NAVIGATE

Issue #10

Contents

Navigate User Guide

What is Navigate?

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

How do I use Navigate?

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

What to read

- Not everything! Save time for reading your other packages, the news and opinion articles.
- Often it is a good idea to read the essays for the questions which you have attempted or would potentially attempt.
- Look at the 'Message from the 2022 GP Team' for a guide on the issue's key reads – it will point out interesting pieces, as well as our picks for pieces with especially strong qualities! Good introductions/conclusions, paragraph development, illustration, use of conceptual understanding, organisation of ideas and language use are some of the characteristics we point out.
- Scan the preambles for features or parts of writing that you struggle with or wish to strengthen your understanding of.
- The ones which look interesting!

How to read

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

Message from the 2022 GP Team

Dear Eunoians,

There is an English proverb that goes,

"To talk without thinking is to shoot without aiming."

This, we think, is as true of writing as it is of speaking. Good, formal writing like the sort we aim to cultivate in GP is always undergirded by clarity of thought. A good essay is almost always the product of not only good knowledge and skills on the part of the writer, but also of planning - deliberate and strategic use of these capabilities, rather than shooting from the hip.

While Navigate presents only the finished product, as you use this issue we invite you to consider the sort of thought that must have gone into these pieces of writing. The plans may not be visible to us, but their traces can be seen in the construction of the logic and the structure of the finished pieces. So, to create good writing of your own, what you must do is not to simply copy what you see on the surface, but instead uncover the ways in which these writers think, and emulate their thought processes.

To kick-start your thinking, here are some questions to ask yourselves:
- How has the writer shaped their topic sentences to answer the question?
- How and why did the writer select these points to make their arguments?
- Why has the writer chosen to address other perspectives in this manner?
- How has the illustration been presented by the writer to support or refute the earlier claim?
- Why did the writers choose to express themselves with these words/phrases/punctuation?

We thank these writers whose works feature in Navigate for their generosity in putting their minds on display. It is only with your help that we can learn from how you think. This issue also owes much to the help of Mr Douglas Pang, whose curation of work shaped this collection.

All the best,
Your GP Teachers ❤

List of Essays and AQs

2021 JC1 FA 3 - Process Writing Final Drafts

1. 'Any adaptation of a novel for film, television or the theatre is never as effective as the original.' Discuss.
   - Not represented
2. Assess the view that traditional buildings have no future in your society.
   - Not represented
3. 'Longer life expectancy creates more problems than benefits.' Discuss.
   - Not represented
4. Considering the money involved, should developing countries be allowed to host major sporting events?
   - Not represented
5. 'Human need, rather than profit, should always be the main concern of scientific research.' Discuss.
   - Not represented
6. 'Countries experiencing conflict should be left to sort out their own problems.' How far do you agree?
   - Wang Danying, 21-A1
   - Kimaya Wanjari, 21-E5
7. How far has modern technology made it unnecessary for individuals to possess mathematical skills?
   - Not represented
8. 'People who do the most worthwhile jobs rarely receive the best financial rewards.' To what extent is this true of your society?
   - Not represented
9. Evaluate the claim that equality of opportunity for females is a desirable, but unrealistic, goal.
   - Not represented
10. Assess the view that most natural disasters are the result of human activity.
    - Not represented
11. Is competition always desirable?
    - Not represented
12. 'Everyone has an opinion, but not everyone's opinion is of equal value.' What is your view?
    - Not represented

2021 JC1 Promotional Examinations Paper 1

1. How important is kindness in the modern world?
   - Not represented
2. 'Sport offers little more than entertainment.' Discuss.
   - Hong Chu Yun, 21-I3
3. To what extent can we rely on international organisations to solve the world's problems?
   - Gwenyth Tan Yang Min, 21-A4
   - Yap Kah Him, 21-I3
   - Isabelle Deborah Looi, 21-E3

4   How far should profits be the main concern of businesses today?
        ● Not represented
5   'We have every reason to be optimistic about the future.' Do you agree?
        ● Long Wen Xi, 21-U1
        ● Liew Shu Mei Jacynthe, 21-O3
        ● Mabel Sim, 21-I3 (1 paragraph)
6   How well are animals taken care of in your society?
        ● Not represented
7   'Not enough is being done to promote a responsible press.' Is this a fair assessment?
        ● Lee Lucille, 21-U4
        ● He Yufan, 21-I3
8   To what extent do people in your society value the arts?
        ● Tiffany Lim Xin Hui, 21-E3
9   Given the rapidly growing global population, should there be a limit placed on the number of children people can have?
        ● Phyllis Peh Yan Hui, 21-I5
10   Is courage essential for success?
        ● Kyran Narayanan, 21-I2 (4 paragraphs)
11   Evaluate the claim that protecting the environment is mainly the responsibility of the young.
        ● Axel Heng Yang Han, 21-I5
        ● Yu Tian Le, 21-U4 (2 paragraphs)
12   Can armed conflict ever be justified?
        ● Harel Tan, 21-I2
        ● Lim Zhan Rui, Don, 21-U2

2021 JC1 Promotional Examinations Application Question

Response 1   Sanjana Rajan, 21-O1
Response 2   Guillermo Caryl Kristine Co, 21-E6
Response 3   Yamamoto Aika, 21-I3
Response 4   Hong Chu Yun, 21-I3
Response 5   Chaw Qi Xuan, 21-U6 (1 paragraph)
Response 6   Wee Cheng Yee, 21-O1 (1 paragraph)

2021 JC2 Term 3 Timed Practice - 2016 A Level Paper 1

1   'Any adaptation of a novel for film, television or the theatre is never as effective as the original.' Discuss.
        ● Not represented
2   Assess the view that traditional buildings have no future in your society.
        ● Not represented
3   'Longer life expectancy creates more problems than benefits.' Discuss.
        ● Not represented
4   Considering the money involved, should developing countries be allowed to host major sporting events?
        ● Not represented

5   'Human need, rather than profit, should always be the main concern of scientific research'.
     Discuss.
        ● Not represented
6   'Countries experiencing conflict should be left to sort out their own problems.' How far do you
     agree?
        ● Cherilynn Yeo, 20-I3
7   How far has modern technology made it unnecessary for individuals to possess mathematical
     knowledge?
        ● Not represented
8   'People who do the most worthwhile jobs rarely receive the best financial rewards.' To what extent
     is this true of your society?
        ● Not represented
9   Evaluate the claim that equality of opportunity for females is a desirable, but unrealistic, goal.
        ● Not represented
10   Assess the view that most natural disasters are the result of human activity.
        ● Not represented
11   Is competition always desirable?
        ● Ryan Goh, 20-I3
12   'Everyone has an opinion, but not everyone's opinion is of equal value.' What is your view?
        ● Not represented

2021 JC2 Preliminary Examinations Paper 1
1   Is the modern world becoming a more charitable place to live in?
        ● Not represented
2   'Too much pressure is placed on government leaders to solve the problems of their people.' How
     far do you agree?
        ● Not represented
3   'While environmental sustainability is desirable, it is an unachievable goal.' Discuss.
        ● Not represented
4   Should the study of literature be made compulsory in schools?
        ● Pang Hui Bin, Gabrielle, 20-I4
5   Can space travel be justified when there are such pressing issues in the world today?
        ● Not represented
6   Consider the importance of nature in your society.
        ● Eyu Kai Jie, 20-A1
7   'Given the cost of conflict, it should always be avoided.' Discuss.
        ● Michelle Leong, 20-U1
8   'As countries pursue development, heritage sites are losing their relevance.' How far do you agree?
        ● Not represented
9   Consider the view that more scientists than artists are needed in the world today.
        ● Not represented
10   Is complete self-sufficiency in countries ever possible?
        ● Not represented
11   Examine the view that journalists should only report the facts and not share their opinions.
        ● Nicolette Wong Su-Ann, 20-O5

12   To what extent is obedience valued in your society?
        ● Not represented

2022 JC2 March Common Test Application Question

Response 1   Sanjana Rajan, 21-O1
Response 2   Alexis Foo, 21-E4
Response 3   Ashley Lay, 21-O1

Essays: 2021 JC1 Formative Assessment 3

6   'Countries experiencing conflict should be left to sort out their own problems.'
How far do you agree?

A large range of factors and points were considered, and a variety of detailed illustrations that serve their purposes well were used, showing an impressive depth of knowledge of the issue. For the most part, there is a nuanced evaluation of the issues. The use of language in this essay was excellent, and helped to convey complex ideas with exceptional clarity. However, the organisation can be strengthened to remove overlaps and create logical development of ideas over the course of the essay. This question is especially complex, with push and pull factors, consequences, legal considerations and so on all being part of the picture, so it is necessary to sort ideas and signpost them well. Additionally, some sweeping statements were made within the paragraphs, but these are quite minor.

The 20th century has witnessed many cases of intrusive and invasive foreign intervention in which countries have interfered with the domestic politics of another country purportedly in the spirit of developmental aid. This has led many to ponder - should countries that face conflict be left to sort out their own problems? Foreign intervention, especially during times of conflict, may not always be beneficial and helpful. These nations that are embroiled within disputes and contentions may in fact be better off without intervention. While they may not always be in the position to manage their own differences, such countries are still more likely to develop better without undue interference from the outside world that is often accompanied by malevolent intentions and other vested interests to fulfil. As such, in most cases, countries experiencing conflict should indeed be left to sort out their own problems unless there is clear evidence that the intervening party does not have any personal agendas to pursue.	Good opening with context Point of contention has been well-understood. Coherent introduction that shows good understanding of the conflict and raises a fairly nuanced thesis. Could perhaps consider the impact of sovereignty.
Countries should intervene in conflicts because it is morally right to do so. Conflicts within countries can become so violent and inhumane that standing idly by as a nation tears itself up is morally reprehensible. Without any intervention to maintain peace in the country, conflicts can escalate to unprecedented levels and threaten to annihilate an entire population of people. One example of how senseless violence can be escalated without proper intervention is the widespread murder of the Tutsis in the Rwandan Genocide. As estimated 500,000 Tutsis were killed by the Hutu majority government over the short span of April 1994 to July the same year. These two people groups had been in conflict since Rwanda gained independence in 1962 and the United Nations Assistance Mission for Rwanda (UNAMIR) had been in Rwanda since 1993 to mediate for peace between the two sides. However, when all-out conflict broke out, the unarmed UNAMIR was unable to establish order in the country. This episode proved that stronger intervention in the warring country is needed. Had there been a stronger neutral party to conduct a peace process, order could be established and brazen violence would not have broken out. This would have prevented the senseless slaughtering of civilians and reduced the scale of the terrifying humanitarian crisis. In these cases where it would have been possible to save lives from the hands of mindless massacre, other countries definitely have the moral obligation to step in and intervene to prevent such a terrible humanitarian	Topic sentence is rather absolute and requires some qualification and elaboration - when is it morally important to do so? Could point out that this happens in cases where there is a very uneven distribution of power, resulting in mass violations of human rights - to show this is valid even beyond the example. Paragraph is well-developed and effectively illustrated. Can consider bringing up an example in which

disaster. Thus, it is only right that foreign parties intervene in conflicts in order to ensure that destruction is minimized and the human cost is kept low.	the intervention has helped stave off such dire effects.
From a political perspective, other countries should intervene to deter belligerent leaders from becoming emboldened to further their tyrannical agendas. Many countries are experiencing conflict due to belligerent leaders and their tyrannical agendas they wish to pursue. For instance, North Korea is ruled by dictator Kim Jong-Un. Under the tyrannical rule of 3 generations of his family, the people of North Korea have suffered for decades. It is not uncommon for those who show the slightest bit of dissent towards the incumbent government to be sentenced to hard labour at the concentration camps for many years. Most of them do not make it out alive, and in many cases, their families are sent together with them. North Korea still remains an impoverished country with its citizens living in abject poverty and constant fear of their government. Although such blatant dictatorship is ongoing, most countries do not intervene apart from slapping them with economic sanctions and refusing to establish diplomatic relations with them. There are no invasive forms of intervention to date. It is evident that countries like North Korea should not be left to sort out their own problems. They have been in this state for the past half a century or more and little has changed about the living conditions of the people or style of governance. In certain cases, a lack of intervention may embolden such despotic leaders to further pursue their oppressive, autocratic regime and further exacerbate the sad circumstances of their populace. Thus, countries experiencing conflict should not be left alone to sort out their problems, as they do not have the ability to bring about reform or change and have to seek help from the international community.	Possible overlap with earlier TS - ensure that each paragraph's argument is distinct

Why should others intervene? The reasoning is not yet clear. Be careful to distinguish distinct ideas from one another.

Evaluate why no countries have opted to intervene. Is it the responsibility of any country to do something about it?

Intervening without their blessing / permission may enrage such leaders and/or be seen as an act of war. The concept of sovereignty needed to be addressed - the argument was slightly too simple without considering the potential implications of intervention. |
| Countries in conflict cannot be left to sort out their own problems because their problems might be intractable as a result of historical baggage, and they require a neutral third party to mediate the conflict. Sometimes, conflicts may be grounded in history. Countries are unable to solve these problems on their own and thus need constant policing to avoid further violence. The Israel-Palestinian conflict that began in the mid-twentieth century has continued to this day. The Israeli Jews and the Palestinians both lay claims to the same territory and object to the opposing party's right to exist. It has proved impossible to make a judgment and all proposals for a two-state solution have failed so far. The current actions to stabilise the conflict is a fragile one. A ceasefire was signed in 2009 and there is mutual recognition of the respective authorities. This arrangement is indeed fragile as no concrete agreement has been made. It is thus evident that it is misguided to assume that countries can solve issues on their own as the conflict may be so complex that any form of resolution will inevitably culminate in endless violence until a stronger side emerges. The US has then stepped in to offer help in mediating the conflict and facilitate the negotiation process between the two parties for a long term peaceful solution. In such cases, a neutral party may allow both sides to put aside their historical baggage and enmity and work together to strive to achieve a consensus and agree on something both parties see eye to eye on. Hence, foreign intervention may benefit | Example here is not directly related to 'mediation' in TS

Need elaboration on the historical claims, since this point is about historical baggage.

Valid point and quite well-developed, but can take into account the effectiveness of |

the two parties involved in the conflict should the other party be able to take on the role as a neutral third party mediator.	intervention too.
However, foreign intervention may complicate and exacerbate conflicts due to the perverse vested interests of the foreign powers. One cannot assume all intervening countries to have venerable and benevolent intentions. More often than not, foreign third parties interfering do so not for altruistic reasons - they too have their own interests they wish to pursue and have their personal desired outcome. Proxy wars are superimposed wars fought by superpowers with existing conflicts. In recent times, Yemen has been the victim of a proxy war between Iran and Saudi Arabia. The Yemeni population comprises both the Sunni and Shiite populations, supported by Saudi Arabia and Iran respectively. In 2015, the Shiite Houthis overthrew the Sunni government which caused the alarm of the Saudis. They feared that the new regime would be hostile towards the Saudis. Instead of intervening in the rebellion and bringing peace to the country, the Iranians and Saudis raced to arm their supporters. This escalated the civil war in Yemen. These foreign powers end up complicating matters and worsening the current situation due to their own dishonourable motives. It is thus naive and gullible to believe that foreign powers interfere with the genuine desire to help improve the current state of affairs. For them, the assistance rendered, if any, points to the fulfilment of their own personal agendas. As such, to prevent such undue interference, countries experiencing conflict should be left to sort out their own problems given that their top priority is to resolve the issue and do not have to worry about fulfilling the interests of an uninvolved third party stakeholder.	Paragraph is well executed
Furthermore, there is a need to respect the national sovereignty of the countries involved, and third parties should avoid being dragged into the dispute. Despite the perpetual power imbalance between countries in the international community, it is only ethical to treat all countries fairly and respect their national sovereignty and right to self-determination. The principle of self-determination is prominently embodied in Article I of the Charter of the United Nations, ensuring the legitimate sovereignty of these nations. The US has always maintained a presence in the Middle East, and is now entangled in a messy conflict that is unlikely to be resolved any time soon. Many of its actions have infringed on the national sovereignty of these countries. In 1953, under orders from President Eisenhower, the CIA organised a military coup in Iran and overthrew the democratically elected Prime Minister Mohammed Mossadogh. Following the coup, the US installed Mohammad Reza Shah Pahlavi, and the thriving democracy that existed in Iran was crushed. The Shah led 25 years of tyrannical rule supported by the CIA and this resulted in the deaths of thousands of Iranians who opposed the US puppet government. As can be seen, the US did not respect the national sovereignty of Iran and constantly meddled with domestic politics of the country, overthrowing their governments and reinstalling puppet governments supportive of the US and their agenda. This has led to the widespread hatred of America in Iran, with many political leaders chanting "Death to America" at political rallies. Therefore, to respect national sovereignty and prevent one from being inextricably entangled in conflict, a foreign power may at times be better off not intervening at all. In these cases, the countries plagued with conflict only ended up suffering a loss of dignity and stature in the international community,	These seem to be 2 different things. Also, when they are dragged in, are they making the choice to intervene? This does seem to overlap somewhat with the previous paragraph. Could perhaps focus more on why contravening the principle of sovereignty is so detrimental. Can consider how this affects the value/state of nationhood or sovereignty itself.

with mayn seeing it as easily bullied or defeated by other major superpowers. Thus, countries should be left to sort out their own problems due to the deleterious consequences of foreign intervention.	
In conclusion, countries experiencing conflict could benefit from neutral intervention and parties who genuinely aim to bring peace to a country. However, these circumstances do not always hold true and superpowers tend to impose their national interests in a conflict, leading to further complication and unnecessary escalation of violence. As such, accurate determination of a country's incentive and motivation to intervene is essential in all cases. If a third party is coming from an altruistic and benevolent perspective, such interference is likely to be desirable and for the better. In most cases, we unfortunately live in a pragmatic world where such instances and far between - the vested interests ultimately serve as the fuel for intervention. *(Wang Danying, 21-A1)*	Do they really have beneficial effects though? Summarises most of the points and is overall a helpful, coherent conclusion.

6 'Countries experiencing conflict should be left to sort out their own problems.' How far do you agree?

This essay demonstrates sound knowledge and understanding of the issues in play. In particular, this essay demonstrates the use of sensible conditions to navigate the complexities of conflicts, intervention and geopolitics, and to make sense of different case studies.	
The world today is often described as a global village where "countries" and "national borders" have become such quaint concepts. While the trend towards a flattened global landscape is indeed underway, it has become more crucial than ever to be able to discern when intervening in another country's problems is the best course of action. Leaving a country to sort out their own problems entails the idea of refraining from stepping into their political landscape either actively through foreign military intervention, or passively by expressing your own views about their conflicts and making a judgement about who is in the wrong. Both of these ways of being involved in another country's conflict often lead to undesirable consequences upon the locals and intervening party, as well as an unnecessary complication of the problem. Therefore, despite the fact that foreign intervention can correct the poor judgement of a country in solving its own conflicts, the high possibility of not being able to reach a peaceful conclusion greatly outweighs the benefits of intervention. Additionally, although extending help to other countries is a gesture of goodwill, it may lead to a culture of dependency. Hence, I agree to a large extent that countries experiencing conflicts should be left to sort out their own problems.	Context clearly outlined. Insightful angle to expand the discussion.
There have been many instances in history that have given us adequate reason to discourage foreign intervention. International intervention can escalate and convolute the political situation, making peaceful resolution an elusive goal. Most notably, the Syrian civil war is a shameful reminder of the dangerous repercussions of foreign intervention, where every party wants a share of the pie. The US-led coalition entered the Syrian civil war, providing air and	

Body Text	Annotations
logistical support for the rebels to topple the Bashar-al-Assad regime and ISIS. As the world began to see a concerted effort in working towards a common goal, the intervention of Russia turned the tide, levelling the playing field for the incumbent government and complicating the political situation. Apart from providing air support to the Syrian government, Russia, as a permanent member of the UN Security Council, repeatedly vetoed Western-sponsored draft solutions in the UN Security Council that demanded the resignation of the Syrian president. This essentially made the Syrian War a stage for political grandstanding between the US and Russia. Foreign intervention in the Syrian civil war thus became a proxy for these foreign nations to flex their diplomatic and military might. When foreign intervention reaches this level, the power imbalance due to powerful parties being present on both sides creates a political deadlock, where peaceful resolution or a landslide victory becomes an elusive goal. As the conflict sustains over a longer period of time, locals are often very badly affected, as seen in the case of the Syrian war where inflation had left many Syrians vulnerable, with 7 million displaced and 83 percent dropping below the poverty line according to the UN. This goes to show that the country is usually better off without additional foreign intervention, especially if the intervention is from powerful nations and is linked to self-interest.	Good development of the background facts which illustrate how intervention should be discouraged Sensible condition presented for when intervention is not advisable Further analysis of the example - going beyond geopolitical effects, to the effects on the country intervened in Link back to question
In a world where each country has its unique set of systems and structures, external parties should not dare to sit in judgement over another country's conflict as they may be incapable of understanding the problem in its complexity. This year, the escalation in the Israel-Palestine conflict, which has seen dozens killed in a matter of days, prompted international concern and worries about the potential of an all-out war. Many influential people have taken their views online. Some posts, including those by Gal Gadot and Rihanna, have been roundly criticised on social media for siding with Israel by disregarding the power imbalance between Israel and Palestine and not understanding that Palestinians are less equipped and being oppressed. This goes to show how it is socially unacceptable to assume the authority to arbitrate other countries' conflicts, especially without full knowledge of the situation. The Hong Kong-China conflict also illustrated a similar idea. In October 2019, mass protests and violent conflict occurred between the protesters and police in Hong Kong during the 70th anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic of China. Just a few days after the breakout, Daryl Morey, the president of a major team of the National Basketball Association, ignited a firestorm by tweeting an image that read "Fight for Freedom, Stand with Hong Kong." This, for obvious reasons, did not please their big Chinese sponsors who immediately withdrew ten to twenty five million dollars worth of investments from the team. It is often said, "only speak when your words are better than your silence". As such, if one does not have the full understanding of the problem, and if they would like to stay away from possible negative impacts of sitting in judgement, then it is better to leave the countries experiencing conflicts to sort out their own problems.	Need to justify their inclusion since celebrities do not actually make decisions to intervene in the ordinary sense, i.e. militarily or politically. Interesting and refreshing style here about the people commenting and attempting to advocate. Involvement of media comments is better supported in this section.
Despite such views, it is also important to consider that if a country is left to sort out their own problems, there may be poor judgement on the country's part, leading to undesirable decisions made in the absence of 'input' from other countries. For example, following Aung San Suu Kyi's rise to power in Myanmar, she has been largely reserved and absent in domestic scenes which are plagued with institutionalised persecution and discriminatory practices	

despite her empathetic rhetoric and fervent advocacy of human rights before the election. She has been repeatedly accused of turning a blind eye to the state ordered genocide of Rohingya Muslims in 2017, by refusing to condemn the military leaders or even acknowledge the existence of such crimes. Taking into consideration how anti-Rohingya Maynmar's majority is, any attempt by Aung San Suu Kyi to deviate from the interest of the majority at that point in time was akin to political suicide. Had there been international pressure on her and the military junta to refrain from engaging in such atrocities against the Rohingya, the eventual outcome of 1.1 million Rohingya refugees having to flee to Bangladesh could have been avoided. It is clear from this example that international intervention has the power of preventing lapses in judgement. For this reason, countries should not just be left to sort out their own problems by themselves.	It would be good to specify a type of country/conflict e.g. where the violence is directed at a vulnerable minority and there is little political will to resolve it? This paragraph is somewhat example-driven.
Countries in conflict often face many challenges, especially developing countries as they have a lack of resources. While external groups are certainly not morally obligated to help, it is generally considered a good gesture to help another country if one has an abundance of resources. For example, this year, escalating conflict in northern Mozambique pushed thousands into hunger and desperation. To lend a helping hand, the United Nations organized emergency food distributions for families who fled the violence in North Mozambique, and food was distributed to reach 50,000 displaced people. While this gesture of goodwill encourages a positive culture of support, it inevitably may also lead to a culture of dependency due to the very nature of aid and donations. Hence, help should be extended to countries experiencing conflict, however, it should be limited so as to prevent aid dependency from emerging.	Useful qualifier of 'especially developing countries' to avoid overgeneralising. This is a nuanced take, but it could use further development and support.
It is important to note that such problems are highly debatable due to the nuances in the argument. Firstly, if the motive behind a party choosing to take part in another country's problems is to genuinely help the country out of goodwill, it is certainly commendable. However, this is usually far from reality as much foreign intervention is politically fuelled and can thus lead to an escalation of the problem. Conflict management often requires accurate judgement. If the country experiencing conflict is clearly not taking the right course of action, then international pressure is necessary. However, if the party intervening is unfamiliar with the complexity of the situation in the country experiencing conflict, they should avoid sitting in judgement. Lastly, even if a party has the resources to help another country, the amount of help should be regulated in order to prevent a culture of dependency. It is apparent that complex problems like these require careful assessment of the different factors in order to decide the best course of action. *(Kimaya Wanjari, 21-E5)*	This notion of a coalition / IGO / NGO's involvement where the collective wisdom and involvement may assuage some concerns about the political proxy wars and lack of understanding of the local context could be developed further

Essays: 2021 JC1 Promos

2   'Sports offers little more than entertainment.' Discuss.

