

NAVIGATE

Issue #5

Eunoia Junior College

English Department

General Paper

2019 JC2

Contents

Message from the JC2 GP Team	2
Essays and Paragraphs	3
JC2 Paper 1 Mid Year Examination	5
1 Does language offer anything more than a medium for communicating with one another? Discuss this with reference to your society.	5
7 The media can no longer carry out its intended functions. To what extent is this true?	9
10 Is it possible to maintain a strong national identity when the world is so interconnected?	12
JC2 Paper 2 Mid Year Examination Application Question	15
JC2 Term 2 Paper 1 Timed Practice (in response to 2017 SAJC Preliminary Examination Paper 1)	17
2 Are rules meant to be broken?	17
4 Do you agree that there is little value in literature today?	20
7 'The environment is the main cause of our health woes today.' Discuss.	23
9 How effective has your country been in creating a national identity?	26
JC2 Term 3 Paper 1 Timed Assignment (in response to 2018 EJC Preliminary Examinations Paper 1)	29
8 Assess the view that international agreements are well-intended, but ineffective.	29
JC2 Paper 1 Preliminary Examination	32
2 How fair is it to say that your society is an inclusive one?	32
3 To what extent should the State be responsible for protecting our privacy?	36
4 'Artificial intelligence should be embraced, since it is inevitable.' Discuss.	39
5 'Our faith in education as the solution to poverty is misplaced.' Do you agree?	43
6 Discuss the view that dissenting voices should be censored in your society.	47
7 'Mental health is more important than physical health.' How far do you agree with this statement?	51
8 'Rights for men and women should always be equal.' What is your view?	54
10 How far do you agree that the value of the Arts has diminished in modern society?	57
11 How far should countries prioritise economic development given the serious threats posed by climate change?	60
JC2 Preliminary Exams Paper 2 Application Question	63

Message from the JC2 GP Team

Dear Eunoians,

“Starting strong is good. Finishing strong is epic.” — Robin Sharma

This issue of Navigate is a collection of responses to the JC2’s Mid Year Examinations, Term 2 & 3’s Timed Assignments and Preliminary Examinations. At long last - you have almost reached the finishing line of your GP journey! The end is near - but first, there is still more to be learned before we reach there.

By now you should be at the stage of (repeated) consolidation of what you have learnt in the past 2 years. So use this collection to further cement things that have already been taught to you, and stretch yourself even further.

Look out for all the elements of the Application Question as handled by these students - what techniques can you possibly employ? Examine the Paper 1 introductions, body paragraphs and conclusions - what principles of execution can you take away and apply in your own essays?

As the quote above suggests, the time to ramp up your efforts and preparedness is Now. At this moment, you have to put in effort to ensure that you are in the best possible state to face your final GP paper in a few weeks’ time. While you all may have entered Eunoia with differing levels of ability in GP, what truly matters is how much you have learnt in these two years, and how you end this journey. Don’t leave any room for future regrets - finish well, finish strong!

We wish you all the very best!

Your GP Teachers ♥

Essays and Paragraphs

JC2 P1 Mid Year Examination

1 Does language offer anything more than a medium for communicating with one another? Discuss this with reference to your society.

- Yeo Shin Loong, 18-A1 (Full essay)

7 The media can no longer carry out its intended functions. To what extent is this true?

- Louis Lu, 18-O3 (Full essay)

10 Is it possible to maintain a strong national identity when the world is so interconnected?

- Alastair Ang, 18-U5 (Full essay)

11 In today's world, people have lost faith in democracy. Discuss.

- Hong Chu Yan, 18-E3 (Full essay)

JC2 P2 Mid Year Examination Application Question

10 Application Question

- Samantha See, 18-E2 (Full AQ)

JC2 P1 Timed Assignment (in response to 2017 SAJC Preliminary Examinations P1):

2 Are rules meant to be broken?

- Kimberly Lim, 18-O2 (Full essay)

4 Do you agree that there is little value in literature today?

- Soon Minh, 18-I3 (Full essay)

7 'The environment is the main cause of our health woes today.' Discuss.

- Chelsea Leong, 18-I3 (Full Essay)

9 How effective has your country been in creating a national identity?

- Sarah Mak, 18-O3 (Full essay)

JC2 Term 3 P1 Timed Assignment (in response to 2018 EJC Preliminary Examinations P1):

8 Assess the view that international agreements are well-intended, but ineffective.

- Christabelle Kam, 18-I2 (Full essay)

JC2 P1 Preliminary Examination

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

Navigate Issue #5

- Elizabeth Teo, 18-U2 (Full essay)

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

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

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

- Dylan Chia, 18-E4 (Full essay)

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

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

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

- Kenneth Hoh, 18-O5 (Full essay)

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

- Nolin Ho, 18-O3 (Full essay)

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

- Lim Jia Min Jasmine, 18-A3 (Full essay)

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

- Karis Goh, 18-A3 (Full essay)

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

- Stephanie Marie Leong, 18-E1 (Full essay)

JC2 P2 Preliminary Examination

13 Application Question

- Yeo Shin Loong, 18-A1 (Partial AQ)

JC2 Paper 1 Mid Year Examination

1 Does language offer anything more than a medium for communicating with one another? Discuss this with reference to your society.

This essay shows an impressive range of examples that show a deep understanding of Singapore's unique relationship with language. This essay is outstanding for how it skillfully weaves in multiple examples into an analysis about language's function (e.g. communication, identity). Strong evaluative attempts were also made as the student drew on universal concepts like #Identity and #Systems&Structures which helped to provide a real depth of discussion.

Since time immemorial, language has been used as a tool for communication within and between societies, and had been a strong tool used by governments worldwide to entrench identities and ensure that a population remains cohesive and united. In Singapore, indeed, despite our history of various diasporic communities and a trading settlement that led to the influx of immigrants from various parts of Asia, language was a vital tool for communication between communities, where translators then helped to convey important information between these bands of immigrants. In today's world, although it is true that the standardized use of English have reduced the number of languages present in this city state, [beyond] communication, [language] use extends to the domains of the economy, the social and the environment in Singapore.

Could there have been a more attention-grabbing way to start?

Thesis statement is clear in setting out stand, general direction of essay and a sense of balance.

In the 1960s and 1970s, when Singapore experienced a forced expulsion from its neighbour Malaysia, we were left to govern a people that had a multiracial makeup. Singapore's historic roots as a trading settlement then meant that we had a plethora of races, religions and cultures that had to be located within our small island state. This therefore was a trouble for the Singapore government then, who had to deal with the interests of various communities and forge a common national identity (which was then absent) from scratch. For example, the Chinese community then tended to use various Chinese dialects such as Cantonese and Hokkien, while the Malays tended to use Malay or even Javanese to some extent. While there were some evidence of integration between the various languages -- such as how tinges of Hokkein can be found in the colloquial usage of Malay in Singapore -- yet the various languages were a barrier to communication. Hence, the Singaporean government sought to remove these barriers through the closing down of vernacular schools (schools that taught in a particular language) and the institution of the Bilingual Policy, which made it mandatory that all Singaporeans, under the formal education system had to go through 10 years of English education and pick up another language of their mother tongue, mainly either that of Chinese, Tamil or Malay. Therefore, the standardised use of English then served as an important medium for communication with one another.

This paragraph would benefit from a clear topic sentence, as opposed to a historical narrative.

Paragraph meanders into a point about building national identity, but could be stated more upfront.

Examples are specific and well-developed to show the need for language to promote national identity.

Navigate Issue #5

<p>Many however, argue that the use of a standardised language of communication has eroded the function of language in Singapore today. They claim that the standardised use of English for the purposes of business, law and administration had caused more Singaporeans to be increasingly monolingual and less exposed to the wonders of other languages. The closing down of Cantonese and Hokkien radio stations in the 1970s on Rediffusion (a cable radio company then) had reduced the variety and diversity of languages in Singapore. Indeed, it is true that we now see many millennials in Singapore losing their proficiency in their mother tongue languages and hence the value of languages in Singapore [has] seemingly been relegated to the mere functions of communications, rather than the forging of a strong multicultural identity that we ought to embrace.</p>	<p>This paragraph skillfully provides a mature evaluation of the earlier point, juxtaposing the historical context with the current reality.</p> <p>The evaluation is ultimately tied back to the questions' point of contention.</p>
<p>While proponents of this school of thought may have made relevant observations, it however makes a flawed assumption that the standardised use of English rendered it less effective in creating a national identity, and thus [it is] only limited to the functions of communications. I cannot offer more than a partial concession to this line of argument as the Singaporean identity itself has prided on the usage of English. In a recent survey conducted by the Institute of Policy Studies, 70% of Singaporeans agreed that the use of English was an essential component of their Singaporean identity. The use of English in Singapore had allowed economic growth to take place in Singapore in the 1970s and 1980s, and was exploited as a key economic tool to attract foreign capital into Singapore. The use of English had opened the doors for many Singaporeans -- it allowed the common Singaporean to be able to communicate with foreigners that many [in] our neighbouring Asian countries could not. Therefore, the use of a standardised language was a magnet for many foreign businesses to invest in Singapore, and this has led to the attraction of many transnational corporations and global conglomerates to bring their regional and international headquarters to Singapore because of our proficiency in English. For example, GlaxosmithKline and Philips are prime examples of multinational companies that had brought in investments to Singapore. More recently, Dyson has also decided to bring its international headquarters to Singapore, and one of the reasons cited was the fact that we were able to be proficient in the use of English. This economic success attained, due to our proficient use of English[,] has allowed Singapore to reign in many global indices worldwide. For example, Singapore has been named the most competitive economy worldwide, just a few days ago. While the links between language and the competitiveness of the economy are seemingly tenuous here, it is ultimately the outcome of a reinforced language policy which has [contributed] to the rise of the Singaporean human capital. Furthermore, the use of an international language in Singapore had fostered a climate that is tourist-friendly. Many tourists have sought to tour Singapore due to our ability to communicate effectively in the English language, and this made it suitable for many foreigners who increasingly seek for free-and-easy tours in Singapore. Our signages -- be it in transportation, restaurants or the airport -- have made Singapore easily accessible to many</p>	<p>Student then draws the discussion to a new point about how language has allowed our identity to evolve.</p> <p>Student delves into a segment that gives some historical context. Notice that there are very clear links to the idea of communication.</p> <p>Student ensures that the discussion is up to date by providing current examples too.</p> <p>Student's acknowledgement of the weakness of his own argument shows maturity and reasonableness.</p>

Navigate Issue #5

<p>foreigners. Furthermore, the fact that we use not only English, but also our mother tongues of Chinese, Malay and Tamil in our daily conversations makes Singapore a more unique and one-of-its-kind to tourists. Hence, it serves as a tool to keep tourism receipts coming into the Singapore economy. Therefore, I would argue that languages in Singapore have allowed for our small city-state to attain tremendous economic growth and this gives us international recognition in many fields, which thus brings together a strong national identity for Singaporeans.</p>	
<p>Language has, and will continue to be a way for Singapore to preserve her traditions and cultures. In Singapore, our unique diversity of languages here are a testament to the immigrant society and represents how Singapore was built upon the backs and labours of early immigrants to Singapore. This is especially important in Singapore, which is oft-cited as a “cultural desert” or a “culturally bereft” nation. Language thus plays an important role in the creation of cultural assets in Singapore, and contribute towards a growing Arts culture in Singapore. For example, the Language Elective Programme (LEP) offered in Junior Colleges in Singapore allowed for those who were more linguistically gifted to extend their interest through their participation in the programme. The LEP allowed them to take a greater interest in the Literature and various cultural practices associated with the language. For example, the Chinese LEP offers students a glimpse of the Chinese literary works written by renowned poets of Li Bai and Lao Tzu. This value is made even more significant in the contemporary context, where globalization has led to the watering down of traditions and cultures associated with Mother Tongue languages in Singapore. Just recently, the Ministry of Education had also announced that it would extend the LEP to secondary schools and more educational institutions in Singapore -- further insinuating its importance in the volatile and increasingly homogenized world we inhabit today. Language is also often important in the Arts scene in Singapore, where we see many plays that have used various/local languages. Hence, I would argue that language creates a cultural ballast in Singapore, and this cultural ballast has also been increasingly used as a conduit to export our culture and exert soft power in our global world.</p>	<p>Clear topic sentence. Good elaboration provides useful context explaining the significance of this function as well.</p> <p>Once again, the student impresses with the sheer range of examples, and his ability to weave them seamlessly into his analysis.</p> <p>Varied use of vocabulary keeps the essay fresh and interesting.</p>
<p>Finally, language is also critical in ensuring a racially harmonious society in Singapore. Recent efforts in ensuring that our young learn one another’s mother tongues have allowed for young Singaporeans to better understand the cultures and practices that each racial community takes. For example, the Chinese and Malay conversational programmes in Primary and Secondary schools give young students of impressionable minds a glimpse into the commonly used phrases of their friends of another race. This has allowed for the appreciation of one another’s food, and a better understanding of certain practices.</p>	<p>Good point made, but student obviously ran out of time here.</p>
<p>All in all, languages indeed offer more than just a medium for communication, but goes beyond and has exhibited its importance in the domains of social, economic, and even political realms in Singapore. In the future, the use of languages and its functions might be increasingly homogenized, but I do hope that Singapore and</p>	<p>Student injects a</p>

Navigate Issue #5

States continue to preserve local traditions through the use of languages. While it is laudable that Singapore has implemented programmes, it is also imperative to examine its [...].

