Essay skills

Reminders:
- In your society —> discuss the essay in the POV of SG, use traits of SG
- Explicit conditions —> eg "given the increasing awareness of environmental problems, are companies the most responsible in tackling climate change'" ,
    - take note of the "given…", where every topic sentence or paragraph must make reference to the explicit condition, in this case being increasing awareness of environmental problems
- Comparison questions —> "Rehabilitation, not punishment, is the best form of justice." —> for each paragraph, we have to compare both forms of factors, and see which one is more important in a criteria given by a topic sentence.
    - Key to note that it is possible to say why both are equally as important and they go hand in hand together ONLY in the last topic sentence

Trends in current world

- Growing awareness/creation of a liberal mindset
- Increasing conservatism
- Pragmatism vs freedom (SG vs USA)
- Globalised → open economy - flow/movement of people
- Technological era
- Capitalist - profit driven society
- Competitive
- Ever-changing
- Fast-paced
- Knowledge based economy
- Educated

Types of questions

Value qns
- Usually some entity in the question that wants you to talk about the desirability or importance about it (so called value)
- Topic sentence: context of today's world + functions of that said entity → valuable or not
- Only if the context and functions match to give benefits, then its of value and thus valuable

- Examples

    - "The traditional family has lost its importance in the eyes of today's young"
        - Functions of traditional family: emotional support, life lessons and values
        - Features that define the context of today: Competitive,dynamic, globalised, tech driven
        - Valuable → the external world is a **source of suffering due to competitiveness (context)**, so one's home environment becomes one's **main pillar of emotional support (function)**.
        - Valuable → **stable role models (function)** in the family neutralise the **negative influence one is exposed to online in such a tech-advanced age. (context)**
        - Not Valuable → older family members with **outdated views (context)** may not be good role models that **help one grow and get ahead of life (function)**.

    - "The cost of quitting social media is too high" → discuss about the value of social media in today's world
        - Agree: The cost of quitting social media is too high because in today's **progressive era (context)** rely on it as a platform for r**aising awareness and rousing sociopolictical change (function)**.
        - Disagree: The cost of quitting social media is not that high because there are other viable platforms in **today's high tech age (context)** for individuals to **obtain accurate ideas and information on social media. (function)**

    - " Math is of little interest due to its complex nature" → discuss about the value of math and whether people will be interested to learn math despite its complex nature
        - DIsagree: Math is of little interest to in spite of its complexity as it allows ordinary people to **eliminate inefficiencies and enhance productivity (function)** at **work (context).**
        - Agree: Math is of little interest because its complexity as an **understanding of abstract and arcane mathematical constructs (context)** cannot be applied to the **everyday affairs (function)** of ordinary people

    - "Assess the importance of food within Singaporen culture"

- "Religion is an important part of the lives of young people today"

Impact qns
- Questions on whether factor 1 changing will affect factor 2 (usually comparison questions)
- Explain the nature of factor 1 and its intended impact on factor 2, where if factor 2 is changed for the better, then it has a positive impact. (link it to pros or cons of the outcome)
    - Example

    - "Has modern technology made our lives more challenging today?"
        - Nature of modern technology: autonomous, less human interventions, digital, bringing day to day activities out of physical realm
        - Change in our lives: effort to complete tasks, stuff to worry about
        - Positive Impact → Modern technology, **being autonomous and digital (nature of factor 1)**, allows **draining tasks to be neglected and be done in less time virtually (affecting factor 2 positively)**, improving workers' health and productivity.
        - Negative impact → However, Modern technology, **being digital and anonymous (nature of factor 1)**, increases our **susceptibility to privacy and security breaches (affecting factor 2 negatively)** in our personal lives.

    - "To what extent is AI replacing the role of humans"
        - Agree: The role humans play as **workers in the global economy** is being replaced by **efficient** new AI driven machines.
        - Disagree: The **narrow intelligence** of AI leaves it reliant on human masters to dictate its use, receiving for us an **executive, decision making role** in the economy.

    - "Is social media having a negative impact on the quality of written language?"
        - The **rise of short form content/reliance** on modern day language **deprives our ability to form long-form artefacts**.
        - The **democratic nature** of social media allows the layperson to participate in public discourse, prioritising for a **wider variety of opinions** that makes people's writing more balanced

- However, the **low barriers of entry** of social media results in uneducated or misinformed users to **give falsehoods** in public discourse, and influencing people's quality of writing.
- The **algorithms** that drive social media have resulted in the formation of echo chambers where users are **only exposed to one sided views with pre-existing biases**, reducing their ability to produce balanced writing of a high quality.

- "Longer life expectancy creates more problems than benefits"
- "People today do not work as hard as they did in the past"
- "Is globalisation to be welcomed or feared today?"
- "How far is science fiction becoming fact?"

Possibility qns
- Discuss about the feasibility of some future, ideal goal. Its whether these factors help us get closer to said goal or not.
- Form a to-do list of what needs to be done to achieve said future goals, and evaluate the factors that help or hinder us. If we lack the means to tick off a task, then the said goal is impossible.
- Common to-do lists are policy changes, attitude of people, technology OR what different stakeholders (individuals, industries, and governments) need to do to solve the problem OR stop bad, start good
- Examples

    - "Equality for all is only an aspiration" How far is this true of your society
        - To do list: Attitude and mindset shifts, systemic (policy) reforms
        - Characteristics of Singapore: conservatism, education

        - Possible: educated people do not harbour ignorant prejudices
        - Possible: educated leaders know the costs of social inequality
        - Impossible: Conservative people cling onto traditional beliefs, norms and roles
        - Impossible: conservative leaders are chary of courting change, instability and uncertainty.

        - "Assess the view that attempts to control climate change and can never truly be effective"
        - To do list:
        - 1. firms give sustainable options,

- 2. consumers choose green products,
- 3. govt adopting green policies
- OR
- 1. Technology to advertise green options,
- 2. A change in mindset to adopt such practices,
- 3. Policies to help above

    - Factors that help/hinder to do list: educated, conservative/pragmatism, tech advancements

- "Small countries are helpless in shaping global politics"
- "In an age of rapid technological advancement, is a single career for life realistic?"

Effectiveness qns
- The extent to which solution/strategy achieves some objectives or address some problem
- 6 criterias
    - reliability (does it do the job all the times),
    - Timeliness (short/long term),
    - durability (once and for all),
    - profundity (tacking root cause),
    - fairness (without making wrong party pay),
    - cost efficiency (without wasting resources, opportunity cost)
- Only some criterias can be used in some questions
- If question only focus on one of the criterias like " Foreign aid does not solve long term problems", need to unpack the solution (foreign aid) and the different ways it is long term or not

- Education is the key to tackling gender inequality"
    - Cost-efficiency; Effective: requires only that curricula are rewritten and teachers are retained once (unlike handouts that have to be paid indefinitely)
    - Durability; Effective: kick-starts a virtuous cycle where an enlightened generation of students become teachers and enlighten subsequence generations (unlike forcing some behaviour that people do not believe in)
    - Fairness; Effective: does not unfairly burden any one group (unlike the stigma where women are tasked with eradicating discrimination while being discriminated)

- Profundity; Effective: deals with the root cause of the problem, namely ignorance (unlike quotas that only bring representation on paper)
- Reliability; Ineffective: only works in societies where education is universal and up to par (unlike laws/policies that theoretically can be imposed anywhere)
- Timeliness; Ineffective: takes a long time before a cohort of students graduates, and before that cohort makes its mark on the broader society (unlike measures uplifting the current generation of women)

- "Schools prepare us for a life that does not exist" How true is this in your society?
    - Agree: Singapore's schools care too much about the product and too little about the process, making them too **superficial (no profundity)** to prepare us for life
    - Disagree: Singapore's education system sees a lot of planning, regimentation, and standardisation, ensuring **all (reliable)** students attain the qualifications needed to do well professionally.

- "Strong threats work better than gentle persuasion"
    - Agree: Threats demand an immediate response, allowing them to work better in the **short term** than persuasion, which takes time to bridge differences and build ties
    - Disagree: Threats work worse than persuasion as the former's coercive effect only lasts as long as one maintains power over others, the latter can elicit cooperation in the **long term**. (Timeliness short term vs long term)

- "How effective is Singapore's efforts at promoting and managing public health"
    - It is not cost efficient to promote and manage public health in SG public health in SG, throwing healthcare services across are just ineffective as **large sums of money are used in the process, incurring high opportunity cost**, in which the government can adopt other ways to promote health
    - OR it is the most cost effective method as there are no other alternatives to yield greater benefits
    - Singapore's efforts to promote and manage public health are effective because educational campaigns to encourage healthy lifestyles are establishing a new norm of healthy living that address the problem **not just in the short term, but for all generations**

- SG's approach to public health **focuses on the prevention rather than the cure**, making it effective at keeping harm at bay before any health crisis is able to engulf the entire population OR movements towards a healthy, balanced lifestyle facilitates allow citizens to take responsibility of their own physical well-being
- SG ensures **everyone** can get the necessary education… (similar to past examples)

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Dissection of a question

"Should unpopular views open to discussions in your society?"

- Focus on inequality, population and immigration policies, racial and religious issues. SG society and climate change have changed. SG is a modern country, be on par with other major countries where social welfare (freedom of speech) is involved implies **cannot avoid talking about difficult topics** → must become willing to talk about issues or risk becoming more fragmented or cause discontent among citizens

- Responsibility/obligation/duty to serve our own ideas and needs to improve the country wellbeing for all

- Talk about the pov of majority → abortion act implemented by the US, many choose to protest against it. Even though the majority of ppl wanted to abort it, the government and religious groups were against it. Practical/pragmatic reasons vs ethical reasons

- Talk about pov of minority:
  Global → SG implementing death penalty for drug traffickers (controversial around the world)
  Local → implementing the white paper in 1988, showing that singapore will encounter problems with ageing population and low birth rates, hence, need immigrants to come to provide workforce for us in high skilled and low skilled jobs. Many felty xenophobia towards immigrants.