This response makes a consistent attempt to address how sport is more than just entertainment. The essay considers various stakeholders, from lay participants up to the state, ensuring that the issue is considered from many salient perspectives. However, the rebuttal paragraph is a little clunky. The paragraph on inclusivity could also afford to be more even in its depiction of inclusivity.

More than 2,000 years ago, the first Olympic Games was hosted in Olympia, Greece, opening the world to the epoch of friendly sporting competition. Even then, hundreds and thousands of people swarmed to watch the events, treating it as a source of entertainment. Up till today, critics still claim that sports offers little more than entertainment because [the] majority of the society view sports as a mere recreational activity. However, I disagree with this stand, as sport serves many other multifaceted purposes, including the promotion of individual and societal values, as well as an avenue for national growth, beyond the monodirectional purpose of entertainment.	Introduction frames the concept of sports within the idea of entertainment and attempts to extend beyond it as part of the question. Thesis is clear and stems nicely from the question.
Critics may argue that sports offers little more than entertainment, as in the perspective of the commonfolk who more than likely see sport as a recreational activity, sports is merely fun and games. Amidst toiling away daily at work and school, many members of society turn towards sports to entertain themselves and let loose. To these common people that lack the sporting skills or talent themselves to compete on the world stage, they often find themselves living vicariously through the one percent of the population who put up strong fights against their rivals in various sporting categories. During the release of the online game, Federation of Internationale de Football Association (FIFA), more than 500 million people from all over the world tuned in to watch the new e-sporting competition. More recently, the global population had its eyes on the competitors participating in the 2020 Tokyo Olympics, exuding a palpable energy as they were at the edge of their seats rooting for their favourite sporting teams to come out victorious from the fierce battle. As such, it can be seen that the wild support for [athletes] during competitions is an indication of the entertainment they enjoy by doing so. To them, a great past-time is getting engrossed in a vicious sporting match and hoping to feel the same highs as when certain teams win. Hence, critics believe that to the wide majority of the population, sports merely offers entertainment.	TS of opposing view is clear and highlights demographics who might argue this. Be cautious with terms - entertainment and recreation are not the same Example of spectating sporting events as a form of entertainment.
However, this view is parochial at best, since sport can also be wielded in the hands of many other stakeholders like countries and sportsmen themselves, not just commonfolk like you and me. Beyond the surface and delving deeper into the crux of the meaning of sports, sport also provides more important purposes.	Rebuttal / transitory paragraph highlights the limitations by looking at other possible stakeholders aside from spectators.
Firstly, sports offers much more than just entertainment, as the individual development in terms of skills and values of a sportsman is key to the goal of sports. Sport's most fundamental and primary purpose is to push our bodies to the limit, simultaneously acting as a tool for people to grow mentally and physically. For example, Joseph Schooling, who won	TS is clear in highlighting what is layered on entertainment. Example focuses on how Schooling uses

Singapore's first gold medal at the Olympics, has met numerous setbacks in his sporting career, including his seemingly disappointing loss at the recent 2020 Tokyo Olympics. However, time and time again when beaten down by these hurdles, he becomes more resilient and nurtures a stronger fighting spirit in him. Sports has taught him never to give up, and that is what allowed him to rise to such a lauded and revered position today. Hence, it can be seen that sport is a commodity that teaches valuable lessons and is imperative to growing the mind, the soul and the body. With this ethos of sports being the centre of its core meaning, it is undeniable that individual development is an inextricable and significant part of what sport has to offer.

Secondly, sports plays a large role in promoting societal inclusivity in the modern world, inside and outside the sporting dimensions. Thus, it would be foolish to claim that sport offers little more than entertainment. Again, sports is a platform for players to set aside their differences and engage in peaceful, friendly competition, which is closely tethered to the meaning of sports in its purest, most unadulterated form. The notions of inclusivity can also be infused into society. For example, since the Rio Olympics in 2016, the International Olympic Committee (IOC) began having refugees from war-torn countries to compete, bringing forth inclusivity and showing that sports would transcend the political and showcase society's best as well. On a different front, the Rugby World Cup that was hosted in South Africa also dissolved the racial tensions that were rife throughout the nation at the time. The handshake between Nelson Mandela and the white rugby captain of the mostly white rugby team signified a growing union between the races of the society that was once highly segregated by the government. Sports thus has the ability to aid in the promotion of amicable relations between countries and within countries. With a significant portion of sports relying on interaction of different people and different countries, sport actively strengthens bonds between sportspeople and non-sportspeople. Therefore, the very nature of sports is enough to prove that there is more to sports than just being a source of entertainment.

Lastly, to countries, and especially developing countries, sport opens up an avenue for them to gain political power that they require to maintain precious global standing in the world, so sports offers more than just the surface-level purpose of entertainment. As previously mentioned, sports, as a major source of entertainment, draws a large audience which fervently spectates major sporting competitions and supports their favourite sportsmen. Hence, it is not surprising that countries will capitalise on this huge consumer population in attempts to inflate their political standing. After all, in this globalised century, sports is just another facet for countries to compete with one another to fight to the top. For example, China announced in the 1980s that they would be embarking on an 'Olympic Strategy'. They did this in hopes of growing the nation to be a sporting superpower, and showcase the political and economic abilities of the country in the process. Flash forward to today, China is now one of the world's most formidable superpowers, who pours buckets of gold into the training of their sportsmen, resulting in the near hundred medals won over the years. Thus, it is clear that countries rely partly on sports to push the narrative that they are capable and able to achieve great feats. Furthermore, with large media scrutiny fixated on sporting events to entertain citizens back at home, to play the role of a hosting country will also endow them

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sports to build his mental and physical resilience.

More could be done to extend this value to the ordinary individual.

Elaboration of the point is logically sound, though more effort could be put to negotiate why this is 'more than entertainment'.

Consider how to push paragraph openers beyond 'firstly, secondly …'

How are competition and inclusivity related?

Inclusivity means including players / sportspeople within a team, so how does a handshake create inclusivity? Demonstrate this more clearly.

Be careful here: inclusion is more than just bonding.

TS is clear on the additional value sports brings.

For consideration: how is this done? What are the means in which sports can be used as a political tool?

Elaborate on how their sporting strategy has altered their global political standing.

This elaboration is much clearer, but

with a ticket to bask under the global spotlight - all eyes will be on them and how frivolous yet spectacular the event may be. Hence, sports and its frequent events is a regular means by which countries showcase their financial and political influence, in a bid to achieve a greater global status and respect as a capable country. Hence, beyond the immediate use of entertainment, sports also offers countries the opportunity to grow and develop.	consider how you could have shown it with the China example.
In conclusion, there is much more offered by sports than simply entertainment. If we mute the rapturous applause in the background and slow down just for a moment, it is obvious that sports can also offer imperative opportunities for individuals, the society and countries to develop and grow. It would be a shame for all of these valuable aspects of sports to be dwindled down to the title of an entertainment source. As the Olympic motto goes, "Citius, Altius, Fortius". As sport serves the impetus for us to be "Faster, Higher, Stronger", may we see that more people open their eyes to the hidden prizes of sports to be won. *(Hong Chu Yun, 21-I3)*	Conclusion offers a sound conclusion to the discussion and nicely ties to the values of one of the largest sporting events ever.

3   To what extent can we rely on international organisations to solve the world's problems?

This essay was original and insightful, tightly focused and relevant to the point of contention. It uses top-draw examples and case studies which are well evaluated with balance, and exemplifies the points being made. The explanations were also logically and thoroughly developed, showing good understandings of both the structure and function of international organisations and some complexities of the current world order.	
Slavery is not a relic of the past; humanitarian crises are not a relic of the past; tensions and conflicts are not a relic of the past. Although we live in an age of almost stratospheric economic prosperity, brought about by international organisations such as the World Trade Organization and world peace with resolutions drafted by the United Nations, this is not to say that the success of international organisations in these aspects can be applied to the many other problems that the world faces today. [Hidden from] many are the ineffectiveness of these organisations, namely due to nations pursuing their own objectives that are not in line with what the international organisations stand for, the presence of strongman rulers whom international organisations are helpless against, not to mention the sheer size of international organisations that make them ineffective. Regardless of past successes at solving world problems, the above reasons lead to my belief that we can only rely on international organisations to solve the world's problems to a small extent.	Listing serves to highlight world problems, but it could be done more elegantly Aside from the world's problems, the context was set precisely and the scope was well-established. Clear thesis statement.
Naysayers posit the view that with the many past successes of international organisations, they have proven themselves effective and able to solve world problems and should be able to continue doing so. Undeniably, international organisations such as the United Nations and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations have managed to uphold peace and stability globally and regionally. By pooling resources from different countries, sharing intel and working together, international organisations have the necessary resources and hence ability to solve	Evaluation of the opposing view that concedes the strength of the opposing argument, making for a well-balanced essay.

world problems. Not to mention, [as] a coalition of many different countries, each with their own strengths, resources and information, international organisations seem to be a formidable force. This can be seen from the fight against terrorism, a global and pertinent world problem that many countries face. Recently, the United Nations announced the unanimous decision by all nations to eliminate terrorism and prevent an Islamic caliphate. Countries such as the United States, Russia, along with many others, have shared intel on the activities of terrorist and jihadist groups and together, they have successfully bombed and destroyed large swathes of ISIS territory, as well as their oil reserves which they used to fund their attacks. Thus, it can be seen that with the cooperation of nations, international organisations do have the ability to solve the world's problems.	Well informed examples. Be careful to distance the opposing argument or use hedging, even while conceding to it, to avoid contradictions later on.
However, the fight against terrorism remains a fringe example of the success of nations in international organisations working together to exterminate a common enemy. This is so as only terrorism has such a powerful impact to plague all countries with turmoil and chaos, threatening the stability of all countries in the world. Other world problems such as humanitarian problems, for example the Rohingya crisis in Myanmar that do not affect other countries, do not see the same scale of cooperation and intervention. It only highlights how other countries remain unbothered by world problems that do not affect them, and the ineffectiveness of international organisations to uphold peace and solve many other world problems.	Good evaluation of motives which underlie the cooperation mentioned earlier.
One reason we can [only] rely on international organisations to solve the world's problems to a small extent is due to nations choosing to pursue their own interests instead of the greater good. The success from international organisations comes from the ability of countries to reach a consensus with a common goal in mind; countries can then act accordingly to solve the existing problem. However, when countries choose to isolate themselves from the common goal and shirk the responsibility of being a part of the international organisation to pursue their own vested interest, efforts of international organisations will then be futile, rendering them unable to solve the world's problems. A case in point is the Rwandan genocide. [As one of the permanent five members of the United Nations Security Council,] France decided to exercise its right to veto the intervention in the Tutsi-Hutu crisis. It was later unveiled that it was because France had been supplying weapons to the Hutus in unmarked ships in the first place! Prioritizing its own national interest of economic gains, France's actions impeded the success and ability of the United Nations Security Council to resolve the crisis, thus proving that when nations decide to selfishly pursue their own interests, rejecting the objectives of the international organisations to uphold global peace and stability, international organisations are unable to solve the world's problems.	Precise relevance, and demonstrates keen understanding of how international organisations work. Logical explanation and development of ideas, showing how the causes and effects are connected. Enlightening example which exemplified the point of the paragraph.
On the topic of nations reaching a consensus, the sheer size of international organisations [also] make them unable to solve the world's problems. As the saying goes, "too many cooks spoil the broth"; in this case, the quantity does not translate into quality, and the large number of nations only serves as a hindrance to the solving of world problems. With such a large number of nations in the United Nations General Assembly, it is without a doubt that different countries will hold varying opinions when met with the same world problem. Although this might not seem like a problem, given that the assembly only requires a two-thirds majority	Good link and transition from the idea in the previous paragraph. Good explanation of how the underlying causes lead to the issue

vote to pass a resolution, the web of alliances between countries that allows countries to call on their allies to support their decision aggravates this issue and impedes international organisations from reaching an agreement and hence taking appropriate actions to address the issue. In 2017, CNN discovered a booming slave trade in Libya where Africans were sold off to other countries as slaves. The United Nations called for a resolution to investigate the issue in Libya, which was met from opposition from Libya as well as its neighboring countries such as Ghana and Nigeria, who were also guilty of supplying slaves. Additionally, China and Russia also opposed the motion, backed by a fear of setting a precedent of investigation of violation of human rights in a country, something they were both guilty of. As seen from the above, countries can call on their allies to support their take on the world's problems, tipping the vote in their favour. The conflicting interest of the many countries and allies colluding to prevent action from international organisations, which both rise from the scale and size of international organisations thus support my view that we can only rely on international organisations to solve world problems to a small extent.

Furthermore, the nature of problems also prove to be a significant factor when deciding the reliability of international organisations to solve the world's problems. When world problems such as territorial disputes involve nations with strongman rulers who refuse to heed international guidelines, international organisations often prove to be incapable of solving these problems. The territorial dispute over the South China Sea has been a topic of contention and debate for many years. China has repeatedly aggravated its neighbouring countries by claiming its right to the South China Sea with "evidence" of them owning the waters that date back to centuries ago. Despite rulings from the International Court of justice, China continues to carry out military exercises on these waters as well as the Senkaku Islands, which rightfully belong to Japan. [What spurs] the Secretary General of China's Communist Party's (Xi Jinping) actions is the desire to win over his people and to be seen as a hero by claiming back what is "rightfully theirs". His blatant ignoring of international court rulings leave international organisations dazed and helpless, rendering their efforts useless as any action taken will not effect any change of behavior of these strongman rulers such as himself. Another example is Russia's annexation of Crimea in 2014 which incited much condemnation from many countries. WIth the nuclear arsenal and other military weapons that Vladimir Putin controls, even the largest international organisations such as the United Nations lack the authority and leverage to force Putin to put a stop to his actions. This shows that when international organisations are met with problems that involve rulers that treat their warnings with blatant disregard, their lack of power or leverage against them results in their inability to deal with strongman rulers. Thus, when persistent and headstrong rulers are involved, international organisations are helpless at solving the related issues and hence, can only be relied on to solve the world's problems to a small extent.

Despite the above reasonings and examples given, we cannot ignore the fact that international organisations have generally managed to uphold a certain extent of peace and stability. However, with the world's changing landscape and the change of times where cooperation between countries for survival and basic stability has long been dropped from the agenda, we see that due to selfish countries pursuing their own interests, the coalition of countries to

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Margin annotations:

at hand.

A well-evaluated and enlightening case study, which highlighted countries with varying reasons for supporting Libya's position.

Consider if the point may be less about the size of international organisations, and more about the limitations of their structure, especially vis-a-vis the complex world order.

Phrasing of the TS appears mismatched, as the Issue in the para seems to be strongman rulers, rather than the nature of problems.

"Global superpowers" seems to be a better term for these nations

Why such global organisations lack leverage even though they are global could have been developed

prevent support for the rulings of the international organisations as well as strongman country leaders who treat international organisations with disregard, [the success of international organisations has been impeded]. As long as countries continue to do so, the legitimacy of international organisations will dwindle and we can only rely on international organisations to solve the world's problems to a small extent. (*Gwenyth Tan Yang Min, 21-A4*)	Good conclusion.

3   To what extent can we rely on international organisations to solve the world's problems?

The greatest strength of this response is its use of examples which were apt and demonstrative. They suited the points well and showed the failure of international organisations to solve problems in a clear manner. A range of examples from both the past and present were used, demonstrating background knowledge of the issue. However, the scope of examples was limited to branches of the United Nations and its predecessor, when there are also other international organisations, of varying scope, structure, scale and power to consider. Aside from the quality of the illustration, the opposing viewpoint and rebuttal were negotiated in a well-reasoned manner.

As we continue watching the highs and lows of human society progressing through the twenty-first century, we see the rise of many pertinent issues surfacing, and our world leaders' lack of ability to solve them. Many would begin to think that the various international organisations with larger reach and not governed by a specific country, could bring our leaders together and tackle these problems threatening many aspects of our lives around the globe and compensate for our individual leaders' failures in solving these issues. However, we cannot rely on international organisations to a large extent, as they ironically lack power and influence over the countries, have little impact on individual governments and end up as a platform for dominant countries to act in their own interests, rendering such organisations incapable [of tackling] pertinent global issues.	The opening sentences introduce the purpose of international organisations. The thesis statement then highlights that the reality does not match up with the purported purpose of such organisations, tying up the entire introductory paragraph nicely.
To give international organisations some credit, they have shown [themselves] to be an avenue for world leaders to [come] together for meaningful discussions about world issues and ways to solve them. With the presence of this many world leaders at one summit, the international pressure for a country to conform to the majority and start acting in their individual governments in hopes of solving world problems together is commendable. In the recent COVID-19 virus pandemic, the World Health Organisation (WHO) has managed to rally countries together in hopes of tackling the biggest problem we face today: ending the pandemic. Scientifically speaking, the only way to do so is to vaccinate the world's population in hopes of turning this pandemic into an endemic, or even into another common flu. However, vaccines do not come at a low cost and many less-developed countries facing the world's highest infection rates and death tolls are unable to provide vaccines for their citizens. With the WHO's help and reach, developed countries, including the United States of America (USA), donated some of their vaccines to African countries in hopes of increasing vaccination rates globally and stopping the spread of the virus. Such incidents show that the reach of international organisations help to rally world leaders together and create international	Signposting of concession to the opposing view is clear. Clear reason presented on why international organisations can be relied on. Use of the COVID-19 example and vaccination is apt and demonstrative.

pressure to motivate countries to act outside of their own interests to solve world problems. Many place their hopes on the influence of these organisations to unite our governments and tackle pertinent issues together.

However, realistically speaking, international organisations lack actual power and influence over world leaders to catalyse change, proving that we are unable to rely on them to solve the world's problems to a large extent. International organisations are not bound by any territorial lines and many governments just treat their words and warnings as wind blowing past the ears. They lack the actual power to influence countries to act in a certain way to tackle world issues and hence have rather insignificant impact in this aspect. An example would be the failure of the United Nations (UN) to stop the problem of authoritarian bodies and governments creating chaos and emergencies in many countries around the world. With the recent overthrowing and imprisonment of Aung San Suu Kyi and her government in Myanmar, the UN issued several warnings to the military government put in place after they staged a successful coup against the elected leaders. It has been a few months since this incident occurred and many citizens are still suffering at the hands of the military government who obviously showed no care to the UN's words. The failure of such big and seemingly influential international organisations in tackling many such problems around the world goes to show that their power and influence is actually superficial and transient, and has no real effect in tackling such world problems of corruption and political unrest. Without actual power and dominance over the governing bodies of the world, these organisations have no ability to catalyse the change we wish to see as our world falls prey to the multitude of problems arising. Hence, we cannot place our hopes in them to solve the world's problems.	More depth of explanation of what countries have that international organisations do not and evaluation of why certain pressure / interventions work (and why some do not) would help avoid contradicting the point in the previous paragraph

More elaboration would convey the point better: What has the UN done, and why did it not work?

A good observation of the limited efficacy, but elaboration on why international organisations lack real power would have taken the point further |
| Essentially, such power needed to solve the world's problems lies in the hands of our individual governments, and not the international organisations, rendering the latter unreliable when it comes to tackling pertinent international issues. Even though such "international" organisations seem like the obvious ones to trust in solving "world" issues, the only systems in place with actual power to catalyse any change are the individual governing bodies. In response to the planet's ongoing climate crisis, many international organisations including the UN hosted climate summits for leaders to discuss ways to stop global warming. A notable summit in recent years is the 2016 Paris Agreement, where over 200 countries gathered in Paris and signed an agreement to reduce their carbon footprint by 36% in 2030. This momentous agreement and the organisation handling it seemed to have been successful in catalysing real climate action amongst our world leaders. However, in actual fact, many have disregarded their promises and continued to harm the environment. Although Brazil agreed to cut their carbon emissions by 36%, the deforestation of one of our world's most significant carbon sinks, the Amazon Rainforest, peaked at an all-time 12-year high under President Bolsonaro. No matter how influential an international organisation might seem when it comes to bringing countries together to tackle the world's problems, at the end of the day, all the power to create actual change lies in the hands of the unfortunately stubborn and selfish governments around the world. A reason behind this is the lack of an actual system that has the ability to coerce governments into changing their habits to solve the world's problems. Individual governing bodies have a stable structure within their own countries and | TS is clear, but this seems to explain or evaluate the previous paragraph, and does not stand as its own independent point.

Example is apt and demonstrative of how the international organisations' powers are illusory, which gels well with the quotation marks used earlier.

This provides elaboration that was needed in the previous paragraph, so while this evaluation is helpful, no new point is developed |

have power conferred to their system from the citizens. International organisations, however, lack such power and seem to drift across the globe addressing these issues without any powerful body in their system to catalyse the change we need to put our trust in them as we embark on solving the world's problems. Hence, we [largely] cannot rely on them.

in this paragraph.

Lastly, international organisations not only lack the ability to rally leaders together to catalyse actual change, they end up as an avenue for powerful countries to act in their own interests, worsening the world's problems. Although international organisations are supposed to be unbiased and not bound to a certain country, many such organisations are dominated by powerful governing bodies who bend the organisation's actions in such a way that its identity as an "international" organisation becomes eroded. An example from the history books worth citing is the League of Nations. Formed after the First World War, leaders saw the need to come together and tackle the big issues plaguing the world after Europe was left in ruins. The victors of the war, however, dominated the League and even denied Germany entry. The League was used to further the democratic nations' own interests and failed to bring world peace like it promised. Denying the loser of the war, Germany, entry to the League was seen by many as a selfish and petty act by the victor countries, which caused dissent amongst many. Why deny a country who caused war entry to a League promoting peace? Should that not be the obvious choice of action to ensure they do not act up again? Following this, the League continued to fail in settling issues of war, such as the failure to stop Italy from invading and colonising regions of the Middle East. The leaders of the League who came from democratic countries including Britain and France even failed to contain Germany's expansion and unfair takeover of the regions of countries surrounding Germany. Acting in their own interests, the League could not take any action against those who threatened world peace in fear of retaliation against their own countries. The League's failure eventually led to the start of the Second World War. As the identity of such international organisations and the individual countries within it become blurred, such organisations begin to act in the interests of the dominant countries, whose beliefs and values may result in clashes with the initial mission of the organisation to solve world problems. The potential influence of these organisations is eroded as they begin to become a mouthpiece of the world leaders. Evidently, such organisations are unable to catalyse real change, and hence cannot be relied on to solve the world's problems.

Good use of a historical example to complement the more contemporaneous examples in the previous paragraphs, demonstrating clear background knowledge of the issue.

Example is clear and well-explained, demonstrating the influence of nations when it comes to selfish decision-making by the main countries driving the international organisations.

This paragraph would be even more effective if links were then made from the past to the present - how the failures of past international organisations are instructive of the failures of today's too, rather than just a cautionary tale

From the climate crisis to the issues of political coups and the threatening of the world's peace to such an extent that it could lead to deadly world wars, international organisations have lived through and witnessed all of these events. However, without the necessary power, structures and universal identities required for an international organisation to influence countries to come together and tackle pertinent issues or act with an unbiased judgment, these organisations fail to gain our trust when it comes to carrying out the noble missions they set out to achieve. As Lorde sang in her new album "But how can I love what I know I'm going to lose?" This lyric from her song "Fallen Fruit" blaming the previous generation and the current government for thrusting upon the younger generation the responsibility of solving the climate crisis, may just predict the inability of human society in solving such world issues. With these international organisations rendered unreliable, we can only continue to hope that

Conclusion briefly revisits the examples earlier and nicely ties up the argument in a coherent manner.

The use of this lyric meshes poorly with both the tone of the entire essay and its key themes. While they have the potential to be effective when used well, care must be taken to not insert them where they do not fit, as they can distract and

the governing bodies will start to take action in overcoming the problems today, or watch as humanity falls to our inevitable doom as these problems and issues snowball to something so insurmountable that we cannot do anything else but accept our defeat. (*Yap Kah Him, 21-I3*)	detract from the focus. Chilling tone is apt and makes for a memorable ending.

