, can stay ahead of increasing competition globally. This has led to an influx of new ideas that are constantly trying to redefine the pathway to success, which has resulted in the mainstream pathway of getting a degree being challenged. It has led to an increased acceptance of alternative pathways, such as the increased prevalence of students taking gap years to explore industries instead of starting their degree immediately. Thus, there is an increasing trend of youth acquiring skills that were thought to be exclusive to a degree from other endeavours. However, it is important to note that some higher education institutes are realising this shift in mindsets. Thus, they have worked to tailor their degree programmes to integrate more of such entrepreneurial experiences, such as the National University of Singapore's Incubation Lab for students who wish to start a side business. Therefore, in the future when this transition becomes more prevalent, the traditional degree may not lose its relevance as it would shift to accommodate students' changing expectations.

[R] Claim is apt in addressing the demands of the AQ

[Ev] Contextualisation focuses on alternative routes to the mainstream way of thinking about degrees in the SG context. Thorough and well thought through evaluation!

[Ev] Could consider how entrepreneurship might have led to this more clearly, to align with the selected claim

[Ev] + [Ex] Explains how universities are changing with a new interest in entrepreneurship, hence their degrees do not lose relevance

Hopper also argues that the traditional university degree is losing relevance as skills and attributes that employers want 'are rarely attributes that universities nurture or select for'. In other words, the disjoint between what the job market wants and what universities want has rendered the traditional degree unnecessary. I disagree with this claim in the context of most Singaporean businesses. As Singapore is still a largely conservative society, most businesses have yet to embrace the liberalisation in hiring criteria that some Western businesses are embracing. 'Paper achievements' are still highly sought after as they show a candidate's ability in a more standardised way. This means that obtaining a degree is still essential for job searching today, thus it is still relevant. Especially with the increasingly saturated job market, candidates with a degree are preferred over those without. However, this does not apply in some businesses in Singapore that are more progressive. New

[R] Claim is apt in addressing the demands of the AQ

[Ev] Clear contextualisation that focuses on the value SG-based corporations employ in their hiring procedures

[Ev] + [Ex] Balance productively looks at the shifting hiring practices that come with a newer



<p>startups such as Grab and Razor are helmed by the younger generation, who are more open to alternative education pathways as they have been more exposed to more liberal ideas growing up. Thus, such businesses may not prize a degree as highly, making a degree irrelevant in one's job search.</p> <p>(Isabelle Looi, 21-E3)</p>	<p>generation of employers</p>
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## Response 2

<p><i>A well-argued and well-evaluated response showing a very good understanding of some differing perspectives across Singapore society, and the context and beliefs that underlie them. A clearer overall stand can be taken in this response to provide a fuller answer to the question as a whole, as the application question is also a test of comprehension. Being able to present a coherent overall view will help demonstrate understanding of the passage author's views and arguments as a whole, rather than only responding to disparate parts.</i></p>	
<p>Hopper mentions a variety of claims that assert the traditional university degree is losing relevance. I disagree with the author in saying that whatever one learns will be irrelevant, and agree with his assertion that universities neglect attributes of emotional intelligence during admissions.</p>	<p>Could more explicitly taken an overall stand to leave no doubt that the question is fully addressed</p>
<p>Firstly, Hopper postulates that "by the time students graduate, most of what they will have learnt will no longer be relevant". What he means is that because of rapid technological advancement, the skillsets are essentially replaced by technology when students leave school. <i>Prima facie</i>, this claim may seem as applicable to my society. Supporters of the claim, mainly technological determinists, would argue as such because they believe that technology inevitably replaces everything. Salient instances they cite often include the development of artificial intelligence in Singapore which they feel would make skills such as architecture irrelevant and replaced.</p>	<p>Good signpost that indicates a distinction between a superficial view and a more in-depth analysis</p>
<p>However, I question the validity of Hopper's argument because of two main reasons, elaborating on the idea that it is a reductionist and peripheral claim. On one hand, his claim focuses on technology's encroachment of skill sets but there are indeed other sectors that require certain competencies unchanged by technology. In Singapore, artists (encompassing different art forms) still retain their craft which was taught and refined in arts universities (i.e Nanyang Academy of Fine Arts). While technology has opened up new opportunities to expand their craft, it does not replace it. On the other hand, Hopper's argument does not distinguish between the learning of hard and soft skills. While the relevance of hard skills is questionable, soft skills are inculcated too. Across all universities, there will always be civics education modules or projects that students have to embark on. In these aspects, the university degree still holds some relevance as in both the short term and long term, certain skill sets as described will be applicable and unchanged in some form by technology.</p>	<p>Good example</p> <p>Phrasing can be more accurate here, as civics is not the same as soft skills</p>

<p>Hopper also mentions that desirable emotional qualities “are rarely attributes that universities nurture or select in for admissions”. What it means is that universities prioritise exceptional grades over one’s character to determine their worth as a prospective student. I agree with this and find it applicable to Singapore as [my] society too upholds similar beliefs. Singapore has a meritocratic education system with a culture that emphasises that grades are heavily important. This arises because of survivalism and the struggle to survive as a small nation. Being book smart would often be seen as ideal in upholding these beliefs as education is regarded as a foundation. Across many university application websites, one sees that the criterion of good grades always appears first. There is also the discriminatory stereotype that perceives those who do not study hard as failures.</p> <p>(Xavier Hui, 21-05)</p>	<p>Needs a stronger link to tertiary education and the workforce</p> <p>Good understanding of the context</p> <p>Could end on a clearer note in response to the question</p>
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## Essays from JC1 Timed Practice

*In response to GCE A Level 2010 Paper 1:*

### 4 ‘The person who dies rich dies disgraced.’ Discuss.

*This is a thoroughly current, illuminating and commendable response to a perennially unpopular question. Despite the abstractness of the topic, this response shows a deep understanding of the issues brought up by the phrase, and it is well-argued, balanced and well-substantiated. There are possibilities for further consideration, such as those who do not directly exploit the poor but make their millions by investment, or those who use their wealth to do good. The strength of the essay is compounded by a confident command of the language and a strong personal voice - the writer’s clear convictions can be seen in her precise choice of expressions. A better understanding of how her personal voice is distinct can be attained by comparing this piece with her response to the Mid-Year Examinations, also in this issue of Navigate.*

“Eat the rich” is a hyperbolic slogan, most commonly attributed to Jean-Jacques [Rousseau], a Genevan philosopher and writer. It is typically used in radical and anti-capitalist circles, and in a modern context is used as a slogan to reference an opposition to wealth inequality. This sentiment seems to have extended to politics, with the phrase being used at rallies of progressive politicians like Senator Bernie Sanders or Elizabeth Warren. The rising prevalence of the usage of the phrase seems to speak to an emerging idea - that the rich have fundamentally accrued their wealth in a manner that is shameful. The statement assumes there is a moral failing that should be attributed to those with wealth and riches. However, it is important to note that the ‘rich’ in our society can be defined as the exorbitantly wealthy — those who possess immense buying power, whose multinational corporations [rake in] profits in the billions annually. This specifically does not refer to those who occupy the middle and upper-middle classes of society. This essay postulates that wealth derived from large business endeavours is inherently premised upon the continued exploitation of vulnerable groups, and

Yes, the question is about the ultra-rich



<p>further argues that with wealth comes immense political clout and sway over international governing bodies. The exceptions to this rule tend to be those with inherited wealth or those who accrue wealth in the billions without owning, leading or directing large corporations and franchises. They tend to be outliers and just extremely rare in our society, and hence this statement generally does not apply to them. It will also tackle the ‘meritocracy’ claim and the libertarian principles that give way to arguments about the rich not owing a debt or obligation to society — given they have accrued wealth of their own personal merit.</p>	<p>Worth considering if those who have inherited wealth should fall under this category</p>
<p>Any argument that someone who dies rich does not die disgraced tends to rest on the foundation of meritocracy — that advancement in society is based on merit, on the basis of talent, effort and achievement. The argument then goes that since society is meritocratic, the rich have earned their wealth and are hence not disgraced or shameful for accruing this wealth. However, this claim is easily disputed by the simple fact that meritocracy is premised upon equality of circumstance. Often, inequities in upbringing and education due to parental circumstances and wealth inequality that already exists simply results in an uneven playing field. Those who have increased access to private schooling, after-school programmes, enrichment activities etcetera have a headstart in life. This argument is hence flawed from its very premise that there is equality in accessing basic tools needed for success and wealth — such as education, proper housing, and even baseline necessities like food and water. Hence, a stronger argument against the statement would be the libertarian arguments put forth by philosophers like Robert Nozick. He was firmly against patterned theories of distributive justice, that would tax exorbitantly rich individuals for the betterment of society. Under Nozick’s principles, it can be argued that the rich are not disgraceful as they own themselves, and there should not be taxation or coercion on them to contribute their wealth back to society. In theory, this means that Nozick’s stance against taxation is based on the concept of owning yourself. He believed that if the individual earned their money by participating in the free market, taxation is morally equivalent to the state claiming part of that labour, which amounts to forced labour and essentially slavery of the individual by the state. In practice, libertarian theory looks like opposition to proposed increased tax rates on the top 1% in America by Senator Bernie Sanders, because it would mean that these individuals who are being taxed essentially do not own themselves but rather, they are tools of the state. The clear argument against this idea is two-fold. Firstly, wealth is defined arbitrarily — one’s talent, intelligence and skills are largely decided upon at one’s birth and life circumstances, which the individual has no control over and hence, cannot claim credit for. Therefore, the arbitrary accumulation of wealth is simply not meritocratic. Secondly, the successful owe a debt to society. Insofar as we accept that the rich cannot claim their success is not a product of derived benefits from society by making use of the resources within a society to attain success, these individuals must then admit that they possess a moral obligation to repay this debt to society. Therefore, the fundamental failure fulfil the moral obligation to society and contribute wealth back for the benefit of the majority amounts to a disgrace.</p>	<p>Excellent awareness of the underlying meritocratic belief that those who are wealthy have earned it</p>
<p>Hence, accruing immense wealth can be said to be dependent on the exploitation of disenfranchised and vulnerable communities. This is perhaps best illustrated by the key quip in NBC’s hit sitcom The Good Place: ‘there is no ethical consumption under capitalism’. It</p>	<p>Well-argued</p>

<p>outlines the key issue that any product created and consumed under capitalism is unethically produced. While there exists exceptions to this idea, such as billionaires like J.K Rowling, who rose to prominence from poverty after writing the bestseller children's series 'Harry Potter', they tend to be extremely rare and are basically non-factors in this discussion, given the minimal number of legitimately 'self-made' billionaires in society. Rather, the vast majority of individuals with immense wealth own large corporations, which tend to only have such wide profit margins that give these individuals their billions due to unethical and exploitative labour practices. For example, Jeff Bezos, the richest man in the world, owns the industry juggernaut Amazon. To reach this level of wealth, Amazon cuts corners, underpays their workers and continually flouts tax laws. Amazon attempts to acquire labour hours for the lowest price, which often involves child labour. In 2018, documents leaked to China Labour Watch revealed that more than a thousand school-age children were employed by one of Amazon's key suppliers. It was also revealed that they underpay their feeder companies and suppliers, impacts which are only felt by labourers that already earn the bare minimum. By allowing such practices to raise Amazon's bottom line, rich CEOs like Bezos have shown that they will exploit, mistreat and disempower such communities just for their own economic benefit. This behaviour is not by any means limited to players like Bezos. Rather than immense wealth being a symptom of exploitation, it appears to be a direct cause for the maintenance of wealth and riches in the billions. Companies like Nestle, owned by Peter Brabeck, have gone so far as to deny impoverished communities of basic necessities. He believed that the water supply should be privatised so as to allow Nestle's monopoly over clean drinking water. As of today, Flint, Michigan in the USA faces continued contaminated and tainted water supplies while Nestle pumps 200 gallons of freshwater per minute out of the state's resources. In essence, men like Brabeck have profited off of the death and suffering of the citizens of Flint just to increase their profit margins. The actions of billionaires are reprehensible in the process of accumulating wealth, and to accrue nearly that amount of wealth requires exploitation, mistreatment and unspeakable cruelty to impoverished communities, by prioritising profit margins over lives.</p>	<p>What about those who use their wealth to do good or who have earned their wealth by investment (in the stock market or property)?</p>
<p>Lastly, the clout that these rich individuals hold due to the immense wealth, buying power and investment prospects they pose to governments grants them immense political sway. In fact, they typically make use of their wealth to block, lobby and change unfavourable policy that could further harm the profit margins of their corporations. This occurs because with great wealth typically comes great political clout as governments, particularly in developing countries, rely on the investment from companies which rests on the buy-in from rich individuals. For example, when these large companies set up factories in developing countries, they are typically given tax breaks which serve as incentives to the already wealthy, often creating a situation where governments and rich individuals are able to line their pockets with the profits. In the meantime, the impact of the pollution, unfair labour practices and poor pay associated with factory labour are felt by the poorest, most impoverished communities who are desperate for any kind of paying labour in spite of the terrible conditions. Furthermore, given the ability of wealthy individuals to block and lobby against ethical labour restrictions and environmental regulations, the issue compounds into one where the brunt is borne by already disadvantaged communities. In India, environmental laws</p>	<p>Well-argued</p>

<p>with regards to factories and waste emissions are extremely lax and rarely enforced due to the economic and political clout possessed by individuals who own these exact factories. As such, this has resulted in the dumping of waste and toxic chemicals in the sacred Ganges River. Those who rely on this river for water to bathe, to drink and even for their food supplies often fall sick or end up dying due to contaminated water, or fish and seafood laced with toxic chemicals. These individuals are precisely the ones who are poorest and rely on the Ganges River for basic necessities. This issue is paralleled in nearly every developing country in the world, further proving that there is no way to increase profit margins to the extent of the likes of Bezos and Brabeck without cutting corners, exploiting disenfranchised communities and building off of the backbones of those at the lowest echelons of our society.</p>	
<p>The disgrace of exorbitant wealth can be felt in many corners of the world, where individuals live off of minimum wages and die from contaminated water supplies while the top 1% luxuriate in their ivory towers. The disgrace lies in the exploitation of children and in the wielding of political clout to block and flout ethical labour and environmental regulations. Most of all, the disgrace lies in the justification of immense wealth by proponents of a supposed meritocratic, libertarian society. To die rich is to die disgraced on nearly every count. As we examine the atrocities committed by the rich in climbing to their upper echelons of society while the rest of us watch from below, perhaps the phrase 'eat the rich' begins to look less and less like hyperbole.</p> <p>(Sanjana Rajan, 21-01)</p>	