  - Appeal of 377A → lgbtq community should be recognised, government doesn't want them to give them rights as it will cause an uproar against religious groups, moral problems

- Express their ideas, willing 2 talk about different discussions as different biases on different situations lead to different ideas → discuss to clear out biasness and make ideas more sound for everyone → find a consensus and a solution!

- Sometimes. It's the problem itself that leads to many different types of views, benefit and disadvantage certain groups of people no matter what, eg. env issues
- Strike a Balance between social welfare and national interests, should national interests take precedence over social welfare?

What society desires?
- Sense of political and physical security
- The abundance of wealth

Race

Around the world

China's high-tech repression on Uyghur
- Since those early days of Chinese President Xi Jinping's so-called "People's War on Terror," **Human Rights Watch** says **at least one million Uyghur** and other **Muslims in Xinjiang** have been arbitrarily detained in what China calls "re-education" or **"vocational training"** camps, in prisons or "pre-trial detention" facilities.
- Survivors have recounted being tortured and raped in the camps, scrutinized by the gaze of cameras 24/7, and perhaps most crucially, **forced to learn how to be Chinese and unlearn what it is to be Uyghur.**
- Surveillance is a feature of everyday life in Xinjiang.

Weaving in technology
- Central to the harvesting is a **biometric ID system introduced there in 2017 requiring Uygurs to provide fingerprints,** facial imagery, iris scans **and DNA samples.**
- **There are also turnstiles, checkpoints and cameras everywhere, and citizens are required to carry smartphones with specific apps**
- forced harvesting of people's data and then using it to improve predictive artificial intelligence technology. It also involves using the same population as test subjects for companies developing new tech. In other words, **Xinjiang serves as an incubator for new tech.**

Racism towards black

Systemic racism has calcified within many of America's institutions, creating sharply disparate outcomes in housing, education, the economy, law enforcement and health care.

- In **New York City, 88%** of police stops in **2018** involved **Black people**, while **10% involved white people**. (Of those stops, **70% were completely innocent**.)
- (**United States Sentencing Commission**) On average, Black men in the US receive sentences that are **19.1%** longer than those of white men convicted for the same crimes.
- African americans men are **2.5 times more likely** to be killed by a police officer during their lifetime
- (Poverty Action Lab) In the US, Black individuals are **twice as likely to be unemployed** than white individuals. Once employed, Black individuals earn **nearly 25% less** than their white counterparts

Rohingya crisis
The **Myanmar government** has effectively institutionalised discrimination against the Rohingyas through **restrictions on marriage, employment, education, and freedom of movement**, causing them to flee the country to Bangladesh

- Rohingya **must seek permission to marry**, which may require them to bribe authorities and **provide photographs of the bride without a headscarf and the groom with a clean-shaven face, practices that conflict with Muslim customs**.
- The government **refuses to grant the Rohingya citizenship**, and as a result most of the group's members have **no legal documentation**, effectively making them stateless. In recent years, the government has forced Rohingya to start carrying national verification cards that effectively **identify them as foreigners** and do not grant them citizenship

- In the US, **the landmark Civil Rights Act of 1964** aimed to end racial segregation and prohibit discrimination where **African Americans get fair housing and voting rights.**
  - Helps increase economic and social mobility for African americans.
  - However, the reality is that racism still exists, where in 2020 the **unemployment rate** of african americans is at **20 percent,** while that of white americans is at **10 percent.**
  - A study by **Harvard in 2017** also showed that african americans **"whitened" their resumes** by changing their names or removing mentions of race, and by omitting any mentions of their race, they are more likely to be **shortlisted for job interviews from 10 to 25 percent**.

- A **2017 study by colour of change**, the **largest online racial justice organisation in the US**, found that **black families** are mostly represented as **poor or often play "bad characters"**

- Baseless claims broadcast by propagandists about **foreigners, immigrants, and refugees in the US being "criminals" and "rapists"** have often led to actual suffering
- **Social Science research** consistently shows that those of **foreign descent are less likely to commit serious crimes than locals**, but **47 percent of Americans believe it is the other way around**.

Income inequality (billionaires)

- According to a **2017 Oxfam report**, the **top 8 billionaires** own as much combined worth as **"the poorest half of the human race"**
    - The **bottom 90 percent** accounts only **18 percent** of the global wealth in 2019

- In crisis such as covid 19, the rich exploited the poor, and even though in the **2023 statista** report the **world's gdp dropped by two over trillion USD, a 3.5 percent drop, but an increasing rate of people (493) becoming billionaires**
    - The increase in food and energy prices have been a boon for the world's rich. The **cargill family** who **own 70 percent of the global agricultural** market, saw its biggest profit in history

(+ve)
- In 2009, Billionaire Bill Gates started the **Giving Pledge**, a campaign to encourage wealthy people to contribute the majority of their wealth to humanitarian causes. **As of december 2020, there are 231 signatories and is now worth 2.3 billion.**

- In **2013**, PM Lee stated that if he **could persuade 10 more billionaires** to move to singapore, he would, **even if it worsen income inequality**, "because billionaires bring business, they will bring new opportunities, open new doors, they will create more jobs especially when **singapore is such a small country**"

(-ve)
- **12 billionaires** is also linked to other pertinent issues like climate change, where from their industrial plants and planes, **out pollute 2.1 million homes** (most notably taylor swift and jeff bozes' Amazon)

- Swift's **170 trips in 2022** topped the list of private jet journeys taken by celebrities that year, generating **1180 times the emissions** of an average household.
- Billionaires should take more responsibility in tackling climate change

- **Jeff Bezos** exploits his workers, where amazon employees are earning a **minimum wage of 15 USD** an hour, workers claimed to be **"treated like robots'** and **also banned from joining trade unions** where he is just relaxing in the comfort of his mansion, **the most expensive property at 165 million**.

- Jeff bezos has also been infamously known to sway policy decisions to benefit him, end up **corrupting democracy**
    - **Bought Washington post in 2013**. In 2016, the washington post ran **16** negative stories **against Bernie Sanders or any politicians** that want to implement a **progressive tax model**
    - Able to use the media to sway criticism against him, remove media as a check against the all mighty powerful people

- Billionaires have ways to avoid tax, most notably again, jeff bezos

Social Media

- Pew research centre in 2018 reported that **95 percent of Americans use smartphones**, with **45 percent being online "on a near-constant basis",** of which **7 out of 10 use social media.**
- SG, **96 percent owes a handphone as of 2023**
    - **2022 integral Ad Science Survey** estimating that **87 percent** of Singaporeans spend **over 2 hours a day** on social media alone.

Authenticity/need more enforcement regarding use of media
- **In 2021, Duan** realised that a local artist, had **painted an artwork using a photo of her face as reference**, where the artwork was **successfully commercially, selling for 1800$**, but shows up in many places **without Duan's approvals such as in a love bonito installation**
- In 2022, **a Russian artist** had made paintings using her image as well, again without her consent, even worse, **they were nude paintings**, but Duan had **no legal resource given the artist is based in a hostile motion**

- **Local photographer, Daryl Yow** passing **stock images off his own work —>** deceive hundred thousand fans following for his skill and **his commercial partner Sony**

<u>Quality of interactions</u>
- **"Para-social relationships"** forged on such platforms - the imagined bond one might have with a social media celebrity they admire (or in modern terms, called "stans" or "simps" → list famous twitch streamers as examples
    - A **2020 study** showed that streaming platform **twitch** was a surprisingly **viable source of support when users faced troubles in real life**, where **82 percent** of respondents uses Twitch to **ease their woes** because "by becoming part of a community the viewers were able to reduce their feelings of loneliness, get a sense of belonging, and **openly rant about their struggles.**

    - Quantity over quality relationships → online interactions are inferior in quality to offline ones, due to the lack of facial expressions and physical intimacy. Additionally, **many display a false image of themselves online**, and the connection is not genuine.
        - A 2017 study from the American Journal of preventive medicine discovered that the **heaviest users (50 or more visits per week)** were **three times** more likely to report feeling **socially isolated** than those **making nine visits a week or fewer**, and concluded that **capping social media at 30 mins per day** brings "significant reductions in loneliness and depression"
        - **During covid 19**, further studies showed that **heavier social media use is linked to higher levels of emotional loneliness in young people**, thus diminishing any forms of emotional benefits social media brings, as it only makes matters worse.

        - In one study, **sarcasm** was correctly **detected 79 percent** of the time when **spoken aloud**, but only **56 percent of the time** when the same words were sent **via email**.
            - Our changes in volume and tone can only be conveyed in person, where **one full stop may sound unintentionally short,** and **three full stops can make one sound unintentionally threatening**

- **"Egocentricity"** is a phenomenon where we **fail to realise the idiocracies in our speech** and forget others bring a **different sets of assumptions**, conventions and sensibilities to bear on conversations
    - When we wash out messages, our egocentric selves "hear" emotional overtones that our respondents are deaf to. We try to write the way we talk, but all the nuance our real life conversations naturally catch gets lost in translation.

- Technology has **allowed the elderly to find companionship virtually** instead, **PEW Research Centre** states that among **Americans aged 65 and above**, **75 percent used the internet.** Instead of having to talk to nurses or neighbours in their last few years, they can now reach into the virtual world and reconnect with people that they actually want to talk to.
    - We **endured interactions** with people we care little about in real life, only because we had no one else to turn to. Now, we have **more options to connect with like minded individuals.**

- In **2020**, viewers collectively watched **27.9 billion** hours of content, compared to **15.6 billion** in 2019, and also took to mobile gaming platforms to socialise as well, especially pokemon go, which allows real life interactions with the game itself.
    - Pew Research Centre stated that **89 percent of kids aged 5-11**, watch **youtube videos**, it is increasingly the norm for parents to use them as a crutch to amuse or appease their children rather than to communicate with them effectively, which **end up lowering the quality of parent-child relationships, leaving the child social inapt**.

(+ve) Raising awareness

Slacktivism
- "slacktivists" express their support for a cause by changing a profile image, retweeting a sentiment, or deploying a trending hashtag.
- Urban Dictionary defines slacktivism as **"the self-deluded idea that by liking, sharing, or retweeting something you are helping out"**.