3   To what extent can we rely on international organisations to solve the world's problems?

A thoughtful response that reflects a depth of evaluation and awareness of the issues raised by the question, though somewhat narrowly through the lens of the United Nations. There was a balanced discussion, and a skilful navigating between different points and rebuttals. Some attention could be paid towards clearly calibrating extent, and making necessary qualifications. Overall, there appeared to be an attempt to thematize the whole essay from the viewpoint that the developing complexities of the world led to the international organisations becoming increasingly ineffective in the present, which had some success.	

As World War 2 came to an end, the winning powers came together to establish the United Nations, an international organisation that was first conceived to preserve world peace, which was the most pressing issue at that time. Within the past eight decades, international organisations have evolved to serve different functions, such as the establishment of the World Health Organisation to deal with health-related issues and even specialised committees such as the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) that examines the global response to climate change. Similarly, the increasing pace of development and globalisation has also ushered in a new set of "global issues" that included not just peacekeeping, but also issues such as pandemics and environmental pollution. Some may argue that we can depend on international organisations to solve the world's problems as such organisations can coordinate a united, global response and can act as a neutral middle-man. However, this view is too simplistic. I postulate that we cannot rely on such organisations as they have limited power relative to individual countries and cannot fully understand local contexts, thus the responses mounted by them would be, at best, ineffective at solving global issues. Therefore, I believe that we can only rely on international organisations to solve the world's problems to a small extent.	Introduction is comprehensive in its unpacking of the keywords in the question, and develops both the evolution of international organisations and international issues.

Critics argue that we can depend on international organisations to solve global issues as their wide reach allows for a coordinated response. They point to the fact that globalisation and increased interconnectedness means that issues from one country can easily spill into the borders of another country. Since international organisations have the ability to bring different countries together to share resources and coordinate a united response, countries can look to them to help solve such issues. For example, when it was discovered that the use of chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs) was causing the depletion of the ozone layer, the Montreal Protocol brought countries together to set international regulations on the use of CFCs. This eventually led to a near-total ban on CFCs, solving the issue and demonstrating how international organisations can be relied on. However, this view is too simplistic as, more often than not, even when such responses are initiated by such organisations, they do not	Topic sentence should place more explicit focus on the extent to which we can rely on such organisations. To complete the reasoning in this rebuttal, why the

have the mandate to enforce it. This is because of the limits placed on such agreements by individual countries, who would not be willing to sacrifice too much of their autonomy. Thus, international organisations can only use weak "punishments" such as sanctions, which non-signatories can bypass, or may not even be able to make agreements legally binding. This looks like how in the Paris Agreement, an international agreement brokered by the UN to stop climate change, targets for carbon emissions are non-binding so most countries have not sufficiently reduced their emissions. Furthermore, enforcement of the agreement is so weak that the United States, under the Trump Administration, simply pulled out from the agreement in 2019. This shows that we cannot fully depend on such organisations to solve global issues.

Montreal Protocol was successful (where the Paris Agreement was not) should be examined.

Suitable example on the environment and climate change, tying back nicely with the earlier example used in support of the opposing view.

An idea that could be developed further.

Additionally, we cannot rely on international organisations to solve global problems as their scope of power is limited relative to that of individual states, making it unlikely that substantial change will happen in the first place. In general, the large scale of the world's problems means that a strong, united global effort is required to overcome them. However, this type of response is unlikely to come from international organisations as their role is to negotiate between different countries and come to a compromise, an agreement that is unlikely to cause a substantial shift in the international status quo. This is because individual states, due to the social contract where they limit the rights of citizens via laws and taxation, are beholden to their citizens above all else. Therefore, in the face of challenges, they will prioritise the provision of resources to their own citizens instead of the global effort brokered by an international organisation. Since international organisations cannot mandate contributions from individual states, their efforts in solving such issues will be futile. This can be seen in the Covax vaccine-sharing initiative piloted by the WHO where, during the COVID-19 pandemic, developed countries were supposed to donate doses of the COVID-19 vaccine to less developed countries. However, it is far from reaching its goal of 2 billion doses as developed countries are keeping vaccines for their own citizens. Countries who relied on this to get vaccines found themselves greatly shortchanged and are struggling to cope on their own. Therefore, due to the limited scope of power of international organisations which prevents them from mounting a meaningful response, they cannot be relied on to solve the world's problems.

Again, extent needs to be more clearly calibrated.

Good explanation on the cause behind the lack of power of international organisations.

Other critics may argue that since international organisations are neutral third parties, they can be relied on to solve global issues, especially in times of conflict. They believe that in times of crisis, international organisations can serve as a mediator to prevent the outbreak or escalation of violence. Even in cases where violence has already begun, they can help to negotiate peace treaties and ceasefires to curb conflicts between countries. These critics point to instances such as the Cuban Missile Crisis where the Secretary-General of the UN, U Thant, calmed tensions between the United States and the Soviet Union, preventing the outbreak of a nuclear war, which would have had wide-reaching, global consequences. However, this view is too naive and fails to consider the reality of international organisations. They are not truly "neutral" as the biggest countries usually have the greatest say. Thus, they cannot be fully relied on as a "neutral middle-man" and thus cannot be relied on to solve global problems such as conflicts. For example, in the UN Security Council, 5 permanent

Consider acknowledging the successes of the UN here, instead of rejecting it fully as it does not appear to be directly rebutted by the following argument.

A thoughtful point, but both the explanation and the example have to be further developed in order to be fully

members hold veto powers which allow them to block policies even if a majority vote is reached. This has led to inaction by such organisations in global issues such as the Rohingya crisis. Therefore, such organisations cannot be relied on to solve pertinent world problems such as conflicts.	persuasive
Furthermore, these organisations cannot be relied on to solve the world's problems as they are unable to truly understand local contexts. While the world can face a similar problem, the way this issue manifests in different countries varies. This is because each region has its own set of deep-seated cultures and norms, which need to be accounted for in policy-making. Failure to do so would result in policy being, at best, ineffective, and at worst, counterproductive, since international organisations are unable to truly understand the on-the-ground realities of each and every country; any policies crafted by them are unlikely to fully resolve a problem internationally. For example, during the Korean War, the UN war effort, led by General McArthur, who was not Korean, failed to understand the delicate balance of the region. This led to him pushing reckless advances that provoked China, and caused China to enter the conflict, exacerbating it. In more modern times, another reason why the Paris Agreement is ineffective is due to the fact that it does not adequately address the concerns of less developed countries, whose main focus is maintaining economic and political stability. By failing to address their baseline concerns, the UN is unable to get their buy-in on climate policies, reducing its effectiveness. Therefore, international organisations cannot be relied on as they cannot respond well to local contexts.	Again, an issue with calibrating extent. This statement requires some qualification. Due to the lack of indication of extent, this paragraph comes across as sweeping in its judgement.
In conclusion, the development of the global order has introduced complexities that have outpaced the development of international organisations. While it may seem feasible to rely on them in theory, in reality, they are unable to mount an effective response to the world's problems and even when a response is implemented, it is unlikely to be truly effective due to their limited scope of power and inability to understand local contexts. Therefore, I believe that we cannot rely on international organisations to solve the world's problems to a large extent. (*Isabelle Deborah Looi, 21-E3*)	Suitable conclusion, making use of a distinction between theory and practice.

5   'We have every reason to be optimistic about the future.' Do you agree?

A thoughtful response that reflects a depth of evaluation and awareness of the issues raised by the discussion. Points raised span a range of domains (e.g. terrorism, media, education and the environment), yet are consistently relevant to the question's point of contention. While the ideas are insightful, some could have been developed further (refer to body paragraphs 2 and 4); doing so would have made the arguments more compelling.

When we think about the future, we often envision a flourishing, civilised society that provides a high standard of living for its people, one that is constantly propelled forward to progress and continuous growth. Some people may believe that with the speed of globalisation and economic progress that we experienced now, we have every reason to be optimistic about the future. However, I believe that in our headlong rush for progress and	

growth, we have lost some of the crucial values that would fundamentally propel and push for significant improvements in our society. With the threat of terrorism, digitalisation and planetary emergency threatening to upend life as we know it, I disagree that we have every reason to be optimistic about the future - rather, we have to take a closer look at our current way of living in order to champion the change and progress we wish to see in our future.	Introduction captures and foreshadows a wide range of threats. Clear thesis statement and effective introduction.
Firstly, we fail to recognise that the far-reaching potential and capacity of the media can be exploited by our people for harmful uses, which will cause more problems in the future. The threat of terrorism has been prevalent in many societies today, and is not considered a distant crissis when we think about and envision our future. Even in relatively safe and secure countries such as Singapore, the threat of terrorism is real - it is no longer a matter of 'if', but 'when'. To make things worse, the rapid globalisation experienced in our societies today makes us all the more vulnerable to such threats due to the increased connectivity and interdependence between countries. It only took 17 minutes for Brenton Tarrant to carry out the worst terrorist shooting in New Zealand's history - but the video recording of his violent actions left an indelible mark worldwide. His attack was recorded and live-streamed on various social media platforms, where millions of people watched as he carried out his attack. Even after the livestream had ended, social media giants such as Facebook and Instagram had to work tirelessly to remove and take down copies of the video, some of which were even intentionally modified to escape detection by the algorithms. This incident has revealed how terrorism, in our current age, has essentially adapted itself for a digitally-savvy audience. It brings to attention the potential for misuse inherent in technology while exploiting the media to navigate vast oceans of user-generated content in order to reach people who would then support such twisted ideologies and valorise such attacks as heroic. The capacity of the media to reach and connect to people all across the globe has provided such atrocities a global stage. Furthermore, copycat shootings were later reported to have occurred in other parts of the world. The use of technology and social media has inundated our lives like a dam-breaking flood - but if it is used for such purposes, to promote terror and instil fear, the power of it will only wreak much havoc in our societies in the future. If we do not immediately reflect upon our role as consumers of the media and continue to allow it to be exploited for harmful purposes, we will not have much reason to feel optimistic about the future.	Topic sentence could be clearer - it appears to be on the use of media generally, although the rest of the paragraph appears to be focused specifically on terrorism and media. Apt choice of example, and a good explanation of the phenomenon. Concluding sentences effectively link the argument back to the point of contention in the question
Secondly, the young generation of today are ill-equipped to become leaders in the future. When we think of the future, we imagine the young people of today stepping up as country and global leaders to lead our societies to further progress. However, a population of young people relentlessly churned out from an education system that is overly fixated on academic excellence may not be suited for the tackling of challenges in an increasingly world. The overemphasis on examination and grades in our current education system has essentially caused too much time and energy to be expended on 'teaching to the test', and consequently students then 'study to the test'. Such a system fundamentally produces students who are good at test-taking, but who may expunge the knowledge from their brains once the test is over. This is not enough to cultivate young leaders who can think critically and propel change in the face of [the world's challenges], which requires the nimble application of knowledge and the consideration of multiple contesting views. According to a study in 2018 by the	Topic sentence sounds rather sweeping This does not appear to apply to all of or a majority of countries. These observations seem limited to Singapore only, which should not be the case.

Organisation of Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), Singaporean students are far more afraid of failure as compared to their international counterparts. While examinations and tests can motivate students to perform well for a test, an overemphasis can lead students to associate studying with drudgery and extinguish a love for learning which is crucial for advancement through life. The motivation to do well for a test is transient, while the motivation for continuous learning is lifelong. We must seek to instil the latter, so that students are well-equipped to cope with challenges, and, in future, effectively champion positive changes in our world as future leaders. With the current way that our education system is functioning, where students simply study for the sake of obtaining stellar grades, I am afraid we cannot hope for too much from them as they carry on to lead our societies.	This argument is predicated on many cause-effect links that could have been fleshed out further. That being said, the ideas here are relevant and would certainly make for a compelling argument if they were developed.
Some people may argue that we have every reason to be optimistic about the future because people are becoming increasingly aware of threats to our societies, such as climate change and planetary emergencies. Indeed, global climate change and environmental threats are problems that we seek to resolve today, which many have responded to. For instance, after the detrimental impacts of plastic on our environment were brought to our attention, many governments and countries have taken action by banning the use of single-use plastics or plastic products. Companies such as Starbucks have also replaced their plastic straws with plastic lids, whose propylene content can be broken down for other purposes. Additionally, other measures to reduce environmental damage through other means have also been introduced. Sainsbury's supermarkets, the second largest supermarket chain in the United Kingdom, made the atypical decision to introduce 'Smokey BBQ Crispy Crickets' to their shelves by marketing it as a sustainable protein source. Insects as diets have huge positive impacts on our environment - they are easier to cultivate and grow, involving a higher feed conversion efficiency and reducing greenhouse gas emissions in our production, while still having comparable nutritious content to meat. Such instances of measures to enact actual social change can, admittedly, lead some people to believe that we have every reason to be optimistic about the future, with a population that is acutely aware and willing to start change.	Exemplification spans multiple stakeholders, i.e. both governments and large corporations Apt and specific examples.
However, we are still committing to surface-level solutions and ignoring the fundamental problem which will not help us improve in the future. Such instances are merely symbolic - we commit to such piecemeal solutions to right our planet's ecological imbalance, but the single-minded focus placed on these measures diverts attention away from the fundamental issues that underpin our society today. When we shift our attention to these mere solutions, we are ignoring the bigger, more important and fundamental cause of the problem - the destructive spiral of mass production and consumption that characterises most societies today, where people take more than they consume and generate unprecedented amounts of waste. Surely it is our mindless way of living and appetite for profit that requires more attention than new plastic bans and insect-based diets - only then can we think about truly correcting our planet's ecological imbalance. This reveals the shallow thinking of our generations, and possibly even the refusal to reflect and change our destructive ways of living. If our generation continues to run from the problem, we will not be able to witness any actual social change in our near future.	Topic sentence could use more explicit focus on optimism Insightful evaluation that makes a clear distinction between a symptom of a problem vs. its underlying issues. However, more could have been said about *why* we seem to have a fixation on "surface-level solutions" and avoid dealing with "the fundamental cause of the problem"

Though I believe that many of the characteristics of our people and populations today point to a rather bleak outlook of our future and instead strips us of the optimism to feel for the future, I believe that if we are able to to first recognize the flaws in our society's structure and take more responsibility for our actions as global citizens, we can still have hope amidst the vast destruction already wrought in our society.

(*Long Wen Xi, 21-U1*)

5   'We have every reason to be optimistic about the future.' Do you agree?

This essay showed a good range of arguments which were generally well-explained and supported by relevant and apt examples which showed understanding of the issue at hand. Some sophistication was also shown in how the the arguments were handled with nuance, including conceding to weaknesses to the arguments. This shows a mature understanding of the issues that were raised. However, the essay is somewhat domain and phenomenon driven, and could be made even more enlightening by pulling out the underlying reasons driving such phenomena.

As people living in an age of constant advancement, we have many reasons to be optimistic about the future. Advancements in technological and social aspects have the potential to bring much improvement to our lives, and yet we remain skeptical about how optimistic we can be, given the declining environmental situation. Nevertheless, we do have every reason to be optimistic, as the endless positive possibilities that await us in the future are likely to outweigh the possible disadvantages.	The introduction can be considered functional since it offers the reader a preview of the points to come but could benefit from a hook to pique the reader's interest. Thesis statement could have demonstrated a greater appreciation of the absolute term 'every'.
In an increasingly globalised world, there is reason for optimism in the social aspect as people now have the growing ability to interact with other people from various other cultures and social backgrounds. As interconnectedness grows with increasing globalisation, the ability of people to empathise and connect with others can develop. In the past, globalisation was minimal. However, with the level of globalisation now, it is no wonder that we can understand others on a much deeper level and empathise with their situation despite our vast differences. Because of the growing interconnectedness between nations, we are now more inclined to aid countries in need, thus highlighting the good that globalisation brings. For example, countries struck by natural disasters are able to get back on their feet with the help of other countries that send aid in the form of funds, medical necessities and food. While there might admittedly be possible hidden agendas that countries have in helping other countries, the ability of various countries helping those in need already brings much more possibilities in the future, and allows us to hope for a world where equity can eventually be achieved. Secondly, vastly-interlinked networks of communication available to most people in the world has allowed for people of different backgrounds to learn more about others, and empathise and fight for things they consider to be of importance. Take the 2017 #MeToo movement and the recent #BlackLivesMatter movement for example. Without globalisation, it is unlikely for people to speak up about their experience of sexual harassment and their	This example tends towards showing charity, rather than empathising or social connections (as they are commonly understood). Apt examples used.

appeal to end police brutality respectively, due to fear of disagreements from their immediate community. However, with globalisation, it was only necessary for a few people to speak up before these movements caught on and became pivotal movements that people are still speaking about today. "There is strength in the masses", and this is exhibited from the support garnered for these movements, made possible by the interconnectedness of people. Additionally, the sharing of cultures through globalisation has certainly exposed many to other cultures, and allowed for growing appreciation for various cultures. One example would be the spread of the K-wave, where an increasing number of people learn to appreciate Korean pop music, food and culture due to globalisation. While this could potentially lead to cultural erosion of local cultures, the appreciation of other cultures in helping people gain exposure and broaden their horizons, as these enriching experiences can help develop their ability to appreciate and empathise with others, increasing their ability to work with others and advance as a society and ultimately as one human race. Thus, we have reason to be optimistic due to our increasingly globalized world.

> While the ideas here are certainly relevant, more could have been done to explain *how* exactly globalisation allowed these movements to gain traction -- does greater awareness necessarily lead to greater support?

> Similar to the point above, how does learning about Korean culture lead to empathy? This idea needs to be further developed

However, it is not without cynicism that we can view our current and future environmental situation, which has been increasingly brought to our attention in the recent decade. Empty promises by governments that pledge to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and pollution are not unexpected anymore, with governments failing yet again to meet the aims to reduce greenhouse gas emissions of the Paris Agreement, which is actually a more recent version of the previously attempted (and failed) Kyoto Protocol. In fact, Donald Trump, the then-president of the United States (US), pulled his country, one of the world's largest greenhouse gas emitters, out of the agreement. The lack of cooperation of governments to help slow down the decline of the climate is definitely not a reason to be optimistic. The fact that oceans are predicted to be filled more with plastic than fish by 2050 is also part of the reason why people might be very cynical about our future. With the odds against us, it feels as though we are resigned to our fate. Yet, we still see environmental activists like 16-year old Greta Thunberg fight for their future with a vision of slowing down climate change. The younger generation is protesting in order to avoid contributing to climate change, and engaging in and advocating for more sustainable behaviours themselves, such as using metal straws over disposable ones, tote bags over plastics bags, with some even cutting down their meat intake (to avoid contributing to the amount of greenhouse gases produced during rearing of cows and such). These actions that today's youths are engaging in to reduce their impact on the declining climate shows the earnest nature of youths to improve their current situation, despite the odds. Thus, we ought to be optimistic about the future of our environment as these youths of today will eventually become the leaders of tomorrow, and as can be seen from their passion and dedication to their vision for a better environment, we have reason to be optimistic about our future not only of our environment but also in other aspects as well, due to the resilient nature observed in these youths.

> Good exemplification of reasons as to why optimism is unjustified.

> Clear attempt at linking the explanation back to the claim that there is reason for optimism. Overall, a rather cogent argument.

In today's digital and scientific era, we have many reasons to be optimistic because of the constant advancements and discoveries in the technological and scientific world. Firstly, the invention of phones and social media acted as a catalyst for globalisation, improving relations and connectivity as mentioned earlier. Secondly, the invention of robots and consequently the

> A somewhat simplistic understanding of the complex factors behind globalisation.

development of artificial intelligence (AI) has vastly improved our lives. When paired together, robots with AI can carry out tasks that increase our efficiency, especially for repetitive tasks. One example would be the introduction of Florence, a robot that is being trialled in Singapore's hospitals. She helps nurses carry out repetitive tasks such as checking vitals periodically, and delivering medicine and food. This saves nurses' time and work, which they can better spend on other areas of their work, and thus improve the efficiency of work at the hospitals. Another example would be AI that was developed to aid doctors in detecting signs of cancer from MRI scans that doctors could potentially miss, or even the yellow robot dog named Spot that was spotted at Bishan-Ang Mo Kio Park in Singapore ensuring social distancing between joggers and walkers alike. All these examples highlight how advancements in science and technology can help increase efficiency and convenience, and decrease the possibility of human error and reliance on labor and manpower. This allows us to be more optimistic about our future, which can become even more efficient with more developments constantly being introduced into our society. That said, some people are skeptical and have understandable fears that machines will one day render humans obsolete. However, humans are emotional creatures, and robots can only imitate a certain degree of human emotion. It is not possible for robots to completely replace a human, especially in sectors like healthcare and education. Hence, we should be optimistic about our future and learn to adapt to the ever-changing world that we live in, such that we can reap the maximum benefits of all our advancements and developments.	Good range of examples that demonstrates the many benefits of AI. However, examples seem to be limited to Singapore only. Balance provided, albeit rushed. Concluding statement has a normative aspect to it that deviates slightly from the point of contention set out in the question.
Hence, I believe that we have reason to be optimistic about the future due to our increasing rate of advancements in the social and technological aspect, be it through improved communication and empathy or increased convenience and efficiency as well as better processes. Despite fears and cynicism surrounding increasingly or possibly detrimental situations like the declining climate situation, and cultural erosion, as well as robots rendering humans obsolete respectively, there is still reason to be optimistic because of the many advantages that change can bring, no matter how unfamiliar and scary it may seem. Thus, we should be optimistic about our future, and learn to adapt to the situation and fight for what we believe in, as the youths of today are a great example of. Thus, we should be optimistic about our future, as the advantages brought about by our advancements over time outweigh the possible disadvantages. (*Liew Shu Mei Jacynthe, 21-O3*)	Conclusion reiterates the points addressed in the essay--a structured, yet simple way of ending that could be made more engaging.

5   'We have every reason to be optimistic about the future.' Do you agree?

This paragraph makes a different and interesting point about how we have progressed from the past and thus can expect to progress in the future. It makes the point fairly well through providing contextualisation and illustrations of the situation in the past and how the situation has improved today, before using this trend to project into a future that reasonably suggests optimism is well-founded.	
Firstly, the world today has [transformed] into one that is more equal and less prejudiced. In the past, only some people belonged in the [higher] class and enjoyed most of the power and	TS is clear and tied to the stand taken

control in the world, as seen from the abundance of male political leaders compared to the lack of female ones and the deep-seated white supremacy sentiments that permeated the society of Western countries. Rights and power were hence [the] prerogative [of] these groups of people who were regarded as superior and would denigrate and even mistreat the so-called "lower classes" such as women or African Americans. This is evinced when women were confined to the kitchen and expected to only carry out the household chores instead of going to school to enjoy the right to education. Racism towards the blacks was also rampant and they were unfairly treated, for instance being readily blamed for crimes that they had not committed in the book "To kill a Mockingbird". However, the society today has grown to become more accepting and awareness has been increased on these topics such that the bigoted mindsets of people have not been gradually eradicated. This can be seen from the higher participation of women in the political landscape, with 24.5% of parliaments being made up of women, and the increased awareness of movements such as "Black Lives Matter" and better protect[ion] [of the] rights of the minorities. Hence, with the increased awareness over the years of the marginalised groups and [those who are discriminated against], we are starting to see a paradigm shift towards a more inclusive society where we accept people of different backgrounds and do not discriminate against them, instead better supporting them and helping them integrate into society. With the improvements in this erroneous mindset of superiority and inferiority, we can hence harbour utmost optimism towards the future following this positive trend, and [become] an even more accepting society that embraces more. Hence, this statement that we have every reason to be optimistic of our future holds water.

(Mabel Sim, 21-I3)

Comments
Contextualisation of the status of women and minorities in the past
The illustration seeks to present the change over time to the status of women and African Americans. It would be better in the second case to select an example that is more global in scale
Take note that works of fiction should not be used as evidence of real occurrences. They can however sometimes be said to reflect the sentiments and happenings in society
Note that expecting them to "integrate" into society can be controversial too
The trend moving forward is projected based on previous trends, providing a key link to the question

7   'Not enough is being done to promote a responsible press.' Is this a fair assessment?

This essay demonstrates a strong grasp of domain knowledge, drawing on contemporaneous examples around the world in support of the author's argument. However, there are opportunities for further evaluation, either by looking deeper into the root causes for the lack of incentives to promote a responsible press, or by evaluating the relative strength of incentives for and against the promotion of a responsible press. Separately, this essay illustrates an effective use of the call-back technique in the introduction and conclusion.