(Yeo Shin Loong, 18-A1)

tinge of personal insight here. Not overdone.

Navigate Issue #5

7 The media can no longer carry out its intended functions. To what extent is this true?

<p><i>This essay, while by no measure perfect in terms of consistently addressing the question, shows very strong contextual awareness of the functions of the media and whether they can still be carried out. There were strong evaluative attempts and a very clear sense of balance throughout the essay as almost all the points were provided with a countervailing perspective.</i></p>	
<p>Factual, unbiased and objective dissemination of information has always and will always be the media's raison d'être. Past or present, the media has always been regarded as the Fourth Estate, functioning like a watchdog to reveal wrongdoings and expose the truth. The media is founded on these principles in its conception and it is the media's intended function. However, in the volatile world that we live in now, proponents often posit that the current media has evolved and can no longer carry out its intended function -- factual, unbiased and objective dissemination of information. While this may be true in certain circumstances, I am of the view that the media still can carry out its intended function.</p>	<p>Clear context but a little too cut-and-dried. Could there be a more creative way to start?</p> <p>More context on how such volatility affects the media would be helpful.</p> <p>Thesis statement could do more to give general direction of essay.</p>
<p>Admittedly, with the rapid emergence of fake news, many might be skeptical about whether the media can still be trusted for factual, unbiased and objective dissemination of information. Detractors often posit that the information reported by the media can be easily distorted and manipulated so as to achieve certain political agendas. A case in point is the North Korean state media, where the media is used as a propaganda machine. Recently, the North Korean state media reported that North Korea had won the World Cup, with the supreme Kim Jong Un scoring 10 goals in the finals against Brazil. This goes to show how the media is being used to blatantly report false information so as to paint the authoritarian regime in a positive light, so that the North Koreans will have a positive view of the government and consolidating the regime's power over the people. Hence, the media can no longer carry out its intended function.</p>	<p>Balance is clearly signposted with clear discourse markers.</p> <p>Example is well-explained, but is North Korea really the best example to choose to exemplify the current phenomenon of fake news?</p>
<p>However, the argument, while commonly heard, is not infallible and is tenuous in several aspects. The assertion that the media can no longer carry out its intended function due to the fact that information can be easily distorted and manipulated is predicated on the assumption that there are no consequences in doing so. Singapore had recently passed The Prevention of Online Falsehood and Manipulation Act, where publishing false information with the intent to distort and manipulate public opinion is now illegal be punishable by law. While it may be true that the North Korean media is state controlled and hence they will not face any consequences. It is important to note that North Korea is a case of an exception, not the rule. In fact, majority of the world's media are not state-controlled and many would face some form of backlash and consequences if it is blatantly reporting false information.</p>	<p>Again, discourse markers well used to show rebuttal.</p> <p>Thankfully student acknowledged the weakness of his choice of example. Which begs the question posed above: was NK the</p>

Navigate Issue #5

Hence, the above argument, while true in certain context, is of an exception and has its limitations.	best choice?
Proponents would then argue that even in democratic states, the media can no longer carry out its intended function – factual, unbiased and objective dissemination of information. They posit that the media has become increasingly partisan than objective due to its inherent bias. With the politicisation of the media, many news sources [have] become more polarised and partisan-leaning towards certain political ideologies, each fuelled with its own political inclinations and vested interest. A case in point would be that FOX News has been notorious for its pro-Republican reporting to the extent that some news anchors cite distorted opinions and even simply put out false claims. Hence, they conclude that media can no longer carry out its intended function.	<p>Using ‘proponents’ is confusing. Why does it sound like the same stand as ‘detractors’ earlier?</p> <p>In any case, the point is explained clearly and succinctly here with just enough evidence.</p>
However, while I contend that certain media outlets indeed have their inherent bias, it is myopic to conclude absolutely that media can no longer carry out its intended function as the above argument is based on questionable first principles. The above argument is predicated on the assumption that all media outlets have their own inherent bias, in disseminating information that is biased and polarised. This is far from the truth as there are well-established media outlets which have their own journalistic integrity and commitment to report factual information. Well-established media outlets such as CNN and the BBC have decades of reputation built on their credibility. The reason for their survival is the public support and trust that this media outlets reported factual information and [are] truthful in the reporting. Moreover the CNN and the BBC are also well-known for [their] rigorous and stringent editorial processes so as to prevent false information from being spread. Even when false information is spread, they acknowledge the errors being made and will make corrections to the articles reported or even retract a story after acknowledging that errors were made. This shows that there are still media outlets with the dedication, reputation and integrity to ensure that they carry out its intended function -- factual, unbiased and objective dissemination of information. Hence, while there are still a few black sheep in the industry, the reputable media sources can still carry out its intended function.	<p>Again, student uses discourse markers well to show rebuttal and his own view.</p> <p>Student does not simply state CNN and BBC and expects these terms to be self-explanatory, but gives substantial and relevant explanations.</p> <p>Would be better if specific instances of this can be fleshed out.</p> <p>Concluding statement is well balanced.</p>
Moreover, the media has commonly been regarded as the Fourth Estate, functioning like a watchdog to reveal the wrongdoings and expose the truth to serve the public’s interests. Well-established media outlets have the expertise and resources to conduct investigative journalism to expose the truth. Investigative journalism is well-known for uncovering the truth and exposing the misdeeds of even the people with the highest degree of power. It serves as a series of checks and balances to those in power so that they can be held accountable for their own actions. An excellent case study is the Boston Globe, reports where investigative journalism was conducted and exposed the Catholic church’s decades of sexual abuse. It exposed the heinous nature of paedophilia of priests and dishonesty of those in power who paid	<p>This topic sentence only provides a function of the media but doesn’t quite answer the question head on.</p> <p>Student could have attempted to address question more closely instead of just describing</p>

Navigate Issue #5

<p>hush money to victims to cover their crimes. Hence, this goes to show that the media can still carry out its intended functions even if it meant exposing those at the highest degrees of power.</p>	<p>investigative journalism in this paragraph.</p>
<p>In a nutshell, the rapid emergence of fake news, the ease of manipulating information and the increasingly partisan nature of certain media outlets cannot be ignored as they undermine the fundamental intention of the media. That being said, media can still largely carry out its function and people must have the discernment and perspicacity to filter out information they think might be untrue and take whatever information reported with a pinch of salt.</p> <p><i>(Louis Lu, 18-03)</i></p>	<p>Student reiterates main arguments and shows clear balance, though it could have been a little more memorable.</p>

Navigate Issue #5

10 Is it possible to maintain a strong national identity when the world is so interconnected?

<p><i>Student has a strong command of language which he uses to flesh out complex ideas and analyses with succinctness (always a mark of a good writer!). The sheer range of examples provided also demonstrate a deep and mature understanding of the global context called for here. Arguments are well linked from one to another and provide a satisfying sense of coherence.</i></p>	
<p>The interconnected world today hinges on an incredible power imbalance. Beyond economic strife, political conflicts, the interactions of cultures on a geopolitical scale, driven by [the] forces of globalisation[,] [have] led to worrying effects. In an arena full of Goliaths, how can Davids stand out on the global stage? These cultural interactions have led to a possible erosion of culture and identity of some nations, unable to withstand soft powers exerted by their larger, stronger, culturally more robust counterparts. Yet, I argue that the maintenance of a strong identity is plausible, even against our interconnectedness, and is not limited by a nation's size, its history not the perceived wealth of cultural influences that created the identity she owns.</p>	<p>Fantastic opening sentence, but it is unfortunately left hanging with an abrupt change into the next sentence.</p> <p>Wrong use of 'plausible', but thesis statement shows general direction of essay.</p>
<p>Today, the advent of technology and peak of globalisation [have] allowed many countries to wield incredible soft power, grounding their national identity, and making waves and impacts on the global stage. In the last century, the notion of globalisation coupled with technological advancements have aided greater exchanges between cultures and their nations, leading to interactions on an unprecedented scale. In the West, the Industrial Revolution boosted both its economic might and social standing, resulting in vibrancy in the plethora of cultural exports it owns, like pop music, ideologies of democracy and freedom, and entertainment like superhero films and situational comedies. The Western nations, notably the United States and the United Kingdom, had firmly established themselves as champions of freedom, democracy, rights, which has been imbued into their national identity. The US's tagline of being the 'Land of the Free, Home of the Brave', aptly sums up their values, and the distinction in the American identity [from] the rest of the world. At the same time, we see [the] emergence of Eastern soft powers. From Japan's J-pop and cuisine exports of sushis and sashimis, to Korea's Hallyu wave, it is undeniable that Asian nations have found their own distinct identities amid the crowded arena too. At the forefront of these nations, is the rise of the Chinese superpower, which wields so much unbridled soft power, it has pervasively spread to most of the world. China's 'One Belt One Road' initiative, along with the establishment of hundreds of Confucianism schools worldwide, have generated a strong national identity. On screens of football matches, we see sponsored billboards of Chinese firms and brands, on Instagram and Facebook, there are increasing posts of non-Asians picking up chopsticks and even Mandarin. It is evident that soft power has generated a strong national identity for many nations aided by technology and globalisation.</p>	<p>Student clearly outlines the factors that have made it possible.</p> <p>A very competent recount of the rise of the West's soft power is helpfully set out.</p> <p>Student covers a wide range of examples from West to East. Shows that one doesn't have to delve that deep into each individual example to show awareness.</p>