## 8 How effective are international efforts to ease the problem of global hunger?

<p><i>This relevant response negotiates the effectiveness of international efforts fairly well. It shows a deeper awareness of the complexities of providing aid, pointing out international efforts often meet obstacles. The essay is well supported with a variety of examples, showing current knowledge and understanding of the difficulties that span different contexts.</i></p>	
<p>Around the world, 690 million people regularly go to bed hungry, according to a report from the United Nations food agencies. Global hunger is an issue that has plagued mankind for many years. Even with international food aid and other measures like improving agricultural technology in poverty-stricken countries in which hunger is pervasive, global hunger is still on the rise in the 21st century. The question lies with the success of current international measures in mitigating global hunger. I believe that international efforts to ease the problem of global hunger are effective to a small extent as these efforts face limitations like the political and ideological differences with recipient countries and climate change, though it is undeniable that current efforts are effective in providing immediate relief.</p>	<p>Recent development: immediately relevant</p> <p>Question is contextualised</p> <p>Thesis statement addresses the extent</p>
<p>With countless non-governmental organisations coupled with large donors - mainly first-world governments - of food aid, it is undeniable that the international efforts have succeeded in the aspect of providing immediate relief for countries plagued by hunger and poverty. In July 2020, when Sudan was struck with floods, the World Food Programme (WFP) immediately</p>	<p>This point should be developed before the example is brought in</p>



<p>responded to the situation by providing emergency food assistance to nearly 160,000 people. The WFP provided the Sudan people with vital supplies and resilience-building activities, saving the already poverty-stricken country from starvation. These organisations have the resources and abilities to render assistance to countries facing hunger issues and are successful in providing relief. However, the efforts alone cannot curb the problem of global hunger in the long run. Furthermore, solving global hunger on a short-term basis can foster a culture of dependency, rendering them ineffective in sustainably easing global hunger.</p>	<p>A concession is made here, but it is unclear whether it is meant to be a rebuttal or if the supporting argument has been retracted</p>
<p>Firstly, international efforts are only effective to the extent of which the political stability of poverty-stricken countries can be maintained to allow the aid to be befittingly and effectively deployed. Oftentimes, recipient countries of food aid are third-world, conflict-stricken countries facing political instability due to civil wars, rebellious or political violence. When food aid is received by these recipient countries, the local governments may be distracted by political infighting and lack foresight to distribute the supplies to the people. This will result in misplacement of funding and aid, and thus international efforts are unable to curb global hunger due to the circumstances the recipient countries are in and the countries' leadership. Furthermore, conflicts between recipient countries and large donors of food aid, like the USA, further worsen this issue as the involved governments do not clearly distinguish military operations from humanitarian activities, and this hinders aid from flowing into the country. For example, the parties to the conflict in Afghanistan have not permitted humanitarian agencies to carry out aid programmes to prevent civilian starvation. Even with resources available, governments and non-governmental organisations are not able to ensure they successfully reach the civilians facing starvation. Thus, international efforts in mitigating global hunger are only effective to the extent that the recipient country is politically stable and has proper governance, so that the aid actually reaches the beneficiaries.</p>	<p>"Firstly,...": listing signpost words essentially creates a list in the essay. There are more complex and thoughtful ways of arranging ideas and showing the connections between them</p> <p>Well-argued paragraph</p>
<p>Secondly, the international efforts to ease global hunger have limited effectiveness because of their inability to address the root causes such as climate change and war, since global hunger is merely a symptom of these issues. Weather shocks, due in part to climate change, are increasingly driving hunger. Half the world's poor grow their own food, and the volatility of the weather conditions including temperature changes and the increasing occurrence of extreme weather events like droughts and heatwaves destroy crops and decrease fertility of agrarian soil. Wars on the other hand, cause many to seek refuge at home, like the 2011 civil war in Libya. Food transport networks are almost inconceivable to solve due to their intricate and complex nature. Hence, international efforts only can go as far as providing aid in the form of harnessing new technology for the local farmers to grow crops to sustain their livelihood, immediate food relief and other measures which work around climate change, war or other underlying causes. This shows that international efforts are limited in effectiveness because of the aforementioned phenomena.</p>	
<p>Lastly, NGOs, governments and supranational bodies distributing food aid often have their efforts hampered by political agendas of the recipient countries. Corruption is a predominant issue in the developing world. Billions of dollars in food and other foreign aid are flowing into Yemen at this very moment, yet millions are still living a step away from famine. Food aids intended for civilians facing starvation are not reaching them due to the aid being seized by</p>	

armed units that are Saudi-led, American-backed military coalitions fighting in Yemen. There are many instances where high-profile officials seize food and sell them for money. According to media sources, a leaked UN report says that up to half of the food aid - valued at \$485 million in 2019 - was diverted through a corrupt web of partners, contractors, local armed groups representing the local government and even the staff from WFP. This diversion of food aid puts the international efforts to curb global hunger to waste, as the aid eventually falls into the wrong hands. Hence, international efforts are only effective to a small extent due to political agendas of the recipient country, which is difficult for NGOs to resolve.	
<p>In conclusion, international efforts are only effective to a small extent due to the indomitable underlying causes of global hunger that are out of the means of food relief organisations and supranational bodies'. However, more can be done, for the success in providing immediate food relief shows that these efforts are not entirely wasted. Organisations could focus on the sustainability of helping countries to curb starvation, through the means of education and the harnessing of new technology, which would allow recipient countries to be more independent in their path to food security.</p> <p>(Desiree Soh, 21-01)</p>	Could make clearer reference to the broad opening

## Application Question from JC1 Timed Practice

*In response to GCE A Level 2010 Paper 2:*

***In this article, Patricia O'Sullivan describes some current issues around the subject of food. How applicable do you find her observations to yourself and your own society?***

### Response 1

A relevant response that consistently makes clear reference to the Singapore context. There is plenty of elaboration on why such phenomena are seen in Singapore, leading to some insights. While there is not much of a broader picture of Singapore society's relationship with food explored, the arguments raised are relevant and conducted with some nuance, recognising that trends in society can and do change in response to current events. However, the nuances can be better managed, as there are instances in which sweeping evaluations cause previously raised nuances to come to naught.	
Patricia O'Sullivan presents the pivotal role that food plays in the past and how following the creation of modern societies, the role in which food plays in our lives has [been] increasingly altered. I agree with most of O' Sullivan's views as her perspectives are applicable to my society at present. However, her opinions have the likelihood of becoming increasingly inapplicable to my society in the future.	Some nuance shown in the stand taken, recognising to an extent the changing nature of Singapore society
As O'Sullivan expounds on the evolution of our metropolitan society, she says, "In an ever-increasing number of families both parents go to work...spending on take-aways or pre-prepared meals has increased greatly." In essence, with the rise in the number of working parents, parents no longer possess the flexibility and abundance of time to cook	Clearly structured paragraph

<p>and have their meals with their family at home. I agree with O'Sullivan as in Singapore, our hectic and fast-paced lifestyles have also led to a "takeaway" culture that is emblematic of our Singaporean lifestyles. As compared to our counterparts, Singaporeans are known to work significantly longer hours and this has heavily reduced the amount of time that we spend on eating. With the provision of hawker centres in almost every residential district, coupled with crowded and bustling malls packed with individuals having their meals after a long day at work, Singaporeans rarely spend their time at home and will often prefer to settle their meals outside. This is also predominantly due to the time and energy that is required to prepare meals at home which Singaporeans after a hectic day at work, do not possess. Hence, I do agree with O'Sullivan that eating outside has become a norm in our modern society. Having said that, with the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic, and as more working adults are encouraged to work from home, these parents now have more bandwidth and time to prepare meals as they go about their daily activities in the same location. Before the advent of the pandemic, the time needed to travel home to cook was a chief hindrance to the prevalence of home-cooked meals but with the pandemic forcing individuals to stay home, more Singaporeans have more leisure time to spare which they can spend on cooking. Hence, O'Sullivan's claim is increasingly not applicable to my society.</p>	<p>Good explanation of how the Singapore context creates this comparable phenomenon of taking away food</p> <p>Discussion is made current with reference to how the pandemic is changing how we prepare dinner. It could be considered if such a phenomenon might be here to stay as the pandemic evolves</p>
<p>As O'Sullivan describes the emergence of fast-food chains, she says, [there is] "far more eating out at fast food outlets, a societal shift driven partly by the demands of children." In other words, the preference of youths towards food is increasingly in favour of fast-foods. I agree with O' Sullivan as in Singapore, obesity has been on the rise with the omnipresence of fast-food chains around the nation. There is a greater propensity to attract and appeal to the younger generation with the rise of social media which enables companies to be cognizant about the dynamic preferences of the younger generation. This can be seen from the upcoming launch of the BTS meal by McDonalds which was created due to the overwhelming popularity of the Korean pop band group, BTS, who many youths today are fans of. Furthermore, McDonalds is known for its happy meals that are specifically catered to younger children that come with a miniature toy with every meal purchased. What is critical to note is that these toys are often curated and rolled out based on the current trends that are gaining in popularity. This entices younger consumers to be in favour of fast-food chains like McDonalds precisely because these brands are able to connect the interests of their consumers to food. Therefore, I agree with O'Sullivan that the younger generation constitutes a large proportion of consumers of fast-food chains. However, this is based on the assumption that parents are giving their children the freedom to consume fast-food, which may not necessarily be the case in Singapore. In an attempt to promote a healthy lifestyle amongst Singaporeans, the government has been assiduously trying to encourage Singaporeans to identify healthier food choices. As such, parents are also becoming increasingly cognizant about the importance of cultivating healthier lifestyles for their children. They have a greater knowledge of the perils of consuming unhealthy foods such as fast foods and are more likely to restrict their children's consumption of fast foods. Thus, in response to the government's efforts to promote a healthy lifestyle amongst the population, parents in Singapore are reducing their children's intake of fast-food hence O'Sullivan's view is not applicable to my society.</p>	<p>Interesting observation on how social media has changed the game, supported with a relevant and current example</p> <p>Shows deeper understanding of how fast food giants attract consumers, though this could be more closely illustrated in Singapore</p> <p>Recognition of changing societal trends, though the exhortation to live healthier lives is not at all new</p> <p>Final statement lacks nuance, seemingly writing over the complexities raised in the paragraph</p>



<p>In conclusion, I agree with O'Sullivan as the hectic and fast-paced lifestyles of Singaporeans have created a "takeaway" culture but her view is becoming increasingly inapplicable to my society in light of the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic. Besides, I do agree with her on the fact that children are in favour of fast-food chains but her view is only applicable to my society based on the condition that parents do not control their children's consumption of fast food.</p> <p>{Angelica Koh, 21-A4}</p>	<p>Odd statement, as this condition is hypothetical when the question asks for a real evaluation, which has also already been provided above</p>
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## Response 2

<p><i>An excellent attempt under timed conditions, with good selection of relevant claims that enables a fruitful discussion. The clear explanations of these claims established not only good comprehension of the passage, but also adequate background knowledge of the issue. The characteristics of Singapore that were brought up were apt for the evaluation carried out and demonstrated uncommon insight, supporting why the claims were or were not applicable well. However, work can be done to achieve more balance, so the evaluation goes beyond whether or not the claims are applicable, to recognising with more nuance how applicable they are.</i></p>	
<p>Firstly, O'Sullivan posits that 'in many of today's homes, however, the television and not the dining table is more often the hub of eating activity as the family meal comes under pressure from the pace of modern life and its attendant demands' (line 24. The author illustrates that the progressiveness of modernity comes with the increased stress from not only wanting to do more, but to do more within a shorter span of time. Thus, the television has taken the dining table's place - representative of how pragmatism comes first; watching television and eating, killing two birds with one stone while relaxing as compared to just eating and chatting with family members. This is especially so in Singapore - with the average Singaporean working around 45 hours a week, we tend to prioritise work over family and be very rigid in our pragmatic thinking - though family is undoubtedly a priority, the family needs to be sustained through work first. This ideal was perpetrated first by our forefathers at a time [when] pragmatism was key to nation-building and now continues to intensify as Singaporeans strive to achieve more and more. This, however, comes with a price, one of which being the family meal. With parents coming home later, it is increasingly rare to see families eat together, and even [when they do] it is often in front of a television. Perhaps it is unfair to argue that eating in front of a television shows a lack of prioritisation of familial bonding; it is more so evident that the stress from modern expectations results in everyone being too tired from daily activities and seeing watching television as a form of rest and relaxation rather than using energy to [hold] a conversation with family members. In this sense, O'Sullivan's argument is relevant to Singapore's context as Singaporeans gradually choose rest and relaxation over family bonding, as a direct result of modern stress.</p>	<p>Claim clearly identified</p> <p>Clear understanding of claim shown through explanation</p> <p>Relevant Singapore traits raised that explain the reasons why Singaporeans behave in this manner</p> <p>Observation of Singapore matches the claim</p> <p>Observation is evaluated With some awareness of the argument's shortcomings</p> <p>Overall a good attempt to apply the author's claim to Singapore</p>
<p>Secondly, in paragraph 6, O'Sullivan argues that in modern society, many are greatly concerned about ethical issues regarding food and she supports this through the statement 'Babette's calorie-heavy feast seems at odds with the modern world and its concerns', [providing] examples such as the carbon footprint left behind, global warming and so forth. In summary, she posits that modern society is increasingly concerned about the ethics of food in its every aspect. However, I feel that this is not very relevant in Singapore's context.</p>	<p>Claim identified</p> <p>Clear understanding of claim is demonstrated</p> <p>Stand is clear</p>

<p>Since 1965, the government [has] been more focused on bread and butter issues due to Singapore's vulnerability as a small nation and this has directly translated into the mindsets of Singaporeans; they tend to desire more tangible satisfaction over intangible satisfaction, in this instance efficiency in the [obtaining] of food rather than the feel-good feeling of morality and being ethical. This can be seen in our supermarkets, such as NTUC, where the organic section occupies only a small fraction of the entire store. Furthermore, with a more conservative and pragmatic mindset ingrained in Singaporeans, they tend to go for the cheaper alternative rather than the ethically sourced one, this rendering O'Sullivan's argument unrelatable to most Singaporeans. Undoubtedly, it is unfair to condemn the whole population to this thinking; there is in fact a minority that remains concerned about the ethics of food. With that being said, this is still only a minority, and hence O'Sullivan's argument that many are concerned about the ethics of food is not completely relevant in Singapore's society.</p> <p><i>(Kyran Narayanan, 21-12)</i></p>	<p>Evaluation using Singaporeans' mindsets regarding food</p> <p>Suitable example</p> <p>Spot on identification of Singapore's traits</p> <p>Attempted balance here, but it needs further elaboration: Who is this minority, why are they concerned with ethics, and why are they the exception in Singapore?</p>
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# Essays: 2021 JC2 Mid-Year Examinations

## 2 In your society, to what extent is there a need for greater diversity in political leadership?

*The strength of this essay lies in its consistent focus on addressing the context set out in the question, as well as the term 'greater'. Salient points were raised as well. That being said, more could have been done to evaluate why there is a 'need' for greater diversity in political leadership; consider some yardsticks that could be used to evaluate this need.*

In a democracy, the importance of good political leadership and governance is something that is expected, in order for a country to be run well. In fact, most people engage in politics through their interactions with elected officials, and ensuring that their responsibilities to govern and manage the country are well-executed. In my society, Singapore, it has been a fact that the leading party, the People's Action Party (PAP) has been the face of politics for decades, with entire generations used to seeing a majority of its leaders in our government. Yet, this is just one aspect of the characteristics of political leadership, here in Singapore. In a country, people hold differing opinions and beliefs, which should be represented by the leadership who then puts the country on the world stage, upholding the values that they hold dear. Ultimately, there is then a need to consider whether these demands by the people have been accurately tackled and met by political leadership. In my society, there will be a need for more diversity in terms of representation by political parties, as well as the consideration of different races in Singapore.