In the novel 1984, Ray Bradbury surmises the advent of an epoch of 'alternative facts' and a post-truth world, and puts forth a strong warning about the threat of digital sensationalism in eroding our capacity for critical thinking. While this scenario may not be directly referring to the press, the problems highlighted in the novel are indeed present in the press as well, with numerous publications of sensationalised headlines and false reporting worldwide. Although there have been concerted efforts to encourage responsible journalism and reporting, they have been largely ineffectual in doing so. Thus, the view that not enough is being done to promote a responsible press is a fair assessment.	An engaging introduction.

Opponents of this view may contend that there are measures put in place to promote responsible journalism in the form of prizes and accolades [awarded] to those who report genuine facts with the intention of benefitting society. These prizes provide an incentive for journalists, reporting firms and news outlets to conduct responsible reporting instead of resorting to sensationalism or fake news. For example, the Joseph Pulitzer Prize for Journalistic Excellence is awarded to press and media outlets that demonstrate bravery in their coverage of political misdeeds as well as journalistic integrity in their reporting. Notably, this prize was awarded to the Miami Herald not long ago for its reporting on the Panama Papers, which exposed information about global politicians' and world leaders' connections to offshore accounts in attempts to evade taxes. Thus, given that such watchdog journalism is, in itself, a dangerous job, the awarding of such prizes encourages the publication of other similar reports which enables the press to maintain its role as a check and balance to politicians and other global figures. As such, I concede that there are indeed measures being taken to promote a responsible press, and it would be unfair to assert that efforts to do so are insufficient.	This is a valid argument, though not a particularly compelling one. Consider regulatory frameworks and professional associations, etc. There was a missed opportunity to evaluate the relative strength of the incentive for responsible reporting offered by such awards, against countervailing incentives (e.g. such as profits, by appealing to sensationalism).
However, it should also be duly noted that the above mentioned instances of journalistic integrity and responsibility are not the norm in today's society. As the right to freedom of speech is enshrined in the laws and constitutions of many countries, regulations on the publication of divisive rhetoric like sensational news articles and fake news are lax and easily circumvented. As such, this makes it easy for the press to employ sensationalism in their publications to gain more attention, which can be detrimental to social harmony through the exploitation of social fault lines and polarization of opinions in an already-divided society. For instance, at the height of the United States' 2016 Presidential Election, right-wing media outlet FOX News, in its reporting of the death of a Democratic politician, alleged that the leaking of Hillary Clinton's personal emails was done by that politician. This sparked numerous other articles with headlines like 'Info leak an inside job, not by Russians!' that propagated throughout the media sphere, contributing to the already intense rivalry between Democrats and Republicans, and further dividing left-leaning and right-leaning citizens despite evidence proving the allegations false. In separate incidents, the lack of regulations on the press was also exploited to promote anti-immigrant sentiments. Firstly, a fake article detailing a terror attack in Sweden by a migrant fuelled hate against innocent migrants, and secondly, reporting on the criminal case by Lisa F. in Germany also worsened the already sensitive and tense environment surrounding immigration, due to the allegations that she was raped by migrants. Evidently, such unsavoury actions by the press not only fail to achieve their purpose of providing the public with genuine facts, but instead sow seeds of discord which is heavily irresponsible given the fear, distrust and hostility they promote. Thus, since these incidents are still happening today, it is fair to say that not enough is being done to promote a responsible press.	Such claims must be further substantiated -- are there really no punitive consequences, or ways to prevent circumvention? There was an opportunity here to weigh the benefits of free speech against the costs of sensationalism (in this case, social division and distrust).
Furthermore, while the government is, by convention, the entity responsible for the regulation of the press and the promotion of responsible journalism, it is actually the one responsible for such irresponsible reporting in some cases, especially in relatively more autocratic or corrupt states. Through wielding the press as a propagandistic tool, such	

governments control the publication of media to influence what their citizens read and further their own political agenda. For example, the Turkish media outlet Zaman was shut down, with its editors replaced by a new team hand-picked by Erdogan's administration. As such, the once-popular outlet, previously known for its critical stance against the Turkish government, had a sudden reversal in its portrayal of the government. Such incidents are also common in North Korea, where the local media is controlled by the Supreme Leader Kim Jong Un to only sing praises about the government, essentially stamping out any political opposition. While some may use Realpolitik to justify these actions by stating that it is understandable for governments to adopt such pragmatic methods of ensuring political stability and order, it does not hide the fact that these actions are inherent abuses of political power and effectively curtail the press' effectiveness in fulfilling its responsibility of reporting true, unbiased facts. Hence, it is evident that not enough is being done to promote a responsible press.	Apt examples provided. A cogent argument that considers the power and responsibilities of the government in regulating the press, and how that power might be abused.
To conclude, the press, as the fourth estate of the realm, evidently wields significant power in influencing the views and mindsets of citizens worldwide. As such, it is disheartening to see that the events predicted in the novel 1984 seem to be slowly taking shape in the form of 'clickbait'-esque headlines and articles as well as the usage of the press to push political propaganda on citizens. It is hence imperative that we continue to encourage a responsible press, be it through rewards or incentives, in order to secure the press' legitimacy as the fourth estate to keep the other three estates of the realm in check, and prevent the world from moving towards a future reminiscent of the one described by Bradbury. *(Lee Lucille, 21-U4)*	An effective reference to the introduction.

7   **'Not enough is being done to promote a responsible press.' Is this a fair assessment?**

The first selected body paragraph of this essay effectively evaluates two competing considerations to show how, in the present day, not enough is being done to promote a responsible press. The second selected body paragraph presents an interesting and potentially insightful idea on how there is a blurring between the mainstream media (or the press) and new media, though more could be done to firmly link how the irresponsibility of new media with the actual acts of press.

The agenda of the press is gravitating towards maximising profits, and no significant actions have been taken to curb this. Hence, not enough is being done to promote a responsible press. The journalistic integrity that the press once valued is threatened by the need to generate profit, and sustain its survival. Hence, instead of presenting well-thought analysis that considers the nuances of facts, the press today tends to subject itself to sensationalism. For example, during the Ebola outbreak, extreme headlines were used to prompt people to read the papers and make sense of the situation. Another case in point was when the World Health Organisation released a report on carcinogenic meat. The findings presented in the report were overblown and distorted by the press in an attempt to catch the attention of	Topic sentence is clear. Motive of profit maximising is juxtaposed against the concept of journalistic integrity.

more people and spark discussion. As seen in the examples illustrated above, the press today is simply vying for viewership to generate profits. The accuracy of information presented has taken a backseat. Instead, the press is exercising sensationalism, clouding the judgement of people. Little action has been taken to solve the root causes of such a problem - the need for funds to sustain the industry. Hence, the press continues reporting without much integrity, and only invests effort to maintain its profits.	Clear rationalising as to why not enough is being done to promote a responsible press.
Furthermore, there has been a rise of fake news around the globe and it can even make occasional appearances in mainstream newspapers. Research has reviewed that the press and media industry could have influenced the result of the 2016 US presidential election, and even Brexit. There were articles circulating among the public that Pope Francis actually endorsed Trump, and people failed to be discerning enough to identify the accuracy of such information. This situation is also aggravated by the fact that there is no strict dichotomy between mainstream media and new media, and established newspapers such as the Straits Times and Channel News Asia have also used online platforms to reach out to a wider audience. This has also made it harder for the authorities to stop the spread of false news due to the unprecedented speed at which the individual can disseminate information. With few regulations put in place to punish the press for spreading fake news both on paper and on their online platforms, it can be argued that not enough is being done to promote a responsible press. (*He Yufan, 21-I3*)	Topic sentence is clear, but there needs to be a link between how the presses are creating fake news, or if there are gaps in society that allow for fake news to occur. Interesting idea on the blending of mainstream and new media that allows for people to consume fake news as if they were from actual news outlets. Evaluation highlights that not enough has been done to promote a responsible press because of lack of regulation.

8   To what extent do people in your society value the arts?

This essay considers a wide range of points, and also considers different perspectives and attitudes held by different groups and segments of societies in evaluating the points, showing an in-depth understanding of the Singapore context. However, it is less successful in signposting and providing the explicit calibration of extent required of this question, which made some of the attempted balance somewhat awkward.	
Every year, thousands upon thousands of tourists flock to Singapore's shores to view the island nation's sights and sounds - among which is the vibrant and unique arts scene that emulates the country's rich, multicultural history and reflects its history as a bustling trading port and its current status as one of the world's most prosperous young nations. From the numerous museums dedicated to art such as the Singapore Art Museum, National Gallery and the Art and Science Museum, to the well-preserved colonial style shophouses and various architectural features like the Victoria Concert Hall, that give Singapore's streets such character, it would be a fair assessment for any outsider to make that Singaporean society does indeed highly value the arts. However, many locals believe that the arts scene is mainly government-sponsored, and the general population has a higher regard for the more practical pursuits, such as the sciences, while local artists struggle to gain recognition within Singapore. Thus, this begs the question: do Singaporeans truly value and care for the arts? Or do the arts just serve as a mere tourist attraction? I believe that while we must recognise the increasing	Thesis statement could be calibrated for extent a little more clearly, though "most part" is

appreciation for the arts in Singaporean society, for the most part, my society does not value the arts.	noted
Detractors may argue that Singaporean society does value the arts, as reflected by the growing increase in participation in arts-related activities, as well as the various efforts made to keep the arts scene afloat during the pandemic. These detractors point to statistics that illustrate the growing appreciation for the arts; for instance, it was reported by the National Arts Council (NAC) that the number of people attending non-ticketed arts performances had risen from aout 60,000 in 2015 to over 2 million in 2016. More recently, in 2019, the NAC also revealed that the vast majority of the population, 70% in fact, had taken part in some form of arts-related activities within the past year. The tremendous increase in participation in such arts performances and activities thus reflect that Singaporeans have come to develop a greater interest in the arts. However, this view is a rather myopic one as it fails to consider the other reasons behind the increase in participation in arts activities. In fact, the sudden rise in the number of locals participating in or rather, viewing, such arts performances and activities - which includes simply visiting a museum or gallery, may not have been an organic process. Rather, it may be attributed to the government's efforts to increase the relevance of arts in our society and boost participation in such activities that has led to the statistics revealing growing participation by locals. For instance, for Singaporeans and permanent residents, entry to the various art galleries and museums are free of charge or are at heavily discounted prices, performances in public spaces like the stage at the Esplanade are most likely put up due to the NAC's encouragement, and anyone who happens to pass by during a performance can claim that they have attended an arts performance, rending the statistics an untrue reflection of our society's attitudes towards the arts. In reality, it is actually state-sponsored efforts that have driven the perceived increase in participation of arts activities, nt Singaporean's own interest and value of the arts. Furthermore, while SIngaporeans may have visited galleries or attended performances on their own accord, they might have simply browsed around and taken a few pictures to show that they had visited a particular exhibition or watched a performance without actually having appreciated the artwork or performance at all, thus showing that they do not value the arts. Thus, detractors are false in claiming that positive statistics signal that people in my society actually value or have interest in the arts.	Not quite the point of contention. Need to calibrate for extent - to what extent are the arts valued? Suitable illustration But how does this not show that Singaporeans value the arts? Even if the state was the one who increased the value of the - the value was increased, right? Elaborate specifically on what our society's attitude is such that you make a value judgment that we do not value the arts.
Moreover, the undying efforts made by local artists to keep practising their craft despite the restrictions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic are also testament to how greatly Singaporeans care about the arts scene. An example of this would be Melissa Sim's "Fat Kids Are Harder to Kidnap" play, which was quickly, and effectively, able to adapt to the sudden Circuit Breaker restrictions in Singapore. The production was adapted to a virtual version that was broadcasted to audiences every night via Zoom. The commitment of performers to continue to put up performances from the confines of their own homes, and even without a live audience, signals the true commitment and care for their craft. Furthermore, the fact that the virtual performance was so successful among local audiences also illustrates how greatly Singaporeans value the arts, that even in such tumultuous times during the pandemic, when many other concerns like family or work are demanding our attention, we still find the time to partake in appreciation of the arts. Although it is heartening to witness the huge efforts	The rebuttal could have been framed in a clearer manner. Good effort to show contrasting trends in

poured into preserving the arts scene and continuing to practice their craft during the pandemic, this only represents a minute fraction of society; the larger portion of society is apathetic towards the pandemic's impact on the arts community. Hence, it would be unfair and baseless to claim that people in Singapore value the arts, when in reality, only very few passionate artists and local audiences actually value and care for the continued survival of the arts in such pressing times.	society, although more could be done to exemplify the apathetic attitudes of most Singaporeans. Again, calibration of the extent is needed to avoid contradicting the earlier argument.
It can be argued that Singapore's excessive focus on pragmatism and the more tangible outcomes causes Singaporean society to hold very little regard for the arts. Since its shaky independence, Singaporeans have had it ingrained in their mindsets that we should all work hard in order to ensure the prosperity of our nation. Since then, Singapore has made the magnificent leap from a small fishing village to one of the world's most developed countries. In order to achieve this, many Singaporeans' goals were focused on practical and tangible things, such as getting a stable job that would ensure a steady income, as the future of our nation was very uncertain at that time. This mindset of excessive focus on practicality and ensuring the security of our future has become entrenched in the minds of Singaporeans. As such, most Singaporeans veer towards pursuing practical degrees in fields where they are guaranteed to find employment such as law, finance, engineering or medicine. [On the other hand], arts degrees are generally considered to be extravagant wastes of money as they are perceived to lack practical utility and do not impart any tangible skills on students. [Thus], given the volatile nature of employment today, it is hard to ensure that one will be able to secure a job after graduating with a arts degree. Hence, it is clear that the arts are not valued. The extent to which my society favours more practical degrees in the STEM fields can be seen from how courses like medicine and dentistry are notorious for being the most competitive courses, even for enrolment, as many locals are vying for a spot in the medical faculty in universities. This disregard or sidelining of the arts is also seen from how even in primary schools, science and mathematics comprise 2 of the 4 core subjects, while art and music lessons are not even weighted, and thus perceived to be recreational subjects. Higher up in secondary schools, art and music become optional subjects catered towards students who show exceptional aptitude in these fields. Hence, the higher regard for other subjects and fields in our education system, and sidelining of arts subjects like art and music ever since students first begin matriculating in the local education system, reflects the institutionalised devaluing of the arts, which is then translated to the mindsets of SIngaporeans that the arts are less important than subjects like the Sciences. This is further worsened by society's emphasis on pragmatism and practicality, causing many to shy away from pursuing arts degrees in the interest of selecting something more 'realistic' like accounting. Thus, people in my society do not value the arts very much as they fail to recognize the practical benefit of it.	Consider signposting the arguments clearly. Systematic and comprehensive evaluation of various factors and the trends in various domains in society, leading Singapore to devalue the arts. Calibration is present in this concluding line, which needs to be present across all paragraphs.
In a similar vein, the lack of value of the arts can also be seen from how those who wish to pursue their creative interests often pursue them as a hobby, or need a second source of income to fund their lifestyles. The lack of value with which my society regards the arts is further seen from how even those who wish to pursue their artistic dreams have to regard it as secondary to other jobs. For instance, Ben Loong, a local gallery designer, has to spend nights working as a Grab driver in order to supplement his income to fund his artistic career.	Suitable example.

Thus, his full effort cannot be placed on his art, and the fact that people are unable to forge viable career paths out of it in Singapore, except the rare few like JJ Lin - who found greater success overseas - reveals how my society does not value art as the local market and audiences do not generate sufficient income for the survival of artists.	Requires qualification.
Additionally, people in my society do not greatly value the arts, as seen from their treatment of the artistic architecture and historical buildings in SIngapore. The beautiful shophouses and the brightly-colored and intricately carved temples around our island [reflect] our multicultural heritage. However, these historic buildings are often forgotten and locals do not seem to care much about them or truly value them, as seen from how many youngsters visit these sites to snap a few pictures and upload them onto social media, without any regard for the rich historical context behind these architectural designs.	Exemplification is too rushed here - overall quality of essay is a little uneven.
In conclusion, people in my society do not value the arts very much as seen from our continuous pursuit of the pragmatic and practical. (*Tiffany Lim Xin Hui, 21-E3*)	More time ought to have been spent developing a coherent conclusion.

9   Given the rapidly growing global population, should there be a limit on the number of children people can have?

This is a thoughtful response with clear explanations of the ideas. Apt illustrations were offered in BP1 and BP3. One further thing to consider is the condition in the question, regarding a rapidly growing global population. This response has taken the country-level perspective well, but there's an avenue to build on the point about no one-size-fits-all argument by considering that while the global population may be rapidly growing, the rate of growth in each country may vary significantly, and so whether 'a limit' can suit all for a closer engagement with that keyword.	
The world's population has increased from 1 billion people before industrialisation to 7 billion people today, and is projected to reach 10 billion by the 22nd century. This has resulted in overpopulation and a strain on resources, prompting governments all over the world to come up with policies to manage their country's population, one of which is to put a limit on the number of children people can have. However, while this policy has been effective in curbing population growth, it has sparked debates on whether it is morally right and practical to impose such a policy. I believe that while a limit can be implemented as a short-term solution to rapid population growth, it should be used as a last resort as it infringes on people's freedom and can have detrimental impacts on a country's demographics in the future.	Nuanced stand indicated; issues in the question understood. However, a clear preview of points is not yet conveyed.
Admittedly, placing a limit on the number of children can have is an obvious solution to overpopulation as it can help to bring down population growth quickly. Implementing such a policy means that anyone who violates it may face punishments in terms of fines and jail time, which effectively solves the problem, especially when rapid population growth has led to a strain on a country's resources. For example, before China's one-child policy kicked in, it was facing rapid population growth that was faster than what the country could cope in terms of	

housing, food and transport, just to name a few. Public education, while effective in solving the root cause of the problem, takes a long time for the effects to be seen. The one-child policy then becomes a quick and effective way to stop the problem from worsening. Hence it can be said that placing a limit on the number of children one can have should be considered given the inability to cope with rapid population growth in some countries.

How? Elaborate on this promising idea.

However, while such a policy is effective in tackling overpopulation, it should not be applied to every situation as it infringes on one's right to have children. To some people, childbirth is a personal decision that has a major impact on their lives due to the joy it brings and the fulfillment it gives to them to see their children grow up. To place a limit on the number of children one can have is the same as placing a limit on their freedom, which is morally wrong since people should have a right in deciding how they want to live their lives. Moreover, placing a limit on the number of children one can have has implications on their own lives in the future. Some may depend on their children to provide for them in the future, and placing a limit creates a greater financial burden on their children. Placing a limit can also encourage parents to spend more on their children since they have greater financial ability to do so with fewer children to provide for, increasing the costs of raising a child. Therefore, implementing such a policy should only be used as a last resort when countries are not able to slow down population growth via their means as it infringes on one's right to have children.

Reasoning explained well.

Logical gaps in this line of reasoning - there is room to elaborate further.

Sound points; supporting illustrations based on past/similar policies resulting in these consequences will complete and strengthen the argument.

Moreover, countries should not rush to implement such a policy to curb their rapidly growing population as it can have detrimental impacts on their demographics in the future. One problem many countries which have implemented this policy face today is a rapidly aging population, with an increasing percentage of of people in the country aged 65 years and above Due to policies put in place in the past to curb their population growth, there is a relatively greater number of babies born before the policy compared to after the policy was implemented. This has led to a major distortion in their population pyramid, with the younger generation having to provide for more people than the older generation. A different set of challenges are then created for the country as they now have to provide for the rapidly aging population as well. For example, due to the two-child policy implemented in Singapore in the 1950s, there is now a greater proportion of elderly compared to the young. This has resulted in manpower shortages which prompted the government to source for foreign labor, which created even more problems due to the changes in the demographic makeup of society. However, the government was prepared to face the challenge as it was aware of the impacts the two-child policy will have on the country, which reduced the severity of manpower shortages. Therefore, unless governments are prepared to face the impacts caused by placing such limits to curb the population, they should not rush to implement such a policy as the consequences of not planning to address the impacts will be detrimental to a country in the future.

Sound point that considers longer-term impacts.

Relevant example. Note though, that it's a combination of the 2-child policy along with rising incomes and education of women that led to the plunge in fertility rates here and places like China - this complex interplay of factors can be discussed to deepen the analysis of unintended consequences.

How so? Do you mean the policy to have relatively open immigration?

In conclusion, while placing a limit can be a simple and effective measure to curb population growth, there is no one-size-fits-all policy and various considerations such as the impacts on one's freedom and a society's demographics need to be considered before implementing such

a drastic policy. It must also be noted that such a policy may not be effective in curbing population in every country, as countries with lax enforcement may face difficulty in monitoring. As such countries continue to face challenges in population growth, different policies should be considered to effectively manage their population. *(Phyllis Peh Yan Hui, 21-I5)*	Sound point and worth elaborating on in the body of the essay!

10   Is courage essential for success?

This introduction and three body paragraphs on one side of the issue have been included because the strengths present plenty of opportunity for this to be a strong response. The Social World Model is used as a framework to provide structure, and the arguments do demonstrate how courage is essential to survival - though not always to success. While the illustrations used do show courage, there are some gaps in the development of the paragraphs that are needed to more effectively elucidate why courage is essential to success. The opposing view is notably weaker and less clear on the concept of courage, and has been omitted. As you read, take note of the strengths in organisation, the overall approach and the fluency and flair of the expression, but see if you can supplement the argument with suitable examples, links and opposing perspectives.	