Navigate Issue #5

<p>Yet, opponents argue that it is the very use of soft power by these culturally-robust nations that threaten[s] the survival of [the] national identities of smaller, newer nations. They have proposed an ugly face of globalisation: one that has led to erosion of culture and homogenization of people. This has led to a more aggressive nature of soft power, in the zero sum game of cultural standings and identity in the global arena. For example, certain nations have taken measures to change Mandarin to one of their own compulsory subjects, on the African continent. There is also more sensationalism than ever, over African performing groups who are able to sing Chinese classics and even songs in the Hokkein dialect, who have performed in regions like Taiwan. As the African continent becomes more dependent on the Chinese for economic growth and development, it has also become increasingly vulnerable to the Chinese soft power and its effects, which can impact the identities of these developing, newly decolonized nations.</p>	<p>Very smart way to link previous argument to the next one!</p> <p>Competent use of language to elucidate ideas clearly.</p> <p>Insightful examples which are definitely not run-of-the-mill.</p>
<p>However, I opine that the view of how aggressive soft power would definitely threaten national identities of smaller countries is rather myopic. The argument hinges itself on two assumptions. One, it assumes that there is a dichotomy between cultures and that cultures and identities are non-malleable entities. I argue that this is invalid, for the confluence of different cultures [has] shaped the identities of many nations. For the immigrant-centric identity of the US, it has centred its identity of a nation with open doors and welcoming arms, with a long history of being a melting pot of cultures. At home, Singapore's very own multicultural, multi-religious identity stems from the clashing and interactions of Chinese and Indian traders, Malay natives and European businessman. Thus, it is short-sighted to blatantly disregard that mixing of cultures cannot contribute towards forming a richer, stronger identity. Secondly, it assumes that these nations are incapable of coming up with targeted measures that strengthen its citizen's sense of belonging. These measures or policies are possible panaceas, should countries regard foreign soft power as detrimental threats.</p>	<p>Student provides a rebuttal for the above by attacking its assumptions.</p> <p>Student then engages in a complex analysis about the nature of #identity in various nations.</p>
<p>This ties in with my argument that countries are fully capable of taking measures to limit the effects of foreign soft power, through their own policies and programmes. Singapore's very own robust National Education Programme has inculcated a full sense of national identity in generations of Singaporeans. [With] social studies [instituted] as a subject, students have the opportunity of understanding more about the nation's past. In addition, Singaporean students are invited to the National Day Parade at least once in their lifetime. The exposure to both history and national celebrations from a young age instills strongly in citizens the kind of pride and identity they have towards the state. This year, Singapore celebrates its Bicentennial Year, covering two centuries since modern Singapore was established as a trading port. Celebrations like this are pertinent examples of how governments are able to use targeted measures in emphasising culture and identity despite fully knowing their inadequacies vis-a-vis other robust countries' cultures and histories. Thus, such</p>	<p>Once again, student segues from the above rebuttal to his next point very smoothly.</p> <p>Student illustrates his point from SG's context very comprehensively, going beyond stock examples like national education.</p>

Navigate Issue #5

<p>measures are able to allow for a strengthening of national identity even in the world today.</p>	
<p>Back in the global arena, Goliaths are still able to wield immense soft power to establish their identities and own limelight, through more and more intricate tools like technology and globalisation. Whilst these might seem to be a severe threat to certain Davids with the significant disadvantages in cultural, historical and political aspects, there are still ways they are able to carve out their own spot in the arena, and maintain a strong identity that their citizens are proud to call home. Quantum leaps in interconnectedness, therefore, should not have bearings on a people's pride, love and sense of belonging for their own land.</p> <p><i>(Alastair Ang, 18-U5)</i></p>	<p>Very skillful echo back to the biblical imagery in the introduction.</p> <p>Preceding arguments are reiterated with conviction.</p>

JC2 Paper 2 Mid Year Examination Application Question

Clifton Mark discusses how meritocracy and our belief in it bring about more harm than good. How relevant is this in your society?

<p><i>While this response is slightly too lengthy and repetitive at certain points, it shows a sustained effort to make evaluative comments throughout, and an ability to point to concrete examples to illustrate her stand.</i></p>	
<p>Mark discusses how meritocracy makes a person “<i>even more prone to acting in discriminatory ways</i>” (line 35), describing the way the perceived justification meritocracy gives for one to believe one deserves credit for what they have because they earned it causes one to believe one is above others, and hence discriminate against others or treat them as lesser, and this is especially apparent in Singapore. As a country that prides itself on values of meritocracy, boasting how intelligence and hard work can boost the poorest student to one of the richest people in the country due to the equal opportunities presented by our education systems and society, the natural result is that many Singaporeans believe that regardless of our status at birth, wherever we are now is the result of our own effort and talent in such an ‘equal’ and highly competitive society, with no apparent conferred advantage from external points. This is because of the ideology that hard work earns intelligence and knowledge, which earns one a good occupation, that earns one the material wealth that Singaporeans often take as a symbol of not only success, but hence superiority. Because Singaporeans consider merit on the basis of hard work more than anything, they may discount things like intelligence since that may be artificially gained through effort and studying, or believe that external factors of luck are eliminated because of the extremely fair and meritocratically idealised schooling system set up by the Singapore government when in fact the system does not in fact eliminate all factors of inequality. For example, students from wealthier families being able to afford expensive extra tuition, conferring to them advantages over others. Hence, this imbues in Singaporeans a sense of ‘justified’ and deserved superiority, resulting in manifestations such as the common belief that there are ‘better school’ than others where students in such schools are considered smarter and more likely to succeed because they worked harder to get the grades to enter these schools, hence are given more privileges like learning journeys or boasting rights. For example, the seemingly automatic tendency for blue-collar workers such as maids or foreign construction workers to give up their seats to those who appear to be white collar workers like</p>	<p>Chosen quote relates well to the preamble about ‘harm’.</p> <p>Good explanation of the idea.</p> <p>Student’s stand is clear. Student gives a brief reason for her stand by explaining our relationship to meritocracy.</p> <p>Student further links analysis to bigger idea of our #B&V on hard work.</p> <p>Student goes into a rather detailed exposition on how the system of meritocracy has shaped our #B&V.</p> <p>Student illustrates points of her analysis with concrete observations which are well explained and linked to the main idea.</p> <p>Some logical gaps here from the tuition point.</p> <p>Student once again points to another concrete observation, and links it well to the main idea.</p>

Navigate Issue #5

<p>doctors or businessmen on buses and trains. The sense of superiority is so intrinsically and deeply integrated into the Singaporeans mindset that it is not only the 'successful' but also the 'less successful' who believe in such a hierarchy of superiority measured by these successes, that it is automatic to discriminate between the two, and give greater privileges to those seen as superior, such as when only top-scoring students are considered for subsidized overseas school trips, or when higher paid workers at companies are given greater privileges than their lower paid counterparts on account of seniority or skill. Not only does meritocracy ground people with a sense of superiority and a 'right' to discriminate accordingly, but it also encourages the acceptance of such discrimination by the discriminated. Discrimination is not only rampant but accepted, normalised and seen as justified.</p>	<p>Another concrete observation here.</p> <p>Well-linked back to main idea.</p>
<p>Mark also [...] describes meritocracy as taking failures as 'defects' or shortcomings that cannot be compensated for, and hence being a 'failure' is inevitable. This is not a relevant ideology to Singaporeans at all, as while we do prize natural talent and intelligence, it is commonly believed that hard work trumps all, in that no matter one's station in life, if one works and studies hard enough, we will be able to get the grades, achieve proficiency, succeed in life, so long as they work at it long and hard enough. The Singaporean belief is that if one is at the bottom' it may mean that one is not naturally gifted, but rather than it being a matter of luck or a defect that cannot be compensated for, it is more of a sign that one has room for improvement and must put in even more effort to catch up with everyone else. This is due to Singapore's highly competitive society and the strongly valued virtue of self-reliance where failure is simply not accepted, and there is a culture of always trying. Part of it could be attributed to the 'tiger mum' attitude of many Singaporeans families where it is expected that no matter what, one is expected to simply work at something till one succeeds. Hence it is evident that while perhaps elsewhere meritocracy gives reason and justification for a new type of dredge of society, Singapore's own brand of meritocracy actually takes such a position not to be an inevitable sign of justified, reasonable, rational failure but rather simply as a sign that one must work harder to get out of such a status, that it is by no means permanent or mandatory, but within, ideally, our control. While Mark claims it sets up a new fixed hierarchy, Singaporeans do not believe in anything we cannot fix without hard work in order to earn merit.</p> <p><i>(Samantha See, 18-E2)</i></p>	<p>Student expresses one of the author's main ideas clearly in her own words.</p> <p>Once again, the stand is clear and a brief reason is provided.</p> <p>Student perhaps spends a bit too much time belabouring that reason here.</p> <p>Student draws on another characteristic of SG.</p> <p>Perhaps this observation could be fleshed out in more concrete terms.</p> <p>While her command of language is impressive, one gets the sense that the student is needlessly repetitive in this paragraph.</p>

JC2 Term 2 Paper 1 Timed Practice (in response to 2017 SAJC Preliminary Examination Paper 1)

2 Are rules meant to be broken?

Observe how the student arranges her points in a highly logical manner that slowly eases her readers from one position to the other without a sense of abruptness, leaving the reader with a very satisfying sense of coherence. She also manages to communicate nuanced and rich ideas with a real economy of carefully chosen words - a mark of a skillful writer.

In the age of globalization where the world has become evermore interconnected and the access to education has greatly increased, the exchange of knowledge, information, schools of thought and other goods and services has become much more convenient; much easier to obtain/interact with. This has led people to [possess] an increased awareness about events in the world and that of back home, about their own rights and what their government is doing to impact their lives, be it in a good or bad way. Many are thus more vocal and ready to question, even break rules they deem redundant – believing that it is rightly so. However, I opine that rules are not meant to be broken, rather, they are meant to be challenged when the need arises.

Quite a bland and trite opening. Could do better.

Student gives this question a specific, modern context.

More could be said to give a general direction of the essay.

Some may argue that in our changing, dynamic world today, rules are meant to be broken and revised in order to suit the needs of the current society. They believe that breaking present, existing rules would thus bring up the inadequacies in now-standing policies or systems, hence driving or catalyzing amendments and improvements to these rules, so as to establish a better quality of life. Certainly, this is highly evident in relatively recent stands to appeal for the legislation of homosexual marriages in various countries. With conservative viewpoints of marriage and the traditional family unit (a man, a woman, and their children) slowly altering into something along the lines of true love and the economical (financial) and psychological capability to raise children, breaking the law (hence, rule) against such homosexual marriages seems to pose little to no negative social impact, but a great array of benefits to a nation's citizens. Yet, while people in countries such as Taiwan and the United States of America have been successful in the latter, the long-drawn implications of breaking such rules have yet to be fully discovered.

Point is clearly made and very eloquently elaborated on.

Student hints at some balance at the end, but not enough is said about that.

On the other hand, rules are not meant to be broken as they have been set in place to ensure the security and relatively equal rights of the majority. A state of order must be established (by adhering to rules) in order to allow peaceful and harmonious living. Take sports for example: sports is deemed as one of the few universal languages of

Clear discourse marker signals the direction of the argumentation.