Failed: Kony 2012
- The **Kony 2012 campaign** was an infamous case study of slacktivism --- the American NGO **Invisible Children uploaded a 30-minute film on YouTube**

titled Kony 2012, introducing Americans to the **plight of children in northern Uganda who live in fear of being kidnapped by warlord Joseph Kony (>30,000 Ugandan children have become victims of Kony)** With **over 100 million views** in just six days, and 4 million tweets mentioning Kony after its release, the video quickly became a viral sensation, blanketing the feeds of many social media users.

- Beyond the publicity, others worry about this strategy of making a trend out of unjust individuals.
- Offline efforts connected with this campaign went nowhere: while the director ardently pleaded for supporters across the world to "cover the night" on April 20, 2012 (i.e vandalise their hometowns so that Kony's name would be everywhere), turnout was abysmal. **In London, 30/1000 protestors attended. In Sydney, 25/19000 attended a Kony 2012 rally**.

- In the US, despite many protests against the reversal of roe vs wade, where **80 percent of citizens want abortion to remain legal**, and even tens of thousands showed up to the white house, **Donald trump reverse the law of roe vs wade** such that **13 states had trigger laws** the moment Roe fell, **where 40 percent of american women reside in states where abortion is banned**.

- During the **2020 elections in US**, users below the voting age made videos criticising Trump's presidency and calling people to **#settleforbiden**. The fact that **50 percent of 18-30 year olds showed up**, up from **39 percent in 2016**, of whom **65 percent voted** for biden.

- Trump's **pathological addiction** to twitter, his candid tweets had incredible influence on h**is 90 million followers** where he sets off stock market tumbles, **stoking islamophobia, racist comments** including one where he keeps **spreading conspiracy theories about a stolen election.**

- team seas, raised 30 mil respectively…, however, it did little impact as research stated that the millions raised only got rid of a day's waste of plastics

- To turn to SG, despite the momentum generated on digital platforms to repeal the discriminatory **section 377A** of singapore's penal code - **tens of thousands signed a petition** circulated over whatsapp and telegram **in 2018**, where campaigns such as **pinkdot are gaining traction**. However, PM Lee asserted

that the **law would be "here to stay"**, and dismisses the challenges to it, showing that in the end, **government is the final say to implement changes**

- Even though the government review its appeal, and change it so **gay men will not be charge for same-sex intercourse** → small insignificant change, showing how insistent the govt is about LGBTQ
- Additionally, the **constitution would be amended to protect the definition of "marriage" as being between a man and a woman** - reveals that **politicians still decide when and on what terms change is allowed to happen**
- **2022 ipsos survey found that 44 percent support retaining the law, with only 20 percent opposing it**
- **Both moral (popular decision) and pragmatic (will cause societal deforms if 377A was removed)**

- As of recent, the **PAP emotionally connects with the people by taking their personas online**, especially the new pm, l**awrence wong, has actively used tiktok** in order to connect with the youths.

Reach people who hold power/democracy

BLM
- **#BlackLivesMatter**-movement was born as a viral hashtag, but the uproar was quickly catalysed into an offline reality.
- People took to the streets for protests, and the topic soon dominated the national conversation in the US.
- Since the death of George Floyd, **31 of the country's 100 largest cities** have passed policies restricting the use of chokeholds by law enforcement

- **Never Again MSD** (which stands for **Majory Stoneman Douglas**, the site of a school shooting that **took the lives of 17 students and staff members** on **14th feb 2018**) in a movement for gun reforms in America, where survivors and sympathisers shared their frustration at the lack of legal progress via **#NeverAgain**. The campaign rapidly reached critical mass; the **March for Our Lives** protest. It **drew 2 million participants** (1.2 million in Washington D.C. and **880 sibling events around the world**, making it **one of the biggest protests in US history**.
    - On the day of the march, people tweeted the **#MarchForOurLives four million times, tagging donald trump**

- As a result, **Florida passed the first gun control measures in more than 20 years**, raising the legal age to **purchase all firearms to 21 years old**, called the Safer Communities Act **in 2022.**
- However, there **has been growing realisation** within the motion that a complete assault weapons ban is **unrealistic**, and their only hope is to **"band-aid" solutions** that make it harder for mentally unwell people to own weapons.

- Reddit styles itself as a bastion of free speech→ proves that information flows need not even pass through formal institutions, social media users, armed with no more than an online presence and an opinion, contribute to conversations about authorities and their actions, creating a counterweight to official narratives.
  - In the US, **news broke in 2021** that a **drone strike orchestrated by the military had killed an Afghani aid worker**, contrary to the **pentagon** (US defence headquaters) position that the victim was a suicide bomber. Unable to trust the authorities, **Reddit users made a compilation of their changing accounts and conflicting details**, such as how the military **claimed there were no casualties**, and then was **proven untrue when it was found out that victims have died.**
  - In SG, both members of PAP and WP are under tight scrutiny under the **local subreddit - a form of echo chamber given that protests are illegal**. For example, during the 2020 GE, citizens questioned why the **newly passed anti fake news bill** was weaponised against opposition parties, but was not utilised when **PAP claimed that opposition parties were "completely silent" on how to fight covid 19, which was untrue.** (use other controversies)

- **In China**, citizen journalist **Zhang Zhan** travelled to Wuhan to report on the situation during the early stages of covid-19. China **tried to downplay the severity of the spread and dictate the narrative** about **its strong crisis management skills**. However, Zhang uploaded videos of what life was really like there - **clips where the infected were burned, and queries asked to authorities about the case of a doctor who has been reprimanded** for trying to sound out against the situation, ended up being arrested for 2 years.

- Monica baey, nichloas lim (search google)

Bad publicity

Victoria Secret made the unfashionable choice not to f**eature plus-size fashion (fat)** models because that would not appeal to their target audience.

- **Promote scantily-clad (revealing) female models in million dollar fantasy bras** (non-eco friendly) in its annual shows in **defiance of today's anti wealth, environmentalist and feminist sentiments.**
- Such marketing stunts have helped the companies capture the media's attention, and **cultivate a reputation that favours the rich, winning over customers whose aspirations are matched.**

- In SG, we have **Steven lim**, whose **claim to 'fame' is a striptease performed in his audition for singapore idol** with other nonsensical behaviour on online platforms, yet he is a successful entertainer booked by clients that enjoy his entertainment.

- In the US, they have **Kim kardashain**, whose **leaked sex tape helped her got her own television series** - **keeping up with the kardashians**, which propel her fame worldwide,and furthermore alway involve herself with drama and is often criticised for her lack of core values, that being said, her **net worth is currently at 1.8 billion**

- IshowSpeed, who is one of the fastest growing youtubers, is known for his crazy reactions and clips, such as setting a firework in his own house, using racial and sexist remarks on his streams, and often 'barks' when he meets people.(also 'accidentally' promoted a crypto currency in one of his streams). His clips have garnered millions of views worldwide on multiple social media platforms, and is currently sitting at 24m subscribers. Considering his core audience are kids, they may be negatively influenced by him and it is questionable how celebrities like this, who many see them as role models, do despicable nasty things, and may turn to such behaviours to reap more benefits, as seen as the many ishowspeed clones out there trying to mimic his success.

However, bad publicity is tough to sweep under the rug, and thus **extracts a heavy cost in the long run**.

- Every election, Singaporeans recall foolish, farcical comments previously made by our leaders such as **Chan Chun Sing's claim that cotton come from sheep**, ironically he is our minister of education, or former DPM, **Heng Swee Kiat's conviction that we are not ready for a 'non chinese' prime minister**, or his iconic quote of how **'every school is a good school'**.

- **Member of parliament Tin pei ling** has not been allowed to move on from a photo of herself posing with a kate spade gift box, which is still used by many critics today (2020 GE election) to **reinforce she is out of touch with ordinary citizens**, no matter the **good work she has done in campaigning mental health support and women rights**.

- The most infamous example is X, whose **value fell by 90 percent** after Elon musk bought it for **44 billion in 2022**, as most of the advertisers such as **apple, disney and other big names have fled the platform** after its CEO **endorsed an racist tweet** and then told those firms to **go "fuck" themselves**, and how the rebrand from twitter to X has been met with lots of blacklash saying it was perfectly fine back then
    - **Elon Musk removed all checks of censorship**, claiming he was **"saving free speech and truth"** even though he was faced with multiple charges of harmful work practices (fired 8000 twitter employees) and stock manipulation (tesla stocks).

(-ve) Censorship/Fake news/Scams
- Following China's Communist Party's removal of president term limits, several phrases for discussion such as 'proclaiming oneself emperor', 'constitution amendment' and 'Winnie the Pooh' (a somewhat derogatory reference to President Xi) were **censored on Sina Weibo**.

- Researches estimated that **"almost 50 percent of traffic taken from facebook is fake and exaggerated"** and that **on twitter**, "fake news was **retweeted more** often than true news was and carried further", turning social media into a field of landmines
    - **In 2016**, in response to the rising amount of misinformation, **Facebook introduced a function that allows users to report hoaxes and flag stories** as fake. Reports are sent to third party fact-checking organisation for verification and **will appear lower using their aughoritims**

- In **2020, partnered with Reuters**, the world's largest multimedia news provider where Reuters would evaluate the authenticity of user-generated media, and also **launched e learning courses to teach writers to differentiate between real and fake notes** before they propagate it to mainstream media
  - Community notes on twitter
- Donald trump following his defeat in the 2020 elections, **not wanting to be a bearer of bad news, he decided to be a bearer of fake news instead**, reportedly tweeting the results had been rigged and that he had been robbed
  - Many **NPR polls** still reveal that **many Republicans still believe electoral fraud had transpired**, undermining American democracy overall, where **only 30 percent of them believe elections are fair**.
  - The big lie also allowed Trump to **scam supporters of $250m in donations to his "election defence fund"**, exploiting his supporters.
  - Finally, his comments also s**purred an attack on the Capitol building** in 2021, where **more than 2000 rioters disrupted congress and many were killed.**

- Sites, such as **FactCheck.org, and Washington Post's Fact checker** serving the functions to verify claims asserted by public figures ensures the public has access to actual facts but also exposes to them which of the leaders are reliable and which are narcissistic liars
  - According to which, **Trump made 30500 different false claims** over the course of four cursed years, his favourite false claim had to do with the strength of the US economy - a statement he repeated nearly 500 times during his presidency. Readers will reclaim the truth in an era within **Trump blatant lies - help to make trump the first one - term president in 30 years - thanks to modern technology**
    - Consider how in 2020, Trump **won only 37 percent of Americans with a college degree or higher**, and **only 35 percent of Americans aged 30 and younger in age** - 2 demographic groups that make **the most effective use of data available online** to Zinform their political decisions
  - Likewise, it came to light that **Joe Biden had voted against gay marriage** in the **1990s**, **contary to his liberal platform**, and was forced to make a public statement to win back the trust of a watchful public.