If the past year of living in a global pandemic has taught us anything, it is that the world functions not linearly, but rather haphazardly, and the wheels of time do not turn in nice circles but rather convoluted multi-dimensional loops. If [there is] anything the past year has taught us, it is that courage is essential for success in this brave new post-pandemic world. It is the driving force for success at almost every level, be it politically, nationally or socially. To be courageous in decision-making serves as the most imperative step towards success. Though detractors may argues that courage serves merely as a stepping [stone] towards success and does not carry much significance[.] This may be due to the perception of courage from a pragmatic standpoint, which in perceiving it as such, serves only to hinder its practical benefits. Hence, I agree that courage is essential for success.	Introduction piques the reader's curiosity and nicely ties courage in the context of the modern world Thesis statement is clear, but the opposing perspective can be clarified
Firstly, courage is essential for success at the international level, especially for small nations. Major superpowers such as the United States, Russia and China already start off with an advantage - large reserves of natural resources. On the other hand, a small nation such as SIngapore does not have much other [than] its people. On the international stage, in order to gain relevance and some form of authority, it is critical for a small nation to succeed - after all, the bedrock of relevance is success. For a small nation to succeed with only its human resources, it takes an entire population's determination and courage to face the unknown even when the odds are stacked heavily against them. The most salient example would be the aforementioned Singapore. Like a premature infant born before its time, the Republic could, should, have died in infancy or early childhood. That it survived to a ripe middle-age and grew rich along the way serves as a testament to an entire nation's courage and willpower, led by a generation of exceptional leaders. Singapore's independence was not by choice; its baptism of fire was merger and separation from Malaya. Singapore had nothing then and it took a large amount of courage for Singaporeans to pick themselves up and develop its country and economy despite the humiliation it faced from separation. Without courage to hope for a	TS uses the Social World Model Clarification of what constitutes success for a small nation Reasoning for why courage is essential for small nations is articulated here This illustration serves to demonstrate the effect of courage on success Unfortunately, the paragraph remains vague regarding what exactly constitutes

better future, Singapore might still be the small fishing port it once was. It was courage that inspired Singaporeans to look forward to a better future and to dream bigger and this serves as the very pivot of success for small nations. If small nations never aspire to be known for anything else besides being a small nation out of fear, they will never have the push to strive for something greater, to increase their standing globally. Hence, on the international stage, being courageous is imperative for a small nation's success.	courage for a small nation. The argument needs clearer explanation of methods/actions taken that display courage and how it has been instrumental to SG's success
Secondly, courage is essential for success in tackling crises at the governmental level. The government should serve to do what is right and appropriate for the country, rather than to subject themselves to populism because they are scared of losing their people's support. In order to shed this fear, government leaders need courage to make the best decision even if it opposes the desires of the people or it may offend larger superpowers. This is the only way for a country to achieve success in times of crises because it is only through courageous decision making that crises can be handled appropriately. The most pertinent example of a courageous leader is Jacinda Arden, the prime minister of New Zealand. Back when the Covid-19 pandemic first started, Arden made the difficult decision to close borders as soon as possible, as opposed to other countries [which] did not quite yet comprehend the severity of the pandemic or were fearful of straining its relations with other countries. It was courage that propelled her to make this unpopular decision and it is courage that continued to make the decision to lock down the country every time there was a single Covid-19 case. As such, New Zealand has met with the greatest success in dealing with the pandemic and is almost Covid-19 free while other nations [which] were too afraid of angering [their] citizens or offending other countries continue to struggle with the pandemic. This shows the salience of courage in making important decisions for an entire country as this is ultimately what brings the country to succeed in unprecedented times. As such, courage is essential in going against populism to achieve success.	TS moves to the next stage of the Social World Model Why it is courageous rather than expected that politicians do not thoughtlessly bend to popular pressure should be established A relevant example of courage and how it has led to a form of success This paragraph makes a reasonable argument especially in light of the context today, and does demonstrate courage. However, it is less clear on why it is so essential, as many questions have been left unanswered: Why would politicians give in to populism? What is the risk of masking decisions apart from the popular one? What are the consequences?
Thirdly, courage is essential for success in bringing about social change. To bring about social change and betterment for society, courage is needed to put one on display and to be unafraid of speaking out against the masses. This is the most successful way of achieving tangible social change, by being courageous and brave to stand out and be a living example to humanise this issue and bring it more life, something a million hypothetical arguments cannot do. Fifty years ago, Martin Luther King Junior gave a speech about racial inequality in a time [when] it was even illegal for black people and white people in America to mix. 'I have a dream', he had proclaimed, and now his dream has been heard by millions of people globally and even from different time periods because of his courage to stand up for the rights of the most marginalised group in history, despite the consequences it may carry. Sadly, his courage to speak up and to put himself in the eyes of the public was what got him assassinated, but the success he brought about to the social change movement remains timeless, even manifesting in the modern world in forms such as the Black Lives Matter protests. As such, courage is pivotal in driving social change and allowing movements to gain traction and success. The courage of one person is able to empower an entire generation, enabling the movement to succeed in the sense that it becomes timeless and ubiquitous.	An evocative example, but a number of steps that would have linked it more strongly to courage have been skipped: If anyone can give a speech, why was this speech significant as an example of courage? What consequences could be expected, such that the act could be deemed courageous? Does this effect truly boil down to the act of courage? The essentiality of courage in this equation has not been convincingly argued

However, there are some who disagree that courage is essential for success. Detractors may argue that courage is too idealistic of a principle to achieve tangible success and is thus not essential at all and pales in comparison to the pragmatic aspects of success such as hard work. They put forth the argument that courage is useless if baseless, and a strong foundation is what is crucial to achieve success.	Courage is positioned as antithetical to hard work here, which is not immediately convincing. Further clarification, elaboration and exemplification are needed
[...] *(Kyran Narayanan, 21-I2)*	

11 Evaluate the claim that protecting the environment is mainly the responsibility of the young.

A sound response that showed a keen attention to the point of contention and thoughtful analysis of how responsibility might be ascribed. Balance was handled well, reasoning was concisely explained and relevant examples were offered. The organization of ideas was effectively managed and there was fluency apart from minor expression errors.

In 2020, bushfires in Australia killed more than 1.25 million and displaced millions of people from their homes. In India, unsanitary practices have led to the pollution of the Ganges river, becoming a vector for the spread of cholera. In today's world, Man's action against the environment certainly cannot be ignored, and humans need to take actions to protect it. This leads to two schools of thought on who should take responsibility for protecting the environment. One camp believes that it is the young, while the other believes it is the old. My stand on this is that it is mainly the responsibility of the old and not the young to protect the environment. Though it cannot be denied that the youth will live longer than the old, and thus will witness the impacts of our actions on the environment, and thus owe an obligation to themselves to protect the environment, it also cannot be denied that Man is already witnessing the impacts of our actions on the environment due to habits developed by the old. In addition, the old ultimately have the power and authority to implement change which is key for taking a step towards protecting the environment.	Opposing perspectives and reasons for stand offered. Clear weighing between the young and older generations, though it could be considered the opposition in the question is not just between the young and the old.
Proponents of the argument that protecting the environment is mainly the responsibility of the young and not the old point to the fact that the youth will live longer than the old, and thus will live longer to witness the abysmal state of the environment. As such, they have a responsibility for themselves to protect the environment. Today, Man is taking actions that will cause the state of the environment to decline. With our continuous use of fossil fuels for energy, we let out greenhouse gases that lead to global warming. This causes ice caps in the arctic to melt and sea levels to rise. This greatly endangers the existence of low-lying cities and islands in the future. Islands such as Mauritius and cities such as Jakarta, Bangkok and Venice, are seeing rising water levels and increased flooding. It is expected that one day in the distant future, these cities will be fully sunk into the water, [becoming] underwater Atlantises. The old might not live long enough to witness this; however, the young have a very realistic chance of doing so. As such, if they wish to continue to explore and marvel at such cities and	Good development of causes and effects, leading to the rationale for ascribing responsibility to the young

to enjoy the world that we live in, they need to take action. This is also why many youths are starting to take action, youths like Greta Thunberg organizing rallies to unite youths against climate change. Part of the reason is due to the fact that they understand that our actions will impact them in the future. As such, youths might witness a world that the old might not, and thus have a responsibility for themselves to protect the environment.	Relevant brief illustration of young people taking action Link back to the question should be careful to include the keyword 'main'
While this is true, it also cannot be denied that we are already experiencing the impacts of climate change, mainly due to the past actions of the old and thus it is the responsibility of the old to protect the environment. Our unkind actions toward the environment [are the accumulation of] habits formed by the old that we now take to be an acceptable standard practice in society. For example, our pollutive practices in factory manufacturing. In Indonesia there are factories of famous fashion brands such as Uniqlo and H&M, which continuously dispose of waste into the Citarum River, affecting marine life in the river. In China, factories emit copious amounts of pollutive gases, and today, one cannot even fathom leaving the house without a mask due to the unclean air. These are habits which have been developed since the industrial revolution and [their] impacts are certainly apparent today. It is due to these habits that ultimately cause implementing environmentally-friendly practices to be such an arduous task. As such, if the cause of our climate condition is mainly the actions of the old, then they also have a moral responsibility to protect the environment.	Responsibility ascribed due to culpability for past actions Needs a clearer explanation of how the old are culpable for such actions How the habits of the older generation make environmental protection a challenge is well explained and supported.
Lastly, the old ultimately have the power and authority that is key for taking steps to protect the environment and thus, it is their responsibility to protect it. This is the key characteristic that separates the young from the old. The old, due to their wisdom and experience, take on roles of power in the realm of finance and politics. Leaders such as Lee Hsien Loong and Joe Biden certainly would not call themselves young. Though young leaders do exist, Mark Zuckerberg and Jacinda Arden to name a few, they are certainly less common. These leaders have power that affects the actions of many; a simple tax can greatly reduce the consumption of various goods, thus greatly impacting the environment. As such, if we wish to protect the environment, the most effective way is through the old. In Singapore, the clean up of the Singapore river was due to the command of [then Prime] Minister Lee Kuan Yew. Though he might have received feedback and advice from others, it was he who gave the instruction to gather the manpower to plan out and execute the clean up. Today, the Singapore River is a tourist site and remains a gem of Singapore. As such, due to practical reasons of having the power to inflict change, the old should bear the responsibility of protecting the environment.	Be careful not to lapse into oral register. Good effort to link age to power while acknowledging that it is not exclusive to the older generations. Zuckerberg appears out of place amongst other government officials. Scale of impact explained and linked to responsibility.
In conclusion, my stand is that protecting the environment is mainly the responsibility of the old and not the young. While the young may witness the world that the old may not, it is ultimately the old that [have] caused our current state of the environment and thus bear the responsibility of protecting it. Moreover, the old have the power and authority to [effect] change to effectively protect the environment. Thus, protecting the environment is mainly the responsibility of the old and not the young. As Kermit the Frog said "Being green isn't easy"; it certainly is not. That is why we all play a part, young and old, to protect the environment! *(Axel Heng Yang Han, 21-I5)*	Clear weighing of reasons. Attempt at a positive final note / call to action, though the reference to Kermit is rather out of place.

11   **Evaluate the claim that protecting the environment is mainly the responsibility of the young.**

The selected body paragraphs for this essay have clearly described and exemplified the relationship and the power differential between the younger and older generations that clearly illustrates why the main responsibility should lie with the latter. This shows clear and consistent engagement with the central contention in the question.

The young should not be mainly responsible for protecting the environment currently due to their limited abilities to do so. Older generations are the political office holders that are capable of leading societies today, and they should therefore take the main responsibility in protecting the environment instead of the young. Environmental protection efforts would be [no more than lip-service], or even non-existent even if younger generations are actively pushing for environmental protection when the power to decide lies in the hands of the older generations that do not view environmental protection as important enough. An example [of this is] how teenage climate activist Greta Thunberg's urging to political leaders [was] faced with indifference and passivity. Former US president Donald Trump dismissed her solutions as "dreams" that are not practical while Russian president Putin took aim at the fact that she is from a high income and highly developed nation like Sweden and therefore she cannot understand the struggles of governments of developing countries aiming to develop their economies and improve incomes of their people. The use of Realpolitik adopted by both world leaders to prioritise serving their own people's needs instead of considering the macroscopic impacts on humanity as a hindrance to environmental protection efforts violates the Harm Principle in terms of outstanding emissions from both USA and Russia that worsen climate change which impacts all of humanity. Without these political leaders being actually held accountable for the pollution that their countries cause and [without] their own change in mindset towards tackling environmental pollution, Greta Thunberg's call and her awareness campaign will have no substantial effect on the environmental protection policies of countries. Therefore, the older generations should be mainly responsible for protecting the environment due to their higher power in deciding on protecting the environment.	Effective juxtaposition of Thunberg's impassioned campaigning, against the real power that is actually held by current holders of political offices.
Nevertheless, despite the higher ability of older generations in effecting change in societies for environmental protection, some may argue that the main responsibility of environmental protection still lies on the young. Proponents of this point state that environmental protection is a long-term fight, and it is really their responsibility when they are the main habitants of the planet in the years to come; the future of the planet then will depend on their leadership. While it is valid to say that protecting the environment is a long-term journey, it is unfair to say that the main responsibility lies on the young. In fact, the [initial stages] of environmental protection by older generations [are] the most important as [they set] the stage for younger generations to take charge of the continuation of environmental protection. Without the older generations starting the process of environmental protection efforts, our environment will be destroyed at an exponential rate and by the time the young take charge, the damage would be irreversible. The Paris Climate Agreement allows for a 2 degree Celsius increase in global temperatures by 2100, but the fact is that 2 degrees Celsius is a large increase that would wipe out many marine species on Earth, like the Great Barrier Reefs, making our planet	Insightful point which draws a relationship between the actions taken by the older generation today and the actions that will be taken by the younger generations in the future.

less bio-diverse and this does irreversible damage to our ecosystem. Therefore, it is mainly the responsibility of the older generations to protect the environment and minimize the damage. *(Yu Tian Le, 21-U4)*	

12   Can armed conflict ever be justified?

This response demonstrates well thought out lines of logic that nicely negotiate the keyword 'justified'. The examples are generally demonstrative, although when two or more examples are used, how they are juxtaposed could be strengthened for greater effect. The writing here is clear and effective, with fluent expression that is easy to read.

Mahatma Gandhi once opined, "I object to violence not because it does no good, but because the good it does is temporary while the evil is permanent." This is a sage observation. With the advent of globalisation, countries with mutually incompatible worldviews and ideologies find themselves closer to each other. When tensions flare up and disagreements arise, some countries resort to armed conflict to force their definition of truth down the throats of their adversary. Some argue that armed conflict is justifiable when used responsibly to neutralise a larger threat and nip the problem in the bud. However, the detriments of armed conflict, including the humanitarian cost as well as the presence of alternative conflict resolution avenues, makes the use of armed conflict hard to justify. Given that the cons of armed conflict far outweigh its pros, I believe to a large extent that armed conflict can never be justified.	Introduction sets up the nature of armed conflict today. Thesis statement is fairly clear, although the use of 'never' is a little more dubious given that some benefits of armed conflict have been pointed out.
Prima facie, armed conflict may appear justifiable when used to pre-empt a greater force of evil, ultimately preserving global peace and stability in the long run. This is because armed conflict is the most direct way of resolving a conflict. When the opposing party is bent on committing crimes against humanity, it would be naive for one to believe that peaceful negotiations will work. A case in point would be the American invasion of Iraq in the Gulf War. It was not a case of American belligerence that it steamrolled through Iraqi territory, but it was in retaliation against Iraq's invasion of Kuwait. Furthermore, under the dictatorship of Saddam Hussein, the people under him live in totalitarian darkness with little to no freedoms. Therefore, the prospect of an armed invasion has liberated, not enslaved, the people since American intervention ultimately gave the people more agency over their governance and fulfilled their physiological needs. Oftentimes, whether armed conflict is justifiable or not depends on the perspective of oneself. If one is on the receiving end of the armed conflict, it will be difficult to internalize the need for armed conflict no matter how much good it brings. It must also be noted that armed conflict may be warranted for small countries to defend their sovereignty and national interest. A case in point is the 1969 Arab-Israeli War which was sparked after Egypt closed the Straits of Tiran (through which 90% of Israel's oil passes). Despite diplomatic efforts by Israel to warn Egypt that such a provocative act could be an act of war, Egypt continued with its belligerent actions. Therefore, Israel had no other alternative but to launch an air strike against Egypt, thereby thrusting the region into armed conflict. From the perspective of a meek and vulnerable Israel, armed conflict is definitely warranted since it is literally a matter of life and death. When the stakes are high and the prospects of	TS is clear. Efficiency of armed conflict. An invasion to remove a threat to human rights. This seems like another point that is distinct from the above, since the point looks at the objective threat to human rights, but here you are saying that it is a matter of perspective. This is a different point as well (one of self-defence). What exactly is this 'belligerent action' you refer to? If it is Egypt that engages in an attack on Israel, wouldn't they be the

armed conflict can create a net gain in welfare, it can be justified for some form of armed conflict to occur. Thus, one may assume that armed conflict is justifiable today.	first to engage in armed conflict?
While the preceding argument appears to make sense, it is founded upon the erroneous assumption that peaceful alternatives to conflict resolution are absolutely useless, and armed conflict is the only option. However, with the rise of international organisations and globalisation today, there are other non-violent ways to air grievances or resolve conflicts, making armed conflict difficult to justify. The presence of regional and international organisations function as a conduit for countries to resolve differences and come to a common ground during a conflict. It would be parochial to view international conflicts and relations as a zero sum game where one must pull the other party down and inflict maximum damage in order to emerge as the victor. Oftentimes, compromises need to be made and were made to avert conflict. For instance, the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) was set in 1945 to prevent the tragedy of World War II from ever happening again in the future. It does so through international arbitration, economic sanctions and international condemnation. When North Korea launched its intercontinental ballistic missiles into the Sea of Japan and persisted in its jingoistic tendencies of striking the United States, the nations involved did not resort to armed conflict from the get-go. Instead, they leveraged on the UNSC's power, to impose punitive measures on the bellicose nation, ultimately averting the disaster from getting worse. Another example is the 2008 Pedra Branca Island territorial dispute between Malaysia and SIngapore. The duo went to the International Court of justice to seek legal recourse. There, they relied on the judgment of an independent UN judge to make the decision on which island belonged to which country. No cannons were fired and no flags were raised. The Malaysian Foreign Minister called this a "win-win" situation while the Singaporean Prime Minister described the UN as a "good way of resolving conflict". As such, international organisations are not powerless in the face of conflict. It must be conceded that sometimes, it is difficult for international organisations to intervene and prevent some armed conflicts from occurring; [however, they] are effective for the most part. Hence, with peaceful alternatives to resolve conflicts on the horizon, armed conflicts cannot and should not be accepted.	Rebuttal negotiates the alternatives to armed conflict. Explanation highlights that diplomacy as an alternative is better than armed conflict in that there is less harm to nations. Example shows how the UNSC prevented the loss of lives through diplomacy. The question that stems from this example is: was armed conflict between Singapore and Malaysia ever a serious possibility? Even if it was, your exemplification did not show it such that diplomacy is a suitable alternative. Concession provided that not all conflicts can be solved this way.
Armed conflict has been lambasted for causing untold misery and suffering to civilians caught in the crossfire and hence, it cannot be justified. Ignoring the humanitarian cost of armed conflict would be akin to putting one's head in the sand. Armed conflict causes millions of innocent bystanders to be displaced from their homeland and to find refuge elsewhere. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees reported that there are 80 million refugees in 2020 as a result of armed conflict. Most of these refugees were displaced from conflicts in Yemen, Syria, North Africa, Myanmar and Afghanistan. For many of these refugees fleeing their homeland, armed conflict is more of a bane than a boon. Although critics argue that armed conflict brings greater freedoms to the masses and liberates them from their totalitarian masters, that is far from the reality. A case in point is the ongoing Yemeni Civil War where over 8 million civilians are displaced from their country fleeing armed conflict. The conflict was essentially a proxy war between the Sunni Muslim countries led by Saudi Arabia and the Shia majority Iran. Both sides supported insurgents from diametrically opposite	TS is clear. Loss of human rights as an effect of armed conflict. Statistics of the displacement due to armed conflict. Example is demonstrative of the damage to civilian lives that is caused by armed conflict.

camps to fight each other. Rather than actually improving the lives of the people, both sides sought to project their geo-political influence in the region. Saudi air-strikes targeted Yemeni schools and hospitals while Iranian supported rebels poisoned the water supply. It is no wonder that the Yemeni Civil War is described as the worst humanitarian crisis of the 21st century. As such, armed conflict intensifies - [rather than ends] - the suffering of the masses as self-interested nations tend not to spare a thought for the plight of outsiders. Hence, due to the immense cost of armed conflict, it is not justifiable.	
Armed conflict cannot be justifiable when it does not solve the root cause of international conflicts, instead it uses force to compel the meek to give in. Armed conflict [is not a scalar, but a vector] - it can be described both its magnitude as well as its direction. Most armed conflict involves a militarily stronger power or an economically superior one being pitted against a smaller nation. When the voices of the smaller country gets drowned amidst the armed conflict, it causes the establishment of a hegemonic status for the superior power. The issue of not resolving the root cause of international conflicts is that it reeds hatred and animosity against the superior power which may culminate in a larger conflict down the road. For instance, following the 9/11 attacks, George Bush led American soldiers into Afghanistan to eradicate the terrorists that were responsible for the brazen terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center. He pledged to either 'bring our enemies to justice or bring justice to our enemies'. Although the superior military of the United States enabled it to eradicate most of the armed insurgents, the United States was unable to gain a foothold of the nation. The American military was painted as an imperialist in the local media, with locals lambasting the US for its belligerent tendencies. Its inability to resolve the deeply entrenched ideological differences proved fatal as it was unable to win the hearts and minds of the people. This eventually led to the embarrassing withdrawal of American troops from Afghanistan, while doing little to upend the status quo. It is not at all clear how spending 6 trillion dollars [(over a period of 20 years and spanning 4 presidents)] on armed conflict can be justifiable. For a country to resolve international conflicts, it must first acknowledge and tackle the underlying issues that caused the problem in the first place. Resorting to tanks and planes to assert dominance over others is not only an intransigent and foolhardy move, but also one that lacks foresight. Hence, given the limited effectiveness of armed conflict, it cannot be justified.	TS is clear. So animosity due to armed conflict can reoccur, and build in size. A good example of how the armed conflict ultimately did not prevent the Afghan Taliban from claiming the nation back or quashing their militant Islamic ideology.
In summary, it is difficult to judge whether armed conflict can be reasoned or if it is warranted since it depends on a multitude of factors. Armed conflict should be avoided as much as possible in favor of non-violent means of conflict resolution and for the safety and well-being of innocent bystanders. Armed conflict should only be used as a last resort by the desperate, bearing in mind that "every action has an equal but opposite reaction" - the retaliation may be as severe. As the world progresses and economic ties are deeply intertwined, it is hoped that armed conflict can go from a flaw of today to a fading memory of tomorrow, inching society closer to that utopia of global peace and stability. *(Harel Tan, 21-I2)*	Conclusion links the ideas across the BPs and presents a call-to-action to the need to move away from armed conflict.

12   Can armed conflict ever be justified?

This thoughtful response reflects a depth of evaluation and awareness of the issues raised in the question alongside consistent attention to the point of contention throughout, and provides arguments worth learning from for their focus and clear development. From the start, the assumption in the question indicated through the use of 'ever' is well understood. However, the arguments can in many cases be taken further with more consideration of this underlying assumption about the terrible, incontrovertible harm done by violent conflict, as has more often been done in the earlier response. The examples used generally support the arguments but some specific details and illustration need to be developed further to ensure the argument is made persuasively.

Towards the end of 1945, shouts of joy could be heard from around the world as people celebrated the end of one of the bloodiest conflicts in human history. World War II serves as a grim reminder to the world that in a war, everyone loses, and that no one can claim to be a victor. However, in recent years, tensions have been rising between China and the United States of America as everyone holds their breath and hopes that history will not repeat itself. Looking at history, many people argue that armed conflict can never be justified, stating the devastating impacts of armed conflict and that alternative methods such as diplomacy should be employed to reduce tensions. While I generally agree with this view, I believe that there are some exceptions to this view. Armed conflict can be justified if a country has no other choice to defend itself since the government has the responsibility to protect its people. In addition, if the intention of such a conflict is to maintain overall peace in the world, I believe that it is justified.

> Hyperbolic
>
> Good that the current-day context is brought in, but why it might threaten to result in violent conflict needs to be justified.
>
> The assumption in the question is unpacked to serve as a basis for the rest of the essay.
>
> Suitable introduction with a clear thesis statement.

Many argue that due to the devastating impacts of armed conflict and the availability of more peaceful methods to reduce tension, that armed conflict can never be justified. Indeed, if one looks at certain events in history the statement is true. History has shown time and time again that war has the ability to affect societies in extremely negative ways and is both practically and morally not beneficial. At the individual level, war can result in the loss of loved ones, the destruction of people's homes, as well as the possibility of being tortured. On a larger scale war can cause countries to be affected economically and politically, and some countries might require a long period of time before they can truly recover. For example, during World War II approximately 60 to 80 million people lost their lives. Europe's economy was devastated and major European powers lost their status on the world stage. Without economic aid from the USA it was unlikely for the European countries to recover. Furthermore, it was uncovered that numerous atrocities were carried out on both sides. On the Axis side Japan was responsible for the Rape of Nanking, as well as inhuman experiments carried out on innocent people in unit 731. On the side of the Allies, Soviet troops were found to have raped about a million German women as they pushed German troops back into their homeland. Hence it is evident that war has horrible consequences [both on the individual and international scale]. Many continue to argue that there are more peaceful ways that could reduce tension between countries. For example, diplomacy could be used to settle disagreements and de-escalate tensions. Hence, since war has many devastating impacts, and there [are] alternative methods to solve disputes, many argue that war cannot be justified both practically and morally.

> TS shows attention being paid to the absolute "ever" in the question.
>
> Suitable exemplification with development of illustration.
>
> Links can sometimes be drawn more clearly: How does armed conflict lead to violence on individuals like this? It could be argued that violent conflict tends to dehumanise others and diminish the value of a life, such that these atrocities become more easily justifiable in the minds of perpetrators.
>
> Could align with the notion of war more.