Context of SG's political landscape provided

Clear thesis statement

Ever since the tiny country of Singapore was set to thrust itself onto the global stage, we have been determined to pride ourselves in our diversity and acceptance of different races. After all, our people are our biggest asset, yet they are also a potential source of tension. In Singapore, many claim that our political leadership is representative of our population's racial composition, and is well-established in that regard. It is undeniable that one of our greatest achievements and characteristics is our ability to manage a melting pot of culture with different races. In that sense, many claim that our political leadership accurately represents this diversity. One case in point is our Group Representation Constituency (GRC) system, set up with the requirement to ensure at least one candidate from a minority race, as it fulfils the need for racial representation of the society. This certainly is a step forward in ensuring that our leadership caters to the needs of different groups of people culturally, and making sure that no one gets left behind. In a society where it is easy to overlook minorities, especially considering that it might be overshadowed by a lifestyle mostly represented by the majority, I do acknowledge that this is a good way to ensure that everyone's voices are heard. Yet, it may also then be argued that this gesture is merely symbolic, as there has been a rise in issues appearing in the media regarding the lack of awareness of minority issues, despite the representation in political leadership. While it is a generalisation to say that political leadership with a large racial majority overlooks the minority, it is also necessary to consider the need for more representation by leaders of minority races. This will ensure an equal consideration of all matters involving race, rather than one that is only emblematic of our

Relevant SG characteristic woven into the discussion

Meaning could have been more precise here -- what kind of 'lifestyle' do you have in mind?

An insightful observation, supported by an apposite example

Would having a representative necessarily ensure 'equal consideration'? Thought needs to be developed



<p>racial composition. Hence, I believe that there is a need for greater diversity regarding the races of our political leadership.</p>	
<p>In Singapore, there is a need for greater diversity in the political party representation in our political leadership. Generations have gotten used to seeing the PAP at the helm of politics in our country. Certainly, it is not to say that the leading party in Singapore does not deserve its legitimacy and power. After all, it is a fact that its leaders transformed the nation from third world to first in one generation, especially considering the vulnerabilities faced at the time. Yet, as a hallmark of our democracy, the need for checks and balances is still unfulfilled to some extent. Indeed, many Western democracies do not criticise the long-lasting mandate of the PAP in Singapore, even if it would be a chance for scrutiny for corruption in other countries. In fact, Singapore ranks 3rd globally on the list regarding corruption of the government. In this regard, the people are content with how the party has been ruling, yet it is also easy for opposing voices to be unknowingly quashed, because of a lack of representation. In Mongolia, initiatives have been put in place to bring people together to listen to different political opinions in an objective manner, to facilitate understanding of the people and government of the issues faced by people from different viewpoints. In Taiwan, an initiative was set up to give people more influence in what the government discusses in parliament. While it shows the polarity of people's opinions, it is also a good opportunity to listen to and take into consideration the views different from the norm. This is an element to be modelled in our political leadership. With the increased use of social media as compared to ten years ago, it has seen the rise of people being more vocal about their thoughts and opinions. The echo chambers formed by social media are pervasive and hard to crack open, with views of an individual being concretised and strengthened by the views of others. Yet, it then reveals the pressing need and worry of people in society for more representation of these ideas in our political leadership. Veritably, the current form of political leadership does take into account the different views, especially with the increased presence of political parties in our parliament. However, to be hemmed in by the limits of a particular party's leadership leaves people wanting to break free of the circumscribed rules, in search of a more accurate portrayal of their voices. Therefore, in Singapore, there is a need for greater diversity in political parties in our political leadership.</p>	<p>Clear engagement with the context in the question</p> <p>Not entirely clear how this example relates to political leadership; looking at politics in general</p> <p>Needs a clearer link to the need for diversity, i.e. similar echo chambers have formed within our political leadership, etc.</p> <p>How do the echo chambers reveal the need for diversity? Link has not been coherently developed</p> <p>Attempts to tackle 'greater'</p> <p>Reasoning unclear. What does this mean?</p>
<p>Lauded by the global community as a successful government with considerable achievements in progress and prosperity, the political leadership of Singapore has positioned itself well in terms of its abilities to govern and execute its duties. Despite that, it is also thus easy to forget greater successes that can be attained with the consideration of greater diversity in our political leadership, as one that is truly representative of the needs of the people they serve.</p> <p><i>(Lim Junheng, Jovan, 20-05)</i></p>	



## 2 In your society, to what extent is there a need for greater diversity in political leadership?

*This piece demonstrates a clear personal voice and grasp of issues, and on the whole, quite well-argued and supported with relevant examples. There was, however, a lack of engagement with the term 'need' – why exactly are the benefits that come with having greater diversity in political leadership so important / crucial to your society? While there is undeniably some balance attempted, the ideas could have been further developed; more could have been done to navigate the extent (e.g. a pressing need, but society is arguably not ready for such representation).*

In a world plagued by Covid-19, the true faces of various national governments are shown clearly to their citizens. In the Philippines, the Duterte regime has garnered a diverse range of feedback, from violent woes for death for their President to blind praise for him as a glorious leader. As the 2022 elections come around, the Philippine people are once again under the pressure of choosing who to appoint as their leaders, with various factions fighting for their rightful representatives. As Duterte loyalists vouch for the President's daughter, those against the regime cry against political dynasties and are striving for change. The farmers are still trying to get their sentiments to Malacañang, while the feminists are still struggling for the rights of women, battered by the misogynistic rule. Despite being democratic, the Philippine government has been occupied by the same elites for decades, and thus, there is a need for greater diversity in political leadership in the Philippines, in terms of socio-economic statuses, gender, and political leanings, to a certainly large extent.

A lively intro steeped in intimate knowledge of the context the writer is familiar with. However, do bear in mind that the type of regime it has needs to be made clearer beyond the later mention of dynasty or elites. An earlier mention would have prevented the impression that you focused on the political executive who is but one leader.

Firstly, to match the different echelons of Philippine society, there is a **need** to include greater representation for these different socioeconomic groups in the government. For an immeasurable time, the Philippine government has housed elites from a multitude of powerful families, centering the power amongst those chosen few. Admittedly, it is not a cause of shock due to how the government had been constructed under the American occupation, as the Americans had carefully trained and nurtured the Philippine elites to handle the government so as to ensure American power in return for the promise of financial stability and sustained power. Thus, the rich have continued to gain power through politics, and those with "new money" recognize politics as a way to gain power for themselves too, attracting celebrities like Manny Pacquiao into the Senate, and Joseph Estrada into the presidency. **However, as the elites prosper and take the lead, the woes of the poor—the majority—and the middle-class have been easily swept away with the intention of catering to the powerful elites to maintain political support and funding.** As the elite minority enjoys their undisputed rule, the disadvantaged majority put their troubles across. Farmers from the rural provinces of the Philippines have staged countless protests against the unjust work conditions they are subjected to, mostly culminating in bloodshed, with the devastating Mendiola Massacre under the Aquino administration as a painful example. The ethnic minorities in Mindanao, such as the Lumads, still **continue to fight against the formidable Philippine army** for their right to remain on their land and retain their traditions. Arguably, it has become a norm in Philippine news to hear of protests by different political groups representing different minorities in the society, yet the fact that it is a norm is something that should be questioned

**Clear reply** to the question, but did you calibrate the **extent** of need?

To make this well-argued point about the lack of diversity clearer, make it clear that the processes to join political leadership are exclusionary and these groups come from the same social circle

**Excellent point** made, but a clearer point needs to be made about why greater diversity in representation in government – of social classes – is critical now – why there is a 'need'

Explain the **army's connection with the powerful elite** → are they under their orders?

What is the situation



<p>and changed. Is it really right for Filipinos to die just to fight for their rights—to the extent that it has become a norm? The elites do try to cater to their needs and still do try to pass laws to make the situation better, such as implementing minimum wage, yet as the protests continue, as lives continue to be unfortunate, and as people continue to die under the hands of the military, it is questionable whether these acts by the government to solve the Filipinos' woes are enough. Thus, there is a great need to employ representatives from the different factions into the government for better representation and ease of communication. The Philippine government should have ample representation, chosen by the minorities themselves, so as to finally give the Filipinos the protection they deserve from the ruling government.</p>	<p>with respect to diversity in leadership?</p> <p>Why there is a great need – for greater representation – could have been further explicated.</p>
<p>Secondly, there is a need for greater gender equality in government, as compared to the current male-dominated state. Some may say that the gender representation in the Philippine government is better as compared to other countries, yet it is my opinion that it is still not enough to combat the misogynistic and patriarchal mindsets of few, and promulgate a just female perspective into the government. The Philippines has only had two female presidents in its whole independence journey, namely Aquino and Arroyo, and currently has a female Vice President beside the infamously misogynistic President. The Senate currently hosts a female minority, and similarly for the House of Representatives which includes a transgender woman. It might be safe to say that the gender ratio has improved as compared to the early days, yet this improvement is still not enough. More women in the government can show the Philippine society that women can lead and be as competent, or even more so as their male counterparts. More women in government can rightfully represent the Filipinas in the fight against discrimination and inequality, creating a better society for women to be protected, and for girls to have a safe environment to grow up in, especially now with the status quo, where rape jokes are freely made by the President, earning boisterous laughs from his predominantly male audience, and where the competency of the female Vice President is continuously shut down by her supposed partner and his male lackeys. Greater female representation is needed in the Philippine government to show and prove that the Filipina can lead and that the Filipina can be powerful in this patriarchal society.</p>	<p>Could have established the gender make-up of your society—50%-50% and why greater diversity is needed—what happens without it and what gains are reaped?</p> <p>Compelling ideas—safety, discrimination, etc—but they are underdeveloped. You need to delve deeper into why increased diversity will address the problems.</p>
<p>Lastly, greater diversity in terms of political leanings should be introduced in the Philippine government so as to facilitate better policy-making and debates, as compared to its current state. It should be a given for the opposition to have a place in policy-making, yet the current regime has spent its 6-year tenure shutting down its opposition, locking up those who are vocal against its plans, and even going to the extent of ruining their name. For example, Leila de Lima, former Secretary of Defence and Senator, is a well-known critic of the Duterte administration and has been thrown into jail and has faced controversies of affairs with her driver to thoroughly ruin her name, and lose credibility and reliability, leading the Philippine society to be critical of her despite of her claims. Similarly, Trillanes, a former Senator, has been thrown into jail for issues dug up from years ago so as to paint him in a negative light due to his vocal opposition against the regime. Currently, it is arguable that the current government may be likened to worship, as policy-makers and government officials put the President and his lackeys on a pedestal, praising them to get into their good graces. The lack of opposition would only allow a dictator to prosper, and only policies that would be</p>	<p>If something should be the case, does it mean we need it?</p> <p>Is it really a given?</p> <p>Opposition ≠ Diversity</p> <p>These are compelling examples, but you cite individual cases when you make a case for how homogenous the political leanings are within the government.</p> <p>The cost of this could have been made more explicit.</p>



<p>beneficial for the ruling government would most likely pass. The situation may have been acceptable if the ruling government was decent and had integrity, yet with the current mismanagement of the Covid-19 situation, leading the Philippines to have a soaring death toll and active cases, and the relentless extrajudicial killings under the premise of protection against terrorism, the absence of a formidable opposition is devastatingly stark, and leaves the Philippine society vulnerable to the insidious political agenda the ruling government has. The opposition that the ruling government has chosen to have under its watchful eye may not be enough to counter these questionable policies, especially with the aforementioned lack of representation from the disadvantaged majority, and the minimal female voice in the government.</p>	<p>Well expressed, but what is the crux and need? Checks and balances are sorely needed because? What do they do?</p>
<p>In conclusion, diversity in general is always welcomed and needed in any given situation for greater inclusivity and effectiveness. In Philippine society, despite the long-drawn history of the same kind of leaders getting into government, it is never too late to enact a change in structure, and gain greater leadership for the Filipinos in its diverse factions, genders, and political leanings. With the elections in 2022 coming up, and with the massive flaws of the government shoved into the faces of everyone, it is high time for the Filipinos to carefully choose which leaders would best represent them and would fight for their rights.</p> <p>(Patrice Santiago, 20-E6)</p>	<p>Good link to the present-day context</p>

## 2 In your society, to what extent is there a need for greater diversity in political leadership?

<p><i>A largely adequate response that raises consistently relevant points that address the main contention in the question. Pertinent characteristics of Singapore, along with relevant local examples, were also woven into the arguments. This response could be further elevated by engaging more consistently with the term 'greater', and by providing a distinct rebuttal point. There were moments where assertions were relied on to convince the reader -- in such cases, exemplification and elaboration would have made for a more compelling argument.</i></p>	
<p>"Singaporeans are not ready for a non-Chinese prime minister." These words posted by a member of parliament a few years back caused an uproar across the country. Although there has been greater ethnic diversity amongst the members of parliament, Singapore has always had a Chinese prime minister. Furthermore, the leading party's core members are mostly Chinese. This has led various groups and demographics in my society to feel unheard and sometimes misrepresented. Although some may argue that the government's efforts, such as different ethnic groups taking the role of president each term, have been praiseworthy, in an age where active innovation is required, the government needs to diversify its political leadership for Singapore to grow rapidly. Thus, I believe that greater diversity of political leadership is needed to a large extent.</p>	<p>Demonstrates an awareness of issues and modifier 'greater'.</p> <p>Clear thesis statement. A brief preview of the points both for and against your position could also be included in the introduction.</p>
<p>Singapore is a multi-cultural society with diverse demographics which should be better reflected in the political leadership. However, politicians still remain as mostly Chinese and of similar demographics. This has made minority groups feel less represented, and their needs</p>	