- **Deep fakes** - shows how the advancement in technology may lead to a new way to use media for harm

- In 2018, **Belgian political party** created a deep fake video of then US president trump calling **Belgians to withdraw from the Paris Climate Agreement**, claiming they should "have the balls" to do so.
- **More than 70 Singaporeans in 2024** were victims to this, even including a few members of parliament

- In the US, a rumour circulated in 2016 led to a **man bursting into a pizza restaurant and opening fire with an assault rifle** because he had led by **disinformation sites to think that the restaurant was the focal point of a child sex trafficking ring.** This **"pizzagate" conspiracy theory** has been designed to **discredit hilary clinton's campaign**, and was popularised by clueless trump voters.

- Can talk about celebrities selling products and exploit their younger audience for profits by advocating its a healthier/better choice when it is not. (eg prime/lunchly)

- In **Brazil's 2018 presidential elections**, the eventual winner **Bolsonaro** utilised **whatsapp to execute a campaign** to discredit his rivals. His disinformation strategy included how the **opposition were turning six year old children gay using a "gay kit" to be introduced in primary schools**. To combat fact checkers, his team **made his own fake fact checkers discrediting actual authentic news.**

- About **7 in 10 participants** for a **Straits Times survey** admitted to have **unknowingly shared misinformation online**, showing how the danger of fake news where people cannot discern it from real news.
    - In the covid 19 era study, SG's national centre of infectious diseases found that **6 in 10 people received fake news** about the virus on social media on social medias, from **how the vaccines are dangerous and not effective**, when the government will loosen the lockdowns → misinformation → do not value-add one's decision making process
    - **During covid, a 65 year old retiree Wong Lee Tak**, who hoarded over **9000 ivermectin pills** and was **hospitalised after consuming 4 of them,** after being misinformed by non-trained medical experts about how it is a cure to covid-19
        - showing how social media allows **people with little background in science or health care to be making such misleading statements** which could cause alot of harm.

- A **viral video in 2022** showed a **bently driver threatening to run over a security guard with his car**, in the course of naming and shaming him, mistakenly **identifying him as Mr Neo**, a **car dealership director**, and proceeded to **leak his private information** on chat groups and online, and **he even received more than 200 calls f**rom angry strangers
  - Reliability of news has been hampered by **thoughtless citizens and commentators trying to find the next big news** without verifying the information
- Distortion of images —> image of a covid 19 vaccination certification cautioning increased penis size as a side effect which is not true
  - **In 2022's National Day Rally**, Pm Lee emphasised how "**not all ideas that reach our minds and recalibrate our political compass are good for us, or good for a society trying to figure out how best to run itself."**

- A **2022 analysis by the Federal Trade Commission** stated that Gen Z and millennials are **34 per cent more likely to report losing money to fraud** compared with those over 60 years old. This includes online shopping fraud involving advertisements on social media, cryptocurrency investment scams and job scams.
  - Experts said **young people are susceptible to get-rich-quick schemes**, as they have **inherited inflation and high housing costs** – a global phenomenon. Their high digital connectivity and trust of what they see on social media also get the better of them.
  - **Especially true in SG**

- In SG, investment scams like **pig butchering scams** hit a **record high in 2021**, where **190.9 m was stolen** from victims**. Scammers "fatten" the victims before "slaughtering" them by nurturing a personal relationship with them online before nudging them to go all in into deposit money schemes**
  - Our interactions involve fabricated fake personas faked by fraudsters forging false fronts with the motive to take advantage of us
  - Shows our trusting nature

- Here in Singapore, **"love scams" escalated from 50 cases in 2011** involving losses of 2 million to a **shocking 800 cases** and **33 million losses** in 2020, during the **peak of covid 19.**

(-ve) Cancel culture

Jk Rowling

J.K. Rowling, the Harry Potter author, shared her opinions which were labelled transphobic; she had argued amongst many other statements, the following:
'If sex isn't real, there's no same-sex attraction. If sex isn't real, the lived reality of women globally is erased. I know and love trans people, but **erasing the the concept of sex removes the ability of many to meaningfully discuss their lives. It isn't hate to speak the truth**.' This made her 'cancelled' with many condemning her as being a transphobe on Twitter.

Dee Kosh

Charged with multiple sex offences. After his 32 week jail sentence, while some influencers were welcoming him back, others were not hospitable. One netizen said that **Dee Kosh was "still a sick man" and "still sick in the brain."**
→ Brings us to the issue of discrimination against past offenders?

Borat

went to kazakhstan and a lot of areas to record documents for them, but then he used it to make a mocking movie out of it. → causes a lot of unrest in nations, also **results in government organisations less trusting of working with online news companies**

Mr Brown (good eg of publicity)

a comedian who has enjoyed a long career (started the Mr Brown show in 2005) despite a climate of censorship by commentating on social issues all groups agree on instead of criticising specific groups. → showing **it is possible to be respectful to all groups while being sarcastic and fun**

Surveillance/privacy

- Universal Declaration of Human Rights believe that "**all human beings are born free**," then all of us should have the **freedom to secrete oneself from public scrutiny should we wish to**
- **UDHR's article 12**, which states, "**No one** shall be subjected to i**nterference with his privacy, family or home"**
- SG's **tracetogether app** and tokens used bluetooth signals between devices to see if potential carriers have been in close contact with other people

- Privacy concerns regarding the app, ministry of home affairs, desmond lee, said the data collected will also be used for criminal investigations, which **contradicts the govt stance** that it will only be used to contact tracing of people exposed to covid19.

- In **2024**, a global cybersecurity breach affected Singapore's education system, around **13000 students** were blindsided when the **mobile guardian app was wiped out by a hacker**, where many notes were lost, which took them so much effort and time to make, which will never be brought back.

- In **2018 (singhealth)**, SG was subjected to the **biggest data breach** in its history, with **including 1.5 mil ppl**, including PM lee
    - In **2019**, the confidential information of **14000 people with HIV positive** status, along with their personal info was leaked, making such groups of people **more vulnerable than they already are**, especially when they face discrimination from society
        - Moving to a more advanced age of technology, sg govt needs to be held accountable and ensure to make sure its people data is stored safely to ensure the wellbeing and safety of the citizens

The threat of surveillance itself changes human behaviour - even when no one is actually watching
- Sg plans to have **200k cameras by 2030**, which is **twice of that in 2023**.
    - In a Yougov survey, **20 percent of ppl** were less likely to search for **less sensitive information** knowing they may be watched unknowingly
    - In **2021**, a **study by expressVPN** reported that **80 percent** of bosses used monitoring survey

- China **increase its CCTV cameras to 700 mil from 200 mil** during the pandemic
    - However, chinese citizens, who have nothing to hide, are more than happy for the measures, and studies have shown that **82.2 percent support cctv surveillance, and even 38.4 percent showed more desire for surveillance**, due to many insurance frauds faking their way to claim insurance by purposely breaking their own property.
    - In february 2022, China implemented new measures for cybersecurity review, where **network service providers that handle more than 1 million users' data must now undergo reviews by the authorities**, giving them another way to track citizens' activity

- No coincidence that **China was the world's second worst jailer of journalists in 2022** with **47** of them thrown into prison for reasons tarnishing the reputation of china.

- The **National Security Agency** of collaborating with tech platforms such as Facebook, Google and Microsoft and others to collect emails, text messages and voice calls from everyone in US, to strengthen the US' defence against external threats like terrorism
    - However, some abused their authority and **stumbling upon people's nude photographs** was considered as a fringe benefit of the job. Agents also **spied on their spouses** (a practice so common that it had a name - **LOVEINT**)
    - NSA also tracked porn consumption of people labelled as "radicalisers" in order to discredit their "devotion to religious beliefs"

- Companies also collect our data and cookies to personalise our advertisements,where in the **personalisation 2021 Report** found that brands that offer personalised experiences are rewarded with more customers of a difference of **40 percent**.

    In 2021, a **15 year old tik tok star Ava Majury**, was harassed by a male fan online asking her for explicit photographs. Eventually, **using personal data he had bought from her real life classmates**, the fan stormed her house, armed with a shotgun, a vest full of ammo, and 2 phones with hundreds of her photos and videos, luckily he was shot dead
    - The amount of harm if our privacy is invaded, and how invasion of our privacy will destroy our security

Private/public space
In 2023, many reported an incident between 2 commuters on bus 974, which began with the first passenger playing a video loudly on a phone with no earphones plugged in. The second passenger asked him to lower the volume, which he refused to. The police had to be called in.
- From the second commuter's viewpoint, the rules of the public etiquette had been violated, and even noted it was **his "fourth case"** that week where he had to **put up with such behaviour** while on public transport, showing how widespread such inconsiderate actions are.
- The first commuter claimed that it was **his "privacy" that had been violated** since his acts were shamed online. His **sense of entitlement** shows precisely

the author's observation that **mobile phones create "portable private personal territories" in public spaces.**
- Illustrates how we use our mobile phones in public: the **perceived need to make full use of our limited time** prompts us to do things on the go, on our phones, that we should probably be doing at home, regardless of the impact of our impolite behaviour on others.