Navigate Issue #5

<p>communication simply because its rules with regard to fair and foul play are acknowledged throughout the world. The strict implementation of these rules ensure good sportsmanship and fair play at stages such as the Olympics, enabling countries the opportunity to bond. Feelings or negative sentiments towards unfair play [are] limited, and international tension and dissent [are] avoided, allowing peaceful coexistence. If we were to extend this understanding to other rules in our everyday lives such as the alcohol-sales ban from 10.30pm to 10am in Singapore, we would thus better understand how rules in place keep us safe. Internal security and social harmony [are] maintained amongst all walks of life such that we are able to live each day with peace of mind and without much worry towards discrimination, for example, as rules help prevent social dissent and tensions from arising.</p>	<p>Student progresses from sports example to other areas of daily living skillfully.</p>
<p>Furthermore, rules are meant to be adhered to as they are by-products of trial and error that have proven to be escalators to future success. Rules such as codes of conduct, be it at home (and hence influenced by religion and culture), at work or outside have given us a baseline of decorum and propriety. Through them, we learn about social faux pas and proper behaviour and etiquette that teach us how to communicate with different counterparts in future. Moreover, such rules of conduct train our discipline, patience, tolerance, kindness and empathy when we understand the reason behind their implementation – to maintain order. We are hence more aware and able to better work well with others when faced with tension, challenges and situational constraints. Additionally, rules implemented, such as rules to games, force us to work within restraint such that we are able to tap on our creativity and learn how to think critically on the spot to solve problems. Rules therefore teach us flexibility, adaptation to situations, quick response to problems and quick decision-making – key skills that are now highly sought after by employers in the working world.</p>	<p>Clear topic sentence that is once again well well elaborated on.</p> <p>Concrete examples to flesh out these ideas would be good to have though.</p>
<p>Lastly, universally acknowledged rules such as moral codes and codes of ethics should never be broken. These rules ensure the survival of humanity by laying out frontiers that cannot be crossed so as to prevent mutually assured destruction or the declination of the human race; life forms on earth. Rapid advancement in science and technology has allowed the expansion of military artillery to nuclear weapons. Although widespread, the knowledge and possession of nuclear weapons have limitations being set upon them, with many annual talks held by the UN Security Council to push more countries (that possess these weapons) towards total nuclear disarmament (Geneva Conference). This is to ensure that large populations do not get wiped out, and that viable earth is not destroyed by rash displays of testosterone. The persecution of the Chinese scientist who used CRISPR technology to remove HIV genes from two babies is another display of universal ethical codes that must remain steadfast. It is understood that we should not tamper with the natural evolution of</p>	<p>Notice that the progression of the students' points such that she ends on an absolute one for certain cases. Evinces thoughtful planning.</p> <p>Examples are current and succinct yet well-explained to show the absolute necessity of rules.</p>

Navigate Issue #5

<p>mankind to avoid any accidental, permanent/irreversible mistakes. By sticking to these rules, humanity is guaranteed survival.</p>	
<p>In conclusion, it is prudent to fully digest the fundamental reasons behind why rules were set in the first place. Rules maintain the security of a country, society or agency such that harmonious living is promoted, maintain law and order, protect us from the failings of our predecessors, and ensure humanity's survival and continuation. While certain rules may seem ridiculous or redundant, rather than going all out to break them, people should instead challenge these rules to a higher authority and bring up the areas for improvement. Rules are fluid in the way they can be amended, without losing their initial purpose. This thus allows the protection of both past and present in societies and the catering to a wider scope of needs.</p> <p><i>(Kimberly Lim, 18-O2)</i></p>	<p>A very well balanced conclusion that reiterates the arguments that were made without being repetitive.</p>

4 Do you agree that there is little value in literature today?

<p><i>This essay reads like a breath of fresh air in a sea of clinically constructed, emotionless responses. The student not only displays an impressive range of literature that belies her passion for the topic, but her evocative word choice gives this essay a stamp of individuality and personal voice that leaves a very deep impression on its readers. Note also how the student manages to consistently address the given context of 'today' throughout the essay.</i></p>	
<p>'The reader lives a thousand lives, the man who does not read lives only one,' penned George R. R. Martin, one of today's best-known literary giants. As a self-proclaimed bibliophile, I could not agree more. I spent my childhood folded between the pages of books. I lived the lives of fictional characters, and my days were their histories, fantasies, and footnotes. Fast forward to the present day - with the quality of written work increasingly eroded by the digital landscape, steady falls in reading rates, and 'literature' seen as something for the austere elites and not the masses, is there much value in literature today? In my opinion, literature is worth its weight in gold. Its coinage may be foreign to some, but the value neither diminishes nor depreciates over time. Classics that have stood the test of time remain as relevant as they were in their day. In an increasingly polarised and complex world, modern literature is our call to action. Finally as boundaries shift and blur, and we meld into a homogenous sea of globalised wanderers, literature can keep us grounded and rooted in a national identity. Therefore, I cannot agree that there is little value in literature today.</p>	<p>Fantastic opening with an engaging quote that gets to the heart of the debate.</p> <p>Student links personal experience with the modern context.</p> <p>Though detailed, student presents a clear direction for her essay, and her personal voice rings strong through evocative word choice (<i>note: the mere use of 1st person ≠ personal voice; it's about word choice</i>)</p>
<p>First, the stories and values imparted in works widely considered literary canon and still applicable to our modern lives. Agatha Christie's novels and William Shakespeare's plays - outsold only by the Bible - remain bestsellers to this day, because their tales of man, morality and meaning are still relevant to us. They teach us values that shape our lives, and remind us that our worth lies not in our strengths, but in how we overcome our weaknesses. In China, works like the Trimetrical and Confucian classics still remain the cornerstone of basic education. Proper moral upbringing is as important as literacy or academic fundamentals. The study of literary works as a means for moral education is a long-established practice, and one that looks like it will continue into the future. Although our circumstances are wildly different from those of our ancestors, the core issues and dilemmas we face are the same as we explore and navigate the human condition. Thus, literature has the power to imbue us with values and morals that have survived to this day. The immense educational value of literature means that to claim it has little value today is simply untrue. Literature can teach us the same lessons it taught our ancestors, and their ancestors before them. As fantasy writer Brandon Sanderson put it, 'All stories</p>	<p>Should use argumentative discourse markers, not numerical connectors.</p> <p>The breadth of examples range from ancient to modern, West to East.</p> <p>Student gives a powerful explanation that ties all the examples to her point about timelessness.</p> <p>Being able to use an apt quote to echo</p>

Navigate Issue #5

<p>have been told before. We tell them to ourselves, as did all men who ever were. And all men who ever were will be. The only things new are the names.'</p>	<p>her point effectively is a marvellous touch.</p>
<p>However, it cannot be denied that as publishing cheapens, almost anyone - with some effort - can write a book. There has been a noticeable decline in the quality of written work churned out by profit-chasing publishers in recent decades. Gone are the days of hand-cramping scribing and Gutenberg's printing press. Now anyone - yes, even the likes of Stephanie Meyers, Dan Brown, and Sarah Maas - can be a writer. Books rife with clumsy language magled plot and shallow characters line the shelves. Worse still, the reading and writing taught at schools is being eroded by [the] proliferation of internet slang, and fewer and fewer children are reading. A 2015 survey showed that 57% of Singaporean youths had not read a book in the past year. With readers and writers both contributing towards the decline of literature, detractors moan the loss of literature and shake their heads at the thought of today's literature having any value. The only way out, they claim, is to turn the page and start afresh from page one.</p>	<p>The context of 'today' is very well addressed here with insight.</p> <p>There is a real sense of confidence and even playfulness in how she cites her examples.</p> <p>Student wittily extends the writing metaphor in reiterating her point.</p>
<p>Yet all is not lost. Although the quality of contemporary literature may have declined, what we really need to do is focus our attention on the few 'good apples' in the barrel. In today's increasingly complex and polarised world, strong contemporary literature stands out from the mediocre mass and calls for action. There are still quality novels out there. They bring social issues into the spotlight and have causes to champion. Angie Thomas' <i>The Hate U Give</i> sheds light on Black Lives Matter. Roy Bradbury's <i>Fahrenheit 451</i> questions the notion of censorship and withholding knowledge. Viet Thanh Nguyen's <i>The Refugees</i> gives a glimpse of displaced people rebuilding their lives. Literature helps us view the world through different lenses in order to better understand others' perspectives, and examine their place in the world. With radical and extreme ideologies on the rise, there has never been a more pressing time for us to discuss important social justice issues, and literature is the perfect medium. Thus, there is much value in literature today, because quality contemporary novels are platforms to discuss important issues and calls to action.</p>	<p>Clear link to preceding paragraph is made.</p> <p>Again, there is a strong focus on the context of 'today', and what continues to give literature value.</p> <p>A smattering of novels are listed here, and tied into how they contribute to the modern context.</p>
<p>Finally, in today's global village where national boundaries are porous and fast-fading, literature can add much cultural value. Storytelling is a time capsule that holds cultural identity in stasis, keeping a nation's sense of self alive through the generations. We are not aimless wanderers having no places to call home, we know our roots - and we return to them eventually. Singapore was a nation thrust into independence, and viewed as a barren cultural desert initially. However, when the local literature scene began blossoming with names like Catherine Lim, Cyril Wong, Robert Yeo, and Alfian Sa'at appearing in print, Singaporeans had an emboldened sense of identity, with something to officially call their own. Local literature book stores like Epigram Books and BooksActually do a thriving trade and remain in</p>	<p>Once again, clear links to today's world.</p> <p>Elaboration is almost poetic, which fits the tone of the essay.</p> <p>References are made not just to authors but to publishers to demonstrate scale of impact.</p>

Navigate Issue #5

<p>business to this day. Although the value of having a richer cultural identity is hard to quantify, there is no doubt that literature helps us remain rooted to where we come from, even as the world grows more hyperconnected. Hence, there is much value in literature today, as it infuses our societies with colour and culture.</p>	
<p>So, what next? Humans once progressed from writing on tablets to writing on paper; now it seems the reverse is true. With the digital era already upon us, literature has not stood still while time marched on. Electronic books - an oxymoron? - are an option for those with too little time. Now, thousand of unpaid writers - amateurs and professionals alike - are writing and sharing their written work online. What about audiobooks and podcasts?</p>	<p>Student writes with a confident voice of conviction. Note how she has built up the essay to this point.</p>
<p>Whatever the future may bring, one thing is certain: literature has much value today, and it is likely to have as much value tomorrow. Literature imparts timeless values, mobilises people to reshape society, and reminds us of where we came from. Although no longer ‘the type of kid who fantasises about being trapped in a library overnight’ (to borrow a phrase from Trenton Lee Stewart), I still believe that literature has immense value today. After all, why live one life when you could experience thousands?</p> <p><i>(Soon Minh, 18-13)</i></p>	<p>The quality of argumentation and strength of personal voice thus far ensures that this concluding note is not merely academic, but personal and deeply felt.</p>

7 'The environment is the main cause of our health woes today.' Discuss.

<p><i>While the essay showcases an impressive range of examples that are well-woven into the arguments being made, it has a tendency to delve into being merely descriptive, and even loses sight of the point of contention at times. Reinforcing the links back to the question would remedy this.</i></p>	
<p>There is no doubt that medicine has progressed significantly in the past century or two. Today, the health woes we face are drastically different from those our ancestors faced hundreds of years ago. We no longer have to worry about diseases like influenza wiping out a quarter of the population, but ailments such as the common cold continue to plague every single one of us from time to time. When investigating the underlying causes of our health woes, some are quick to push the blame to the environment. After all, on the surface level, it does seem like our coughs and colds are a product of the chemical-laden air we breathe in every day. However, delving deeper into the matter at hand, it becomes apparent that our health woes today are not mainly caused by the environment, but something we are much more familiar with. Since the Industrial Revolution, mankind has mostly brought harm to the environment. Releasing tonnes upon tonnes of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere with only short-term benefits in mind, us humans have been wrecking the environment before we even knew what we were truly capable of. Therefore, I posit that the environment is not the main cause of our health woes today, but rather, mankind is at fault.</p>	<p>Perhaps the opening context could more directly point to the tension of the question, as opposed to a mere backdrop of modern medical advancement.</p> <p>Student could have been clearer in giving a general direction of the essay here.</p>
<p>Firstly, when considering the desolate state of the environment currently, we have to keep in mind that we are the ones who have caused it to deteriorate to this condition. Our ancestors invented the carbon dioxide producing machines that kickstarted the Industrial Revolution, and simultaneously began the era of environmental destruction. In the past, humans used coal to generate power for economic activities, and this practice lives on today. Even in the age of technology, many corporations still rely on the traditional method of burning fossil fuels to generate energy, despite there being more environmentally-friendly options such as wind power and solar power. This can be attributed to the two most important features of fossil fuel generated power - it is cheap and efficient. Many corporations focus largely on profit-making rather than environmental consciousness, trading off environmental quality for money without batting an eyelid. These actions certainly show in some of the world's major cities today. In Beijing, China, the sky is perpetually covered by a thick layer of smog, and citizens have reported rapid increases in incidences of respiratory problems and cancers. Currently, China's lung cancer cases account for 36 percent of the world's total, and about half of those affected are non-smokers. This clearly highlights the detrimental effects brought about by the polluted air mankind has created. Mankind has also frequently participated in activities which are</p>	<p>Poor choice of connector: don't list!</p> <p>While this clearly addresses the environment, student should also try to link it to health woes from the outset.</p> <p>Mention of health woes only comes in mid-way</p> <p>But thankfully, student provides a</p>