[However], while I generally agree with the points being made, I believe that this view does not consider the whole picture. Although the outcome of armed conflicts are horrible we should also consider the intentions behind such actions. If the intentions in engaging in armed conflict are to protect oneself I believe that armed conflicts can be justified. When people in a country elect a government they trust that the government will care for their needs and the needs of the country. As such the government has the responsibility to take care of the people. This includes ensuring that they are safe, hence if the government, in an effort to protect its people has no choice but to engage in armed conflict, I believe that their decision is justified. For example after the 9/11 incident, the US government decided to enter into Afghanistan and engage in armed disputes in an effort to ensure the safety of the American people from future terrorists attacks. When North Korea invaded South Korea at the start of the Korean war the Korean government had no choice but to engage in armed combat in order to protect its people. These examples show that both external and internal armed conflict can be justified if the ultimate goal is to protect the country and its people and if there are no other options available. Therefore armed disputes can be justified if firstly, the intention is to protect one's own country and its people, and secondly, if there is no other way to solve the conflict.	Balance is navigated well. Justification is suitably developed. These examples are appropriate, but they could be elaborated on a little more to demonstrate such protection and the necessity of entering into armed conflict. For more depth, the real-world limitations and consequences of such a response could also be considered.
In connection with security, if nations engage in armed conflict with the ultimate goal being to maintain world peace and collective security, on an international level armed conflict can be justified. Certain nations, especially powerful ones such as the USA, being part of an international community have a responsibility in ensuring world peace. If a certain nation decides to invade another, these countries in the international organisation have a right to stop this nation and maintain global security. When other methods such as economic sanctions, diplomacy and international condemnation have failed to de-escalate conflict. Armed conflict might be necessary not just to deter offending nations, but also serve as a warning to other nations and discourage them from disrupting world peace. For example in the 1930s, Japan invaded Manchuria. The international organisation then, the League of Nations used methods such as international condemnation to try to convince Japan to return Manchuria to China. However, these methods were ineffective. If members of the League of Nations had intervened militarily then, it might have solved the issue. Instead, they did not and as a result Japan continued in its invasion of China and this was one of the situations which contributed to the start of World War II. Therefore, if nations of an international community engage in armed disputes in an effort to maintain world peace and collective security such a decision is justified.	Functional illustration, but a speculative example is not as persuasive as one in which this scenario of violent intervention actually happened.
In conclusion, I agree that the majority of the time armed conflict is not justifiable. However, if there are no other options to defuse the conflict and if the intentions are noble or for self defence then armed conflict can be justified. Every case is different, and some armed disputes in history were justifiable despite the outcome. Hence when determining if an armed conflict can be justified we not only have to consider the outcome but the intentions as well. It is unfair to classify all armed conflict as unjustifiable. *(Lim Zhan Rui, Don, 21-U2)*	This evaluation could have been expounded on in greater detail for a more convincing conclusion, but it is overall reasonably effective.

AQs: 2021 JC1 Promos

In response to 2021 JC1 Promotional Examinations Paper 2:

Margaret Emerson points out that progress has had negative consequences and argues that there needs to be a new definition of progress.

How far do you agree with the author's views? Support your arguments with reference to how you and your society regard progress.

Response 1

This is a thoughtful AQ response that brings up some interesting viewpoints that challenge the relationships of concepts/ideas espoused by the author and reimagines them in light of the characteristics of SG. To do this, it draws on a very good understanding of the unique societal context of Singapore, substantiates this understanding further with illustration. However, more discussion of alternative perspectives will help to incorporate balance.	
I largely agree with the author's views on the harms of progress and that progress should be redefined to include individual contentment.	
Firstly, the author argues that one of the negative consequences is that when progress and "the acquisition of money and material goods [becomes the sole purpose of our lives], massive environmental degradation is sure to follow". In essence, Emerson argues that prioritising progress and consumption will create a negative impact on the environment, largely impacting humanity. Emerson's arguments ring somewhat true in Singapore, [since] as a small island nation, we are easily subject to the impacts of climate change, with rising sea levels expected to play a huge role in Singapore's future stability. In recent years, worsening floods and increased rainfall have sparked conversations about Singapore's ability to adapt to a world with higher sea levels. Proposals of erecting a sea-wall in the near future have also been mooted by several politicians. While the negative consequences wrought by the Industrial Revolution's progress on Singapore's environmental landscape are undeniable, Emerson presents the two options, progress and the environment, as a dichotomy. However, Singaporeans typically perceive the two to be able to co-exist in harmony, by straddling a careful balance between industrialisation and environmental conservation. The incumbent government has set sustainable goals for the development of Singapore's future as part of the 'SG 2050 Development Plan', emphasising the incorporation of sustainable, ecologically friendly technology into new industrialisation and infrastructure projects. Even persistent climate change issues, such as increased flooding, are increasingly being solved by utilising technological progress and scientific advancement to improve the drainage systems in Singapore to circumvent further flooding. Thus, while negative consequences of progress definitely impact and will continue to affect Singapore as an island surrounded by rising sea levels, the environment in Singapore is viewed as an element that can co-exist along with progress through careful regulations and planning.	TR is about a valid consequence of progress

EX + EV: Some good use of concrete examples here, demonstrating good content knowledge. However, it should come alongside clear explanations of how these negative effects are the result of Singapore's pursuit of progress to be a clearer response to the question

Good attempt at balance and contextualisation, with some good use of concrete examples for effective explanation and evaluation |
| Emerson further argues that progress needs to be redefined, as we have to "ensure that people are not just well-off financially, but are also happy and healthy". Essentially, Emerson | Signposting helps to build the argument as a whole |

critiques capitalistic progress centered on economics and finances and proposes that we define progress to include individual contentment and joy. This is true of Singapore society to an extent, as many individuals prioritise the economic and career advancements of their lives over their own individual happiness or fulfilment in their careers. Despite Singapore topping the world in our academic, scientific achievements as per global academic indexes, our ranking on the Happiness Index is comparatively low to other first-world nations. Some may argue that this is the result of highly competitive Singaporean society that measures success strictly in terms of income, housing and career progression, pushing individuals to work towards progress at the cost of diminishing their individual happiness. However, I would argue that this persistent, dismal push towards progress in Singapore is a result of the capitalist structuring of our economy. Instead of aiming for progress instead of happiness, as Emerson suggests, Singaporeans appear to aim for progress because they see it as the gateway to contentment and happiness. Under Singapore's tightly contested markets for jobs and housing, it is extremely hard to purchase capital goods like land for housing without it being incredibly expensive. This is also due to land shortages in Singapore, and is exacerbated by hawkish landlords that charge high rental rates, knowing the desperation of many for housing due to long waiting lists on government-issued housing. This creates the mindset that money will allow one to access material and luxury goods that consequently translate to happiness and joy in life. This consumerist culture is prevalent in Singapore as a result of how consumption is touted as "self-care" or an action that elevates one's social status as a result of the widespread global capitalist hegemony. This consumerism is worsened by [the] Singaporean obsession with social status due to competitive industries and the need to retain one's social position. The result then, is that progress is viewed not as a replacement to happiness but as a perceived entry way into contentment. Thus, Emerson's assertion on this front falls somewhat flat in the light of the Singaporean context - that we cannot prioritise our happiness over progress, because economic growth and stability is seen to be necessary to attain that very same, elusive happiness. *(Sanjana Rajan, 21-O1)*	TR is about a new definition of progress Well contextualised and supported with suitable exemplification Very thoughtful contextualisation of the Singapore context with some good discussion of the underlying causes that makes for evaluation that is both convincing and insightful

Response 2

This response presents a very enjoyable and refreshing perspective from another societal context. It provides us with a good contrast against the author's perception as well as to Singapore's own context. There was consistent contextualisation, some depth of evaluation and concrete substantiation. However, in some other aspects such as the links to the question and the use of balance the response could be strengthened.	

I find that largely, the author's views do not apply to my country, the Philippines. The author makes an argument that progress has disconnected us from nature and thus brings about many consequences. She argues that this disconnection comes about due to [fewer] people working in agriculture. This is not something that applies to the Philippines. Much of our population and economy rides on agriculture, and it even boosts other aspects of our economy like tourism. Due to vast natural resources and fertile soil, Filipinos have been farming for centuries. Today, parents get their childrens' help to work on the farms, enabling	As the question is about the extent of agreement, not applicability, the statement could be more targeted Context is fleshed out,

their children to pick up agricultural skills. They then usually inherit the farmland from their parents and continue farming for a living. Furthermore, many of these places also attract tourists, for example, the Banana Rice Terraces. The government understands how valuable nature and agriculture is to our economy, especially since local produce is a big source of money through exporting, and also keeps our economy alive. Therefore, nature is highly regarded by the government, parts of society that need it for a living, and even by people who do not since many of these places that double as tourist attractions and become a source of natural pride. Therefore, our conception of progress keeps agriculture and nature in the picture due to how vital it is for our community, and instead looks towards advancements in agricultural technology that could further boost our agricultural sector.	showing understanding and evaluation Links to the question could be better established - what does this say about the negative consequences progress has wrought? Does farming mean that nature and your society's appreciation for it have been preserved?
Emerson also argues that developments in technology, like "mobile phones" and "TVs" have "isolated us from each other", and reduced the strength of our connection with our community. I find that this does not apply to my society and in fact, many have strengthened our social relationships instead. Telenovelas, or television dramas, are very prominent amongst Filipinos and [are so much] a concrete part of our modern day culture that all of them release new episodes every night on weekdays. We have a strong local entertainment industry that is watched by most Filipinos. This can be because of the many prominent entertainers that have emerged from the Philippines, like Tony Award winner Lea Salonga, who has only strengthened what we call "Pinoy Pride". This strong sense of pride in our arts has resulted in a booming local entertainment scene, with variety shows like "ASAP" that eventually televises a new concert filled with fan favourites every Sunday, or telenovelas that are largely successfully and continuously watched by many. This pop culture boom that technology has enabled us to have increases our common topics with the people around us, with telenovelas and celebrities being a very common, lively conversational topic amongst social communities. Some families even gather together to watch these shows every night, enabling more time spent together. On the segment "Kwento ni Marc Logan" (stories of Marc Logan) on local news "TV Patrol", Marc Logan features funny clips from social media. Many of these include a family member being so particularly invested in a telenovela that they, for example, cry about a character dying, or even throw a television out of anger towards a character, and these videos are often filmed by their children who are on social media. This shows how in my society, due to such technological progress, [] the growth of our entertainment industry [has been enabled] and [it has] actually strengthened our connections with others through spending more time with them sharing common interests, and thus such consequences of progress do not apply, and instead this technological progress is largely welcome and well regarded in my society. *(Guillermo Caryl Kristine Co, 21-E6)*	Clearly relevant TR Well contextualised and exemplified Clearer connection drawn to the ties within a community here, not just as an abstract notion, but also as real bonds between people This can be tied back to evaluating the author's call for a redefinition of progress and the extent of agreement to that. This would make the response more complete in addressing the AQ requirements

Response 3

This response demonstrates personal voice and evaluation. It develops a line of argument that was commonly attempted by many students, and does it well, with a commendable focus on the societal context, nuance and

reasonable support for the claims it makes. Addressing the full scope of the lead in with stronger links as well as reference to the redefinition of progress and how this applies to Singapore would have further elevated it.

Firstly, the author argues that "progress has disconnected us from nature". That is to say, due to the rise in technology and with more people favouring the job opportunities that follow over the jobs that connect us with nature, we have neglected the environment around us. Basic knowledge of the environment that was once vital for our survival has become inconsequential and we no longer appreciate the environment around us. However, I believe this applies to my society only to a limited extent. Around a hundred or a two hundred years ago, Singapore used to be a fishing village, and its inhabitants lived off of the fish they caught and the crops they planted, in huts made of natural materials and carts towed around by cattle. Now, technology has dominated our society, with smartphones becoming an essential part of [our] lives, and our very livelihoods depending on the internet. We live in concrete houses and drive fuel-powered, or maybe electric cars. Instead of fishermen and farmers we have businessmen and entrepreneurs. This change is exactly the "progress" that the author speaks of, and it has to a small extent led to us becoming disconnected from the environment. After all, it is true that most of our jobs do not involve interactions with nature at all. However, to say that this immediately means that we no longer care for the environment would be impulsive. Firstly, Singapore is heralded as a 'garden city', where we place importance on preserving the natural environment. Numerous nature reserves have been built[, and] parks serve as a popular place for families to gather on the weekends. In fact, it is perhaps precisely due to the fact that we are constantly exposed to the (old) technology we use in our daily lives that we learn to appreciate nature, which serves as a therapeutic change in scenery for us to take a break from our fast-paced lives. We may not care for the environment in the traditional sense, we may not know the environment like we did before, but we have come to treasure the beauty of the environment in our own way.

This broad choice of TR means that many ideas will need to be addressed to cover it well. It is advisable for each student to select TRs that they can reasonably address in the short span of an AQ

This assertion could be better substantiated, and supported with understanding of why SG's context has shifted

The evaluation here is good and built on an understanding of societal changes, but why this reimagined relationship with nature is not negative could be better argued

However, the author also says that progress has "disconnected us from each other". This means that because technology has given us the ability to be self-sustaining, because we no longer need the help of others around us to survive, [and so] we have lost the camaraderie and connection with those around us. However, this is true only to a small extent in my society. It is true that the progress that has brought about technology and high-income job opportunities has given us the ability to sustain ourselves physically. We no longer need to rely on others for help when our car breaks down or when we need bread, as the author says. However, while we no longer require these connections for the physical benefits they bring, we now need them for our emotional needs. Due to the nature of our country - small, vulnerable with no natural resources to leverage when facing our global competitors - we face many challenges as a country to maintain and even boost our country's standing on the global market. It is thus [that] we are faced with tough jobs, and even at a young age we are put through a rigorous and difficult education system. We thus need to form connections with other people, who can provide emotional support for us. It is the progress we have made that has brought us new, more intense difficulties, and it is these difficulties that we go through together as a society that [have] reinforced our spirits of camaraderie, or as we call it, the "kampong spirit".

Relevant contextual awareness

Support for this view is brief, and could be strengthened with more detailed and concrete illustrations of how we remain connected or cherish the connections with others in our society

Response 4

This response makes an attempt to address both requirements in each BP, recognising the bigger picture raised in the passage that the identification of the problems to do with progress is the start of its redefinition. Overall, it was evaluative and well-contextualised, and could have been strengthened with better substantiation for some of the claims it makes.

[Emerson] claims that progress has isolated us from one another and that the new definition of progress should encompass more time spent with our friends and family. I agree with the author's views, as one of the main problems with technological advancements today in my society is the lack of social interaction. With Singapore being a highly digitalised society that has digital integration as one of the top priorities of the government, it is [] no doubt that almost all of life's needs and requirements can be found online or on [our] phones. This ranges from e-pay to banking [processes] to school classes. Even Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong has taken to facebook to interact with citizens of the nation. With this much encouragement of embracing all things digital, it has caused us to be more suited [to] and comfortable with connecting online and refraining from stepping out of our homes. Especially with the convenience of this technology, it is even more likely that future generations will be accustomed to less face-to-face interaction as they live a life surrounded by technical gadgets. If unsolved, the lack of social skills and inability to form human connection will damage a lifeblood of citizens that is needed for the country to continue to develop and grow. Hence, it is true that progress has increased isolation and is something the new definition of progress needs to fix. However, it is imperative to note that [] low-income citizens may not even have the privilege to access the technology that most of the well-off Singaporean society is [able] to. Hence, this argument really only applies to those who have the financial capabilities of using the technological gadgets borne from progress.	Relevant context, but for greater depth, why digital integration is so highly prioritised here and what that has to do with progress could be developed Relevant example Evaluation is based on context, but why exactly this digitalisation and lessened face-to-face interaction would threaten the 'lifeblood of citizens' could be clarified Skillful tying in of both requirements of the AQ
[Emerson] also argues that with progress, increasing materialistic consumption has led to degradation of the environment, which is something that the new definition of progress should reverse. I stand with the author in her claims as this applies heavily to my society. With the transition from a third world to a first world country, Singapore's growing affluence has allowed citizens to be apathetic towards our expenses, often neglecting the repercussions on the environment. For example, fast fashion brands like Uniqlo, whose shirt designs depicting well-known cartoon characters from Disney and more are well-received by the public, [and] consumers more often than not give in to the urge to spend without caring about its implications on the environment. Furthermore, Singaporeans highly value convenience, and when plastic bags used to carry groceries cost a mere ten cents at most, they are bought at people's whim and fancy. This highlights the lack of regard for environmental sustainability, as limited resources are used to produce materials and products that are hard to [bio]degrade and will more likely than not pollute the earth. The new definition of progress needs to protect the environment as without it, it will result in a harsher climate for younger	Good context that links our progress to the effects on the environment. Could be explored further by considering why these repercussions are ignored Arguments and claims here tend to be sweeping and can be better substantiated and qualified to back up the good evaluation

generations to live through. After all, it would be a chance for Singaporeans to continue destroying the land that they toiled to build and cherish so much. Hence, I agree with the author's claims that progress is degrading our environment and its new definition needs to reverse its effect.

(Hong Chu Yun, 21-I3)

<div style="text-align: right">and contextualisation already present</div>

Response 5

This paragraph's choice of claim is rather ambitious, as it brings up several of the ideas that the author argues. This makes it potentially very challenging to address in full and with nuance, and in most cases it would be advisable to select something more focused. With that said, this paragraph has been quite successful in both pointing out the problems with progress as well as considering what we are doing in Singapore to redefine it. It also goes on to draw links in the balance between the new definition of progress and the tradeoffs that are to be expected in the Singapore context. As pointed out below, there are some missing links, perhaps as a result of the need to manage this many ideas in one paragraph.

In paragraph 9, Emerson argues that "Progress has to mean examining what really makes us content, and working within the limits of the planet in terms of resources to ensure people are not just well-off financially, but are also happy and healthy." She meant that the new definition of progress should include improving human lives in all aspects, not just in terms of income, while also caring for the environment. I largely agree with her view, especially in the context of Singapore. In Singapore, the country is already well-developed, with one of the highest gross domestic product per capita in the world. Singaporeans can buy almost any good that they physically need. However, Singapore has one of the largest emissions per capita in the world, [and] one of the largest proportion[s] of students [feeling] huge academic pressure despite our high scores[,] and more. It is also further exacerbat[ed] by the fact that Singapore is a very small country in terms of land area. If sea levels were to rise dramatically due to global warming and climate change, it would hurt Singaporeans significantly, regardless of [our] financial capabilities. Thus, the government has to develop [Singapore] differently if they want to sustain economic growth while also boosting the quality of life for people and not compromising on the environment. One of the ways the government has done this is through the invention of green spaces. Parks are now more common, with a road of park connectors connecting them. These serve not only to preserve the greenery of the country to conserve the environment, but also introduces a way Singaporeans can destress from their work lives and thus help themselves emotionally. They also help people living in a common neighbourhood to come together and interact with one another. Companies are trying to give shorter working hours to give Singaporean workers a breather and some may even transition to a four-day week in the future. These do help elevate the quality of life of every Singaporean[] in all aspects while not damaging the environment. However, detractors may argue that it may hurt companies as they may have to settle on paying their workers but with lower labour productivity. This is a concern, especially considering that Singapore has to rely on many companies, including those from the financial sectors, for its economic survival. Companies may experience a fall in profits because of this and it would hurt Singapore's

TR is about the new definition, addressing the question requirements directly. Note how many parts there are to it

EX+EV: valid contextualisation with some good use of concrete details

Comprehensive discussion, but examples could be more concrete. Consider how this could be more tightly connected to progress - what trade-offs have been made here? Have we always been this way or is it a new development? Why?

The discussion on

economy severely. However, because of the improvements in Singaporeans' quality of [life], their mental well-being would be much better, which would decrease stress in their work and motivate them to work in their respective companies instead of treating it like a chore. This means that labour productivity would improve and Singaporeans would be less likely to leave the company because of this. Thus, this new definition of progress would help improve society as a whole, not just financially, and would not have the said unintended consequences to the environment. *(Chaw Qi Xuan, 21-U6)*	mental wellness is logical but needs to draw clearer connections to what makes us content, in line with the selected TR

Response 6

This paragraph's strength lies in its valiant attempt to justify the view taken, with contextualisation and plenty of reference to concrete illustrations that present many aspects of our relationships with nature. It also attempts to balance this view, and the paragraph quite thoroughly responds to the author's many ideas about the disconnect from nature. However, the argument that progress is 'reconnecting' us to nature would have been more effective if how or whether we were previously disconnected had first been established.

Margaret Emerson argues that "progress has disconnected us from nature" thus "disparaging the environment" and "also diminishing our overall well-being". She suggests that an increase in non-agricultural jobs [have] led to an ignorance or disengagement with nature which has in turn resulted in environmental damage in the form of oil spills and deforestation as well as an increase in health problems that can be prevented by interacting more with nature. I disagree with the author's views to a large extent, as progress in Singapore has, on the contrary, re-connected my society to nature. Perhaps this can be attributed to the government's foresight in dubbing Singapore as a "garden city", [as] the lack of actual natural resources or scenery has pushed us to appreciate nature even more. The deliberate construction of parks and green spaces that invade every neighbourhood as communal [space for] exercise has resulted in a vibrant and green cityscape. In fact, the Singapore government has a law that requires constructed buildings to make up for the land taken by having a minimum amount of plants and greenery within the building's premises itself. In addition, the lack of big industries or big rainforests has prevented any mass oil spills or deforestation events. The dedication to the preservation of nature is upheld by the government through Nparks and community nature enthusiasts amongst the people. In addition, [the] appreciation of nature [] embedded in education [from a young age] through Biology and Geography classes as well as compulsory field trips [has] created a sense of awareness of nature in children and have prevented a too-sterile environment. Although growing one's own food in Singapore is rare, to say the least, healthy products are advocated through the Healthier Food labels and healthy living is advocated through various "steps" and walking challenges organised by the government. In this way, Singapore's progress has reconnected us to nature rather than disconnecting us[.] Ironically, this is motivated by our lack of natural resources and thus the need to deliberately shape our eco-landscape. [This is] not to say that Singaporeans are innocent in the global issue of climate change, [as] Singaporeans' "progress" has resulted in an increased wastage of food and use of non-degradable materials and even an increased use of cars. However,	TR about valid consequences Thoughtful contextualisation of the SG context, with some good discussion about how environmental consciousness permeates different segments of society A rather odd point to make Many references made to concrete observations in SG This link to progress is important in keeping the argument on track Could be more clearly explained and linked

Singapore has made progress in curtailing this, for example, through [the Certificate of Entitlement] (COE) which decreases the [number of] cars on the road and thus also [encourages] Singaporeans to seek healthier alternatives of transport such as cycling.

(Wee Cheng Yee, 21-O1)

Essays: 2021 JC2 Term 3 Timed Practice - 2016 A Levels Paper 1

6   **'Countries experiencing conflict should be left to sort out their own problems.'**
How far do you agree?

This essay is clear and well argued, demonstrating a strong mastery and application of skills and relevant knowledge. Language is generally clear and coherent. To further improve the grasp of a thoughtful response, perhaps further explanation on why there is a need for intervention, what type of intervention is needed and what are the intended outcomes/benefits would be helpful.