<p>less met. This can be seen by the increasing approval and liking of the Workers' Party, a rival to the leading party, in the General Elections. This party heavily pushed for the needs of minority ethnic groups during their campaign and the leading members are also of a greater diversity than the leading party. In a multi-cultural society which promotes racial harmony, lack of representation will promote discord and threaten the fragile social fabric of the country. Not only variety in terms of race, but also in terms of sexuality, is lacking amongst the current leaders. In 2020, there was a report of the mistreatment of a transgender student in Singapore. When the Ministry of Education (MOE) publicly responded to the incident, they continued to use the dead name, the pronouns that the student did not identify with and seemingly downplayed the situation. Although this may not be a detrimental statement to the country, it caused a public uproar amongst supporters and members of the LGBTQ+ community. The general public accused the ministry of blatantly disrespecting and mistreating the LGBTQ+ community. This controversy, although seemingly minor, highlights the lack of knowledge and representation of certain demographics in the country. Had there been a representative amongst the leaders, the needs of this student and the community would have been more seriously looked upon before the statement was released. Thus, in order to better represent the needs of the various demographics in Singapore, greater diversity in political leadership is required.</p>	<p>Illustration not directly pertinent to the contention in the question</p> <p>Some room for nuance here; this makes the assumption that belonging to the same group equates to unquestioning support. Is this necessarily true?</p>
<p>On the other hand, critics may argue that as long as the government is willing to listen to the people, there is no need for greater diversity in political leadership. The Singaporean leaders have taken great effort in communicating with the citizens through various platforms. Many have opened social media accounts to propagate their views and allow for discussion in the comments section. There are also regular Meet the People sessions where the leaders listen to citizens' concerns and opinions. By doing so, the leaders already have an understanding of the needs of the citizens. The government also works closely with various religious leaders and professionals in various fields to better understand what problems people of various cultures encounter. While these efforts should be continued, the leaders may not fully grasp or understand the struggles of these citizens and may end up misrepresenting or not representing them at all. As previously stated, there has been a lack of LGBTQ+ representation in the government. Thus, while discussing whether to repeal section 377A, a law which discriminates against the LGBTQ+ community, the government sought advice from religious leaders. This outraged supporters of the LGBTQ+ community as several religions in Singapore have scriptures which are against the LGBTQ+ community. This is just one case of misrepresentation where the leaders sought advice from the people who do not understand the needs of the community affected. Although it is true that Singapore is a rather conservative society, it has a growing LGBTQ+ community which should feel heard and represented in the political leadership. Evidently, with greater diversity in political leadership, more demographics will be represented and less misrepresentation will occur. This will inevitably strengthen the legitimacy of the political leaders.</p>	<p>Certainly a valid point, but further elaboration required; why, despite the many efforts to understand their citizens better, would the government still not fully understand their struggles?</p> <p>As aforementioned, does greater representation necessarily translate to more equitable policies? Causal links could have been fleshed out more</p>
<p>Greater innovation is required for Singapore to grow. Singapore has successfully made its name known amongst big countries and has become a modern and well-respected country. However, the country is not growing as rapidly as it used to despite having cutting edge</p>	<p>Assertion without sufficient exemplification. One</p>



<p>technology and better infrastructure. The stagnating growth could be attributed to its lack of diversity in its main leaders. The main faces of the government have yet to change. While well-respected and familiar to the citizens, their handling of the power has mainly been top-down. The leading party which takes up almost 70% of the seats in parliament has also never changed. Perhaps, with a change and variety in beliefs and values of political leaders, the country could be driven to greater heights. Perhaps, through another set of eyes or another leadership style, there could be greater growth in the country. Although the leaders have tried to be innovative through the use and implementation of technology in various sectors like education, none can be more innovative than a fresh set of brains from various backgrounds. Thus, there is a need for a greater diversity of political leadership for Singapore to continue to grow.</p>	<p>area worth exploring would be echo chambers, and how they have been formed around similar ways of thinking, which then leads to a stagnation of ideas.</p> <p>Again, more can be done to exemplify your point; what exactly are the reasons for this claim?</p>
<p>Pessimists, however, may argue that a greater diversity in political leadership will result in discord amongst the leaders. With a greater diversity of political leaders, there are many more views and perspectives raised. This may result in decision-making becoming less efficient due to the more contradicting needs of multiple communities in the country. This, in turn, may hinder the progress of Singapore. On the other hand, while this concern may be valid, the needs of various groups of Singapore are represented. This will allow the ultimate decision made to be more inclusive and increase the legitimacy of the government. In the recent COVID-19 pandemic, the leaders had to be hasty in making decisions. They had to take into account impacts on various demographics while implementing restrictions. This included restrictions on places of worship, religious celebrations, as well as people of various occupations. While the restrictions implemented were able to meet the needs of most communities in the end, these decisions could have been more effectively made if these groups had already been represented amongst political leaders. Evidently, greater diversity in political leadership can aid the country better especially in times where decisions have to be made rapidly without neglecting the needs of any groups of people in the society. Thus, greater diversity in political leadership will better benefit my society.</p>	<p>A valid point; to elevate it, weave in some relevant examples</p> <p>Some rehashing of the points found in Body Paragraph 1. Explanation demonstrates a rather simplistic understanding of governance.</p> <p>Do note that these are Ministry-level decisions made by directors and other personnel, not just political leaders</p>
<p>In conclusion, for Singapore's political leaders to have a better understanding on how to use the authority given to them, there should be a better representation of the various demographics amongst the citizens and foster more trust in the government. Greater diversity will also drive Singapore to greater heights through an increased variety of perspectives and innovation. Since Singapore has made itself known on the map, a greater diversity of leaders will put Singapore in a better position to make itself a highly sought-after collaborator and investment in the world. Thus, Singapore needs a greater diversity in political leadership to a large extent.</p> <p>(Fong Hiu Tung Jacqueline, 20-05)</p>	

### 3 'Individuals are responsible for their own health'. How far do you agree?

*This essay displays a consistent engagement of the question and an assured awareness of the various dimensions of individual responsibility, sustaining a cogent argument revolving around the relation between autonomy and responsibility. The development of the arguments is done aptly with a range of examples and clear explanation + evaluation of the context and conditions affecting the degree of responsibility an individual has. The substantiation in the form of evidence is especially strong in body paragraph 2, and achieving a similar degree of exemplification in other paragraphs would elevate this essay, as would a consideration of other factors/forces on different levels of the SWM spheres of influence.*

'Health is wealth.' An age-old adage that seems ever more out of reach than ever in today's disease-ridden world. Being healthy now seems like a privilege, with only a few born without any genetic associations to cancer or underlying health conditions like Type 1 Diabetes. With environmental and conditional factors having such a large influence on our health and well-being, it is hard to put the responsibility of one's health entirely on one person. Of course, health is not just limited to physical but mental health, which means that individuals have even more responsibility to bear. With there being other environmental factors contributing to one's health, alongside the fact that the capabilities of an individual are limited, individuals, while still responsible for their general well-being, are not entirely or greatly responsible for their own health.

Clear thesis statement

Opponents may posit that individuals have a responsibility over their own health, as only individuals can truly watch over and manage their decisions and lifestyle choices, which in turn influence the outcomes of their physical and mental health. Naturally, if one were to choose to smoke cigars and binge drink alcohol every day for pleasure, why should others be responsible for the negative consequences of their hedonistic acts? We alone seem to have the responsibility to care for our general health as we decide what course of action is best for us at any time—no government or organisation or even other members of the community could watch every move one makes in their entire life. Even when it seems that external factors – such as naturally sedentary occupations could seek to occupy large swathes of time – could result in people having less autonomy over when they can exercise, there are always alternatives, such as finding a more mobile mode of transportation to work or school. The autonomy, the right to live and preside over our own lives, compels the argument that one should indeed take responsibility for their own physical health. Even with regards to our well-being, when we become stressed due to environmental factors, we can choose to distress on our own, whether it be through listening to music—which is easily accessible—or even by talking to someone else. With such a variety of activities and choices we can make, it appears that we should bear the brunt of the responsibility for our health.

Autonomy entails being accountable for the consequences of our own choices

Consider whether it is always as simple as looking for an alternative option

Again, is it as easily resolved an issue as it seems here?

Of course, that argument was spoken from a privileged viewpoint, where one had control over most of their lifestyle choices. But when it comes to individuals who lack the capacity to be responsible for themselves due to poverty or physical and mental impairments, it becomes harder to argue that they then still have to be entirely responsible for their own health. Instead, I argue that the state has a responsibility as a caregiver of the people, to care for the health of those who lack the capability to do so. The social contract theory puts forth the idea



<p>that because each individual gives up some of his or her rights to belong as part of a chosen state or society, the government has the responsibility to care for the welfare of its citizens. Particularly for those mentally or physically impaired, where their own actions could harm themselves and worsen their health—by tripping and falling—they require the assistance of trained personnel, which is where the government’s capabilities come into play. While we cannot expect the government to watch and care over every action of every individual, the state not only has the capacity, but the obligation to extend help to its citizens, especially for those who seek help or when they are in dire situations where no other party is willing or able to intervene. One such example of a state which takes partial responsibility for the health of its citizens is Canada. With universal free healthcare, citizens can go to any public health hospital and receive free treatments. And because citizens need not worry about the economic considerations before seeing a doctor, their populace is generally healthier, due to government intervention. This is in comparison to the United States of America, who is a strong believer in the idea that individuals are responsible for their own lives and health. This results in very little governmental aid when people’s health takes a turn for the worse, and hence sky-high hospital bills that actually dissuade people from going to the hospital, contributing to the worsening health of the nation. With the state’s duty of care to its people, it seems absurd that people’s general well-being and health declines because of a lack of governmental input into individual health. Hence, I believe that while individuals still have a stake in their own health, the government’s obligation over individuals extends to individual’s health and well-being.</p>	<p>Good comparison of case studies showing the implication of different views re: individual responsibility</p> <p>Consider weaving the economic and financial aspect of capacity into your topic sentence to reinforce the internal coherence.</p>
<p>It is also hard to argue that individuals are responsible for their own health when it comes down not to lifestyle choices, but environmental reasons that are out of one’s control, even if they are entirely physically and mentally able. It seems obvious that when one has the right to decide one’s own living conditions, that no one else but themselves are to blame for any consequences. Yet 60% of the world’s population lives in crowded and urban areas. This means that we have to live with other people’s habits and lifestyles. For instance, it is known that 70% of smoke produced by smokers smoking cigarettes becomes second-hand smoke, which can cause illnesses like lung cancer due to the presence of carcinogenic compounds within the smoke. In a densely populated urban city centre, where we cannot always escape the interference of neighbours, we are unable to entirely protect our own physical health due to external influences that are mostly out of our control; even telling them to smoke elsewhere does not solve the problem as it could just affect other individuals. In a grey area of who is responsible for subsequent health conditions, the only thing clear is that individuals themselves should not be entirely left with the responsibility to care for their own health. In addition, mental health due to workplace stressors, other responsibilities like caring for the children or elderly, can lead to caretakers suffering simply because they are caring for the needs of multiple people. Parents are particularly prone to poor mental health because they are the ‘sandwich generation’, left with the responsibility of caring for those in older and younger generations. This herculean task is without a doubt stressful and tiring, as balancing the needs of everyone often results in compromises on their own end. While those more well off can depend elderly services such as old folk’s homes or childcare services to ease this burden, the reality is that the majority of people cannot afford to pay their way to a</p>	<p>Greater specificity here can help to sharpen the focus of this sentence</p> <p>Consider the emotional ties that compel us to make some of these life choices too</p> <p>What is the social</p>



<p>stress-free life. Even in a wealthy nation like Singapore, where the gross domestic product per capita is just over \$65,000 USD a year, the <i>Straits Times</i> reported that 1 in 2 working adults are stressed out due to their finances, as they do not have enough cash on hand to pay off all their debt and bills, much less take on new financial burdens like childcare services. With all of these factors compounding onto a few people—financial, social burdens of caring for so many people— in addition to other considerations such as living conditions, we cannot expect them to also be entirely responsible for their health.</p>	<p>phenomenon forming the backdrop for this?</p> <p>Could have considered factors or larger forces beyond our control as individuals too.</p>
<p>Overall, when individuals are in control of their lives and are privileged enough to be able to make better life decisions, those individuals should be almost entirely responsible for their own health. But for those limited by their own capabilities or bogged down by the inherent features of the environment, they cannot be entirely responsible. Instead, third party bodies, like the government or non-profit organisations should extend a hand to work together towards protecting the health of the less privileged. Perhaps in the future, assuming an idyllic, equal world, we may be able to take responsibility for our own health. But until then, for the most part, the burden of the individual's health will always and should always be shared by someone else.</p> <p>(Emily Young, 20-04)</p>	

#### 4 Examine the importance of the media in shaping identity in today's world.

<p><i>This essay displays original, informed and flavourful discussion. The insights, ideas, arguments and examples examined by the student were what elevated this response.</i></p>	
<p>In our current world, where globalisation has made people's experiences more and more homogenous, identity becomes more and more important. Our unique identities, setting us apart from each other, have both clearer markers and blurrier lines. An individual's identity is made up of characteristics that include him in some communities and excludes him from others, resulting in tangible effects on his lived experiences. For groups, like countries or religions, identity consists of shared traditions, experiences and values. Media can contribute to and reinforce one's identity and sense of belonging to their community. However, for both individuals and communities, the media is merely perpetuating the effects of identity markers on lived experiences, and hence is just one of many factors that shape identity.</p>	<p>Definition of what constitutes one's identity</p>
<p>In contributing towards an individual's identity, the media's significance lies in connecting the individual with others who possess common identity markers, especially for those who are physically apart from the communities they belong to. Globalisation has increased the number of immigrants around the world, resulting in many of their children growing up without experiencing their ethnic culture first-hand. This has the potential to dilute their connection to this facet of their identity. However, the media provides exposure to their motherland, not just in terms of traditions but giving immigrants and people within the country of origin a commonality. Teresa Teng, for example, is a Chinese singer whose songs provide the soundtrack to many Chinese people's childhoods, whether they are living in China</p>	<p>There is a clear set-up of why certain aspects of one's identity may be lacking, before the student explains clearly how media is able to fill this void</p>