- A **samsung survey** found out that **8 in 10 drivers** in **Singapore** use their phones while driving, and in 2016, such behaviours **killed 60 motorists** and **injured 2700.**

₋Cambridge Analytica

Company owned by the hedge fund billionaire Robert Mercer, and headed at the time by **Trump's key adviser** Steve Bannon – **used personal information taken without authorisation** by exploiting facebook in early 2014 to build a system that could profile individual US voters, in **order to target them with personalised political advertisements**, **predicting and influencing their choice**s
- The use of Cambridge Analytica became controversial after it was revealed that the firm obtained data from millions of Facebook users without their consent. This raised significant ethical and legal questions about data privacy and the influence of targeted advertising on electoral outcomes

Singapore Society

Politicians/Governance

- According to **2021 Policy Studies survey, 70 percent of respondents** had a great deal of trust in state instuitions

- The **WP jamus lim**, was propelled to stardom when he asserted his party was **aiming to "deny the PAP a blank cheque"**. This catchphrase has frequently been used, as WP party serves as a guardian of sg's democracy, addressing the

PAP's monopoly over the political scene. In addition, he **portrayed as a non elite within the political system**, and uses phrases like **"warm the cockles of my heart" quickly became trending in GE2020**.

- SG ranked the **4th least corrupt country** in by the **transparency international, corruption perceptions index in 2019**, **best airport in 2020**, and **placed 2nd in the Economist's 2021 safe country index**.

- Singapore placed a **$10000 fine** on **Terry Xu** for defamation of the government just by merely sharing his views about **how the PAP leadership is questionable and the possibility of corruption**. However, **the court sided with the PAP stating** that he was defaming the government reputation → shows how SG PAP has power over its citizens where we are not allowed to go against the government.

- **Transport minister S iswaran** was arrested for corruption → **accepting bribes of private jet rides**, **luxury hotel stays** and **premier league tickets** → attracted public disapproval
- **K shanmugam, minister of law** was paying below market rent for a good class bungalow, and also was **accused of having an affair of another MP in 2023**

- This cause PM lee to address the importance of integrity in both the 2022 and 2023 ndp rally that we have to "keep our **system free of corruption and wrongdoing**" so as to "**preserve, protect and strengthen** the trust singaporeans have in the government" and what "allows political leaders to work closely with singaporeans and deliver a better life"

- As superpowers can push us around or even pulverise us entirely while we lack the military, we need to **sustain cordial relations with both sides of any geographical conflict or contest** rather than sway outcomes with one side over the other - which we not only cannot but will be punished if we try → in the middle ground between US and China, host a meeting for the US and North korea presidents to meet
    - We were punished for **being overly friendly with the other china** (taiwan) and China **seized our armoured vehicles in 2016**, when we had military exercises with hong kong and taiwan.
    - Punished by the US for **departing from its democratic ideals** → not invited to attend the **2021 summit for democracy.**

- A member of the **Five Power Defence Arrangements** involving **Australia, malaysia, new zealand, UK and SG.** → consult one another immediately if any of us were subjected to a foreign attack. In **2021**, the joint **exercise bersama gold** was conducted to **celebrate the 50th anniversary of the treaty.**

- **SG's botanic garden** is marked as a **UNESCO world heritage site**

Freedom is obviously a liability to children, who cannot and should not be tasked with governing themselves
- We **cannot get married before 21 years of age**, unless our parents are present it give their blessings
    - This is an **obvious infringement on our personal freedom, but is done to protect us from our own injudicious decisions**
    - According to **Ministry of social and family development data**, **divorce rates are on the rise, especially among the recently married among the youths**
- Mandatory for girls younger than 16 who wish to terminate a pregnancy to **go through pre-abortion counselling** and a **48 hour "cooling off" period**, in anticipation of possible lapses in judgement

(+ve) Smart Nation

[Elderly] Seniors Go Digital programme:
- **Teaches elderly to use online communication apps,** government services and apps like Singpass, and e-payments tools like paynow, paylah, SGQR codes… while managing cybersecurity
- **Held in community hubs that elderly are familiar with** (eg. libraries, CC)
- Survey conducted in 2021 found that about **9/10 seniors engaged by the ambassadors said they will continue to apply digital skills** they learnt in their daily lives,

[Students] PLD Scheme
- **2021 onwards**, **all secondary 1-4 students** receive PLD for learning purposes → higher accessibility → tech-savvy

Income

Median monthly household income from work per household member rose from $3,027 in 2021 to $3,287 in 2022 ($3000 in 2021 to $3300 in 2022)

2022 world bank puts us 2nd in the world in GDP per capita (at purchasing power parity), **Gini coefficient decreased from 0.41 in 2012 to 0.36 in 2022**, even with the **increasing influx of low skilled cheap labour and the high end rich entrepreneurs**

- The Singapore dream, often described as the **5Cs** - car, condominium, cash, country club, credit card.
- There is proof that the **materialistic values held by adults has rubbed off on the younger generations**
    - A **2021 National youth council** report found 4 out of the 6 life goals most **important to youths - "to have a place of my own", "to have a successful career", "to travel the world", "to earn lots of money"**, suggesting singapore is only getting more materialistic

measures
FAS: Gross household income (GHI) as at the time of application does not exceed $2,750 per month

Improve income equality
- by having a **progressive tax system**, the **rich gets taxed 22 percent** of their income
- **600 dollars worth of CDC vouches**, schemes that help workers to develop skills (econs examples)
- **MediShield Life** is a basic health insurance plan, administered by the Central Provident Fund (CPF) Board, which helps to pay for large hospital bills and selected costly outpatient treatments, such as dialysis and chemotherapy for cancer. It is structured so that patients pay less MediSave/cash for large hospital bills **(further topped up 750-1500$ in budget 2024)**
- **CPF life - "Majulah package"** during covid (400-1000)$ bonus annually added on after retirement

<u>Inclusivity/equality</u>
- Uniqlo Singapore **offers 1 hour private shopping sessions** for people with disabilities at its **ang mo kio outlet**, as well as specifically designed furnitures such as **wider fitting rooms** and **lower check-out counters** for wheelchair users
- Uniqlo, and **popular fast food restaurants such as KFC and Mcdonalds hire workers with special-needs.**

- **Scholarships** from the **society for the physically disabled** gives out scholarships to give them a **chance to attend local uni education**.
- Rainbow centre
- Schools such as **pathlight school caters students with autism**
    - Such schools will give a chance for these students to acquire the skills and knowledge needed to be integrated into society.
    - However, **some may argue that it is a form of discrimination**, as it **deprives them of the opportunity for conventional forms of education**

- In a **2022 survey by Valuable 500**, **SG was recognised as one of the top 10 cities in meeting the needs of travellers with disabilities**.

- However, due to **Singapore's pragmatism and meritocracy system**, the worth of individuals is based on their achievements and how much they can contribute to society. As a result of being perceived less capable than the rest of society, PWDs are offered fewer opportunities than others

- In **december 2017**, the **Institute of Policy Studies (IPS)** released a study that found a **clear divide among social classes in singapore**. The study found that singaporeans **tend to associate with people who has the same class markers such as "elite" vs "non-elite" schools**, **private vs public housing**, and **high vs low paying jobs**, and how **class outranked both race and religion** when it comes to the **most significant social dividers** in Singapore
    - Singaporeans who **lived in public housing** had **fewer than 1 friend living in private housing**
    - An **individual from a non-elite school had ties to an average of 0.4 people from an elite school**, much **lower compared to the average of 3.9 people from non-elite schools that they have ties to**.
        - Such disparities in the composition of Singaporeans' social networks along the lines of social class will only r**esult in rising tensions between the poor and rich**
        - People are hanging out **with their "own kind" based on what school and which house they come from**, which will heavily influence one's perspective or opportunities, and are **unable to relate to the fortunes/misfortunes other groups may experience**

- A recent **2020 Sunday Times survey** showed that **over 57 per cent** of respondents in a survey said they **do not want to be garbage collectors**. This

percentage did not fall much even in the hypothetical scenario that the **salary for these jobs were doubled, showing the strong societal aversion to these jobs, and how much people care about 'social status'**

- A **2015 survey** by **world vision Singapore** found that **9 in 10 youths polled agreed that it was important to help the disadvantaged**, but **3 in 4 did not translate to any action**, citing it is a waste of time and money.

Happiness

- Singapore ranked as the **happiest country for the 2nd year in a row in 2024** according to the **world happiness report**. However, the report was based on markers such as **life expectancy, perception of government corruption and GDP per capita**, which these criterias are not an accurate gauge of someone's happiness level
- A **2022 Quality of life survey** has found that **despite rising income levels, Singaporeans have become unhappier,** feeling **decreased sense of achievement, control, and purpose**.

- There are 2 philosophies to happiness
- **Stoicism** —> assumes the **best way to be happy is to be virtuous** (having high moral values). It is not about being completely numb, but rather **dividing our situation into things we can control and those we cannot** - particularly avoiding "passions" like distress, fear and pressure
    - With **unexpected events** such as Covid 19 and other geopolitical wars, it is no surprise stoicism has remained in our culture,
    - **"hustle-culture" of modern-day capitalism** - a focus on productivity and hitting goals which tend to lead to stress and burnout where **stoicism is just another way of efficiency maximisation** - r**egulating one's emotions to compete for in the very rat-race** that the original philosophers deplored
    - "Yolo" mentality

- **Hedonism**, is a **way of living with immoral behaviour**, but it is **core principle of maximising pleasure and minimising pain**
    - Opposite of Stoicism's philosophy to rationalise one's emotions and the immaterial value of wealth
    - It can be argued that the decision making of governments, or scientific breakthroughs are all align with Hedonism, where their **ultimate goal is for the greater good of society**

Education

- In the latest **OECD programm**e for international student assessment in **2022, Singapore finished top of the world in mathematics, reading and science tests**.
    - In our meritocratic system, exams are a means to an end and have historically served to distinguish those that display **more academic merit perceived** by the government from those who display less, and then graduates into a line of work that is appropriate for them, so as to fully utilise every member of the country's manpower pool.
        - However, this exam focus mindset creates a mismatch between the academic and real world, where we expect students to memorise facts, figures and formulas, **where students use answer schemes to discern a right or wrong answer**, but in reality, the r**eal world expects us to be creative thinkers**, and is a patchwork of endless grey that takes a lot more depth to navigate, and is poor to gauge someone's abilities just from the numbers of their score sheets
        - **The meritocratic system is to be questioned, with everyone having a different starting point**. The child of the rich will have more connections, more resources to boost their education or other supplement courses to boost their job applications
        - With the **further segregation between the IP students and the rest of the students with changes to how the NT, NA and express students** are integrated with each other, except for the IP students, leaving them alone in a more prestigious schools, and enjoy greater opportunities and advantages, It is hard to break out the cycle of relative poverty if one simply does not do well for PSLE. **Even though Chan Chun Sing stated it is to promote a more inclusive education**, it only segregates the top students from the average student even greater.