Navigate Issue #5

<p>detrimental to our environment in the name of convenience - think Indonesia's slash-and-burn methods, or China's dumping of untreated chemicals into the ocean. Polluted water, when consumed can have life-threatening effects, and are carriers of waterborne diseases like cholera. It can no longer be denied that mankind is responsible for the current state of the environment, which has brought about a multitude of health woes. Therefore, when considering the magnitude of destruction mankind has brought to the environment and consequently our health, I maintain my stand that mankind is the main cause of our health woes today.</p>	<p>range of examples which showcase breadth.</p>
<p>Secondly, our diet and lifestyle also play vital roles in ensuring we are in the pink of health. We have autonomy in how we choose to live and eat, and these choices play a direct role in influencing our health. There are many commonplace health woes today closely linked to lifestyle and diet, some a direct result of lifestyle and diet. For instance, type II diabetes is brought about by a diet high in sugars, while liver failure can be brought about by excessive consumption of alcohol. These diseases are certainly not a product of our environment, but rather of ourselves, and they continue to affect a large proportion of our population today. By 2050, one million Singaporeans are projected to suffer from type II diabetes, making diabetes a pertinent health woe that is caused by our direct action. On a global scale, nearly 40 percent of Americans are obese, partly due to their diet which is high in sugar, sodium and fat. Obesity is not only due to an unhealthy diet, but also a sedentary lifestyle. It can lead to a plethora of secondary health woes, such as coronary heart disease, further highlighting that our health woes are mainly determined by the choices we make. Therefore, I believe that mankind, not the environment, is the main cause of our health woes today, simply due to the fact that many of our health woes are related to our diet and lifestyle.</p>	<p>Response veers off the point of contention, student has hijacked the question to talk about other factors without reference to relative importance of the environment.</p> <p>Learning point: to avoid hijacking the question, ensure that any mention of an alternative factor is always done so in comparison to the main factor in the question (in this case, the environment).</p>
<p>However, some may argue that mankind is not the main cause of our health woes today, but rather, it is mainly caused by other factors, namely genetics and the natural environment. Despite this, I maintain my stand that mankind remains the main cause due to the fallacies in the arguments raised by those opponents, who propose that genetics is the main cause for our health woes today, as certain genetic diseases are unpreventable and untreatable. Some conditions, like Down Syndrome and albinism are caused by random mutations during the fertilisation process, and are unpreventable by humans. In these cases, these diseases are certainly out of the control of mankind, and mankind can no longer bear the blame for causing these health woes. However, I personally feel that although genetic mutations are certainly a cause of health woes, they are definitely much less prevalent than the health woes brought about by the environment mankind has destroyed and the lifestyle one chooses to lead. Therefore, while I do admit that genetic diseases are out of our control, they are not the main cause of our health woes today.</p>	<p>This paragraph is puzzling as well. The opponents' arguments are not fleshed out enough to rebut them.</p> <p>Student tries to bring the discussion back to the PoC by comparing genetics vis-a-vis environment, but no substantiation is given her assessment besides a brief 'less prevalent'.</p>

Navigate Issue #5

<p>In addition, certain critics still believe that the environment is the main cause of our health woes. They argue that animals and insects, an important feature of nature, are excellent disease vectors and are to blame for the widespread of diseases today. For instance, the Aedes mosquito is primarily responsible for the spread of diseases like the Zika virus and dengue fever. These diseases can be life-threatening if left untreated, and are a big issue in the tropics. Despite mankind's best preventive measures, such as removing stagnant bodies of water in the home and mosquito nets, these mosquitoes are still able to fly from one destination to another, infecting countless people. Furthermore, seemingly harmless diseases can mutate in animal bodies to become far deadlier. One of the most relevant examples to our current world would be the Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV). This virus is virtually incurable, and will comprise one's immune system to a large extent. HIV is hypothesised to have spread from animals to humans, as a result of mutation of another disease while in the animal's body. HIV is a large problem in countries with low levels of education and family planning, leading to a large proportion of the population participating in casual sex or needle-sharing. Therefore, animals and insects certainly play a role in giving rise to new strains of diseases and being an effective mode of transport of infectious diseases, which in turn impacts human health negatively. Nevertheless, I believe that these critics are adopting too narrow a viewpoint. While the animals and insects may be effective vectors of disease, there are still numerous ways in which diseases can be spread. Many of today's most deadly diseases are spread through air, water, or bodily fluids, such as the Ebola virus. Furthermore, many of the insect-borne diseases are confined within a certain region, for instance hot and humid regions, due to the type of habitats the insects inhabit. Hence, due to the myopic view adopted in the above argument, I conclude that mankind is still the main cause of our health woes today.</p>	<p>Perhaps student could further flesh out why this is a particular problem 'today'.</p> <p>While the level of detailed knowledge here is impressive, one wonders if the point of contention (about 'today') is not really the focus here.</p> <p>There are some logical flaws here. Just because there are other mediums to transmit diseases does not make animals insignificant? And in any case, are they not all part of the environment?</p>
<p>In conclusion, there are many causes of our health woes today, but the main cause is ultimately ourselves. We have unknowingly constructed a world which has great potential to poison us, but the reality is that we are the ones who have poisoned the environment first. We should no longer ignorantly point fingers at the environment for causing our health woes, but instead ponder on our past actions and think about what we can do from now on.</p> <p><i>(Chelsea Leong, 18-13)</i></p>	

9 How effective has your country been in creating a national identity?

<p><i>The strength of this essay lies in its rich examples reflective of the Singapore context. These examples could be more tightly woven into the overall argument with the use of stronger links to the question's point of contention, and the deployment of more effective discourse markers to signal the transitions in the arguments.</i></p>	
<p>"This is home, truly..." as Kit Chan croons in the famous National Day song, <i>Home</i>. This song continues to strike an emotional chord in many Singaporeans, resonating with a sense of national identity. Producing National Day songs is one of the many ways my country is creating a national identity, but people disagree on whether this has been effective. Cynics decry these attempts as artificial, especially since Singapore is a relatively new country with only fifty-four years of independence. Others do feel strong emotional ties to Singapore, with a desire to contribute to this country, demonstrating the effectiveness of these measures. National identity aids in bonding the countrymen so the country is more resilient in crisis, and motivates them to contribute to the nation, so the government has devised various measures to foster it. I believe that these measures are only somewhat effective, but they are more effective on younger Singaporeans.</p>	<p>A simple but effective opener.</p> <p>Context of the question's point of contention is well brought in following from the opener.</p> <p>Sentence on national identity's function appears a little abruptly.</p> <p>Thesis statement could have done more to give a general direction for the essay.</p>
<p>A few of these measures to create a national identity in my country have been effective. The Merlion, a symbol for the Singapore Tourism Board (STB) to market our tourism sector overseas, has seen some popularity overseas, highlighting how it has resonated as a national icon. It is especially popular in Japan, and has even seen an appearance in the anime <i>Cowboy Bebop</i> as [an] important plot point, with one of the major characters being a Singaporean. The Merlion has grown to [become] an icon at home as well, with famed local poet Edwin Thumboo writing a poem about the symbol in 'Ulysses By The Merlion'. This poem, along with other poems about the Merlion, has been compiled in an anthology named <i>Reflecting on the Merlion</i>, demonstrating how this piece of our national identity has sparked the creativity of many local poets. The popularity of some National Day songs such as <i>Home</i>, <i>Stand Up for Singapore</i> and, more recently, <i>In a Heartbeat</i>, also shows that some measures to create a national identity [...]. With the camaraderie [many] Singaporeans feel when singing these songs, we truly feel bonded to our nation. Therefore, a few of these attempts have been successful in fostering a national identity among Singaporeans.</p>	<p>Topic sentence is devoid of an argument.</p> <p>Japanese popularity and Thumboo's poem takes the trite Merlion example into insightful territory.</p> <p>While the discussion of examples has been exciting, one wishes the student engaged more in reasoning why they have been effective.</p>

Navigate Issue #5

<p>On the other hand, there is still some resistance to creating a national identity, especially among older Singaporeans. This has made forging a national identity less effective. Since many older Singaporeans still have familial and emotional ties to other countries, such as Malaysia and China, they do not feel as rooted to Singapore. Some of them are willing to migrate to different countries such as Australia after their retirement. Many older Singaporeans point out that the idea of lions with fish tails can be found in Greek mythology, with no ties to their cultural roots. Decrying the Merlion as an artificial symbol, not every Singaporean is proud of this attempt to create a national identity. Singapore's enfant terrible, Alfian Sa'at, wrote a poem titled 'Singapore You Are Not My Country', exposing how ineffective the creation [of] Singapore's national identity is. Describing Singapore as a country of "hourglass kebayas" and "leaflets in Japanese", he argues that Singapore has a weak national identity, being a mass of artificial icons. Although not every Singaporean may be as cynical as Alfian Sa'at, his poem still highlights how resistant some older Singaporeans are to our measures of fostering a national identity, diminishing their effectiveness. Thus, many older Singaporeans do not feel very rooted to Singapore, and my country has not been totally effective in creating a national identity.</p>	<p>Student takes the interesting approach of segmenting society to evaluate effectiveness (note: this can also be done in one's AQ)</p> <p>Yet despite purporting to deal with older Singaporeans, the example cited is by a young poet (although it is described well!). Doesn't quite add up.</p>
<p>Younger Singaporeans, however, may be more receptive to efforts to create a national identity, and those measures might be more effective on them. Being younger, these Singaporeans are more receptive to stories of our national narrative since they have more, malleable minds. Since it is far less likely that they have ties to other countries, Singapore could be the only country they call home. It is unlikely that they have competing loyalties to other nations since most younger Singaporeans have families that have settled in Singapore for several generations. Some argue that many young Singaporeans have little faith in Singapore and are more footloose, thus they are more likely to migrate. However, this is not always true, since the world is increasingly volatile with the threat of racism in other countries being very real indeed. In more uncertain times, it is more likely for people to stay in the communities they have lived in and known to be safe, for fear of their security. There are several Singaporeans who are willing to contribute to crafting Singapore's national identity, showing the effectiveness of current measures. Through the competition <i>N.E.mation!</i>, students write a story in response to a theme, usually based on Singapore's history, to create a short animation clip. Hence, my country has been more effective in creating a national identity among young Singaporeans.</p>	<p>Reasoning used here is effective.</p> <p>Perhaps student could have used a more effective discourse maker to signal the counter-argument here.</p> <p>More could be done in terms of illustrating this point. Making video clips doesn't say very much.</p>
<p>In conclusion, my country's measures to create a national identity have been more effective among younger Singaporeans. If my country has more active involvement from citizens in forging our national identity, it is likely that it will be one that more Singaporeans identify with. As Singapore matures, perhaps our national identity will solidify and future generations of Singaporeans will be more rooted to Singapore.</p>	

Navigate Issue #5

Quoting the song *Home*, perhaps Singapore will be “where I know [it’s] home” one day for all Singaporeans.

(Sarah Mak, 18-03)

Good attempt to link the conclusion back to the introduction.