<p>or overseas. Her songs not only strengthen Chinese diaspora's bonds to their language, they have also become a shared experience, building up Chinese people's sense of belonging in the community. Additionally, social media can be used to find or create spaces where people with common identity markers gather. For example, in Singapore, there are many Instagram pages dedicated to amplifying the stories of racial minorities to each other, in order to bond over them. The way that social media encourages interaction through its functions and makes finding communities easy with its convenient search engines and algorithms gives its online spaces significant power in boosting one's sense of belonging to their community. Hence, the media can provide a common area and a digital safe space for individuals, allowing them to connect strongly with their identity.</p>	
<p>For certain communities, pop culture is an integral part of their culture, so much so that it becomes part of their identity. The media, in hosting and broadcasting music, television shows and other aspects of pop culture, not only ties the people in these communities together, but also shapes other communities' perceptions of them, influencing the way others view their identity. Take Los Angeles, for example. When people think of Los Angeles, they often think of Hollywood. The city's identity is inextricably tied to its populace of movie stars and musicians. A large proportion of its population were drawn to it for its opportunities for careers in entertainment and social media. Los Angeles is a community shaped by pop culture, full of people who love and are part of said culture, bringing them together not only in common professions, but also physically. Another example would be South Korea's pop culture. The country's music and entertainment shows have become wildly popular all over the world. It is now part of their identity as a country, and they are globally renowned for their pop culture. This results in tangible effects upon the lives of Korean people due to the change in perceptions of non-Koreans towards them. New stereotypes have emerged from the spread of Korean pop culture, and Korean immigrants can face unsavoury remarks from the people buying into these stereotypes, such as questioning whether they have had plastic surgery due to Korean pop stars often having had plastic surgery. People can make assumptions of others' identities based on what the media shows them, hence influencing the experiences of people with that identity marker.</p>	<p>The student has been intentional in looking at different facets of media in each paragraph, while still ensuring that her EV relates back to the broader concept of 'the media' as a whole</p>
<p>On all scales, however, from individual to ethnic, the media does not so much shape identity so much as it perpetuates the already-existing effects of identity markers on people's lived experiences. The environment one is born into, as well as exposure to others' behaviour towards one's identity, has a greater effect on shaping one's identity, with the media reinforcing it. For example, a woman raised in the Netherlands, experiencing a higher degree of gender equality, would have a vastly different relationship with her womanhood than a child bride in Malawi, unwanted and sold off by her parents due to her gender. Identity markers such as gender and ethnicity, cannot be controlled, but one's environment would dictate one's perception of their own identity, as well as others' perceptions of it. The media can reinforce our own view of our identity or reflect what others think of it. Both of these effects are simply mirrors of the real-life experiences that shape identity. For example, after the Covid-19 pandemic started, print media released many articles with anti-Asian undertones, framing China's food culture as unhygienic and disgusting. In tandem with the</p>	<p>Here, the student questions what it means to truly 'shape' one's identity</p>



racism shown in the media, hate crimes against Asians in Western countries spiked. Suddenly, the trait of simply being Asian was having an oppressive effect on people's lives and experiences. The media parallels the perceptions of identity markers people already hold. While it is a factor that contributes towards one's identity, its importance lies in reinforcing perspectives on identity traits, and not in the fundamental shaping of identity.	
An increasingly globalised world means that our identity markers are constantly being scrutinised, by our own eye or others'. In the struggle to foster a meaningful connection to the identity markers we are born with, the media can help provide resources for us to strengthen or change our perceptions of identities. However, the environment we are in and general exposure to those identities leaves a deeper impression and is more fundamental.	
<p>In our current world, where globalisation has made people's experiences more and more homogenous, identity becomes more and more important. Our unique identities, setting us apart from each other, have both clearer markers and blurrier lines. An individual's identity is made up of characteristics that include him in some communities and excludes him from others, resulting in tangible effects on his lived experiences. For groups, like countries or religions, identity consists of shared traditions, experiences and values. Media can contribute to and reinforce one's identity and sense of belonging to their community. However, for both individuals and communities, the media is merely perpetuating the effects of identity markers on lived experiences, and hence is just one of many factors that shape identity.</p> <p>(Justine Koh, 20-01)</p>	The essay concludes with a statement that reinforces the evaluation done by the student to weigh the 'importance' of media in shaping identity

#### 4 Examine the importance of the media in shaping identity in today's world.

<p><i>This was an interesting read. While points made were not always clear (para 2) or nuanced (paras 1 &amp; 2), this was still a thoughtful response that reflected a depth of awareness through the consideration of how identity is shaped by the media. This essay could have been elevated by providing clearer points, introducing nuance to the evaluation, and developing the insights unearthed to logical conclusions.</i></p>	
<p>What does identity mean in today's context? While the traditional definition offered by dictionaries has remained unchanged, the characteristics that we use to define who we are has changed significantly over the years, owing to the cultural, technological and ideological paradigm shifts taking place in the 21st century. I believe that the media has been an essential driving force of this shift, as the media is important not only in creating identities for us, but also in strengthening and supporting pre-existing identities.</p>	<p>Clear thesis statement, with a preview of the points for your supporting arguments.</p>
<p>Skeptics argue that a person's identity is intrinsic, and that no external forces, not even the media, can shape a person's identity. This argument holds true when identity is defined by more traditional markers such as one's sex, race, ethnicity and nationality. Many of these inherent traits cannot be changed by external agents of socialisation, and certainly not the media. These determinants of identity go beyond categories printed on one's birth certificates, as many view them as inextricably linked to their sense of self. For example, race</p>	<p>In the past. What about today?</p> <p>Link this to how the media plays but a small part in this</p> <p>There is a claim in this paragraph that the</p>



<p>and ethnicity play a large role in shaping one's cultural practices and beliefs, where such transitions are instilled in people from young, becoming an important part of who they are. Many Asians are often imbued with lifelong values such as humility and filial piety, due to Asian traditions and beliefs. As such, certain determinants of identity eventually become the crux of how people define who they are, and the media offers little importance in shaping such internal, inherent identities.</p>	<p>media does little to shape identity as these are innate markers of identity. This seems to ignore how the perception of an individual's /a group's identity is very much shaped by external forces. Injecting nuance into this paragraph would strengthen it</p>
<p>However, most skeptics' arguments fail to include the ever-growing importance of the media in the modern-world context, and their definitions of 'identity' are often skewed to only include the extremely intrinsic and traditional aspects of one's identity. As the media becomes more powerful, determinants of identity are increasingly in flux, demonstrating the media's importance in shaping today's identities. On a global level, the media is of tremendous importance in creating an entirely unprecedented form of generational identity. Prior to the rise of digital media, transitional media such as newspapers served to report on events and provide updates on issues happening around the world. As such, while it was crucial to the construction of people's general knowledge, it did not have much effect on one's identity. However, with the accelerated development of technology bolstering the power of the media, those in the 21st century grew up surrounded by novel forms of media, such as social media and readily accessible digital content. Growing up in such an environment allowed many to develop traits such as being particularly discerning of our media consumption, constantly interconnected with the rest of the world, and more educated on international affairs due to increasingly accessible media reporting. These traits give rise to an entire generation of digital natives, defined by their ability to quickly distill media-provided information, and discern in the age of misinformation. Undoubtedly, this is an identity that the media has played an essential role in shaping in today's world.</p>	<p>Traditional media portrayals of gender, sexuality and race have played a significant part in shaping public perceptions of an individual or group's identity</p> <p>Argument seems driven by an example of an identity that the media has shaped. Can an actual point be extracted from this example provided?</p>
<p>Beyond the creation of a generational identity, the media also seeks to strengthen and uplift the voices of those with certain identities. The mass media has traditionally been people's only source of information, helping to raise awareness on current affairs. However, as new forms of journalism and alternative media outlets take the stage, the media is becoming an increasingly important storyteller, lending a voice to those with more uncommon, even marginalised, identities. For example, new media outlets such as PinkNews and Singapore's @PinkDotSG Instagram platform seek to give a voice to those who identify as members of the LGBTQ+ community. Apart from new media outlets, traditional media sources such as The New York Times are becoming more liberal, reporting on the lives of marginalised identities, such as racial and religious minorities. Their 'In Her Words' newsletter uplifts the voices of intersectionally oppressed women. Media reporting on such identities amplifies the troubles and challenges, even discrimination, that these communities face, helping to shape these identities by destigmatising them and creating a culture of acceptance and inclusion. In doing so, it also strengthens these communities' pride in their identity, as their voices are now heard by the world, due to the media's influence</p>	<p>Rather narrow definition of the functions of traditional media</p> <p>A number of apposite examples in this paragraph. Some insight here in terms of considering how perceptions of identities are shaped and not just the identities themselves. Including examples of perceptions of identity change would have helped to elevate this paragraph.</p>



<p>Apart from strengthening identities through storytelling and amplifying voices, the media is also important in connecting people to communities of those with the same identities. Social media, with its rise in the 21st century, has become a key driver of fostering interpersonal connections across the globe. From Facebook's algorithm specially designed to find like-minded individuals, to TikTok's 'For You Page' that connects one with others of the same interests and identities, many people are now able to find people who have the same identities as them, particularly minorities facing alienation who need a community to provide solace. In an age of intersectionality, finding others with very similar identities, such as race and gender, is especially important when finding people who can relate to one's problems. For example, @dearasianyouth on Instagram is a platform designed not only to raise awareness on the multifaceted issues Asians face, but also allow Asians from around the globe to connect with one another. In Singapore, platforms like @minorityvoices allow people of racial minorities to share their stories, but also interact with and empathise with one another. Due to the media, identity is now something that is not only individual, but also collective, as many are united over their common identities. Identity is shaped and transformed by the media, as intangible individual determinants of identity are crystallised into larger communities. Hence, the media has played a vital role in shaping identity in today's world.</p>	<p>How does connecting similar individuals help shape identity?</p> <p>While this idea of intersectionality is indeed interesting and pertinent to the question, it could have been better reflected in the example provided, and alluded to in the elaboration</p> <p>Some deeper thought demonstrated by considering how identity is a complex concept that is made even more complicated because of intersectionality</p>
<p>In conclusion, the media has not merely shaped identity in today's world. Rather, it has created, strengthened, and even re-shaped what identity is. While we will always be inextricably linked to certain aspects of our identity, the media is key to shaping who we are and how we define ourselves. Our identities are no longer purely individualistic, but a conflation of our individual traits and the collective identities we share with others. In our current climate of vitriol and polarisation, I hope that the media will be able to bridge the gaps between the identities it has shaped, and foster unity instead of sowing discord.</p> <p>(Yanisa Kee, 20-05)</p>	<p>Succinct and effective conclusion</p>

## 7 Evaluate the claim that women can be as highly valued as men in the workplace.

<p><i>This was a generally coherent and well-articulated response, with a clear focus on the question. Reasoning is generally present and sound although para 2 would have benefitted from stronger development.</i></p>	
<p>In almost every corner of the globe before the 21st century, there was the widespread and long lasting belief that women were inferior to, weaker than and less capable than their male counterparts. Way before even industrialisation, men were the ones who took on jobs in the workforce and were responsible for managing the family's finances, while women took on the responsibility of child-bearing and taking care of the family at home. It was only after World War 2 when more women started receiving formal education and joined the workforce. Today, the proportion of female workers is comparable to that of males. However even then, there is still the belief that women are less capable in the workplace. As such, there is often heated debate as to whether or not women can ever be as highly valued as men at work. It has been proven that in many careers, women are no less disadvantaged than men and can possibly even outdo them in certain areas, however societal norms of women still stand today and</p>	<p>Apt contextualisation</p> <p>Issue of social norm must be addressed</p> <p>Generally well-contextualised with clear stand but reasoning not entirely</p>



<p>hinder many from progressing in their jobs. On the other hand, with the rise of the concept of gender equality in today's world, I believe that women can be as highly valued as men in the workplace.</p>	<p>convincing</p>
<p>Firstly, women do have the capability to take on almost all, if not all jobs that men can and hence, should not be treated any less significantly. Some jobs may give off the impression that men are more suited for them since males have certain traits women do not possess and have been male dominated for centuries. However, that does not mean that women are any less able to take on that career, and females may in fact be advantaged in other aspects. For example, the medicine industry has long been dominated by males, with a significantly huge population of doctors being men. But from another perspective, women can be more meticulous and pay greater attention to details, giving them an edge over their male doctors... Another of such an example would be politicians. Most of our world leaders are male. But in fact, women are more compassionate and can better be a voice for issues like gender equality and discrimination, as they are seen as more caring and empathetic. This holds true for many other jobs as well. Surprisingly, the first image of a black hole was obtained by a female. The phrase 'equal work, equal pay', has been used by many world leaders and politicians worldwide, including US ex-president Barack Obama. If women can carry out the same tasks as men, women should be given the same treatment and expectations as their male partners. This has been proven to be true in Rwanda, where the workforce is made up of 60 to 70% women and is very heavily reliant on them. Women are paid the same as men are. Hence females can be as capable as men in the workplace, as proven to be true in both careers and economies and if we go by the notion that people should be treated accordingly for the amount and quality of work they do, women can be as highly valued as men in the workplace.</p>	<p>Explain why</p> <p>Why then have most doctors been male?</p> <p>Sweeping statement</p> <p>The link could be clearer</p> <p>This was not argued for convincingly, apart from an appeal to a few gender stereotypes</p> <p>There is focus on the question but there is a lack of sound reason/evidence in support of the claim</p>
<p>However, some may argue that women will forever be inferior to men in their careers because of societal norms which hold them back from progressions in their careers as compared to men. From a Danish study on Children and Gender Inequality, females in the modern world experience almost equal career advancements as men, with minimal unequal treatment. It is only when females have children and start a family, that the income gap starts to widen. There has been the widespread belief that women should be the ones who stay at home and care for children. Mothers spend an average of 25 hours a week looking after the family, as opposed to fathers who spend only 16 hours. The additional time women have to spend at home leaves less for the workplace, allowing men to advance further in their careers while women are held back. As the years pass, there will inevitably be a large income gap and differences in their career levels. Research has shown that around the world, women earn only 65 to 90 cents for every dollar men do. Therefore, because of beliefs and expectations that make women the ones responsible for caring for their families, they are seen as less capable in investing as much time and effort in their jobs and ultimately are less highly regarded.</p>	<p>Sweeping statement</p> <p>Explain why</p> <p>Point is well articulated and substantial</p>
<p>On the other hand, with the rise of the concept of gender equality in many parts of the world, changing mindsets can make it possible for women to have a higher status in the workplace and possibly as much as men. From a Netflix 'explained' episode on women in the workplace</p>	