The Rohingya genocide, the China government and the Uighur people, terrorism - the world today is plagued with conflicts and tensions, spanning across our globe. After World War II, the United Nations was set up to act as a mediator in international conflicts to prevent a World War III. However, critics have posited that countries experiencing conflict should be left to resolve their own problems as only they have the complete understanding of the conflict to effectively sort out the problem. However, critics fail to understand that international organisations and other countries hold a moral obligation to intervene, especially when human rights are infringed. Furthermore, with globalisation, conflicts in one nation can now have impacts spanning the world, thus other countries should intervene to prevent their own countries from suffering negative consequences. Hence, I believe that in most cases, countries that are experiencing conflicts should not be left to sort out their own problem.	Clear perspectives and clear presentation of knowledge of the issue
Some have argued that countries experiencing conflict should be left to sort out their own conflicts as more often than not, only the countries involved have the capacity and understanding of the issue that they are embroiled in to effectively resolve the conflict. In most conflicts that have historical significance, only countries involved have the historical context and knowledge of the history to be truly aware of the whole conflict, from start to present, to understand how to effectively ease the tensions and resolve the issue. If other countries without perfect information on the issue or misinformation attempt to intervene, it can escalate the tensions, especially when such long standing conflicts have already been ingrained into the identity of the nation. This is seen in the Japan-Korea conflict where Japan is accused of much atrocities acted against Korea and China during World War II. As the incident occurred so long ago, narratives of the incidents are also not trustworthy considering the low advancement of note-taking in the past, it is unlikely that other countries can obtain full knowledge of the incident. As such, intervention from other countries could constitute insensitive political actions, thus other countries should not intervene ans allow the involved parties to sort it out themselves.	Clear signposting of the opposing perspective It could also be about sensitivities to the local population, culture
However, such an argument contains an erroneous assumption that the involved parties are even willing to make efforts to resolve the conflicts in the first place. With the resolution of conflicts need not necessarily bring about benefits to the involved nations, thus involved countries may not have the incentive to make effort to resolve the issue. Such willingness stems from the fact that the dissolution of the conflict could bring about greater detriments	

to the involved parties than the status quo. While most resolution of conflicts can bring about win-win situations, there are exceptions when one party gets the shorter end of the stick. In the Japan-Korea conflict, resolution of the conflict occurs when Japan issues an official apology to all the victims of the aar crimes committed on a global stage. Such an action can only ruin the reputation of Japan and potentially lead to the worsening of their economy when other countries punish Japan for their heinous acts in the past. For an already stagnating economy with a bleak future of an ageing population, Japan will possibly not have any incentive to resolve the conflict. Thus, there would be a need for other countries to be involved to pressure Japan on a global stage into resolving the conflict.	Could explain the following further: Why should conflict even be resolved? What good does it have? To whom?
Additionally, on moral grounds, other countries and international organisations should not leave the countries to sort out their own problems when conflicts consist of severe socio-political impacts, such as the infringement of basic human rights because of the ethics involved which goes against human dignity. As every species does, humans also have a moral obligation to protect the welfare of our fellow humans. Especially for the International Organisations like the United Nations Human Rights Office, they have the authority and responsibility to condemn conflicts that cause the infringement on human rights. For example, the Rohingya genocide in Myanmar is a blatant infringement of human rights of the Rohingya Muslim people. The government had cleared entire villages of the Rohingyas to build government buildings and forced the Rohingyas to be housed in makeshift detention centres. Furthermore, ober hundred thousands of Rohingyas have been subjected to arson, abuse, rape and even killed. This conflict between the Myanmar government and the minority Rohingya people shows a clear power disparity that leaves the vulnerable and helpless Rohingyas at the mercy of the government. When such systems in the countries encourage and provide a breeding ground for conflicts and oppression of individuals, infringing on their basic human rights to shelter and freedom to religion, in these cases, this thus requires the intervention of other countries and international organisations to protect the welfare of the vulnerable. Thus, other countries have to intervene in the conflicts of other nations.	Good analysis of the example What kind of intervention/aid? What are the outcomes?
Moreover, in our hyperconnected and interlinked world, conflicts originating from one nation can have impacts that propagate beyond that nation's political and geographical borders. In such situations, the rest of the world is forced to intervene, else await the negative consequences about to hit them, thus countries experiencing conflicts should not be left alone to sort out their own problems. As globalisation brought our world together in trade, transfer of information and immigration, each country is no longer isolated and considered one entity. The world is now joined in an extensive webchain and the happenings in one country can have impact in other countries. This is evident from the problem of terrorism. After the Arab Spring in the Middle East, it brought about a fertile breeding ground for the formation of terrorist groups as the lack of order and law in the absence of a nationally-accepted political leader allowed terrorist groups to thrive. While in the past the conflicts and chaos wrecked by the terrorists would have been isolated to that country, the interconnectedness in the world today no longer allows this. The most prominent terror group, the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) now conducts terror attacks all over the world which requires the attention and intervention of all nations in the world. As our	Valid characteristics of the modern world Clear discussion of significance

interdependence brings about greater connectivity in the world, conflicts belonging to one nation are now shared as a world. Hence, there is a need for countries to intervene in conflicts with other nations.

In conclusion, conflicts in one nation often cannot be ignored by other nations due to the nature of the conflict and the possible impacts it brings to others. As our world becomes more connected day-by-day, conflicts of one nation will now become a shared and global one. Thus, I believe countries experiencing conflicts should not be left to sort out their own problems.

(Cherilynn Yeo, 20-I3)

11 Is competition ever desirable?

This essay clearly addresses the issue and contention on why competition is not 'always desirable'. There is a good range of examples cited, and the quality of evaluation is perceptive. However, the chain of reasoning could have been more logical in some parts of the essay (like the rebuttal) to prevent confusion to the reader.	
'Citius, Altius, Fortius'. 'Faster, Higher, Stronger'. The motto of the Olympics, the pinnacle of sporting competition, encapsulates the spirit of competition – for people of different countries to compete against one another to bring glory to the nation. Likewise, such forms of competition are still evident in most parts of the world, where competition between carious individuals, countries, firms or even in areas such as education, it seems that competition is a key and possibly essential component of our daily lives. However, in recent years, the spirit of competition has been undermined by various individuals or parties, who tampers with the goodwill of such competitions. As such, many have wondered if competition is always desirable in our world. I agree with this statement to a small extent. Excessive and unhealthy competition may result in a poor physical and mental state, as well as bringing out the "win at all costs'' mentality, while healthy competition may sometimes bring out the full capabilities of humans.	Could make clearer what the 'spirit' of competition is Good distinction between healthy and unhealthy
Unhealthy and excessive competition may bring out the dark side of competition – a "whatever it takes" mentality in order to achieve success. For many aspects of competition, with so much on the line, some individuals may possibly be unable to resist the temptation of the achievements at stake. In these instances, they resort to any possible trick which can give them an unfair competitive advantage over fellow competitors. A prominent example of this would be Lance Armstrong, a cyclist who overcame cancer to win multiple Tour de France titles, which are some of the physically and mentally demanding races. However, he was found to have consumed steroids to illegally enhance his sporting performance, and he was subsequently stripped of his Tour de France titles. In such an instance, competition was more than just about the prize money for Lance Armstrong. This shows the extent to which he was willing to sacrifice his beliefs and values of morality just for the possibility of fame and recognition. Even outside of the predominantly competitive sporting world, such forms of unhealthy competition are steeped in society too. A case in point can be seen in India, where	Could highlight that in these scenarios, the motivations of competition are tainted Good analysis of a relevant example

a picture of parents and relatives scaling the school building just to be able to deliver answers for a national examination to their children has gone viral around the world. Evidently, the desire to see their children succeed has pushed some to the point of desperation, one in which they will undertake possible means necessary. That being said, it might be worth considering the social systems in India. With the caste system, a system of which different individuals are assigned to based on a multitude of socio-economic factors, still being deeply entrenched in society, some may feel that it is necessary for the parents to give their child an illegal advantage in order to gain social mobility and possibly elevate themselves from poverty. With discriminatory systems still in place around some parts of the world today, it is possible to see why the "whatever it takes" mentality might be accepted. However, this still goes against the values of morality, and others who have put in equal effort, if not more, just to be undone by such underhanded acts, is a harsh price to pay. As such, competition is undesirable as it brings out the mentality to succeed at any cost possible.	Good range of examples from different perspectives to support your reasoning
Competition may also not always be desirable as the success from competition is unable to outshine the detriments competition brings to others. In order for one to be able to outshine the others, it requires a vast amount of resources for one to even dream about succeeding. Considering the amount of time and effort needed too, one would expect themselves to experience success, but that is not always the case. During the 1980s, and the era of the Cold War, the USA was in a space race against the Soviet Union in order to gain the bragging rights over the other political superpowers, resulting in then investing heavily in the resources for the space race. However, this has unfortunately come at a cost, with the populace of the Soviet Union being hit hard. With a lack of available funding from the government, many citizens were forced to go hungry, and many died of starvation as a result. From this instance, it is evident there are conflicting needs when it comes to competition. After all, competition is unable to be fully desirable if it comes at the expense of the masses. This can be further seen in the form of the US-China trade war. In an attempt to get an edge over the other, both parties imposed tariffs on one another, resulting in ripple effects felt around the world. Not only were countries and trading partners affected by the trade tensions economically, showing larger support for one party may lead to retaliation from the other. This further shows how the competition between different parties sometimes lead to more harm than good. Especially when competition is brought onto the international landscape, one has to consider the possible implications on both the individual and global level. Otherwise, in our globalized and interconnected world, the competition of one country negatively affects the rest. As such, this shows why competition may not always be desirable as it may sometimes bring more disadvantages than advantages.	TS could clearly state who these 'others' are - is it society at large?
Critics to my stand may point that competition can bring out the best in humans and spur us to break the boundaries and push the limits to achieve success. In a rapidly ever changing global landscape, the desire and sometimes the need to tread in uncharted waters has allowed us to push the limits and achieve the success of an unprecedented scale. For instance, during the Covid-19 pandemic, which has claimed millions of lives and infected many more worldwide, vaccines were being mass tested and produced at levels which have been unheard of before. Companies such as Pfizer, Moderna and many more have been able to roll out	Yes, consider the urgency and efficiency of companies, as well

vaccines for the masses. Although this was helped by technology, it still illustrates the potential and capacity of what is possible due to competition. Competition between firms making improvements to the quality of life and overall health of the populace. However, all these rest on the notion that competition is fair and not for any selfish, altruistic gain. Unfortunately, this is not always the case.	the goal of gaining reputation/financial profits
In a large majority of circumstances, competition may only exist to simply further the vested interests of the respective parties. By doing so, it may not benefit everyone equally, which does not make competition desirable. Using the vaccine roll out as an example, vaccines may have been produced, but it is not truly benefitting all. Global superpowers such as the USA, Russia and China are engaging in 'vaccine diplomacy' in which the 'bigger' countries only agree to let other countries obtain the vaccine on the basis of spreading their global influence to other nations. In such instances, the vested interests of countries can be seen as taking precedence over the fair and equitable vaccine rollout, showing how these countries could be causing more harm to others just by competing to be the leading vaccine exporting nation. On an individual level, competition between individuals was assumed to be fair and on a level playing field. The harsh reality is that this assumption does not hold water most of the time. As much as competitions are designed to be as fair as possible, there are a multitude of factors which do not make it fair. For instance, the biological differences between humans are a factor out of one's control. The different biological and genetic characteristics in different people may give some an inherent advantage in certain areas, be it in sporting competition or in any other forms of competition. As such, it is unfair to assume that competition can bring out the best in humans since those at a disadvantage find themselves needing to resort to underhanded means to possibly make up the advantage of other competitors. Hence, as it is almost impossible to be fair competition, competition may not be desirable most of the time.	Relevance of this paragraph to the question could have been better handled
In conclusion, the desirability of competition is subject to multiple different factors, some which make competition more desirable and some which makes it less desirable. However, competition can be desirable if the parties involved make the effort to level the playing field and play by the rules. If one was to follow their moral conscience and stick by the principles of fair competition, every party will then be able to reap the maximum benefits of competition and only then, will it truly be desirable for all. *(Ryan Goh, 20-13)*	

Essays: 2021 JC2 Prelims

4   Should the study of literature be made compulsory in schools?

A thoughtful response with sustained relevance to the demands of the question, effective language and personal voice. A greater focus on the nature of school as an institute of learning and socialisation would have elevated this response, along with deeper evaluation of its significance to today's world.	
In her well-known novel, 'To the Lighthouse', Virginia Woolf delineates the fictional lives of the Ramsays, who yearn to visit a lighthouse together. To put it simply, they do not manage to; not until they have waited for a full ten years to pass which indubitably raises confusion not only attributed by the characters' actions, but also the decisions of the writer herself. With such a seemingly insipid storyline for a full-length novel, it is no wonder that the practical uses of Literature have sparked various contretemps over the years, especially with the increasing need for relevant skills that will prove most useful in the workforce. However, despite what many naysayers may opine about literature being more platitudinous than apt for the educational curriculum of many generations to come, I believe that the study of literature, with its hallmark of sensitivity towards the very people we constantly interact with, should be made compulsory in schools and educational classes.	Preview at perspectives/ arguments can be more complete
Nevertheless, contentions regarding literature's practical use in the workforce do prove to be incontrovertible. Although the study prides itself on its ability to help students become more sensitive to language and tone through various genres, the magniloquence and ostentatious style of speech that it encompasses may not prove to be necessary for students who plan to excel, or already excel in Science Technology Engineering Mathematics (STEM) fields. These disciplines, undoubtedly, have very little to do with language itself, much less the requirement of its deep understanding. In fact, STEM fields tend to have their own jargon that relates specifically to their own set of rules and scope of knowledge that the study of literature may not necessarily add to. Since the purpose of education in schools is to enable students to not only be equipped with relevant skills and knowledge to function as a working adult in the future, but also to realise their individual passions, the study of literature should remain as an open option to students, as opposed to a stifling matter of compulsory attendance. As such, despite the high-flown language that the study of literature may help students understand, its compulsory grip on all students may prove ineffectual in preparing them for subjects that are of more relevant or practical use in a world where technological advancements are put on a pedestal, or simply, subjects that they are more passionate about.	Clear signpost of balance Good link back to the key terms of the question
However, this is a fallacious argument that fails to recognise the full purpose of education, as well as the extent of literature's role in society. Although, at first glance, studying language in literature may not have striking similarities with STEM fields, the ability to read between the lines may prove useful in the communication and discernment of data. In fact, with our 21ˢᵗ century competencies so hinged on our capability to navigate social relations, it is almost essential for any subject that develops a student's communication skills to be imperative. For example, various Literature texts such as 'Lolita' by Vladimir Nabokov play with language in such a way that forces the reader to eventually realise how dishonest the narrator of the	

novel has been throughout the course of the plot. In this way, the past narrations and subtle methods of the narrator's disclosure of information becomes greatly skewed to falsehoods. Similarly, in a world that is becoming increasingly digital and technologically-advanced, the vast pool of data that has accumulated requires a discerning navigator to get through. Whether it is the information that is orally received from a co-worker, or part of the web where purveyors of false information lie, it is absolutely essential for students to learn how tone, language and diction come into play when interacting with the complexity of human beings. Therefore, the study of literature should be made compulsory for all students regardless of the fields they are in, as social relations and human interaction is an aspect of life that we cannot escape.	Evaluation could have gone further in unpacking the value of the study of literature
Furthermore, the study of literature, with its ability to carry historical context as a vessel, proves useful in our capability to empathise with others who bear dissimilar experiences to ourselves. By studying the context of a given work, the student will come to acknowledge that the setting and space in which the work was conceived are invariably different from the present, attributed by the beliefs and values of the general population of the author's time. For example, most inexperienced readers who stumble over Louisa May Alcott's 'Little Women' would find no shame in Jo's desire to become an independent writer, and remain unmarried and independent, sometimes even questioning the character's occasional hesitation pertaining to the matter. However, by taking the context into consideration, the values of Regency England of Alcott's day were skewed towards more traditional gender roles, almost requiring women to marry or be subjected to poverty. It is with this information that we are able to develop a sense of pathos for the suffering of others, regardless of how small it may be. With the relentless need for empathy in today's world, given that humanity is a constant in our ever-growing globalisation of the world, students should be equipped with the skill to understand other people and help them cope with afflictions that life so often brings us. As such, the study of literature should be made compulsory in schools.	Relevant and well-argued supporting argument
Finally, as school can act as a form of exposure for students when they become more attuned to the various facets of the world, the study of literature can open doors to not only the cultural arts scene, but also contemporary social issues. For example, Singaporean author Catherine Lim is known for her satire in the light of Singaporean culture, tapping on some of the most notable flaws in our people, such as our competitive mindset and stubbornly conservative values that blindside us. By studying literature, we will not only be able to become more exposed to our own cultural scene, but more importantly realise the social issues that plague us today, giving us the opportunity to observe how society has grown from the history of the past. This ability to keep abreast of current news, but also be cognisant of their underlying contentions and how it informs different groups of people of society is arguably the most fundamental skill in learning and retaining information in a way that is useful to the progression of a country. As such, with literature's ability to teach students how to relate issues to the various facets of their lives and that of others, the study should be made compulsory.	Could further elicit the significance of such skills to society today
Although 'To the Lighthouse' may seem lacking to most readers, Woolf's insightful observations of her characters' state of mind and ever-fluctuating selves come through in her	Good attempt at intro-conclusion pairing

fresh perspectives, and take on language as imitating our own stream of consciousness; and all this is visible to any discerning reader, if only they were to acutely look into her works.

(Pang Hui Bin, Gabrielle, 20-I4)

6   Consider the importance of nature in your society.

A thoughtful response and an enjoyable read overall! Ideas are relevant and reflect a keen awareness of Singapore characteristics and priorities. The writer employs a range of felicitous expressions to persuade the reader of his stance, and presents his ideas in a clear and coherent manner. In terms of substantiation, this essay would have benefitted from the use of more examples (see comments for Body Paragraphs 3 & 4). The conclusion could also have been more impactful.

Singapore is not only known as a financial hub and a focal point for global trade and commerce, but is also reputable for its title as a "city in a garden." Lush greenery and foliage are to be seen islandwide, and efforts are increasingly taken by the government to further incorporate elements of nature into our society. As such, one may wonder: What is the importance of nature in Singapore today? Well, the weaving in of nature as a key aspect of our country's nation-building efforts has not only brought discernible benefits in the form of international recognition and tourism revenue, but has also contributed significantly to the intangible aspects of living enjoyed by residents, promoting the construction of an ideal living environment for all to reside in. While some may contend that nature is becoming of less relevance in Singapore due to the growing pursuit of our economic priorities, in which it is seen to be of a less important priority, I believe that nature plays an important and irreplaceable role in shaping our society and will continue to do so in the years to come.	An effective introduction that lays out the arguments for and against the writer's stance. The writer could have provided the reasons for his stance after the thesis statement for better flow of ideas (since the reasons provide justification as to why the writer believes that "nature plays an important and irreplaceable role in shaping our society").
With consistent government efforts centering on the construction of a "garden city" that revolves around the preservation and development of nature in our living environment, the focus on nature as an indispensable aspect of our nation-building efforts has undeniably contributed towards the enhancement of our country's international prestige and image. In doing so, Singapore has also grown to become a popular travel destination for many, culminating in an influx of tourists and economic benefits in the form of tourism revenue. The widespread incorporation of nature in our developmental efforts has provided Singapore with a unique trait that distinguishes itself from the plethora of countries in our international community. In the increasingly globalised and swiftly developing world we live in today, while economic growth in its entirety remains a highly coveted priority for many countries, what allows Singapore to stand out is its ability to attain consistent economic performances while delicately crafting a greener environment for its citizens to live in. This garners us the attention of the international economy that perceives our nation as a benchmark for achieving both sustained and sustainable growth. The Singapore Botanical Gardens has been successfully recognized as a UNESCO World Heritage Site in recent years, leading to many tourists flocking over to the booming attraction to enjoy the tranquil and relaxing natural environment offered. This is but one of the many efforts by the Singapore government to	Apt illustration here. That said, this argument would be much more compelling had the writer provided further

enlarge the role that nature plays in the formation of an environment unique to us alone. With the subsequent influx of tourists into our country, it enables the tourism industry to flourish and the tourism revenue collected also contributes to the high level of economic growth that we enjoy. As such, nature plays an important role in our society as a way for us to elevate our international standing and drives us to attain economic growth.	examples that showcases how our incorporation of nature is truly unique (other countries, after all, do have parks similar to our botanical gardens).
The "green" concept that Singapore strives for also positively contributes towards the formation of an ideal living environment for citizens to live in. While material benefits are undoubtedly essential, enabling citizens to derive satisfaction and utility from the goods and services consumed, it is important for us to note that the holistic standard of living enjoyed by residents also encompasses intangible aspects, such as the quality of the environment they live in. Nature plays a pivotal role in the construction of a living environment of high quality by alleviating stress and providing relaxation from the hectic pace of life which Singapore is also known for, while also serving the practical purpose of ameliorating the issue of pollution that developed countries such as ours often face. In this case, the construction of various parks and nature reserves islandwide evidently contributes towards the enhancement of the standard of living in a non-material sense, whereby residents are able to take a respite from their busy lives and enjoy the tranquillity and sights that these natural areas have to offer. Moreover, efforts by the governments to further strengthen interconnectivity within our country have also led to these natural destinations being more accessible to the masses, allowing them to enjoy the intangible benefits associated with these natural environments. As such, nature has been allotted a crucial role to play in Singapore's development, ensuring that the material standard of living derived from economic growth is matched by the provision of a high quality living environment, allowing citizens to enjoy high standards of living in all aspects.	Nuanced evaluation (material vs. intangible needs) Some concrete examples could have been provided to further strengthen the argument Overall, a cogent and well-developed argument that is sufficiently contextualised to Singapore.
However, individuals that oppose such a viewpoint do not recognise the importance of nature in our society, claiming that economic priorities will always take precedence in the increasingly competitive global climate that we reside in, with the focus on nature taking on a subsidiary and less relevant role. Owing to the pragmatic ideals that have enabled our country to achieve sustained levels of growth through its infancy to where it stands today, it is possible that our government may determine the value of a course of action based on its lucrativeness and economic significance as this utilitarian approach has ensured Singapore's continued survival in the competitive and unrelenting world we are situated in. As such, there could possibly be the perception by some that given the nature of our functionalist society, the incorporation of nature into our society could potentially be sidelined due to its economic irrelevance. On the contrary, I believe that such a viewpoint is too limiting and fails to see the symbiotic relationship enjoyed between these two factors. While it is true that the immediate benefits to our country's economic performance may not be apparent at first glance, probing a deeper inspection would reveal that the development of nature is more often than not synonymous with achieving economic growth. The construction of various attractions such as Gardens by the Bay and Jewel are evident cases in which the concept of nature is distinguishable in these locations. These attractions have not only become icons representative of Singapore, but have also made significant contributions towards the	The writer could have provided some concrete examples to illustrate this tension in priorities. Some rehashing of earlier ideas.

development of our country, reflecting how the blending in of nature amidst our developmental efforts often come hand-in-hand with economic growth. As such, it is in my belief that nature plays an important and significant role in my society today.

While it is true that as the economic imperative becomes increasingly evident in the near future, I believe that nature has and will continue to be of relevance in Singapore as we continue to strive for respectable degrees of economic performance while continuing to mold and build upon our nation's identity as a "garden city" and providing a living environment of the highest standards for the benefits of our citizens. *(Eyu Kai Jie, 20-A1)*	Conclusion reiterates the overall stand, but could do more in terms of synthesising the arguments presented in the essay.

7   'Given the cost of conflict, it should always be avoided.' Discuss.

A thoughtful and nuanced essay that demonstrates a sound understanding of the topic. The writer goes beyond merely providing examples of observable phenomena, and explores the underlying motivations and reasons for the various actors' decision to partake in conflict. Overall, the arguments reflect an awareness and appreciation of the condition in the question, although this was not sustained (see comments for body paragraph three). In terms of language, the writer skilfully employs signposting language to signal transitions in her writing, making it easy for readers to follow her train of thought.

Conflict is a universal occurrence in the interactions of human beings and is a problem that has plagued us constantly. The uniqueness of each person gives rise to a great web of complexity all within themselves, thus one can only imagine the differences that can arise when we interact with one another. With news of large-scale conflicts constantly being covered, pervading the news and the terrible tales that leave the world distressed while wars rage on, it may occur to many that conflict is extremely detrimental to the human race due to its ability to destruct upon eruption. At a cursory glance, while it may seem that it is so - that the consequences of conflict are too gargantuan and only the complete avoidance of it would disrupt these patterns of destruction, this is not the case. Simply claiming that conflict should always be avoided is a blanket statement as it disregards the potential benefits that conflict can bring about. It is only with conflict that a mutual understanding can be worked towards in spite of differences. Furthermore, the internal turmoil one feels from avoiding conflict will eventually bubble over. Thus, it can be said that conflict may more than often just be put off temporarily and not entirely avoided. Therefore, I believe that even though the cost of conflict may be high at times, it should not always be avoided without taking into account circumstances.	Context-setting demonstrates a keen awareness of the human condition and how some forms of conflict are inevitable. Thesis statement reflects an appreciation of the absolute nature of the statement.
Skeptics may argue that given how conflict comes at the cost of peace and massive negative societal repercussions that occur, conflict should always be avoided. This is an understandable perspective, given the truth which is that armed conflict universally has proven to be extremely destructive. For example, as rebels or opposition parties to incumbent governments struggle to establish power politically, they may often turn towards physical violence as a show of power, turning situations into armed conflicts. This can be evinced by	

the events of late, such as the Taliban takeover of Afghanistan. In a bid to re-establish their leadership after being exiled and to oust the American puppet government that was installed, the Taliban resorted to an invasion. Another salient example would be the bombings across the Jerusalem border early this year, where longstanding rebel groups aimed to conquer and consolidate Jerusalem. In the process, many civilians were caught in the crossfires, suffering from devastating injuries and fatalities. News and images of these atrocities flood the media, revealing only a glimpse of the suffering civilians undergo as a result of the political conflicts that evolved into armed conflicts. Beyond just societal destruction, the constant ravaging of infrastructure often sets these countries back economically as they have to rebuild their economies over and over. Thus, it is apparent that armed conflicts come at a great cost - socially, economically, psychologically and more, adversely affecting innocent civilians greatly. While the predicament of these citizens are worth empathising with, it would be too general of a statement to say that armed conflict has never brought good. The positives of armed conflict can be reflected in the post-colonial struggles for independence in Southeast Asia, particularly in the Vietnam War and in Indonesia. After the Second World War, Vietnam and Indonesia both had extremely strong nationalist movements as they desired to be free from the colonial powers that used to control them. Thus, they launched great battles for their own liberation, which eventually resulted in armed struggles. While lives were sacrificed and the country torn apart due to these revolutions, the Vietnamese and Indonesians won their independence, showing that while the process might have been gruesome, it was a worthwhile cause to them, to which many civilians did not mind giving up in their nationalistic pursuit of independence. Therefore, while armed conflict can have extremely devastating impacts, it can ultimately serve a good and worthwhile purpose and be one's only justifiable means to resolution.