        - In 2018, a **16 year old O lvl graduate took to reddit** to share sobering experiences at work where he met parents of students from "good schools" being smug and snobbish due to their child being of seemingly superior status to their salesperson, where it sparked huge discussions with **people pitching in experiences where they have been looked down just by being from less renowned schools**, where there are discussions whether the segregation of different education streams causes more choices or just an **excusable means to exacerbate social inequality**.

- A **CJC vice principal** told students from her school that they were unlike a **"neighbourhood secondary school"** where most students come from **troubled families** and how a **RGS spokesperson** told reporters that **"moving away from the luxurious condominiums in orchard road" would let their students "reach out more to the ordinary Singaporean",** as if they themselves were extraordinary, and that hanging out with low-income residents of public housing flats was an act of charity.
- The supposedly "best academic" school RJC, featured a student wearing inappropriate outfits that mock other cultures. One, **wearing a mask with a dark skinned man, along with his long-sleeved foodpanda uniform** saying it was all for good fun, was criticised heavily on social media about how he was targeting the malays, most of which foodpanda delivers are malays.
  - This emphasises the need for the education system to be changed if even someone with such moral incompetence to post a threat to our national identity can achieve in life just merely because someone is good at academics.

- Many Singaporean students only see education as a way to improve one's socioeconomic status, and thus only caring about the endpoint, while not caring about the true essence of learning a subject, or further their curiosity by taking the initiative to learn what is outside of the exam scope.
  - In an **OECD study**, **86 percent** of students feel anxious about poor grades, and **76 percent** fret over poor results **even if they prepared well**, showing how much results meant to us that the process of learning is neglected.

- Psychologists have cautioned that many students now **believe that "doing well in school" is a guarantee of "doing well in life"**, as well as the converse is true. Not only is this debilitating to their mental health, but it also deludes them into thinking adult life is just as predictable and straightforward, where as transactional as schools are, where hard work translates to high grades and rewards, however in reality, **effort is almost never certain to produce results** and never certain to be recognised.
  - In **2010**, MOE launched its **21CC framework**, which includes plans to **impart 21st century competencies** (Global awareness, **critical thinking skills, collaboration skills**) **to our education system** - to be more confident and self-directed learners

- The **Applied learning programme** grants children to learn via practical **hands-on experience rather than pouring on books**, which will be **implemented in all primary schools by 2023** and give more opportunities for students to get familiar with technology by incorporating **blended learning**, which is to be the **norm going forward across secondary schools and junior colleges**. There will be more applied subjects such as **coding and robotics offered to o lvl and a lvl students**.
- CCE lessons, VIA
  - Seems to have paid off, **PISA's 2018 Global Competence test**, which judges students' **ability to differentiate between biased and unbiased sources, dissect situations**, and **discern connections across multiple parts of a problem** - skills that **cannot be brute-forced** in the way Singaporeans do for exams - **ranked us number one in the world,** with 46 percent of our representatives achieving the highest proficiency levels.

- Even polytechnics and Institute of Technical Education, for so long the forgotten children in our public education system, have received an update to their curriculum to **focus on teaching life skills**, where students will be exposed to **broad based foundation courses in the first year to be versatile at everything**, then proceed onto **industry attachments in the second and third year to ensure students are exposed to the actual working world**.
  - Furthermore in Singapore's 2024 budget, under the new ITE progression award scheme, **ITE graduates aged 30 and below will receive 5k** in their post secondary education account upon enrolling in a diploma programme, then **10k to their CPF account upon attaining the qualification**, making it more attractive for students to further upgrade themselves

- As many Singaporeans are so fixated on "being successful", and thus being individualistic people who would backstab anyone just to get to the top is the norm, and accepting its toxicity in schools, where this may translate us to become even more cut-throat in our jobs. There are **rightful and wrongful ways to treat others**, regardless of how competition plays out, yet **schools clue us in none of that**, and instead **compel us to be unkind to those who we beat - and even to ourselves when it's our turn.**
  - The new **PM Lawrence wong**, addressed this in a **6 min video** where he outlined his vision of the kind of **"post-material" society** he wants to build and stated that **"there needs to be a broader definition of success,**

which goes **beyond the narrow metrics of material achievements**, and "**values everyone for who they are**" and how there is "**no need to compare with others, to squeeze into boxes we are not meant to fit**"
- DPM **Heng Swee Kiat** also **suggested the 3Cs in place of the 5Cs in 2021**: "**Creating** more **value for society**, **Caring** about the **environment** and wider community, and **Charting the way forward**"

- A **2019 survey by Tigerhall** in Singapore found we have a new definition of the 5Cs: **cash, a meaningful career, credibility, cultural proficiency and convenience**
    - Shows how our values change to a more diverse one, other than financial needs

Mental health/stress

(-ve) Current

- A **Gallup survey in 2012** ranked Singapore as the **"Least Emotional country in the world"** with **only 36 percent of Singaporeans reporting emotions of any kind on a daily basis.**
    - Headlines **declared Singapore "The World's most stoic nation"**, as one who can **endure hardship without knowing their feelings**

- Singaporean students **rank third worldwide on time spent on homework**, and **rank fifth in terms of average annual labour hours per worker**, and **75 percent experienced burnout at work**
    - That Youth mental health is a problem can be seen in how **suicide is the leading cause of death in that age range**.
    - Similarly, the **Institute of Mental Health's Child Guidance Clinics** reports that **anxiety and depressive disorders** have **become common in youths aged 6-18**, **averaging 2400 new cases every year**.
    - In 2021 **National youth council report that young people's happiness level has fallen** from 5.45 in 2010 to 4.79 in 2021 on a seven point scale.

- In a **2020** a survey by **Randstad**, job seekers **ranked "job security" as their number one priority**; interest value ranked eighth, **impact on society ranked tenth**. → shows **how much we prioritise ourselves in our career and how we are scared of losing out**

- Almost half of us are **unsatisfied** at work - **48 percent by Employment Hero, 2021** → shows how we are just working for money and as a result, don't do things that fit our passion.
- Th**e phenomenon of "quiet quitting"** is getting more and more prevalent, largely attributed to covid 19, where employees are provided with the opportunity to reflect on their own mortality
- According to a **2021 LinkedIn survey, work-life balance emerged as the top priority** for employees worldwide searching for a new role
- A **Straits Times survey (2024) found that 35 percent of workers in Singapore have quiet quit their jobs, 4 percent higher than the global average**

- quiet firing - rather than firing them upright, employers make working conditions so toxic that they compel workers to resign voluntarily, so they won't have to pay the extra costs to fire them
  - According to a **2024 survey by monsters**, 77 percent of respondents have witnessed quiet firing, with 58 percent saying they have personally been affected to it

- According to The Straits Times in 2024, **47 percent of workers in Singapore feel mentally or physically exhausted by their work**, with **two-thirds of the workers having at least one of three** indicators of burnout

- **"Most people die at 27. We just bury them at 72."** by Mark Twain, a famous American writer, talks about how the **high stress, and capitalist world only cares about results, and makes us lose ourselves and our own identity and dreams** in the process, **doing one's job just to simply survive.**

(+ve) What is being done
- The **Youth Mental Well-being Network** was formed in February last year and **brought together more than 1,500 people, including mental health professionals, practitioners, parents and youths**, to work on projects to support youth mental health. They come up with **initiatives like 'Free Your Mind' and online workshops** to **teach parents on how they can better support their children with mental health issues.**
- **MindSG**, one-stop platform where **ppl can access their own mental health** and what steps they should take to address it

- In 2023, the **Ministry of Health (MOH)** in Singapore **expanded the capacity of mental health services**, improving capabilities for **all demographics**. They are refining care models, increasing capacity building, and developing intermediate residential facilities. Overall, **there has been a 54% increase in mental health facilities across Singapore from 2020 to early 2024**

Low birth rates and ageing population

- A total of 33541 babies have been born in 2023, a 5.8 percent fall from last year, it's the lowest since 1971.
- For the first time, the **Total Fertility Rate (TFR) fell below 1 —> 0.97,** one of the lowest in the world
- Conducted by the **research institute for clinical sciences** -> main reason is due to **cost of living** and **HOW the responsibility falls more and how there's more opportunity cost lost on the women**, as gender norms still assign most caregiver work to them.
- **forgoing higher wages, career developments and leisure time to take care of children** —> also f**ace the social and economic pressure of producing high achieving children in sg society**

- Number of birth rates falling, **number of deaths increasing 10.7 percent from last year**, due to an ageing population and a rise of tendency to fall ill.
  - smaller workforce, means the age dependency ratio is lower, more pressure for the workforce to support the economy of the country

Race/foreigners

- **1964 saw 2 riots between the malays and chinese**, due to the alleged difference political allegiances between malaysia and singapore, when **malaysia pressed for special rights for malays in SG.**
  - Continue to be brought up in SG's national education program to emphasise the importance of harmony in a society, where racial harmony day marks the date of the first riot in 1964.