<p>which featured an interview with ex US First lady and presidential candidate Hillary Clinton, she mentioned how males were the ones taking on many jobs in the past, because of how they received formal education at a young age as opposed to women. But that has changed over the years. In many areas, both genders already have access to equal education, with global university enrollments of both genders almost the same. Throughout the years, the mindset that mothers should stay at home while fathers should work and earn money is also disappearing. Fathers nowadays, more than ever, are getting involved in their children's affairs, with many countries like Iceland for example, increasing the period of paid paternity leave for fathers to ease the burden of females looking after a family. Closer to home in many Asian countries, more women are seen balancing both family and full time jobs, and are coping very well. In Singapore, there have also been measures implemented to better help them. There are childcare centres all over the island to lighten the burden on parents, especially mothers so they can work while the child is cared for. Since the responsibility of looking after the family is now significantly reduced, women can spend more time on their work and with the same capabilities as men that they possess, climb up their career ladders to be on equal or maybe even higher footing as well.</p>	<p>Link to example?</p> <p>Well-articulated but are their measures sufficient to close the gap, given the question is about equal value?</p>
<p>In conclusion, I believe that the claim that women can be as highly valued as men in the workplace definitely holds some truth. In many, if not all domains, females have the ability to carry out their job as well as men. Even though there are long standing beliefs and expectations of women as caretakers that can hold them back from career progression, these norms are slowly fading as fathers share the responsibility and as mindsets change for the better. As of now, women might still be considered to have a lower status than men in the workplace but with greater change and progress, it is unarguably possible for both genders to be equally valued.</p> <p>(Ashley Soo, 20-U5)</p>	

## 10 'Not enough is being done to tackle climate change.' How true is this of your society?

<p><i>This is a fully relevant essay. The student demonstrated great merit in evaluation, with consistent links back to characteristics of Singapore society.</i></p>	
<p>As global temperatures continue to rise, so does the level of awareness over climate change, an issue that has increasingly been the subject of heated debates around the world. The same can be said in Singapore, where the general population is largely aware of climate change and advertisements or campaigns related to it can be seen around the country. As a country with a high literacy rate and standards of education, it is perhaps expected that Singapore is indeed conscious of tackling climate change, though its efforts do deserve some commendation. However, it is then disappointing to realise how Singapore has some ways to go in terms of seriously taking on climate change, as it remains a non-priority in society, especially considering her additional context of being a low-lying island vulnerable to threats from rising sea levels as a result of climate change. It is evident that each stakeholder in society can still</p>	<p>Great contextualisation of the issue at hand, both generally and specifically in Singapore</p>



<p>afford to pay more attention to climate change, and that the vital tight cooperation between all parties needed remains lacklustre, showing how Singapore should be doing more to tackle climate change.</p>	
<p>It is important to still acknowledge some of Singapore's efforts to tackle climate change, namely the advocacy and awareness of individuals or groups in society. As a country with a fairly literate and educated general population, consensus over climate change being a problem can indeed be found, and some members of society have acted on their knowledge to make a change. For example, the Singapore Climate Rallies feature civilian speakers who bring attention to climate change and the factors in Singapore that contribute to it, such as our high greenhouse gas emissions, calling for change and concrete actions to tackle the issue. The translation of their beliefs into action reflect how climate change is indeed a priority for them, driving them to start commendable efforts to address the issue in Singapore. This indicates a good practice of applying what they gained from the high standards of education and general interest in intellectual discussion in Singapore, showing sufficiency in their actions as individuals to do what they can to tackle the problem.</p>	
<p>However, this sentiment is not reflected in the majority of the population. Though many are acutely aware of climate change, Singaporeans tend to adopt the attitude that it is an issue individuals are unable to contribute to, while pinning more responsibility on the government to solve the problem. Indeed, this is a prevalent idea in many societies worldwide, as shown by the numerous discussions over which stakeholder should be taking on more responsibility. It is perhaps even more pronounced in Singapore, where individuals rely greatly on the government. Ever since her shaky start of independence, Singapore's government has played a rather controlling role over society in order to ensure stability and guaranteed success. Though the government's reliability and problem-solving for citizens contributed greatly to the survival and prosperity in earlier parts of Singapore's history, it has now come to cultivate a sense of dependence in citizens on the government to solve problems they perceive to be larger than themselves, one being climate change. This results in the lack of concrete action from citizens; many still indulge in practices that aggravate climate change like fighting the hot weather in Singapore with air conditioning, and few can be seen bringing eco-friendly reusable bags or containers around to replace plastic packaging. Even at the aforementioned climate rallies, the focus on speeches tended to focus on government action, placing importance on top down regulation rather than more initiative from citizens. Of course, calling for government action is still advocacy and valid. However, loading too much responsibility on the government can lead to the apathy of the individual, who becomes used to cynically belittling the might of their own actions when the collective initiative of a society would indeed be a powerful way of tackling climate change. Thus this habitual reliance on the government limits the sufficiency of individual initiative and action in Singapore.</p>	<p>Evaluation on why what is being done is 'not enough'</p>
<p>The Singaporean government itself can also be seen to not prioritise climate change, which further diminishes the drive of society in tackling the problem while simultaneously being a reflection of the general population's opinion as well. The current efforts of the government must still be acknowledged - their commitment to the Paris Agreement and cutting emissions by 36% by 2030 through initiatives like the Green Plan and harnessing solar energy cannot be</p>	



<p>ignored. However, it is uncertain whether such goals can truly be achieved, as Singapore remains heavy handed in using energy, which causes the burning of fossil fuels that exacerbate climate change. Solar power takes up only about 2% of our energy supply despite ambitions to expand it greatly. It is thus doubtful whether or not Singapore can reach her goals, though the hope of possibility is still there. It can only be sustained, however, with the government's commitment. Yet, the fact that climate change is not exactly one of its priorities is a worrying one. Singapore's government continues to place emphasis on development and economic expansion, which often comes into direct conflict with climate change as ways to harmonise the two have not been thoroughly explored despite the presence of viable options like a carbon tax and the government's notable financial capabilities. The amount of government action for climate change is no match for the amount for industrial and technological advancement. Some specific policies also indicate prioritisation of mitigation over prevention, such as the highly publicised government initiative to raise sea walls and elevate buildings and structures to mitigate problems of flooding from rising sea levels. Though a practical and important measure, the government must also show how it prioritizes prevention of the issue in the first place to have a well rounded strategy of tackling climate change. Hence, it is clear that the government is acting, but more should be done to prioritise the issue to truly tackle it, especially since Singapore is aware of it, has the means to spend on it, and is a direct victim of it, acknowledged as well by the government's mitigation measures.</p>	<p>Once again, EV of why the government is not doing enough, with the relevant EX to substantiate</p>
<p>The culture of consumerism cultivated by Singaporeans and businesses contributes to the issue as well, and should but has not been addressed. As a relatively affluent society, Singaporeans can be quite materialistic with high levels of consumption. Though the same cannot be said for all social groups in society, like lower income families who cannot afford to spend carelessly, a large portion of Singaporeans still treat commercial products lightly and buy for entertainment and their wants without considering deeper repercussions. An example can be found in Singapore's involvement in the fast fashion industry, which produces massive amounts of greenhouse gas emissions from its mass production. Most Singaporeans remain apathetic to this fact, engaging freely in buying and disposing of clothes without considering the consequences found in landfills and the wastage of resources. A YouGov survey in 2017 found that a majority of youths threw away clothes in that year and a significant amount threw away clothes after wearing them once. Consumers in Singapore thus engage in wasteful ways of consumption that waste resources and encourage mass production of goods, worsening the inefficient use of energy that fuels climate change. Businesses' actions further exacerbate the problem, encouraging consumers' habits with advertisements all over social media convincing citizens to buy more while also not reforming their production practices and making them green. Hence, unhealthy consumerism practices in Singapore should but have not been solved, indicating a lack of effort to eliminate harmful practices that worsen climate change.</p>	<p>A simple qualifying statement like this is able to prevent the claim from appearing over generalised and provides nuance</p>
<p>The general prioritisation of pragmatism in Singapore society can also be seen as the main silent obstacle to efforts to tackle climate change. Cultivated in Singapore since the past with her survivalist attitude, it has now evolved into the prioritisation of convenience and pragmatism in society, setting the mindsets of all stakeholders to be one difficult to match</p>	



<p>with pouring so much effort into an issue that is hard to perceive in our daily life. This drive for efficiency and pragmatic, concrete goals thus blindsides society to more abstract and long term consequences as well as the argument of human kind's moral obligation to nature as well to solve climate change. In fact society's relative apathy towards nature was captured in the Cross Island line issue, where it was decided that a Mass Rapid Transport (MRT) line would cut across the central catchment reserve, potentially disrupting wildlife, so it would not disrupt humans instead by cutting through civilian's homes as well as shorten travelling times. It was accepted as a pragmatic decision, as to be expected in Singapore, and reflects the way Singaporeans prioritise concrete things that benefit their lives in perceivable ways instead of focusing on indirect effects or the importance of nature. This attitude is thus one that greatly hinders efforts against climate change in Singapore.</p>	<p>Clear EX to link a relevant example back to the overarching issue</p>
<p>It is ultimately important for all stakeholders to recognise how they affect each other and all play a role in tackling climate change. The voice of the individual sways the government and businesses, while regulations and structures set by the government as well as businesses limit the individual. Singapore's norms and cultures unfortunately make realising full responsibility and cooperation on all sides hard. However, its awareness and current efforts provide hope that it can be achieved in the future, making it all the more right for Singapore to start doing more now.</p> <p>(Amanda Lim, 20-O1)</p>	

## 12 Consider the view that the study of history is pointless.

<p><i>This essay demonstrates clear personal voice and nuance that is apt for an absolute question. A wider range of examples should have been raised in order to maintain more relevance to the broad scope of the question, as the student was otherwise largely limited to Singapore society.</i></p>	
<p>In George Orwell's essay "Notes on Nationalism", he writes that "Actions are held to be good or bad, not on their own merit, but according to who does them, and there is almost no kind of outrage, ..., that does not change moral colour when it is committed by 'our' side." History can be understood as past events and the actions of people that have taken place, as well as the cultural and political climate of those events. Hence, the study of history aims to analyse and examine the factors and effects of said events on the people and the future course of history through methods such as field work and cross-examination. Therefore, I do not agree with the view that the study of history is pointless as it equips us with many important skills such as the ability to look at events in context, corroboration, and looking at things from different perspectives, which are necessities in the modern world.</p>	<p>Clear definition</p> <p>Clear stand</p>
<p>However, detractors may opine that in the modern world, with all its immense technological advancements and rapid speed of change, history can no longer serve as an example to learn from. We are in an age of unprecedented development and access to information the past civilisations could not even imagine, so how would they help us now? I believe that to some extent, this opinion stands true. Never in history has information been so readily available to</p>	<p>Good use of modern world context as rebuttal</p> <p>Apt qualifier</p>



<p>the people, and so quickly as well. In the past, the educated were often part of the elite and aristocratic classes, leaving the common folk with the basic knowledge they needed to survive. Thus, there are not many examples from history that we can analyse to help us understand how to wield this power of knowledge that has been made available to the masses through platforms such as Google, Instagram and Twitter. However, the study of history is not merely about learning from the mistakes of our past, it inculcates in its students the skills of always being cautious about what is real and analysing situations and information with a balanced perspective needed in the day and age where fake news is littered all over the internet. Thus, I disagree with the opinion that the study of writing is pointless simply because there are no directly correlated case studies we can learn from.</p>	<p>This is valid but bears no obvious link to the point you are apparently rebutting - both parts of the para need to work together, as it lacks cogency otherwise</p>
<p><i>[Paragraph redacted due to limited relevance to the 'study of history' and an overemphasis on Singapore society]</i></p>	
<p>In addition, the study of history is incredibly useful and necessary as it teaches us the importance of corroboration. In Singapore, about 25% of its citizens have admitted to not being able to differentiate between real and fake news. Furthermore, the influx of news that we encounter every day on social media platforms makes it harder for people to tell the difference between what is real and what is fake, especially since we, as humans, have a tendency to believe things that align with our view, no matter how skewed they may be. One of the earliest historical texts, and arguably the one that shaped the study of history, is Athenian Thucydides' account of the Peloponnesian War - "History of the Peloponnesian War". During the writing of the text, Thucydides corroborated his own personal accounts of the battles between Sparta and Athens while his counterpart Herodotus, who in his account of Greek life in "Histories", simply took what people said to be true without cross-checking with other sources, culminating in his text being a blend of real life stories, accounts of Greek society and fantastical stories. Therefore, the study of history is very much built on the principle that one can never fully trust what is said by a single source, and must always corroborate with other sources in order to provide oneself with a reliable account and perspective of an event. Similarly, we too, in the modern age, should corroborate the news we see online, with other credible sources, to prevent ourselves from being misled by the people who put up fake headlines merely to attract attention. Thus, the study of history is far from pointless as it develops one's skill in cross-examination and teaches one to be skeptical of what one hears or reads.</p>	<p>What study is this? Evidence could not be corroborated.</p> <p>Link to the context needs to be made clearer → use signposts + linking sentences i.e. This can be seen in...</p> <p>Valid and well-exemplified paragraph that would be clearer with improved sign posting/linking sentences</p>
<p>Lastly, the study of history is not pointless as it teaches us to look at the past from different perspectives. With our fundamental tendency to lean towards biased opinions and information, without the study of history, many of us would be left with a fairly narrow-minded perspective of the world. For example, in the Singaporean history curriculum, students are taught the history of British colonisation of Singapore and Malaya - as well as the Dutch colonisation of Indonesia. For the most part, the curriculum portrays the British colonial rule as gentler and fairer compared to the extremely exploitative and harsh Dutch rule over Indonesia. However, the syllabus fails to bring up the ramifications of British colonial rule over other colonies. For example, when Britain decided split up its crown colony, India, into Muslim Pakistan and Hindu India post-independence, this forced millions of people to leave their</p>	



homes in order to move to the places they felt they would be safest at. The Indian partition incited a lot of chaos, leaving 2 million people dead due to rape and violence, as well as 15 million people displaced. This integral part of the British colonial rule is rarely brought up in the history syllabus in Singapore, perhaps due to the nation's place in the Commonwealth. However, studying history outside the confines of the geographical regions of our nation allows us to gain a larger and broader perspective on the past, considering the many different and often conflicting viewpoints of different groups. This teaches us to be more open-minded about the accounts brought to us, striking a balance between skepticism and being receptive to conflicting perspectives which can help to breed more empathetic and better leaders for the future, thus making the study of history integral today.	Perhaps because its entire history was vast, and only the aspects most important to SG are focused on?
In conclusion, the study of history aims to equip its students with the ability to see events, past and present, beyond a simple continuation as culmination of factors from previous events, but as part of a greater whole which reflects the social, political and economic contexts of the world in which they take place in. It builds our ability to form a balanced viewpoint of events and prevents us from falling into the trap Orwell describes as a product of nationalism, that simply because "our" side did it means that it is justified. The study of history makes us better and smarter people, with the knowledge gifted to us by technology and the skills we harness in studying the past, we are able to better the world we live in.  (Nicole Chao, 20-U5)	Nice return to the hook that began the essay.