JC2 Term 3 Paper 1 Timed Assignment (in response to 2018 EJC Preliminary Examinations Paper 1)

8 Assess the view that international agreements are well-intended, but ineffective.

<p><i>This response very quickly gets to the heart of what the point of contention is and responds with a maturity that demonstrates a solid understanding of the key concepts at play here: state sovereignty, power imbalances, compromise and the need for/ lack of enforcement. Examples are not only well chosen, they are adequately explained and linked to the points being made. Sophisticated use of language serves the essay well in bringing out nuances, subtle changes in direction and depth of insight.</i></p>	
<p>In the highly interconnected world we live in today, global cooperation has been said to form the foundation for global progress. As advances in technology lead to improved communication, countries have capitalised on such forces of globalisation to call for change on a global scale. This has manifested in international agreements, deemed a necessity in today's context to achieve progress. Such agreements often form the backbone of radical improvements on different scales, yet they remain mere guidelines, limited in their capacity to infringe on sovereign powers of the state. I concur that international agreements are often well-intended, but largely ineffective in achieving the intended outcome. While such agreements can be effective in empowering individuals and communities to work towards fulfilling their intentions, the hopes of such agreements are overly contingent on global cooperation, which can sometimes infringe on state sovereignty. Such agreements can lead to the tyranny of the powerful, due to [the] veto power of stronger states, and remain guidelines with little legal consequences, limiting their effectiveness.</p>	<p>Competent start to the essay, but a little dry, no?</p> <p>Context is well set-out.</p> <p>Connecting the link between 2 sentences would have been good.</p> <p>Doesn't 'tyranny' suggest that they are not well-intended? Be careful not to contradict.</p>
<p>It is possible to argue that international agreements are effective in fulfilling their intentions, for they provide guidelines to direct and empower groups in society to make the necessary changes and improvements. Such agreements are akin to a target board, providing the end goal for success. This allows for various stakeholders to step forward and utilise their resources to hit the target and achieve the objective of the agreement. This is especially so for minority groups and communities in society, who are prone to feeling polarised and excluded, drowned out by the consensus. Provision of international agreements serve as a springboard for them, for the creation of international agreement mostly aim to ensure equal representation of all groups in society. This can empower minority individuals, by acknowledging the interests of the minority, they feel represented and included. The Millennium Development Goals (MDG) were created in 2000 by the United Nations, and highlight 10 different goals each country is to work towards attaining by 2030. While the MDG remain mere goals, they have been criticised as being ineffective in enacting change, where countries are unsure of how to work towards such goals. However, the creation of the</p>	<p>Well explained with a helpful analogy.</p> <p>Interesting angle. Segments out certain kinds of agreements.</p> <p>The specificity of example is commendable.</p>

Navigate Issue #5

<p>MDG had empowered people all over the world, such as women in Bolivia, Africa, who capitalise on the MDGs to fight for better sanitation for girls and women in their countries. The MDG serves as acknowledgment and validation of their rights, and can be a legitimizing tool for small communities that utilise the MDGs to improve their social situation. Such empowerment is contingent on the level of education in the country, hindering the effectiveness of international agreements when education acts as a roadblock towards empowerment. Nonetheless, an international agreement is a target to empower people to achieve its intentions.</p>	<p>Student acknowledges possible limitations of her argument, showing reasonableness.</p>
<p>Despite this, it is more relevant to argue that international agreements are solely limited by state sovereignty, where their intentions remain empty promises with no concrete action in the face of the power of individual states. As the definition of “agreement” suggests they are only guidelines premised on consensus, with few being legally binding. Such agreements are sidelined by state sovereignty, where states are allowed to acknowledge guidelines, and failure to meet such guidelines results in absolutely zero consequences. The noble intentions of these agreements are insufficient in holding states responsible and accountable in fulfilling these intentions. In 1992, the Rio Earth Summit was created in a bid to keep “concentrations of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere well below the level that they would interfere with and threaten humans and the environment”. All countries who ratified the United Nations Framework Convention for Climate Change were required to put forward a list of actions they would take to do their parts. However, the intentions of the Rio Earth Summit evidently remained unfulfilled, eventually necessitating the Rio+20 Conference, a future summit to force attention back to the unfulfilled objectives of the preceding summit. State sovereignty limits the power of international agreements, for states would choose to prioritise their own development first and global development second. In developing countries, this is glaringly obvious, for these states are unlikely to prioritise international goals when their people are poor, hungry and unemployed. Therefore, state sovereignty can diminish the importance of international agreements on a national scale, where such agreements remain guidelines with little legal consequences should countries deviate from the set course determined by the agreement.</p>	<p>Very well explained and evinces understanding of the question’s contention.</p> <p>Example is well fleshed out to prove the point made.</p> <p>Once again, a certain segment of the world is highlighted. Good move.</p>
<p>Furthermore, it is apparent that the effectiveness of international agreements lies in representation of all parties involved, yet the prevalence of unequal power relations between states can lead to intentions following a particular agenda supported only by powerful states. On the surface, it is possible to claim that international agreements aim to represent the vested interests of all parties included, yet the reality of unequal power relations can lead to more powerful states incorporating their own agendas into the international agenda, among other ways of exerting their power. In 2011, the United Nations had proposed an agreement to end the Syrian Civil War by forcing Syrian militants to capitulate. This required a systematic inspection of all weapons in Syrian borders, and was ratified by most of the countries involved. However, Russia,</p>	<p>Very astute observation made using #P&I</p> <p>One again, well chosen example that is explained clearly</p>

Navigate Issue #5

<p>holding a veto power in the agreement, vetoed for the case to be silenced, allegedly due to weaponry relations between Syria and Russia. It is evident that states that are weaker in the global political climate lose out to more powerful states, affecting the effectiveness of international agreements. Due to the nature of the political stage, where developed countries with large financial might ace in the limelight, while others are forced into the backseat, international agreements are then manipulated by larger states to push their own agendas, causing the original goals of these agreements to diminish in importance, eventually rendering them ineffective.</p>	<p>to prove her point.</p>
<p>As the term 'International Agreement' suggests, cooperation of all parties involved forms the premise of the success of these agreements, therefore the intentions of international agreements remain unfulfilled when there is lack of cooperation from certain parties, rendering them ineffective. In the case of the Kyoto Protocol, in 1997, which aimed to reduce global greenhouse gas emissions by 5%, the ineffectiveness of this agreement lies in a lack of international cooperation. Countries like China and the United States of America, who are two of the largest greenhouse gas emitters globally, refused to ratify the protocol, leaving only small states involved in this agreement. Lack of ratification due to state sovereignty greatly limits the potential of international agreements to do good. Cooperation is especially imperative in global agreements, where signatures cannot be limited only to those who are willing. Yet, it is within the rights of the state to reject an agreement for countries reserve the right to exercise their agency in international affairs, for agency forms the basis of diplomacy. Hence, it is evident that international agreements have grand, noble intentions, yet the chase for such intentions is curtailed by optional ratification that limits global cooperation.</p>	<p>Intelligent way to bring in a new point.</p> <p>While the Kyoto Protocol is a dated example, it is well explained to bring out her point.</p>
<p>In conclusion, while international agreements always aim to do good, and their existence can empower minority groups to achieve these aims, the effectiveness of these agreements is greatly limited by sovereignty and the rights of individual states. This gives rise to unequal power relations in exercising such rights, and withdrawal from these agreements can lead to their ultimate demise. It is impossible to ensure cooperation from all parties involved, for international agreements are often founded on the principles of compromise, leading to the agreement's interests potentially conflicting with that of individual states, and the manifestations of the aforementioned limitations that spell failure for these agreements.</p> <p><i>(Christabelle Kam, 18-12)</i></p>	<p>Arguments are once again reiterated for a strong ending. Could it have been a little more memorable, though?</p>

JC2 Paper 1 Preliminary Examination

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

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

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

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

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

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

Navigate Issue #5

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

Navigate Issue #5

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

Navigate Issue #5

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

(Elizabeth Teo, 18-U2)

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

Navigate Issue #5

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

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

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

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

Strong, vehement believers of the government may be falsely deceived into hailing a divine-like power to the state, resulting in their overly trusting attitudes towards the government. Naturally, they [assume] the protection of their intellectual assets and confidential details to be safe as long as the government, the ruling power[,] is in control to oversee the entire online traffic of information. Yet, what they fail to realise is the monstrous power the media holds, where sources of information may be anonymous, and data transactions is a priority that is achieved with the brute force of technology experts. The undeniable, oftentimes unethical practices of data analoging and management is illuminated in the data analysing for artificial intelligence company iMerit, based in India that delegates tasks to the workers to "teach" systems of artificial intelligence. This is done by labour work in front of the computer such as analysing coughs, in manually telling a good cough from a bad cough (one that signals a disease) or circling polyps in [CT scans of] intestines of patients [who] are wholly unaware of their breach in information, or [identifying] doors of homes in satellite images of streets or even pedestrians caught on surveillance cameras. iMerit admitted to being uninformed of where all these healthcare, medical sources are from, and is only focused on doing their job. This illustrates the anonymity, the hushed monetized transactions of data that happens behind closed doors. If companies themselves are not even capable of recognising the

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

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

Evaluation negotiates how clandestine government organisations may be in the gathering of

Navigate Issue #5

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

Navigate Issue #5

individual to manage their intellectual assets, financial privacy properly, because it is clear that the government did not exploit us or make us give up our information. Hence, we should take responsibility for the shift in culture to a more convenient one, albeit at the potential threatening expense of the loss of our personal information. In Singapore, the booming popularity of a cash-free transaction system where people transfer money via applications like “Paynow” and “Paylah” or through the simple tap and pay system of ApplePay and WeChatpay, is achieved at the known potential dangers of data loss. Yet, as the country embraces the convenience of such a system that may put our online monetary assets and information at a position of fragility, the State should not be held dutiful in safekeeping these online information as it is not their job to do so. The giving up of information for convenience, cashless transactions that may infringe on privacy is continuously fed by the global appetite for effectiveness, where Shanghai is now barely running on cash and applications like Grab and Deliveroo promises rebates on cashless payments. The enticing allure and succumbing to benefits and incentives are all within the control of the individual. The choices lie[] within the individual, utterly untethered by the State. With a global, collective acceleration towards online, digitalised everything, there is only so much authorities can do to enforce safety. The ultimatum lies within the individual and lifestyle choices that may produce repercussions.

The State should not be held fully responsible for protecting our privacy. Instead a more holistic approach would be to work hand in hand with parents to protect [the] privacy of a tender aged child. Privacy breach is manipulated by large forces and companies that are incentivised by profits, at the same time, privacy protection is [the] duty of the individual, not the state. [...]

(Chanel Wong Xin Yi, 18-14)

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

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

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

Clear outline of the conditions for this stand.