- **In a 2016 study** by the **Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy**, there is an overwhelming consensus of Singaporeans that see multiculturalism as an ideal; **91% stated that they enjoyed social cohesion among a diverse ethnic matrix**; **96% respected people from all races, held the view that all races are equal** and **that people of all races should be treated equally.**

- In 2014, SG was **recognised as the most religiously diverse nation by Pew research centre**, further reporting that **"over 85 percent say that islam, christianity, Hinduism are compatible with Singaporen culture and values"**.

- of the babies born in 2023, **28.4 percent are double barreled races, a substantial increase from 12.9 percent last year**. -> shows more locals are **more open to different race marriage** -> builds our cultural identity even more —> attract more foreigners to our multi heritage country

- A **2021 institute of Policy Studies** report found that **50.3 percent believe immigrants take away jobs from citizens** - this sentiment is **held by lower income individuals** hit hard by economic uncertainty of covid 19
- That same study found out **70 percent reject blatant discrimination and racism**, such as **not hiring someone because of their race/religion**, and also **how they preferred a political leader to be of their own race**.
  - Shows that singaporeans have yet to truly accept and embrace our differences, and **tolerate other races to "save face"**

- Controversies sparked the **hijab debate 2021** where Muslims are **not allowed to wear hijabs if they are required to wear a uniform**, where they have to **choose between their religious identity and their desired profession, which goes against the values of multiculturalism** that form the bedrock of SG society
  - However, the government argued that it is a **sign that service is rendered equally**, as **promotions will be more based on one's skills regardless of race.**

- In june 2021, a **chinese lecturer Tan Boon Lee** confronted an interracial couple, accusing an **indian man of "preying on a chinese girl"**
  - These events were significant that **PM Lee Hsien Loong** had to use for the **2021 national day rally** to urge us to resist any prejudice against different races, saying "we should not let our frustrations spill over to affect our racial harmony… it is **illogical to blame the covid 19 disease on the chinese, or any races**"

Chinese privilege/Chinese chauvinism
- (CA) Until **1977 Malays were excluded from serving in the military because Mr Lee doubted that their loyalty could be relied upon should they fight a war against Malaysia.**

- (Rebut) But other minority groups were obliged to serve NS like indians..
- **SAP schools**?

Measures
- Ethnic Integration Policy (EIP),introduced in 1989, which **mandates racial quotas in public housing where the majority of Singaporeans live.**
- Group Representation Constituency (GRC) scheme, implemented in 1988, a team of candidates to represent a constituency in parliament, **at least one of whom must be an ethnic minority.**
- An amendment to the constitution in 2016 made it so that presidential elections would be **"reserved" for any racial group that has not been represented over the past 5 terms.**
    - The **2017 election was only open to malays**. Most Chinese Singaporeans were against the reserved election, protesting that it **uncompromised the meritocratic foundations of our country and the entire reason why we broke away from malaysia**, many **displayed their unhappiness by rejecting Halima Yacob's election using the #notmypresident** on social media
        - Indicating the importance of our ruling party to resist the tug of race-based populism, she ended up being a great choice as her **minority background helped her** came up with the **themes of the annual president's challenge** which provide f**inancial support for social causes of the disadvantaged**: **mental health** in 2019, **disabilities** in 2020, **a digitally inclusive society** in 2021, **low income families** in 2022, all hoping to achieve a more equitable society.

- **Penal code section 298 →** f**orbids us from uttering anything as a joke** that may wound the feelings of different groups on racial and religious grounds.
    - Amos Yee in 2015, sentenced to 4 weeks in jail for making offensive remarks on religions

Values-In-Action/kindness/charity
Benefits
- A study by the **department of social work at NUS** found that beneficiaries were **more likely to perform well academically**, and **even be more active in**

co-curricular activities and **less self-conscious about their background**, as a result of the donations liberating their main obstacle (financial difficulty) to success.

- Research has shown that while splurging on personal expenses or possessions does not elevate a person's happiness, spending one's wealth on charity does, and involves more than the dopamine hit - the **region of our brain that mediates social attachment is activated when we give, affirming our status as social beings**

- Research published in 2016 in the **journal Health Psychology** found that **improvements in blood pressure levels** prompted by **prosocial spending paralleled those that come with taking up a new exercise routin**e.

Initiatives
- MOE pushes students to partake of community service via the **VIA programme**, where all students in primary school, secondary school, and junior colleges are **required to clock a minimum number of hours,** with grassroots leaders pushing out **youth networks** at every part of Singapore, or volunteer.sg app which promotes various opportunities to help people in need.
    - To shape into a more emphatic Singapore and build our nation cohesiveness
    - However, students may only serve others not as an activity borne out of compassion,but for pragmatic intentions, such as completing the "service" section in **Leaps 2.0** to have a deduction of 2 points for your O lvl score, or decorate their portfolios and dazzle future recruiters, to show off our kind acts to cultivate a certain image for themselves
        - Many students do not actually care about the beneficiaries and may even cause them to suffer more as we are taking advantage of these disadvantaged groups for the sake of benefiting ourselves.

- **Youth Corps Singapore**'s claim that **youth volunteerism in 2022 grew 20 percen**t from pre-pandemic levels.
    - However, it noted that **15-24 year olds mustered a 40 percent volunteering rate**, the **highest** for all age groups, but **25-34 year olds managed a mere 25 percent**, the **lowest** of all age groups, it is evident that **most people who volunteered** are just doing for the **sake to beef up their portfolios** and leave as soon as it does not help them anymore.

- **Until 2026**, the Singapore Government will **provide a 250% tax deduction for donations** to **qualifying charity organisations**, where every dollar donated will be a **2.5 dollar tax deduction from their taxable income**. Singaporeanas may only donate as **they possess a larger take-home-income instead of intrinsic desire** to help those who are disadvantaged.

- The **National Environment Agency** began enforcing the returning of food trays in **all hawker centres in September 2021**, and reported a **drastic rise in tray returns**, from **33 percent in February to 85 percent in November**. However, the fact that there is a **fine of 300 dollars now** imposed shows that we may be **more interested to "look kind" than "being kind", to just not pay the fine.**

- In june 2023, **Shine Children and Youth Services** announced the **Star programme**, a **mentoring** service that would work with low-income children from **ages 6 to 14**, where **they claim "the return on investment is $7 for every $1 invested in each child,"** where these children can **provide a sevenfold increase to the economy.**
  - The **focus on return on investment in mentoring children distracts** from more compassionate reasons for our society to care for the less privileged.

Out of generosity with no motives
- During the Covid-19 outbreak, **MOM** and ground up initiatives like **MigrantxMe** and **CMSC (700 volunteer group)** came together to render help to the migrant workers who were confined in their dormitories, like making sure the facilities are of proper use and hygiene, and **setting up different therapy chambers** to provide emotional support for migrant workers to voice out their concerns as they go on without seeing their loved ones.

- In another case, migrant worker advocacy group Transient Workers Count Too then put out a call for 20k to buy phone top ups for them to reconnect with their families back home and reassure they are safe - which the singaporean public answered with overwhelming kindness by raising over 280k, more than 10 times the target amount.

- **In SG budget 2023, SG invested 1 billion into all charity organisations**

Limitations to charitable giving

Limited funding
- In SG, national director of Habitat for Humanity said in a 2020 interview that the government limits the amount of money it allocated to charities so that they do not grow used to simply sitting around waiting for handouts
- **Reach community services**, shared that his social service organisation typically **needs about 1.5m a year from their own pockets** after funding from the government

Certain causes are overemphasised
- Global research firm, The decision lab noted that in 2018, **Americans donated 410b to charity**, yet it **still points out that millions of people continue to die from preventable diseases**
  - The firm attributed this to **"ineffective altruism"**
    - First, we tend to **place more emphasis on things that are closer to or relate to**, hypothetically, we are more likely to care about victims of an accident that happened in our own first world neighbourhood than some humanitarian crisis in developing countries.
    - Second, **people empathise more easily with an identifiable victim**, which means **organisations that are less skilled at selling themselves to donors** because they cannot afford a public relations team will lose out
    - **Climateworks foundation data - 2 percent** of all charitable donations go to climate change
    - **This is further seen even in countries such as in SG with our education oriented mindset, where charities in the education sector receives the largest shares at 40 percent, but arts and heritage - related charities received just 3 percent and sports under 1 percent**

Does not solve root cause and it is only a short term solution
- The root cause of problems that charity aspirers to address often takes more than money. We may feed the hungry and put a roof over the homeless, but if hunger and homelessness continue to emerge under social issues, then more and more money will need to be sunk in the black hole.

- People may donate just to look like a good moral person, instead of changing the system from the bottom up

- For eg, **large banks like JPMorgan** loudly tout their **large contributions to fighting climate change**, yet have been **exposed for simultaneously financing the fossil fuel industry**

- A **letter to the Irish times in 2017** pointed out that the **homelessness crisis in Ireland** at the time was actually the result of of **private sector charities that had distracted the country from seeking sustainable solutions** to the issue by pampering over the cracks and perpetuating an illusion all was well, and **prevented policy makers to address the root cause of poverty.**

Globally
- When the **russia-ukraine war is at its peak**, IKEA gave 1 million in cash, and **9 million in core supplies** - **70k mattress, 75k bedsheets, 85k blankets and 200k pillows to Ukraine** - though it is anyone's guess whether their products or putin will last longer.
- **SpaceX** also gave **20k starlink satellite internet terminals**, absorbing a **100m loss** in the process, to **facilitate the Ukrainian military communications**

SG Policies

- Skillsfuture, Singaporeans aged 21 and above get 500 dollar credit, further being **topped up by 4000 dollars in 2024**, which they can spend on a pool of curated courses to upgrade their skill sets. **In 2021, more than 300k Singaporeans tapped on their skillsfuture credit**, an increase of 31 percent from the year before.