## 12 Consider the view that the study of history is pointless.

<i>This essay presents quite a comprehensive treatment of the question's contention, providing sound reasons defending the value of history amidst the contextual conditions of today's world. Well done! The examples cited to showcase the continuing relevance of history in today's world show an assured grasp of the subject-specific content knowledge, and there is a clear understanding of the issue of the value/relevance the study of history holds demonstrated in the evaluation. To improve this, consider deepening the evaluation further by scrutinising the tensions between the past, present and future that improve the various perceptions of the study of history.</i>	
Ever since our independence, Singapore has continuously been placing an increasing amount of focus on the STEM subjects: Science, Technology, Engineering and Math. Meanwhile, the humanities have been arguably side-lined. While some secondary schools make the subject of literature compulsory, there seems to be no corresponding policy for the history subject, which makes us question the purpose of the study of history. Some say that studying our past is pointless, but I would argue that the study of those before us is still relevant today.	<p>Beware of limiting the argument to SG society when the question does not</p> <p>Why do you say so? Provide some reasons</p> <p>Outline the arguments to show how this relevance makes the study of history not pointless: Is it meaningful? Important? Significant? (How so?)</p>
Some skeptics might argue that the study of history is meaningless as events that have occurred decades ago have no relation to today's climate. They are not wrong to say so, as it would certainly behoove us to avoid using outdated historical knowledge to analyse, explain or resolve our modern-day problems, such as the spread of misinformation on social media,	



<p>for example, when the Internet did not even exist until a mere few decades ago. In fact, today's global Covid-19 crisis further proves how studying our history can be useless to solving today's problems. Our globalised economy today took a more severe hit from this pandemic than the ones that came before; this includes the Black Plague that killed millions of Spanish. The breakdown of tourism worldwide has led to increasing unemployment in the tourism sector, and the effects trickle down to the rest of the economy as trade becomes more restricted and the flow of goods slows down. The devastating implications of the pandemic have caused unprecedented recessions worldwide, and "learning from our past" is unhelpful as we have never <b>been this reliant</b> on international relationships and trade before. Even the SARS epidemic in Singapore had less lasting effects on our economy as the virus was less transmissible, albeit more fatal. As such, the need of the study of history is doubted when there seems to be no utility in its implementations today, and can be deemed to be pointless</p>	<p>How extensive is this <b>reliance</b>? Substantiate with explanation and illustration (International relations and trade are not new, but the <b>scale</b> is different)</p>
<p>However, while the study of history may not be able to help us manage certain modern-day problems, it is still very politically pertinent and important. Our increasingly interconnected world may have been a cause of the unprecedented implications of the spread of Covid-19 worldwide, but <b>it is also because of globalisation that we have to study history</b>. In the political realm, this fact is highlighted as there is a need for world leaders to recognise the historical sensitivities of another nation in order to be able to maintain cordial relations. In 2018, Singapore was the host of a milestone summit between the leaders of North Korea and the United States of America. The first meeting to be held between these two leaders in over half a century, it definitely was important for us to be sensitive to the historical tensions of these two nations. Singapore has always maintained neutrality, especially on bipolar world events, and as such could be chosen as the first meeting location. Had the stakeholders of this event been obtuse about the history of these nations -- Singapore's included -- a meeting could have been more detrimental than not as age-old wounds could be opened again. Therefore, we can observe that the study of history is very important politically and when politics is what governs our world, we cannot say that history is meaningless.</p>	<p>Consider whether this <b>counters the earlier OA</b> about the lack of relevance the study of history holds; the reason given in the OA has to be tackled in the rebuttal more specifically</p>
<p>In addition, the study of history is also culturally significant. Knowing our past enables us to understand the backgrounds of our companions, and the grievances they may hold today. Due to the advent of social media, the once hidden stories of minority groups have been able to gain traction and awareness of racism has increased. When we look at the Black Lives Matter movement that shook the world last year, we inevitably link it to the Civil Rights Movement in the 1960s, when the seeds of the fight for social justice for Blacks were first planted. The knowledge that this is a fight that has lasted for over a prolonged period of time is able to highlight the systemic and innate societal issues when it comes to the treatment of minority groups. <b>Knowing and recognising the efforts of our predecessors is only respectful, and their legacy is carried on until today.</b> Closer to home, racial tensions between the Malays and Chinese in Singapore and Malaysia have sparked riots in the past, and acknowledging such tensions are essential in ensuring racial harmony today. It is only by studying our tenuous past that our government is able to appropriately handle today's racial tensions without riling up any one group of people. <b>As such our history is an important part of our culture, and having a good understanding of the past of various cultures will enable us to be more sensitive to one another. The study of history is thus arguably very important in order for peace and harmony to exist,</b> and stability is one of our psychological needs.</p>	<p>This <b>seems a little out of place</b> because what comes before and after it are about cultural tensions while this is about the legacy of our predecessors (without much context)</p> <p>While this part about our own cultural roots can be linked to the point above, it is <b>not sufficiently developed</b></p> <p>Rather than a benefit that echoes the one from the previous BP, <b>consider an implication that's more unique to the factors of cultural heritage you've mentioned</b></p>
<p>The skills that we collect when we study history are also useful, and it would be arrogant to</p>	



<p>call them “pointless”. The history subject is most notoriously known for having excessive readings and having to analyse those readings. These aspects of history are more commonly dreaded than anticipated. But analysing these readings forces our brains to think critically, which not only helps us do better in the study of history itself, but also in other areas, such as the most popular STEM subjects. In fact, even in the scientific realm, many researchers are required to study the history of their respective areas of focus, which will allow them to make a more informed research paper, or devise a more useful experiment. Critical thinking skills gained in the study of history can also be applied to that of the sciences. It is true that history is not the only study that can enable us to gain these skills, as other subjects like that of literature and art can also do the same. However, history more particularly teaches us to look at the provenance of sources, which is something other subjects tend to neglect more often as they are primarily concerned with the content of the source of information. Being able to study the context of information in fact helps us more today when fake news is such a widespread problem in our society, as we are able to critically and maturely judge for ourselves the credibility of a source. As such, the study of history has been shown to develop skills in students that are useful in most, if not all, other aspects of life.</p>	<p>A rather sweeping claim; is this really the case?</p>
<p>So, while our STEM subjects are indeed an essential ingredient in the development and functioning of society, the study of history is still relevant in many other areas -- such as in politics and racial issues, and even in the realm of the sciences themselves. Yes, the knowledge of history may not be a must-have for a human being to survive, but it definitely is useful in many areas of our lives.</p> <p>(Ang May Syi, 20-04)</p>	

## 2021 JC2 Timed Practice (2013 A Level P1)

### 1 ‘The world would be a better place if more political leaders were women.’ What is your view?

<p><i>This essay was a pleasant read -- insightful, and with clear evidence of strong content knowledge in this area. There was clear coherence and flow of logic throughout the essay, maintaining relevance with consistent examples without unnecessary details (for the most part). At times, however, the main argument of the paragraph lost sight of the contention -- whether the world would be ‘a better place’, and just leaving it to the end instead of weaving it into the explanation. A greater range of examples would have made more substantiated arguments -- examples of female political leaders came largely from the West.</i></p>	
<p>Growing up, I’ve always heard the saying that ‘behind every successful man is a supportive woman’, and I’ve grown to accept this as a fact of nature; that women will always be behind men, allowing men to be on the frontlines for politics, governance and every other pertinent area of leadership. However, such an idea is growing increasingly old-fashioned and outdated, as more females rise up the ranks and become important world leaders. Amongst the sea of old, white men in politics emerge revolutionary figures like Angela Merkel and Jacinda Ardern, taking politics by storm and inspiring young girls around the world to dream big. I strongly agree that women as political leaders would change the world for the better, and that the</p>	<p>Good contextualisation</p> <p>‘Old’ and ‘white’ may not add value</p> <p>Clear and concise introduction of how the world could be a better place (ties in nicely with</p>



<p>world would stand to gain a lot more by letting women lead.</p>	<p>hook at the start)</p>
<p>Firstly, having women in the political world gives them a chance to represent the opinions of the female population, hence allowing more policies to treat women equally as they do men. With women having a completely different identity from men, the issues that women face may not often be raised up to the government when addressing national concerns, especially as many governments around the world rarely have a significant number of female policy-makers, if any at all. For the longest time in history, women were not allowed to express any interest or opinions on politics, as it was widely regarded as affairs that only men had the capacity to handle. Until the revolution of the suffragette movement, women weren't even given the right to vote. The exclusion of women in politics has created a world that inherently favours men, and has also unconsciously normalised the oversight of issues that women battle with in politics. As such, with the representation of women in politics, issues such as gender wage gaps and the rights of mothers in the workforce can finally be addressed. For instance, Jacinda Ardern has been eagerly fighting for equal pay between men and women for as long as she's been elected Prime Minister of New Zealand. Her work has allowed pay equity to become something that is almost ensured for females in New Zealand; comparably, in other countries with male-dominated governments, gender wage gaps become sorely overlooked, breeding inequality and dissatisfaction amongst civilians; South Korean women are paid up to 40% less than their male counterparts. Evidently, such issues would be addressed more fairly if more women were allowed to influence policies.</p>	<p>Clear topic sentence that is relevant to the question (but could be more explicit in the paragraph itself as to why/how this would make the 'world a better place'.</p> <p>Good evaluation of the current state of the world</p> <p>Example can be clearer by explaining why/how this would make the world better</p> <p>Good highlighting of the contrast</p> <p>A very clearly structured and argued paragraph</p>
<p>In addition to enacting actual fair policy change, more female politicians may serve as role models for other young girls around the world, inspiring them to be their own trailblazer. Politicians are not only policy makers, but they are also public figures; their status is not unlike that of the celebrities and social media stars that we worship today. As such, politicians have the power to influence and inspire the masses with their actions and words, as evidently seen from Donald Trump manipulating millions of Americans with his twisted truths on Twitter. When that influence is put to good use, however, it can be a true driving force of change for many, especially for impressionable youngsters that have yet to find their purpose in life. Politicians such as Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, or AOC for short, may serve as a role model for many young girls around the world. [She was often seen speaking out boldly against the Trump administration when Donald Trump had reigned as president, going on Twitter to dispel his fabricated lies and informing her followers of the facts and real information. She is one of the many politicians and celebrities who spoke out in favour of Kamala Harris being voted in to be the first Black female vice-president of the United States.] She has shown her followers and others alike that women have something to offer in the world of politics, even if it is a tough world for women to prosper in. In such ways, female politicians like AOC have made the world a better place, by inspiring other young females to follow in their footsteps, which would ultimately lead to a better world where policies are fair and regulated, and there are restraining institutions in place to prevent the dominance of one sex over another.</p>	<p>Great evaluation of how/why this is needed to make the world a better place</p> <p>Relevance of example to argument could be clearer</p> <p>Could explain more on the importance of role models like her in this world we live in</p>
<p>Some may refute my stand for more women in politics, stating that women don't have a lot of say as political leaders, and they would be absolutely right. Though sexism and gender discrimination are not as extreme as they used to be in the past, they still have a place in our society that greatly unfavours women and hinders our progress in society. In her book, 'We Should All Be Feminists', female Nigerian author Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie talks about the</p>	<p>Link to 'world a better place' could be clearer</p> <p>Very valid, but need to explain how this stops the world from becoming a better place (even with women as</p>



<p>deep-rooted culture that gifts men with an invisible power over women, a power that allows them to automatically have more authority and superiority over any other woman of the same capabilities. We see this culture in politics as well, as women are seldom elected into power; even then, they are sometimes disregarded by the civilians that they serve. There still holds a belief in society that women aren't as capable as men, especially in handling affairs of the state, saying that women are too emotionally driven to behave objectively. In sustaining such a belief, members of society rob female politicians of the power and influence that any other politician would have, impeding the progress of women in progress.</p>	<p>political leaders) more explicitly</p> <p>Could use a concrete argument of a woman in power simply used as a 'puppet'</p> <p>End of OA seems to be a bit of a different argument from the rest of it, maybe make it explicit that this assumption of women being emotional + stereotypes/patriarchy would make it hard for women to have the power to make the world a better place even if they are political leaders</p>
<p>However, as much as women hold less power in the world of politics compared to men, a woman in politics can still offer something to the table that gives her an edge over other politicians; her views. In a world of politics there are many old, white men, the identity of a woman may mean that she holds a different set of beliefs and values that can contribute to further developing future policies and plans, allowing the government to better account for the population. This is exactly why a female Supreme Court Justice, Amy Coney Barrett was chosen as the successor of Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg. Both women are devoted mothers and wives, and Ruth Bader Ginsburg has been an inspiring feminist before she passed away. In having these background characteristics that are unique to the female experience, they provide a refreshed and balanced view on issues that concern the wider population; as compared to the often ubiquitous nature of opinions amongst men in politics. This is not to say that female politicians would inherently disagree with all opinions of all male politicians; in fact, there is an increasing number of male politicians who are speaking up in world politics about issues such as gender equality and restoring the rights of women. However, having more female political leaders can allow the governing body to consider issues (particularly those regarding gender disparity) with a more holistic view and hence develop more inclusive policies to better serve society, making a better world.</p>	<p>Needs a link to 'world a better place'</p> <p>A little contradictory to the opposing argument</p> <p>Overlaps a little with the first supporting argument, but good evaluation for the concession</p>
<p>Admittedly, the main impact that more women in politics may bring is the offering of different perspectives to the table. This can be said for other marginalised communities, such as the LGBTQ+ community, the physically and mentally impaired community and much more. The fact is that world politics is sorely lacking in diversity and the representation of different communities. By having more women in politics, we may be opening the door to better policy-making and governance, but this can only be possible when the mindset of people changes. We must eradicate the power disparity between men and women, banish the culture of having supportive women behind successful men. <i>Beside every successful man is an equally successful woman</i>, and we must keep it that way for real change in the world to be made.</p> <p>(Celest So Yee Suan, 20-14)</p>	<p>Takes the focus away from the main argument</p> <p>Effective use of a bookend to conclude your essay</p>



# 1 'The world would be a better place if more political leaders were women.' What is your view?

This essay reflects a clear train of thought, with good development of logical arguments supported by apt examples. These examples were wide ranging, and demonstrated clear insight and understanding of the issues pertinent to the discussion. Evaluation was also rather nuanced, which made for an insightful response overall.

Right now, if you were asked to describe the personality traits of a woman, what would be the first thing that comes to mind? The most common answers would be something along the lines of empathetic, selfless or caring. On the flip side, what about the qualities of a man? The answer is likely to be quite different, with traits such as assertiveness, intelligence and aggressiveness being raised. As such, some people have argued that the prevalence of these traits in men mean that having too many male political leaders in the world will lead to increased conflict and chaos worldwide, hence having more female political leaders in power will make the world a more equal place for women. While I do believe female political leaders are capable of bringing more peace to the world and improving the livelihoods of their citizens with empathy and selflessness, I also believe it is extremely myopic to say that making more women political leaders is a definitive solution to all of the world's problems, as it would mean assuming that women are inherently superior to men. Moreover, believing in the presence of 'masculine' and 'feminine' traits could ironically reinforce archaic gender norms, hence setting back social progress.