On the other hand, upon further inspecting the underlying nature of conflict and the benefits of it, one will realise that conflict should not always be avoided due to its essentiality in building understanding and making progress. While partaking in conflict may invite the fear of a breakdown in relationships and communication, the avoidance of conflict actually hinders communication more. This can be said to be the case from day-to-day issues in one's life, or even conflicts on a much larger scale like political conflicts. During the Cuban Missile Crisis of 1962, the world was on the brink of nuclear war and global destruction. While the political leader of the USA, John F Kennedy and Nikita Khruschev, only established communication in the later parts of the conflict, it was this communication that bridged the gap in understanding, preventing an otherwise unthinkable outcome. While this conflict was certainly an uncomfortable and distressing topic to approach, one that had to be approached with much delicacy as well, the conflict was necessary in drawing out mutual understanding as well as resolution. This also led to a more favourable climate during the Cold War, ushering in a season of less antagonism from either side and more cooperation. The essentiality of conflict as a step in consensus-building can also be seen from our day-to-day interactions. While a conflict between two people may often reveal the ugliest truths, it is the brutal honesty that conflict draws out that will help one to truly understand the needs and expectations of another, things that may have previously been suppressed in a bid to avoid conflict. Therefore, conflict should not always be avoided because while its immediate

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Apt illustration to support the reason provided.

Good evaluation here; the writer recognises that actors engaged in conflict might do so of their own volition, indicating that whatever they are fighting for -- in this case, independence -- is worth it even if it might mean losing their lives.

While this example does illustrate the importance of communication in preventing conflict from escalating, it does not quite support the assertion that the "conflict was necessary in drawing out mutual understanding"; this is a different idea altogether and requires further substantiation.

outcome may be unpleasant, discourse from conflict can ultimately be beneficial in bridging gaps, helping people to work towards a more comprehensive resolution.	
Furthermore, it can be argued that even if one attempts to avoid conflict, there is not much of a way to truly avoid it, but rather only avoid it temporarily. At the heart of it, the very issue that undergirds conflict is a disparity in one's beliefs from the beliefs and values of another. This is strongly evinced from the different political conflicts that are waged due to differences in the beliefs of ideologies, religion and many more. Due to the entrenchment of one's beliefs and values which then guides one's actions, it can therefore be seen as a matter of time before one's actions erupt. A strong case in point would be the debatable idea of racial harmony in Singapore. While the notion of Singapore as a harmonious society regardless of race, language or religion is often propagated, there still exists subtle undercurrents of racism and discrimination against those that are not of the predominant Chinese demographic. It can be argued that Singapore exists under a guise of racial harmony, with recent developments bringing the attitudes of prejudice of some errant Singaporeans to light, showing the prevalence of such attitudes even now. For instance, during a period this year where reports of the "Indian strain" of covid were allegedly reported to have entered the country, expressions of hate and discrimination against Indians rose, even if most of them were native Singaporeans, highlighting the blind prejudice that was lashed out. The fact that the announcement of the suspected "Indian strain" was a catalyst for unjust negative sentiments around the Indian community points to the underlying prejudices in society, just that they were all along being repressed or dismissed. However, just like in the case of Singapore, these biases eventually bubble over and come to light. This is analogous to most other similar situations, albeit in other contexts. This is so as it is the human condition for our actions to be guided by our beliefs and thus, for our beliefs to show in our actions. Beliefs are often a quintessential part of our being and existence, thus being entrenched and unable to be suppressed fully. Thus, conflict should not always be glossed over, as the temporary avoidance of it will cause conflict to still erupt eventually, possibly in an even more destructive way.	The ideas in this paragraph, while broadly relevant, do not sufficiently engage with the condition in the question, as well as the point of contention (arguing that conflict is unavoidable does not quite address the normative aspect of the question). While there was an attempt to directly address the contention in the concluding sentence (that temporary avoidance will cause conflict to erupt in a more destructive way later on, and should therefore not be glossed over), this idea was not further developed.
Therefore, while conflict is the patient zero responsible for the destruction of peace for many around the world even till today, it is worthwhile to note that there is little to no effective consensus that can be reached without conflict. Furthermore, the avoidance of conflict may most likely only be temporal, bubbling over in more detrimental ways in the future. In this regard, conflict can be viewed as a double-edged sword - that though the potential repercussions of conflict may be horrific, the benefits that conflict can bring about when wielded in a constructive manner are greatly significant as well. All in all, it is how we choose to approach and manage conflict that can help provide more favourable outcomes to conflict, wherein its benefits outweigh its costs. Thus, I believe that even in spite of the costs that can be incurred, conflict should not always be avoided. *(Michelle Leong, 20-U1)*	A nuanced conclusion that effectively synthesises the key ideas presented in the essay.

11   Examine the view that journalists should only report the facts and not share their opinions.

A thoughtful response that provides good insight to the point of contention, and demonstrates a sound understanding of the roles and responsibilities of journalists and the power they wield. That said, the writer could have done more to engage the value of fact reporting -- this was glossed over and should have been discussed in every body paragraph. While the examples furnished do support the arguments being made, the writer could have fleshed out the parts that relate directly to the point of contention. In terms of organisation of ideas, the writer could have employed more discourse markers, especially in the topic sentences, to signpost her supporting and opposing arguments.

The media is growing into its role as the fourth estate at an alarming rate with our increasingly globalised and tech-savvy world. The role that journalists play in shaping public opinion and the power they wield in shaping people's truth has increased significantly. While I agree that it is important for journalists to report facts, I feel that they should also be able to share their opinions. The sharing of opinions by journalists can lead to more thought provoking insights and well-informed perspectives, which is beneficial to people who may not be as well-informed. However, I feel that journalists have a social responsibility to report the facts as they are so as to maintain a reliable source of objective truth and prevent abuse of the power they hold in shaping the truth. Thus, I feel that the sharing of personal opinions is valid only if done so in a responsible manner, and should not serve to diminish or conceal the facts.

> The question's key contention is addressed in the outline of possible arguments from different perspectives. Stance is clear and measured.

With the links that journalists have to large media outlets, their words maintain a strong sway in public opinion and the forming of the truth. Some may feel that journalists should thus only report the facts and not share their opinion. This is to prevent abusing the power they hold as the fourth estate by engaging their platforms as a way to spread their personal agendas. For example, there have been many instances whereby journalists have reported things severely out of context, or even gone as far as to provide false information to garner attention. This jeopardises the credibility and integrity of journalists, often causing distrust amongst its readers as well as in some cases, distrust of the government. The sharing of personal opinion can come about through subjective and persuasive phrasing as well, whereby a journalist chooses to insert his or her personal voice into an article, phrasing facts to favour one party or view. This can be detrimental to how people perceive the facts, and can result in backlash towards the losing party. This is often seen in journalism concerning celebrities, whereby harsh and critical phrasing has resulted in uncalled for major backlash against celebrities, effectively turning the world against them. One such example is The Straits Times' harsh criticism of Joseph schooling after he failed to qualify for the 2020 Olympic semi-finals in the butterfly event, despite his success in the 2016 Olympics. This resulted in major backlash against Singapore's former golden boy. However, this swaying of public opinion can be avoided while still allowing journalists to share their opinions. This is possible when there is a clear separation between what is fact and what is an opinion. More progressive societies give us hope that responsible regulation is possible. For example, Nordic countries like Denmark, Norway, Sweden and Finland have earned names for consistently ranking highest in terms of freedom of speech, arguably due to independent regulation within their press. With responsible regulation, it is entirely plausible for journalists to report facts and share their

> A valid observation, though more could have been done to unearth the motivations behind this behaviour.

> An insightful point about how the author's choice of words has an effect on readers.

> Examples could be further expounded to include concrete evidence of independent regulation of the press in these countries.

opinions. However, without the responsible regulation of journalists, the sharing of opinions could potentially be detrimental to parties involved.	Concluding statement is nuanced and coheres with the ideas presented earlier.
The sharing of opinions by journalists who are well-informed and are at the forefront of the issues covered have the potential to provide insightful and thought-provoking perspectives. As the journalists are often on the site of the incident or very well-informed regarding the issue at hand, they are more likely to be exposed to information that is not available to the public. One example would be the coverage of Kerri Strug's vault in the 1996 Summer Olympic Games. Strug competed with two torn ligaments and a sprained ankle after landing poorly on her first vault. Her feat was portrayed to be a heroic tale as the United States of America (USA) team earned its first gold medal at the Olympic Games in Women's Artistic Gymnastics. However, journalists who were able to probe further into the issue, interviewing other gymnasts, provided an interesting yet more cynical perspective to the "Magnificent Seven's" performance. This perspective explored the stance that Strug's compliance to compete while severely injured hinted that there was more to the story than meets the eye. It was later revealed that the abuse faced by gymnasts from coaches Marta and Bela Karolyi was what led to Strug's actions. The world of gymnastics was revealed to be wholly intertwined with what competing while injured could mean - a gold medal, team sponsors and endorsements. What was once viewed as a glorified heroic tale has since been revealed to be the result of physical and emotional abuse, and by providing such perspectives, journalists wield the power to raise the awareness of viewers, using their extensive knowledge to explore alternative ideologies. In this case, the sharing of journalist's opinions can provide a more well-rounded and accurate perspective of certain issues. In a world that subscribes highly to the ideas of relativism , the opinions of ethical journalists can aid in making the distinction between balck and white, diminishing the grey lull that many seem to stagnant in.	While this is certainly a valid point you can make from your chosen example, the link back to the point of contention is tenuous -- journalists can, after all, raise awareness of hidden issues by presenting merely the facts and not their opinions.
The sharing of jounalist's opinions has the power to bring to light major social conversations that might otherwise be avoided or overlooked. With the freedom to express their opinions on public matters, journalists are better able to engage their audience due to the emotional investment present in their words. In doing so, journalists hold the power to sway the public's opinion and views regarding taboo topics. For example, topics such as mental health were often overlooked, and have resurfaced in recent times. With the previous taboo and cynical view towards mental health, journalists play an important role in shaping the future view of mental health. Positive coverage regarding athletes Naomi Osaka and Simone Biles in recent times have opened the eyes of many to what dealing with mental health issues truly means. Regarding such sensitive topics, it is important that journalists connect with their viewers and readers emotionally. This is done so through a personal voice. While upholding moral integrity, including personal opinions can be an effective way of drawing readers in, influencing them for the better. Gymnast Simone Biles was a crowd favourite, expected to bring home five gold medals at the 2020 Olympic games, however, she pulled out of the competition after her first event during the team finals. Without the extensive and personal coverage on Biles' actions revealing to the public the mental struggles she was facing, she would have been severely criticised. However, with the positive emphasis and support from	The writer could provide a brief explanation in the topic sentence as to why facts alone do not have the "power to bring to light major social conversations". There is also some overlap with the previous argument, as both discuss the power that journalists have to raise awareness of issues. While these examples

media outlets, articles highlighting the importance of mental healthcare and wellness provided Biles with the means to spread a positive message. Thus we see that the emotional engagement that is required by certain issues can only be effectively achieved through the inclusion of personal views. By simultaneously upholding moral values and sharing personal opinions, journalists are able to shed light upon issues that hold taboo in society, and they can more effectively convey the conviction behind the words and facts presented. This in turn will positively influence the public and allow them to gain insightful knowledge.	are certainly relevant to the discussion, the writer could have done more to flesh out the techniques these journalists used to inject personal voice into the articles they've written.
Overall, I feel that journalists should report both facts and share their opinions. Combined with accurate and objective facts, the responsible sharing of opinions can better provide insightful perspectives and engage readers on a more emotional level that is required of certain topics. While the sharing of opinions could lead to abuse of the power journalists wield in shaping the truth, this is something that can be regulated and the sharing of personal opinions can be exercised with caution. Overall, I feel that it is important for journalists to also share their opinions alongside the facts, and when done so responsibly, this will serve to improve and elevate the media's role as the fourth estate, benefitting society as a whole. Thus, I disagree that journalists should only report the facts and not share their opinions. *(Nicolette Wong Su-Ann, 20-O5)*	An effective summary of the key ideas presented in the essay.

AQs: 2022 JC2 MCTs

In response to 2022 JC2 March Common Test Paper 2:

One writer thinks that intensive parenting is harmful for children, while the other believes that it is necessary. How far do you agree with the opinions expressed in these two passages? Support your answer with examples drawn from your own experience and that of your society.

Response 1

A well-written response that contains detailed evaluation of Singapore society. An attempt to compare arguments from both authors is done successfully as well. One thing to note, however, is that there seemed to be an overlap in the overarching argument of both paragraphs (in reference to 'kiasu parenting' in Singapore). Students would want to be mindful in ensuring their evaluation of Singapore society is distinct in each paragraph.	
While I believe that both authors' viewpoints are valid, this stems from the fact that they are fundamentally discussing different aspects of the 'intensive parenting' spectrum - with Miller suggesting it as micromanaging children's lives, but Doepke positioning it as merely a more involved form of parenting. Regardless, I think both authors' views are applicable with regards to my society, though Miller addresses the issues with intensive parenting more accurately.	
Firstly, Miller suggests that the insidious harm of intensive parenting is that it shields children from real world problems, limiting their future capacity to problem-solve. They state: "Learning to solve problems, take risks, and overcome frustration are crucial life skills [...] and	

if parents don't let their children encounter failure, the children don't acquire them." Essentially Miller argues that this parenting damages children's ability to adapt and learn. To some extent, this is true of my Singaporean society. Asian pragmatism and emphasis on tangible results have meant that many parents, saddled with rising anxiety about their child's ability to succeed in tight and competitive job markets and educational institutions, have turned to a Singaporean brand of intensive parenting - "kiasu" parenting. This mindset embodies the intensive parenting one, as it involves parents exerting control over their child's academic, extracurricular, and even social life, to give their child the best opportunities in a crowded economy like Singapore's. This often looks like intense academic rigour imposed on children - who sit through expensive tuition lessons for hours after finishing a full school day. Their extracurriculars are also often controlled, planned specifically to appeal to the most universities. This has resulted in a booming tuition industry in Singapore, from kindergarten to university level private tutors charging upwards of a thousand in tuition fees monthly. What this does, beyond creating immense pressure and stress on students, is to shield them from facing failure. Parents will often overcompensate in areas that the child may be struggling in, immediately jumping in to offer tuition classes to children whose grades are slipping, or even private coaching if they begin to fall behind in their extracurriculars. This encourages students to constantly look to their parents for a bail out, neglecting to even attempt to overcome these struggles through existing means. This is exacerbated when students wish to enter tertiary education - many whose 'O' level grades are not up to par opt to migrate to international schools that have prestige, given that their parents can simply afford to bail them out of their limited choices in Singapore's tertiary education system. This type of intensive 'kiasu' parenting shields and bolsters the child, leaving them truly unprepared for a life where they can no longer rely on their parents to help them succeed.

Secondly, Doepke offers a different perspective, suggesting that intensive parenting breeds success, but specifically because it allows for strong parent-child bonds to be formed, that improves the child's ability to think critically and succeed. Doepke states that "it is less the details but the close interaction between parents and children that counts". Doepke suggests a form of intensive parenting that is less so about micromanagement or control, but one that simply chooses to actively involve and engage with the child. While this is undoubtedly a rather noble goal in parenting, I would argue that this often appears as not so much the case for Asian styles of intensive parenting. The "kiasu" culture as discussed earlier is often unconcerned with generating a truly holistic education for the child, that encourages them to think critically, imaginatively, or to engage with politics, as Doepke claims. The "kiasu" culture erodes these nobler aims, and fosters an environment where parents are hyper-anxious about competing with other parents to give children the best opportunities - which means emphasising rote learning and academic success over fostering a more holistic and enriched world view. In fact, parents' support of the insular education system is demonstrated by Singaporean students' performance on the "global issues" element of the PISA - a global study on education. This study suggested that a vast majority, nearly 70% of Singaporean students in 2021, were hesitant about their ability to adequately explain global issues. This suggests the form of intensive parenting that Doepke claims is effective and helpful is truly not occurring in Singapore. What Doepke further misses, however, is the Singaporean context of how the type

of intensive parenting practiced have harm[ed] children more than what even Miller suggests. While Miller comprehensively addresses the sheer failure of critical thinking that intensive parenting leads to, both Doepke and Miller seemingly neglect the stress and pressure intensive parenting has on children. The time, effort and money spent on the child is often extremely overwhelming, with more than half of Singaporean students in an Institute of Policy Studies (IPS) survey suggesting that their schooling made them "stressed" or "anxious". Intensive parenting piles onto this existing pressure by stripping children of their leisure time and enforcing strict restrictions on the child's study time, and robbing them of their wants and needs. Overall, this element of intensive parenting is a big concerning factor in Singapore, and is an aspect of this type of parenting that neither author truly addresses.

(S Sanjana Rajan, 21-O1)

> compare and contrast the two authors' arguments. A concern would be that both paragraphs seem to address the same issue of 'kiasu parenting'.

Response 2

A very well-written AQ, with clear substantiation and evaluation. Balance is also well-negotiated and there is a strong focus on parenting. There are a couple of gaps that did diminish the overall response a little which can be worked on, but it is nevertheless still very coherent.

The writer arguing for intensive parenting endorses the view that intensive parenting is effective and is necessary to help children attain success in school and in life, due to the increasingly competitive job market. I agree with this view. Indeed, significant economic changes, particularly in Singapore which relies largely on human capital, mean that job seekers are increasingly facing a saturated job market, especially with the influx of foreign talent into Singapore. While there are other indicators, 'paper achievements' remain a key way in which employers select candidates. Prima facie, intensive parenting may be frowned upon, yet, we cannot deny its inherent effectiveness in attaining success in the education system. Parents who are able to fork out immense time to schedule after-school activities such as enrichment classes, tuition lessons and internships are able to give their children the opportunities to build a dazzling portfolio. This means that children, even on top of flourishing in examinations, can qualify for Singapore's 'Direct School Admissions', which grant early admission to top schools on the premise of one's extra-curriculars. How else would a child be able to attain stellar results while refining one's tennis skills? Parents with the means to monitor their child's school performance and their achievements beyond the classroom can help children keep a good track record of good grades and good extra-curriculars, serving as an essential stepping stone to entering elite colleges like Cambridge and Oxford, giving children the highly sought-after degree which guarantee[s] high wages and good career prospects. Yet, we see a budding shift in mindsets, with more top companies like Google and Facebook hiring more non-graduates based on one's soft skills, which are examined through interviews and face to face interactions, opening up more pathways for those who do not fit the traditional mould of a university degree holder, given the increasing need for innovation which a degree cannot promise.

> TR is apt in addressing the demands of the AQ
>
> Contextualisation raises the economic demands on individuals to have academic success in the SG context
>
> Example looks at some firms which are changing their hiring requirements.

The writer arguing against intensive parenting argues that it fails to equip children with some skills needed to overcome obstacles independently, which is counterproductive in their road to success. I agree with this view as I feel that parents who undertake everything on behalf of their children deny them [] the chance to learn how to solve problems and manage their own stress levels. The spotlight on mental health issues in Singaporean youths of late is a worrying trend, with many labelling the generation as a 'strawberry generation' which gives up upon encountering the slightest problem. Indeed, many youths who are accustomed to having their problems being solved by their [parents] cannot effectively manage their own stress levels and problems. This is seen in my own experience, with friends often complaining about a rise in workload and commitments after entering [junior college], where parents are often forced to take a backseat. Yet, more parents, in wanting the best for their children, are encouraging their children to step out of their comfort zones, with these parents acknowledging the source of their children's lack of independence. Many parents sign their children up for overseas school trips to inculcate a sense of independence from a young age and outdoor camps like Outward Bound Singapore. Thus, while intensive parenting is a problem, more parents who are acknowledging the issue are taking steps to help mitigate the problem and give their children space to grow. Intensive parents who are so actively involved may not be that big of a problem after all.

(Alexis Foo, 21-E4)

	Contextualisation establishes the young as the strawberry generation, but would be good to take a step back to consider if there is intensive parenting in SG that has led to this
	Balance looks at the ways intensive parenting may also mitigate the lack of problem solving skills

Response 3

This piece demonstrates an uncommonly good and sophisticated understanding of the Singaporean context, making multiple references to a range of trends and observations in SG. These form a persuasive, composite picture of how many beliefs, practices, developments and trends in Singapore's society have culminated in the sort of parenting we see around us today. It engages thoughtfully with the writers' ideas, with evidence of non-superficial understanding of its limits. However, its approach towards a balanced discussion could be improved, and in the first paragraph the evaluation of the actual harm caused by such parenting should be more complete.

Miller argues that "It starts early, when parents get on wait lists for elite preschools before their babies are born and try to make sure their toddlers are never compelled to do anything that may frustrate them." Essentially, over-parenting occurs right from the start, where parents attempt to plan their children's entire lives exceedingly early on to ensure that they have a head start in life. This is exceptionally true in Singapore, known for its "kiasuism" and tiger-parenting. "Kiasuism", which translates to a fear of losing, is highly common in Singapore. Because of our nature as a small country with no natural resources, a mindset of comeptition's necessity has been bred into our thinking. Because of our rapid development in the country's earlier years, we now feel an anxiety to rush forward into our future, and accomplish as many things in as short a time period as possible. This has also translated into our parenting. Because we see everything in life as a competition, we treat parenting as one too. Not only must we act fast, we must also achieve the best results. This is seen in our tuition culture, where an overwhelming proportion of students attend such classes outside

	Good contextualisation that demonstrates some underlying beliefs about parenting
	The harm resulting from such action should be pointed out to meet the question's expectations

formal education, and this starts young, as the passage suggests. Centres such as I Can Read and Berries are tuition centres teaching English and Chinese respectively, as classes start in kindergarten. Centres like Zoo Phonics even start before preschool. Thus, from an exceedingly young age, parents are competitive in hopes of securing a bright future for their children through a head start. However, the claim that parents ensure their children do not face any challenges is not true. Singaporean society, because of Asian values, strongly believe that while they can give their children the resources, their children should still be independent, mirroring Asian values of strength in the self. For example, even Primary Schools often oversee exchange trips for students, and parents are more than willing to give their children a shot at independence. Thus, while Miller's claims are largely applicable, not all of it is true in the Singaporean context.

Next, Doepke asserts that "All this meant that there was more than one path to secure middle class existence, and therefore pushing children to maximum school achievement and onward to top colleges was not a priority for American parents." Thus, Doepke is arguing that the change in the nature of the social ladder has forced parents to take a heavy-handed approach in parenting. Now, only the educated elite are able to achieve a stable living, thus with such increased stratification, parents feel compelled to help their children early-on so that they can achieve their potential later on. This is also true in Singapore, where the increase in university graduates means that society is increasingly placing importance on the presence of a college degree. This is because Singapore is attempting to transition into a knowledge economy, which places more emphasis on highly-skilled jobs rather than technical skills. Moreover, Asian pragmatism promotes a very utilitarian mindset, where Singaporeans believe that the best demonstration of this knowledge would be in a university degree. Thus, employers now increasingly look at university certificates as a threshold for employability. For instance, in the past, many diploma holders were able to find meaningful full-time employment depending on their major, however today even university graduates are unemployed, as employers start to look at their university, the honours they received and even internship experience et cetera. The situation is even worse for students who only hold a diploma. Thus, in modern Singapore, a university degree is considered a fundamental for meaningful employment. Thus, as Doepke stated, this pushes parents to worry about their children very early on in life, hoping to do as much as possible to give their children a head start so that they can accumulate 'badges' to secure employment. Though, Doepke's claim even underestimates Singaporeans. In his claim, he argues that parents push their children to secure good grades to get into top colleges. However, Singaporean parents go beyond that. As mentioned earlier, "kiasuism" in Singapore is almost like an anxiety – parents are highly motivated to make sure that their children are not only academically successful, but also all-rounders. The anxiety for their children to do well is crippling. For instance, many parents sign their children up for sports classes, such as swimming, tennis et cetera to buff up their portfolios as overachievers talented in both their studies and sports. They even bring their children to volunteer on weekends, hoping to create a presentable portfolio of a child who is academically-inclined and compassionate. Ballet is also a staple. Thus, while Doepke's claim is true, Singaporeans go beyond the boundaries of her claim, demonstrating the competition in the country.

| (Ashley Lay, 21-O1) | |