The inevitability of Artificial Intelligence was not obvious in the past. Prominent philosophers and religious leaders in antiquity often held human consciousness and by extension intelligence as something that is innate within our soul, thus the Christian and Islamic beliefs that when you pass [away], your consciousness is transferred to a different realm, bringing your ability to act as an individual to that realm. This thinking that intelligence and consciousness is innate and unique to human beings led to the consensus that artificial forms of intelligence were never possible to begin with. However, this is starting to change with the invention of the modern deep computing industry. With IBM’s chess computing machine Deep Blue besting even the best human chessmasters at their own game despite only being trained on for less than a few months, the belief that machines cannot think is starting to [waver]. With further advances in computing power and even technologies relating to the simulation of the human brain in an Artificial Intelligence (AI) [technology] known as Recursive Convolutional Neural Network to better the rational ability of AI, it seems obvious that in the future, AI will redefine mankind in an

Good evaluation of the perceptions re: intelligence

Apt choice of eg.s and, more importantly, the

Navigate Issue #5

<p>unprecedented way. Recent AIs that have performed artificial synthesis of [i]mages and [s]ounds not previously known may even suggest that AIs have the ability to “dream” and be creative (simply search for Deepdream AI), cementing its place as true competitor to human intelligence and making it rather inevitable that it will take our place, given that they come with other perks such as being able to be cloned indefinitely on other computers and only require electricity rather than wasteful and unnecessary human processes such as eating, drinking, sleeping, reproducing and conflict.</p>	<p>evaluation of their implications in terms of the inevitability of AI. This sets the context for the evaluation of whether AI should be embraced.</p>
<p>While the above portion may have been rather transhumanist in nature, [...] I will now focus on the more immediate question of whether we should embrace AI.</p>	
<p>From an [economic] perspective, AI poses a huge opportunity for us to rapidly expand our economy due to the efficiency that AI can bring to our industry. First of all, they can work 24 hours a day, 7 days a week for 365 days a year without any threat of unionizing against your company as they do not complain about unfair work hours. For more simple and straightforward tasks such as accounting, which involves number counting which computers are great at this efficiency it brings can be unprecedented and cut down on human involvement with such menial tasks and instead focus on innovation and more. Furthermore, with the betterment of AI and its expansion into more areas of expertise such as language and image processing allowing automated drivers for example, the value of AI can add to [the] economy would be tremendous, with a famous International Study suggesting that AI can bring about over 13 trillion USD to the global economy in 2030. This is also fantastic for countries facing a manpower crunch such as Japan and Singapore which have low birth rates and an ageing population as their labour forces can be supplemented by AI workers to bring about huge economic and efficiency gains.</p>	<p>The tone here approaches the informal.</p> <p>Note that the abilities/features of AI need to be the focus/cause of these effects. Otherwise, the argument about increased productivity could apply to some other technological advancements too.</p>
<p>On the other hand, AI will also lead to a major disruption in the economies of countries that cannot keep up with technology. Countries with lackluster technological capabilities that do not invest in AI will be left in the dust as their international counterparts massively outrun them in efficiency, leading to imbalances in power between countries that can lead a global conflict to take place. There will be a struggle over the technologies associated with AI which can result in industrial level bans and protectionist measures being on full display, with the recent example of US sanctioning Huawei Technologies over their lead on 5G technology in order to protect domestic 5G technology (although ostensibly it was due to spying by Huawei which the US has not furnished any evidence of.) This may even extend into full trade wars which is the case between America and China now and touch wood, even a global conflict of World War 3 over the control of such indispensable AI technologies granting a major economic advantage to whomever possesses them. This is a danger</p>	<p>Tone here is informal.</p> <p>Take note that this</p>

Navigate Issue #5

<p>to be aware of and countries should seek technological sharing and dialogue instead of acquiring technology lest it brings about the destruction of mankind. Thus, a cautious approach has to be taken to temper the imbalance on technological inequality.</p>	<p>technological inequality needs to be focused on AI technology.</p>
<p>On a social front, on an individual level, AI will bring about greater social inequity. As I have previously mentioned, simple and straightforward tasks for now are what AI are going to supplement. This generally includes low paying jobs that are often repetitive in nature, such as factory operations (automated/production lines), cleaning (cleaning robots for example) and others as well. With these low income earners being replaced by AI first, this will create more individual disparities in wealth as they are now unable to provide for their family and [regress] on a societal level. Even more concerning is how the rich can gain from investing in AI and building factories to use AI to further maximise their economic efficiency and wealth. The [saying that the] rich get richer and the poor get poor [...] is [...] true but with technologies like AI accelerating the demise of the poor and the fortunes of the rich, it would be no surprise to see the wealth gap widen. In fact, this is already on full display by Amazon CEO, Jeff [Bezos], who has recently become the richest man in the world and is heavily invested in AI seeking to replace the low earning warehouse employees with AI robots instead to further maximise profits. This is unsustainable as it will lead to social uproar and perhaps even upheaval. Karl Marx's ideology of communism [was] disastrous but was popular because of the disparity in wealth between the nobility and [bourgeois], and there is a risk we run here with such ideologies resurging if nothing is done to stop the gaps in wealth from widening. Thus, we have to be cautious in embracing AI lest it lead to a creation of communist world order or more realistically a fragmented society.</p>	<p>Explain this social regression.</p> <p>The progression of ideas in this paragraph from the individual to the social and to the global requires some hedging.</p>
<p>From a philosophical perspective, AI can be seen as playing god and we are perhaps wishing to supplant and extend beyond what is humanly possible in violation of nature's principles. As Issac Asimov has warned in his book <i>The Rise Of The Machines</i>, such a trend of seeking to better our race in pursuit of technological advances can lead to disastrous and unexpected outcomes especially if we do not temper our ambitions of empowering AI with consciousness and for instance, grant it control of the military with such an outcome being explored in the Terminator movie series and the Matrix where AI takes over the human race.</p>	<p>The philosophical element of this paragraph could be strengthened: What does the perceived violation of nature's principles mean for humanity? What values are reflected? What questions are raised?</p> <p>Split/ shorten the second sentence for clarity.</p>

Navigate Issue #5

<p>This is where my transhumanist ideals come in. Bringing again an example from Elon Musk, he has created a company named Neuralink seeking to implant human machine connections in humans allowing us to communicate with machines and thus bringing the unification of human intelligence and artificial intelligence. Whilst the safety [of the procedure] is still being worked out, they were able to read brainwaves from lab mice and have them control robotic arms. I am excited for what the future holds for humanity as we are on the cusps of greatness and perhaps the dawn of a new civilization. Just imagine the possibilities of improved efficiencies and other benefits it will bring!</p>	<p>Although the writer's enthusiasm about the subject matter is evident here, it detracts from the question's focus on whether AI should be embraced. The link to the transhumanist ideals mentioned at the start of the paragraph needs to be established too.</p>
<p>Ultimately, we still have to control our ambition and make cautious steps in the adoption of AI otherwise it will bring about major inequality/conflict and even social [upheaval]. So long as we can integrate with AI, humanity can be redefined as a new species and seek for a new age. So long as caution is exercised [...]</p> <p><i>(Dylan Chia, 18-E4)</i></p>	

Navigate Issue #5

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

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

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

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

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

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

While there is an attempt to engage the opposing argument, the reasons stated here are not elaborated on. This approach addresses 'misplaced', but results in an underdeveloped

Navigate Issue #5

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

Navigate Issue #5

<p>Consequently, our faith in education as the solution to poverty is misplaced, as education is unable to tackle the root cause of poverty - which is the economic systems in the world today. Poverty is often seen as a result of inequality, where people who are poor get poorer as they cannot achieve upward social mobility. This is then attributed to the capitalistic system of the current global economy. David Harvey's theory of the political economy supports this argument, where the capitalist nature of the economy allows a few people, who own the means of production, to obtain fiscal surpluses, at the expense of workers. This then manifests in relative spatial inequality, where wealthier firms and countries collect surpluses, at the expense of other countries. This is supported too by Andre Frank's Dependency Theory, where he argues that poverty and underdevelopment in countries are not due to luck or unfortunate circumstances, but rather due to the nature of current global economic systems that allow for richer nations to accumulate wealth by extracting them from poorer nations. This notion of inequality can be seen throughout the world. For example, the Rasa building collapse in Bangladesh, which killed over a thousand garment workers, was caused by poor building maintenance. These building collapses are common in Bangladesh, where transnational corporations have the impunity to do what they want, without legal ramifications, from the domestic governments that focus on economic development. This manifests in the gross abuse in human rights of people in poverty, who are powerless in the face of ruthless firms. Such examples can be linked to a trend in the world, where firms are able to do whatever they want, in the name of profit-making. From environmental degradation, to human rights abuses, it is seen that the implication of such actions are borne disproportionately by the world's poorest. This is something education alone cannot fix and hence our faith in it as the solution to poverty is misplaced as only changes in the economic system can fix these issues.</p>	<p>Although the explanation of the root cause of poverty is rather persuasive here (and engages #systems), the argument does not link to education.</p> <p>The evaluation of the example clearly links to the root cause of poverty, but education and the idea of our faith in it being 'misplaced' are not addressed.</p>
<p>It is important then to note that the word "solution" to poverty is itself, problematic. Poverty is a pervasive and widespread problem, and there are no permanent solutions to it. Perhaps, poverty is inevitable in [the] current political and economic systems. Education is at best, something done to alleviate poverty. There is a need for a multi-pronged approach – and of our concerted efforts – to cure the world of such a problem.</p>	<p>This section might be better suited for the conclusion instead.</p>
<p>In conclusion, I believe that despite education's benefits and potential in bringing people out of poverty, I am unable to share the unbridled optimism of the supporters of education as the catholicon to poverty. This is as education lacks both the sufficient power and the targeted means to tackle and change the political systems and economic systems that are our root causes of poverty. Perhaps, it is also salient to note that there may never be one 'solution' to poverty, as the problem of poverty is too widespread to be tackled by just one problem alone. Methods to alleviate poverty require multi-pronged approaches, and I look forward</p>	<p>This section repeats what was stated in the previous paragraph.</p>

Navigate Issue #5

to a future where we work together towards eradicating this issue. Ultimately, I see [it] is just as Sisyphus [was] doomed to struggle against an uphill and monumental task, [only] to see [his] efforts go to naught. What then is commendable is instead our will, as Camus notes in his philosophy, to appreciate this an inherent struggle against such a task. In our own Camus-esque Sisyphean tragedy, what is best to take away from is our wills.

(Seah Jie Hui, 18-12)

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

Navigate Issue #5

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

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

Since Singapore’s independence, our political establishment and leaders have proudly championed a diffractive interpretation of western democracy. In contrast to the liberal ideals of the absolute and universal freedom of speech, Singapore has shown little hesitation in clamping down on statements and public articulations that are contrary to the prevailing political norms and attitudes. Such a model was an accepted part of our government’s social contract - that not all contrarian views deserve to be heard. Yet, in recent times, an increasing proportion of Singaporeans recognise, with fervour, the need for a more open approach to discourse, one that allows for greater freedom in the exchange of ideas. Considering the changing demographics of our society, the increasing politically active populace, and the nature of problems and opportunities we as a nation face today, the paternalistic approach of quelling dissent would no longer be beneficial and thus can no longer be justified.

Sets out SG’s context from the outset.

Explains the historical reasons for such a context, and the current forces that have given rise to the question.

Very clear thesis statement that shows the general direction of the essay.

The most prominent argument in favour of censorship is one that deals with our nation’s obsession with efficacy in governance. Proponents of strict regulatory laws argue that, in a vulnerable, racially and religiously diverse, and young nation like ours, strong and decisive leadership is necessary to implement effective policies without fear of impediment. Such supporters then posit that any form of dissent lodged in public may distract the government from solving critical issues, and would force the government to engage in debate, which is often perceived to be unnecessary. Such beliefs may have been shaped by our country’s racial and cultural ties to Asian cultures and countries like India and China, which have centuries of history functioning as a one-state, top-down society adopting a similar, if not harsher approach to dissent. Another claim such proponents often assert in conjunction with the above argument is the idea that dissenting views are often riddled with lies and half-truths to deceive, thus lowering the moral and practical legitimacy of these voices. These supporters contend that, given the impracticality and/or inaccuracy of opposing views, the government allocating time and being forced to engage with said views would result in less effective governance, thus justifying the belief that opposing views should be quelled in Singapore.

Deals with the most ‘obvious’/ prominent argument first.

Gives a conceptual #B&V analysis on where this argument comes from.

Gives another reason for this argument.

Notice that student has consistently addressed them as ‘proponents’ and ‘supporters’, creating a sense of distance from himself.

First and foremost, the view that opposing voices are always riddled in lies can be highly patronising and is not a reasonable one to make. It is natural that malicious parties, on either side, may attempt to lie and deceive. However with a reasonably highly educated populace in Singapore, as well as a populace that is reasonably politically active, there already exists a self-correcting mechanism that of the people.

Such signposting indicates that this is now his take on the argument, as he refers to and evaluates ‘the view’ that was raised earlier.