Is this the same as making the world a better place?

A measured stance and insightful awareness of assumptions

Electing more female political leaders can bring positive change to the world as their experiences as women have the potential to enable them to better empathise with the needs of women in society, hence allowing state policies to address the needs of women even more effectively. Since a society comprises people with different needs, having a more diverse government can mean that the government will be even more effective at addressing the diverse needs of its people. This is because people of different backgrounds will have had different life experiences, hence causing them to be able to empathise with some groups of people more deeply than others. In the case of having gender diversity in parliament, having more women in power could lead to a government that is better able to address some of the problems commonly faced by women in society, such as gender discrimination and sexual harassment. For instance, when Singapore's president Halimah Yacob was first elected into power, she promised to raise the profile of women in Singapore and make the workplace a more equal place for women. Indeed, she delivered on her promises, by creating the Diversity Task Force regarding Women on Boards, before the Diversity Action Committee was established. This task force aimed to examine the state of gender diversity in senior management offices and increase the amount of female representation on boards. The case of Halimah Yacob's presidency has shown that it is possible for female political leaders to relate better to women than their male counterparts can. Moreover, having more female political leaders in high positions of power can ensure that policies passed by the government do not disadvantage women in society. Therefore, having more female political leaders in power can make the world a better place by introducing positive legislative changes and ensuring greater equality for women.

An apposite example that is sufficiently linked back to the point being made

A logical conclusion. A little more can be said about how ensuring greater equality for women contributes to making the world a better place.



<p>However, although women can indeed bring much positive change to the world, it does not mean that having more female political leaders in the world is a definitive solution to making the world a better place.</p>	
<p>It would be unfair to use a few female political leaders to generalise the way countries around the world would be governed by women, for the reason that every woman is different, meaning that one female political leader cannot be used as a benchmark for how all female political leaders will be. To say that every female political leader will definitely be more empathetic and caring than their male counterparts would mean assuming that all women have the same values and styles of leadership. In reality, this is a sweeping generalisation, as every political leader will have a unique way of governing their country. People who believe that female political leaders are inherently more compassionate and empathetic than their male counterparts typically point to examples such as Jacinda Ardern, who made the decision to ban semi-automatic weapons in New Zealand after the Christchurch shootings of 2019. However, different female leaders have shown themselves to have different personalities as leaders. Just as Jacinda Ardern is known for being eloquent and optimistic, former British Prime Minister Theresa May was known for her blunt, realistic addresses to the nation. This shows that even women in similar positions of power can have different approaches to leadership. In terms of bettering the world, these two women have had differing degrees of success as well, with Ardern being lauded internationally for her ability to unite opposing political parties, while May was accused by her people of placing her party's needs above those of the nation. The examples of these two leaders show that we cannot use the accomplishments of a few leaders to generalise the way all female political leaders will be. Hence, we must examine each leader independently when determining the success of a female political leader in creating a more united world, and not judge how they will lead their country based on their gender.</p>	<p>Every country is different too, and therefore their needs in terms of leadership would also be different</p> <p>It might be worth considering the reverse - Jacinda Ardern's shortcomings vs Theresa May's strengths.</p> <p>Well-substantiated and convincing</p>
<p>Moreover, when determining the success of a political leader, we cannot neglect that women are just as susceptible to their own prejudices as men are. The qualities of a good leader, such as critical thinking, compassion and empathy are not necessarily bound to any one gender, but rather can be seen in people of all genders. For instance, Priti Patel, Secretary of State for Home Department in the UK, appeared to be a good fit as a leader to champion for equal rights for all, being a woman and of a minority race. However, in June 2020, she was accused of using her status as a woman of colour to justify racist, insensitive remarks made about the Black community protesting against racism. This shows that female political leaders are not automatically more empathetic leaders simply because they are women. In fact, doing so could reinforce age-old gender roles about women being nurturing and empathetic, hence ironically hindering progression in gender equality, which would not improve the state of the world. Hence, in order to ensure true equality in the world, we should judge each and every political leader by their beliefs and actions, and not simply by their gender.</p>	<p>This paragraph makes for a good rebuttal against the first opposing argument.</p>



<p>In conclusion, in order to create a better, more equal world, the first step is judging each and every leader by their own merit, and not by any external traits, which involves not gendering specific qualities.</p> <p>(Tania Ho Kaye Wee, 20-E3)</p>	<p>Conclusion is rushed, but still effective in capturing the essence of the thesis statement.</p>
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# **1 ‘The world would be a better place if more political leaders were women.’ What is your view?**

<p><i>An insightful response that consistently addresses the requirements of the question. Balance was also well-negotiated and nuanced. Examples were relevant and sufficiently fleshed out to demonstrate their relevance to the points made. Still, a greater range of examples would elevate your arguments and make them more compelling (only three leaders were cited).</i></p>	
<p>Males may make up half of the general population, yet most billionaires, businesspeople and ‘successful’ individuals are men. Women are relegated to stereotypically supportive roles, like secretaries, assistants or homemakers. This trend is especially prevalent in the world of politics, as three-quarters of the seats in parliaments globally are occupied by men. As sentiments of female empowerment grow, many are increasingly suggesting that the world would be a better place if more political leaders were women. Generally, while I do agree that a higher proportion of female political leaders would signal a positive trend towards gender equality, possibly benefitting countries by providing a more humane, nurturing perspective, I am cautious that blindly elevating women to positions of power may not be beneficial for them or the constituents they represent and serve.</p>	<p>What are some reasons commonly proffered for this position?</p> <p>Clear thesis statement, with a preview of the points one can expect to see in the essay</p>
<p>Firstly, having more women in power would send a strong signal to the world that women are indeed just as capable as men, representing that the world is closer to complete gender equality—where gender would not be a defining factor of a political leader. While in the past women were seen as only fit for domestic chores, discouraged from attending intellectually-stimulating lessons in school, females today are increasingly stepping up and setting new precedents for their work and careers. The trend of increasing female political participation can be seen today, as the aforementioned quarter of global parliamentary seats held by women has in reality already been a steady increase from about 10% three decades ago. The entrance of female leaders into the political arena has not only improved gender balance in politics, but also in other professions. With the prominent nature of politicians, greater female representation in political leadership can lead to knock-on effects that encourage more women to step up across all fields. Certainly, having more female political leaders would send a strong message that the dominating, influential and characteristically shrewd nature of the profession is not a matter of gender, helping society at large take much-needed steps towards gender equality. Therefore, having more women steering political leadership would definitely make the world a better place.</p>	<p>Direction of causality debatable (would require further exemplification)</p> <p>A valid and cogent argument. Could be elevated further by providing evidence/explicating this very crucial assertion.</p>
<p>Moreover, women are also known to be more nurturing, allowing them to lead with a more humane perspective on issues. Female political leaders worldwide have been applauded for</p>	



<p>their exemplary handling of tough issues. For example, New Zealand's Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern was praised for her sensitive yet stern handling of the Christchurch shooting in 2019. While respectfully honouring victims of the mosque attacks, she also managed to convey a cautionary message to the white supremacist who was behind it, stating firmly that New Zealand had no place for racism. Ardern's humane yet firm response represents a fine balance that many male leaders have struggled to replicate, as it is either not in their inherent nature or mainstream in society for men to display the same level of sensitivity and vulnerability. Whether by nature or by nurture, men are generally groomed to have a more stoic presence, which may work well for the announcement of economic policies but not as well for navigating contentious subjects or incidents which may require genuine displays of emotions to handle. Of course, it is salient to note that not all men in politics are cold and stoic as leaders, and not all women are nurturing, or can provide a more humanitarian response to issues. However, considering our inherent evolutionary differences since our time as nomads where males were predominantly hunters and gatherers were predominantly female and our external environment of society's expectations of gender norms today, I maintain that females do generally bring a more humane touch to politics, allowing countries to navigate conflicts, tensions and sensitivities more eloquently. Thus, the world would indeed be a better place if more political leaders were women.</p>	<p>Link to the previous point on women being more nurturing?</p> <p>A valid concession</p> <p>A well-written body paragraph. Good use of discourse markers to signal internal coherence. Example was also explained to show its relevance. Overall, a very lucid and well-elaborated BP</p>
<p>However, I acknowledge that simply because female political leaders have so far achieved great successes in addressing the gender gap and touchy issues, that does not mean that their gender is the only factor contributing to their success. In the case of Jacinda Ardern, New Zealand is also a relatively progressive country, where racially intolerant views are mostly frowned upon, rendering the support for her response seemingly more predictable. Through this example, we see that associating women with better political leadership would be conflating correlation with causation. Without a doubt, blindly elevating females to political stewardship would not necessarily be good. Doing so would further reinforce the notion that there [are] indeed some great difference[s] between genders, defining political leaders by their sex and not their capabilities. We must acknowledge that there are undoubtedly great leaders across both genders and proceed with caution when we aim to increase female political leadership. Female political leaders like Germany's chancellor Angela Merkel have been criticised for a lack of sympathy, especially in dealing with contentious issues, and Canada's progressive prime minister Justin Trudeau has been lauded by some for his extremely supportive stance for more female labour and political participation. More women in politics might signal the possibilities that females can aim for, but we must ensure that elevating females to political leadership is centred on the quest for equality, beginning with a common standard for quality. In short, the world would likely be a better place if more political leaders were women, though we must not lose sight of the ways in which females can do just that, lest we inadvertently weaken political institutions and dilute the standard of female political leaders.</p>	<p>An effective juxtaposition here -- these examples were clearly selected with special consideration of the point being made.</p>
<p>In conclusion, a higher proportion of female political leaders would certainly send a positive signal to the world that females are on-par with males and can contribute significantly to the political discussion. Moreover, female political leaders will likely also provide a more humane</p>	<p>A concise and effective conclusion that summarises the key points in the essay.</p>



lens to navigate contentious and sensitive issues, allowing for a more tactful response that benefits all. However, I do not believe that this should be taken as a hard and fast rule, as we must be intentionally cautious that we are not elevating females to political leadership just for the sake of it. Though females can certainly bring a fresh perspective to political institutions and send a strong message to society on gender equality, the world will not always be a better place simply because more political leaders are women.  (Jennifer Tan, 20-04)	
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## 6 How important is it to save plant and animal species which are in danger of extinction?

<i>This is quite an insightful piece, albeit incomplete. The first two paragraphs set up a complex arc between the opposing argument and supporting argument, but this relationship can be more clearly presented in the 2nd paragraph, which can also engage the question more directly.</i>	
To us humans, there are four things in life that we often cannot recover once lost: a stone after the throw, the word after it is said, the time after it is gone, and the occasion after it is missed. Likewise, for the Earth, when its lush forests teeming with life are cleared and pristine lakes and oceans polluted, it would nearly seem impossible to regenerate in our lifetime. While we have been taught these lessons since young, in our pursuit for economic growth and development, we sometimes turn a blind eye and choose our economy over our environment. Due to our actions such as deforestation, poaching and pollution, certain animal and plant species have begun to become endangered or possibly be driven to extinction. Seeing as how animal and plant species play a vital role in maintaining the natural and physical systems in the environment as well as provide tangible benefits to humans through tourism, agriculture or science and technology, it is thus imperative to engage in efforts to save and conserve these flora and fauna, especially when they are in danger of extinction.	This introduction lays out the ideas very clearly, from the thoughtful contemplation to the contextualisation and the outlining of key arguments
Some may argue that it is not in the government or country's interest to save these endangered species as they may be facing issues of even greater concern such as poverty or funding relief efforts against natural disasters. It is the state's job to ensure the welfare of its citizens through providing infrastructure such as housing, and ensuring access to basic goods and services such as food and income. To the eyes of such a society, saving endangered plants and animals would be the least of their concerns. Additionally, even if they wish to carry out such conservation efforts, it would require strong financial, governmental and institutional capabilities. According to the Scientific American, a popular science magazine, in 2012, protecting all the world's threatened species would cost around US\$4b a year. If there is not enough government revenue to be allocated to wildlife conservation, they may opt to allocate its resources elsewhere they see fit. Even if they have the money, it would require strong political will and an ecocentric attitude to ensure policies implemented would be effective and remain in the long term. Furthermore, there needs to be existing infrastructure and legal measures to house these efforts. Otherwise, it may not be as effective in conserving wildlife due to potential breaches into the protected space or lax enforcement, undermining the	How so? More elaboration would show deeper understanding



<p>purpose and success of such efforts. With such requirements and challenges governments face in tandem with ongoing issues in their own country, they would believe it is not worth the effort and instead, focus on their immediate needs as opposed to rescuing endangered species.</p>	
<p>While it is unavoidable that there would be unequal capabilities across countries, it is myopic to believe that there would be completely no action taken or that governments would completely dismiss the value of these plant and animal species. With the cooperation and participation of its citizens, and involvement by a neutral third party like the World Bank, efforts become contextualised to the current needs and issues of a particular endangered species. Additionally, by seeing these endangered species as a potential source of profit, they are able to fund prospective conservation efforts or other sectors in the economy. This can be seen in Namibia, South Africa, where they engaged in trophy hunting of black rhinos, a critically endangered species, and ecotourism to fund their conservation efforts for the black rhinos. Initially, there was backlash from the international community as it was viewed as unorthodox or inhumane but such misconceptions arose due to a misunderstanding between poaching and trophy hunting. Unlike poaching, trophy hunting is regulated by local authorities. With participation and support from the local community and US Fish and Wildlife Service, conservation organisations in Namibia are able to benefit from the trophy hunting and continue protecting wildlife in the long run. As a result, there was an increase in black rhino populations, safeguarding their heritage while the surplus revenue was channelled to improve the welfare of its citizens. Therefore, preserving these endangered species can still be of value as they are able to bring in revenue even if countries face other issues as well.</p>	<p>Link this more closely to the question's contention of importance</p> <p>It becomes clearer here how the paragraph addresses the opposing argument in the previous paragraph, in relation to the question. Perhaps greater clarity can be set up earlier in this paragraph?</p>
<p>In the field of science and technology, conserving wildlife is crucial as certain plant animal species house certain medicinal or anti-viral properties that would benefit humans. Take the Black Cohosh root, an endangered plant species in North America. It is commonly used in modern medicine and supplements such as Remifemin that aid and support women's health ailments such as menstrual and menopause issues, and is a vital component in said treatment. Due to overharvesting, habitat loss and threats of invasive plant species, it is at risk of extinction. Once these endangered plant species are gone, we may never be able to recover it anymore...</p> <p><i>(John Francis, 20-E3)</i></p>	<p>Incomplete</p>