Navigate Issue #5

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

Navigate Issue #5

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

Navigate Issue #5

<p>Furthermore, implicit in the argument is the assumption that censoring would remove it from public view entirely. This is not true in a modernised world where echo chambers can easily form online. In fact, the act of censorship may embolden the claims of oppression that various identity groups use to further these claims. A prime example is the alt-right in the United States, which uses a narrative of persecution and discrimination to rally predominantly White people to its cause. By highlighting instances of its material being censored on platforms like Youtube due to their seemingly offensive nature, they empower fellow supporters to believe that an increasingly racially diverse United States is waging a culture war with the Whites. Such an example demonstrates how censorship may lead to the amplification of resentment felt by various identity groups in society, which may deepen and widen fault lines in our society's shared fabric. In an increasingly globalised and diverse Singapore, coupled with already prevalent economic disparities between different racial groups, it is not difficult to imagine a similar situation occurring were similarly as a result of censorship. Hence such restrictions on opposing views should not be placed.</p>	<p>Student attacks the underlying assumption of censorship – about its function – while referencing yet another characteristic of our society today.</p> <p>Draws on a US example to show potential dangers.</p> <p>Student draws explicit links to the SG context and why this is plausible here too.</p>
<p>Finally, beyond the social sphere, open discussions are necessary due to the increasingly complex world we live in. In a world where artificial intelligence is rapidly proliferating, the South East Asian region is rapidly modernising, and we grapple with issues like Climate Change, Singapore as a vulnerable and highly globalised nation will require the best of ideas to be debated, openly discussed, and openly decided on. Our Finance Minister recognises that the government no longer has a monopoly on wisdom, calling for a more consultative democracy and a nation open to different perspectives. Given this context, it becomes critical that we accept ideas and perspectives from all. While political censorship may not have a direct effect on the level of participation of citizens in our society, fostering an open community and a culture of voicing one's views begins with adopting open laws on the freedom of speech, since such laws set the tone and style of governance and participation in our country. Hence, [the] censorship of dissenting voices is not wise in the complex world we live in today.</p>	<p>Another characteristic of our current context.</p> <p>Example shows acknowledgement of this concern from the top echelons of our political leadership.</p> <p>Student has rightfully left this much more vague and tenuous point to make as his last one.</p>
<p>Singapore has witnessed a favourable transformation from third-world to first. Since our independence our economic and social structures have evolved with the times to prepare us for a changing region and a changing world. I do not doubt the intentions of those calling for a top-down view of governance. However, it is clear that, just like our economy, our political norms must adapt to the times as well. Legitimate ideas and perspectives should not be restricted in our society, even if they run contrary to our current norms or attitudes. Only in doing so can we foster a community unafraid of being open, a society which is stable and as a nation prepared for the world of tomorrow.</p> <p><i>(Kenneth Hoh, 18-05)</i></p>	<p>Student ends in a similar way that it started about Singapore's rise.</p> <p>Gives credit to his opponents where it is due, and respectfully puts forth his argument winsomely.</p> <p>Ends with a touch of personal hope.</p>

Navigate Issue #5

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

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

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

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

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

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

Why would we dismiss physical health as being less important than mental health in the first place?

Navigate Issue #5

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

Navigate Issue #5

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

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

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

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

Student begins with modern developments in gender equality.

Moves into the question of rights.

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

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

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

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

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

Student argues based on existing 'deficits' that women face.

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

Once again, draws from a #B&V

Navigate Issue #5

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

Navigate Issue #5

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

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

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

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

Precise contextualisation of the shifting priorities of contemporary society.

The reasons for the stand (that will be stated at the end of this paragraph).

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

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

Before the tides of modernisation and urbanisation has swept the globe, people led relatively simpler lives. [Without] the hustle and bustle of day-to-day chores, work commitment and the need to always stay competitive for survival, one had more time to pursue other domains in life. Some may argue that times as such were the golden ages of the Arts. Simply due to the sheer time and energy one had in excess, people could spend hours sitting at home admiring the beauty in Mozart's intricate pieces or Chopart's melodious tunes. One could spend their weekends travelling to town to watch the local opera or bask in the glory that is the work of Vincent Van Goh's Starry Starry Night painting. In contrast to the scene we observe today, the pace and craze of life has left us unable to enjoy the luxury of Art appreciation. Gradually, people have started to lose touch with the Arts, some even labelling it as a waste of time and resources. Hence, it is no wonder how many could believe that the value of Arts have been diminished in modern society. However, in my opinion, the value of Art in the past was not so much truly understood and celebrated though [Art was] paid more attention. Simply assuming the loss of value of the Arts in a society due to the lack of attention and time spent on it is too myopic of a view. On the other hand, I believe, albeit it remains true that less time is spent on appreciating the Arts in the form of pieces in the museum or musicals, the value of Art has never been more prominent in modern society.

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

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

Navigate Issue #5

<p>The value of the Arts include[s] its ability to build a nation's identity and culture. The power of the Arts has only been recently recognised by many states and [the Arts] have since been used as an instrument to craft a nation's colour and identity. The Arts through many ways can add dimensions and layers to a country in terms of its culture. This is essential especially to young countries like Singapore that is accused as culturally bereft and lacking in tradition due to its young age of 54. Desperate for an identity, Singapore has relied on the power of the Arts to forge that identity. A local artist [] painted a picture that is renowned for its conflicting artistry, using Chinese traditional brush strokes to paint a modernised landscape of modern Singapore. His piece encapsulates the cutting edge design of modern buildings through the gentle brush strokes of the Chinese art form, calligraphy. Such an art piece demonstrates the identity of Singapore as an urban society with its deep Chinese traditions and culture. Such polar traits that now form the identity of Singapore can only be presented through the Arts. Hence, it is evident that the value of the Arts has not diminished in value but has been recognised for its ability to create an identity for a country. Countries like China, with a vast history, [have] the Arts play a direct and vital role for identity-making. China has always been known for its rich Art that has transcended through time in the forms of traditional Chinese Opera and face-changing shows. Such forms of the Arts has become China's main identity marker with a multitude of tourists leaving China with mementos of face-changing dolls from a uniquely China experience, it is the Art that has become China's identity. Hence, I stand by my belief that the value of Art has increased in value in modern society.</p>	<p>This is a crucial link as it highlights how it is through the Arts that complex and even contradictory qualities can be expressed effectively.</p>
<p>In an increasingly liberal society, the value of the Arts as a medium of expression without limits has been largely celebrated in many societies. The Arts allows one to express oneself in the from of song, dance or poetry. With increasing conflict in ideologies today, many have taken the Arts as a means to speak up and out on pressing issues of the world. Disney's <i>Aladdin</i> recently hit the theatres this 2019. This hit remake features old songs in the classic 1998 version such as 'Friend Like Me' and 'Whole New World' and brand new songs that address seemingly pressing issues in modern society today. 'Speechless' performed by actress singer Naomi Scott belts out on the right to speak up and stand up against men who seek to contain and constrain the strength and power of women. This truly moving and empowering song on women's rights created a media frenzy and is now a female anthem for all girls in the world. With issues such as gender inequality still left unsolved in our modern world in places such as Saudi Arabia where girls are deprived of education and an equal chance in the world[...] The Arts are able to send a global message and to spark a movement towards the betterment of our modern society. The Arts empower one with the voice and the platform to express one's thoughts and ideas to make a change in the world where dissonance between genders and social classes plague so many communities. Hence the Arts has not diminished in value in modern society as its ability to provide a voice to people has been proven vital, very necessary and needed in a modern society.</p>	<p>The continued relevance of the Arts is established as an indicator of its persisting value, as the platform for expression that the Arts provide is complementary to the increasing drive towards voicing previously neglected issues.</p>

Navigate Issue #5

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

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

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

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

This outlines the reasons for the opposing argument.

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

Good qualification of stand with the condition stated.

Should countries be unable to attain a middle ground between these two conflicting targets, and [choose] to prioritise and heavily invest in economic developments over addressing the mounting impacts of climate change, this will undoubtedly exacerbate and speed up the latter's effects further. This is bound to occur should a country's economic development be unsustainable, and only focus[ed] on harnessing the finite resources of the Earth in order to fuel a country's growth. Without a healthy circular metabolism functioning in society, in time, this will definitely lead to the irreversible deterioration of the natural environment, and only serve to feed the ravenous mouth of climate change. Despite the irrefutable logic that this doomsday declaration radiates, some still choose to adopt a cynical, or even worse, skeptical and blind perspective on the matter, an archetypical example of that being the United States of America's (USA's) President Donald Trump explicitly denying the catastrophic reality of climate change, claiming that it is a fabrication crafted by so-called experts. With such an influential figure governing such a large, powerful and established nation, it is no wonder that the USA remains one of the highest contributors to global carbon emissions, which only serves to exacerbate the growing hazard of climate change as seen from July 2019 being the hottest month recorded. However, what cynics and skeptics alike who follow this fatally flawed ideology fail to realise is that in the

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

In the span of this sentence, the focus shifts from looking at the non-renewable

Navigate Issue #5

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

Navigate Issue #5

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

JC2 Preliminary Exams Paper 2 Application Question

This response handles balance very well, and shows how students need not (and perhaps, ought not) to stick to an absolute position with regards to whether the observations apply, or do not apply, to Singapore. Also, the response provides a very mature and insightful evaluation of the examples given - always pointing to deeper, underlying reasons for why certain phenomena occur.

In Passage 1, Miller asserts that intensive parenting has led to parents ‘preparing the road for the child’ rather than ‘preparing the child for the road’, mentioning how it could be detrimental to the child in terms of lacking the ‘crucial life skills’ and the degree becoming ‘a badge of accomplishment’. In other words, Miller thinks that such parenting deprives the child of facing the realities of the world and thus is less beneficial to the child when they turn into adults. I find this claim to be highly observable within Singapore. In Singapore, given the highly competitive mindset of ‘kiasu[ism]’ embedded within the Singaporeans psyche, many Singaporeans want their child to be able to gain an edge and an earlier headstart over [] other children. This is manifested via the sending of their children to preparatory classes such as violin classes, abacus classes way before their child is admitted into primary school. As such, these children often gain a competitive advantage over other students, and thus are able to enter well-known, elite schools within Singapore. This becomes detrimental for the children, as it often puts them into schools with students of a less diverse mix - often that of the higher socioeconomic status. This is especially since primary schools in the past allowed the enrolment of students that lived within the vicinity of the school, thus allowing for the concentration of elite schools within Singapore. Anecdotally, I have seen many of such children being less exposed to the demographic realities of Singapore these students were often only made to interact with those of a similar social class as them, and thus when they eventually enter secondary school, junior college or universities, they face issues of communication and interactions with those of the other social classes. In particular, many of those within the Direct School Admission System were able to enter via a ‘backdoor’ process - often through preparatory classes beforehand - and thus land themselves on a smooth path of education till they grow up. Hence, this demonstrates Miller’s argument, that intensive parenting in Singapore had deprived Singaporeans of being able to interact with those of all walks of life and thus are less equipped to face the real-world in the future.

This paraphrase of the quoted claim goes beyond repetition by crystallising the key issue in the claim.

Link this illustration of the Singapore education context to how parents have overly catered to their children, to the extent that the children lack life skills.

Link to life skills?

Link to parenting?

While this paragraph engages in thoughtful discussion about the state of education in Singapore, this content needs to be tied to how the loss of life skills is a result of over-parenting.

In contrast, Doepek asserts that intensive parenting is beneficial due to the ‘economic benefits of more education’ (paragraph 4). This may seem to be true in the Singaporean society, especially that of the government. In Singapore, given that we are a geographically small island-state, human capital was thus crucial to jumpstart

Navigate Issue #5

<p>the Singaporeans economy in the 1960s to 1990s and thus intensive parenting then, which ensured that Singaporean students were able to perform outstandingly in comparison with other students from other nations were crucial to ensure Singapore's economic competitiveness. However, I cannot whole-heartedly agree to this as Singapore now, being more developed than before, do[es] not see the same magnitude of economic benefits than before for accessing education. Our quick ascension to the 1st world status now means that greater emphasis should be placed on confronting the challenges of the 21st century, and navigating a more uncertain economy. Hence, parents should better equip their child with less school-based knowledge but rather [...]</p>	
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