- **more than 1 million Singaporeans signed up for SG's healthier SG scheme**, 1 year in its launch.
    - Allows people to enrol in **free annual check ups**, nationally recommended vaccine screenings and lifestyle r recommendations —> free and accessible healthcare allows the ageing population to be more aware about their health concerns
    - Ministry of culture, community, and youth launched ActiveSG, which gives users 100 dollars worth of credits to spend on sports in community centres in the midst of covid 19

- Trying to solve root cause the rise in demand of healthcare equipments, preventing illness rather than curing it

- **Flexigrow** - civil servants get an **additional $500 anually for medical checkups**

- Start-ups are exempt from what would be otherwise a **17 percent income tax** for the **first 3 years of its lives**, and small and medium enterprises may be granted a partial exemption

Covid 19

- Asian countries tend to be able to contain the coronavirus outbreak due to our **conservative nature**. In SG or Hongkong, both who were traumatised by the SARS pandemic, took swift actions to control covid 19. **"Face saving"**, where individuals act to preserve their reputation in the public's eyes of their peers, and are compelled to act out of consideration for others. The act of wearing a mask became a moral act to "save face", where if people opposed it, it would be criticised heavily through the media.
- However, in western countries such as America who **prioritise personal freedom over the collective goals of the country**, even when the government enforced the wearing of masks, **many Americans just simply removed it as most said "it removed their right of expression.** A study conducted by **Brookings 2020** revealed that **excessive individualism is the root cause of American's reluctance to wear masks**, where **40 percent of them said their "rights" are more important than reducing the possibility of getting others sick**
    - Uptake of vaccines as of late 2023 was only 68 percent, in comparison of the 90 percent in SG
    - Can use trump rally as examples

- in Sweden, people prioritised autonomy over safety, and no lockdown or law on masks was unstated; resulted in Sweden having the worst infection rate and impact on the health sector among its region

- On **New Years Eve 2021**, large groups had gathered at **Clarke quay** to celebrate the arrival of the new year, these crowds are a **clear violation of social distancing measures.** → shows that the **peaceful reminders the**

government enforce on singaporeans is ineffective as singaporeans still choose to **behave irrationally and irresponsibility**.

- A man, **Mr Alan Tham** was even **jailed for 6 weeks** for **breaching his stay home notice (SHN) because he had cravings for a bowl of bak kut teh**. Furthermore, clusters of up to **120 people are forming in KTV**, thus the **government decided to tighten restrictions (can be used in pragmatic vs morality)**

- Some Singaporeans gorged on covid 19 conspiracy theories while in lockdown and grew into **anti-vaxxers** who exploited social media - a study by the **Straits Times** found **over 17 such telegram groups with between 1000 to 14000 members** each - **plotting to spread their self-destructive ideals to the rest of society** and **subvert the state's position on vaccines.**

- Between **2020 and 2021**, **73000 business entities were forced to halt operations**

In places like **United States**, there has been a spike in anti-chinese sentiment, **Pew research centre** stated that **60 percent of Americans have negative opinions about chinese people**

Other forms of **misinformation concerning "solutions" to the virus** include the **use of hydroxychloroquine, an anti-malara drug** that has **no proof of effectiveness against covid 19**, where many believed a lot of these solutions, and **according to the BBC**, **800 people died globally because of the misinformation.**
- Suggested the **use of censorship** on social media platforms, facebook **removed 20 million posts that violated the rules on covid-19 misinformation**, (talk about POFMA)

The unexpected and unpredictable event of Covid 19 caused some countries' plans to fail

- Japan, one component of "abenomics" was hosting the 2020 Olympics, which was meant to **bring 40 million tourists to the country**. As the number of **foreign visitors had been increasing with 32 million in 2019, continuation of the climb seemed to be a safe bet**

- The global pandemic not only pushed Tokyo 2020 back a year, but forced the games to play out in empty stadiums and c**ost japan's GDP an estimated of 1.4 trillion yen.**

The "great resignation" triggered by covid 19, **jobsite surveyed 1000 people who quit their jobs, 92 percent said the "pandemic made them feel life is too short** to stay in a job they weren't passionate about." **microsoft 2021 work trend index** found **41 percent of the global workforce** was preparing to change jobs in the next year and 46 percent was planning to make a major career transition

Science & Technology

"Science and technology revolutionise our lives, but memory, tradition and myth frame our response" - Arthur **Schlesinger**

Explanation:
We control technology, not the other way round
- We use our tools for our purposes rather than allowing our tools to use us
- **Should not (completely) allow technology and science to dictate how we live.**
- "Revolution" is not inherently positive. It is an overturning of the good as much as the bad. Schlesinger maintains **that we make choices as to what we want to be revolutionised.**

The reality is that **far too many people worship technology** and allow their lives to become subject to technologies tha**t destroy the memory, tradition and the myths that sustain us**. They rationalise this destructive and defeatist mindset through their own hubristic myths of human rationality and objectivity.

The **term industry 4.0** describes **an economy dominated by artificially-intelligent robots free of human bias**, error and fatality

The **World Economic Forum in 2022** had **17 optimistic predictions** on the potential of technology in the next 5 years, including that "human potential will be redirected to more meaningful causes"

- AI is used in labs to **model the future, such as to predict short-term chronological events** or the **long term scale and shape of climate change**. It is even used to **model the past**, such as **simulations of the Universe right after the big bang** constructed in the **Harvard Astrophysics centre**. This **technology is also used by the UN** to **publish accurate events and statistics** for governments to make better national decisions and citizens to know more about the global state of the world.

(-ve)

The restructuring of the economy to cater to the use of AI leads to unemployment in sectors that follow manual routines (**usually low skilled workers, and may lead to increasing income gap**). As **AI is algorithmic** in nature: following a series of rules and steps, where it needs no pay, pee breaks, public holidays or falling ill, there will be an **economic advantage to select the peaceful, yet more productive workers over us, the trouble making incompetent vulnerable humans.**
- Eg. Amazon is primarily an e-commerce platform where most tasks are just a set of routines - **are handled by AI with computers and codes**. However, Amazon also **used to run 68 retail stores, but in 2022**, **letting them all go** (along with its workers) as they are not worth the operating costs, and will **enjoy more cost savings if Amazon focused on upgrading its AI on the e-commerce platform**.
- **Waymo,** which has been **experimenting out driverless taxis in the US**, and planning to launch them will **cause a mass displacement crisis in the service sector.**
- Even **high skilled jobs** such as personal accountants, administrators are outgunned by AI, **especially secretaries**, which have an **over 95 percent chance of being automated out of existence**.
- As AI can be used to improve anything, our new role as humans is to design the algorithms and architecture of AI using our **moral compasses to suit societal needs.**

Even if technology is usually more efficient than human workers, this does not hold true for every role

- in mcd, the **first self-ordering Kiosk** first rolled out across the island in **2016**, as of **2020, mcd also implemented these kiosks at all US locations**
- Theoretically, this allow consumers to complete their transactions more conveniently and also the solution to rising labour costs in the US
- However in reality, self service kiosk have **increased the lvl of complexity**, where **workers now not only have to operate cashiers but also juggle kiosk queries**
- In **2016, Stomp** posted a story from a reader who "felt humiliated" because of difficulty using the machine, saying how it **took her an hour to finally receive her food**
- A new **study from temple university** found that customers ordering from a self service kiosk plan **feel increased pressure to place their order speedily** compared to those who order from a human cashier
    - Led to a **worse customer experience and a loss of additional income due to people not wanting to order** due to the fear of not knowing how to use kiosks

-

Education (learning)

ChatGPT
- **>13 million daily visitors as of 2023**. In January 2023, **ChatGPT crossed 100 million users**, making it the **fastest-growing consumer application** in a short period of time.
- AI search engine that can provide personalised and conversational results, can answer follow up questions, unlike other services like Google
- **Survey by the online magazine Intelligent** found **30% of the 1000 college students surveyed in the US used ChatGPT on written assignments**, and **60% of that group used it on "more than half of their assignments."**

Limitations:
- Still a gap in its **ability to capture the nuance, storytelling and emotion humans have the capacity to develop**,
- Chatbot draws information from the more common things that show up on the internet and not necessarily addressing some of the finer points
- **Pew Research Center (2022)**: In another report, **60% of educators** mentioned that they worried about students misusing AI tools in their work, which indirectly

speaks to concerns about plagiarism and the potential erosion of academic integrity.

Benefits:

The **McKinsey survey** regarding students' use of AI tools for brainstorming and its impact on creativity found that:

1. **71% of students** who used AI tools reported that they felt more creative in their writing compared to when they did not use such tools.
2. Additionally, **64% of respondents** indicated that AI helped them generate new ideas and explore perspectives they hadn't considered before

- **Google Arts and Culture** also allows users to **view iconic museums for free via street view technology**. It is **supplemented by contextual information**, making it more informative than a real life tour. Its **additional educational (in the form of quizzes) and entertainment (selfies)** features truly **underscore how everything can be achieved online.**

- In the midst of the covid 19 pandemic, **Zoom experiences a 300 percent year on year increase in revenue in 2020**. Its multimodal nature allows for discussions of the same detail or depth as those in real life meeting rooms to take place, allowing many participants to listen in on the same conversation with no capacity constraints.
    - **Bill Gates predicted that business travel decreases by 50 percent in the new normal.**

Healthcare

Floreo US – autistic children
- Floreo is a company that started to **develop virtual reality lessons** designed to aid in therapy for autistic children.
- **Lessons cover a wide range of situations that autistic children may not have been exposed to**, such as visiting the aquarium or going to the grocery store.
- Teach autistic children, who **may struggle to interpret nonverbal cues, to interpret body language.**

- Improve core deficits of autistic people in social interactions and minimise the impact of restricted behaviours, with an overarching goal to help children develop **greater functional skills and independence**

Teletherapy SG
- **eCounselling Centre** founded by **Fei Yue Community Services** for Singaporean youth and young adults who seek **some comfort in anonymity**. Users can use their **Quick Chat feature** to **speak to a counsellor at available timings for free**, so that patients do not have to worry about not being able to afford expensive therapy fees.
    - However, it is important to note they cannot replace actual professional human therapists, as **every human has a unique problem that cannot be found in the algorithm**. **The lack of physical human presence and their sense of empathy also diminishes its effectiveness**.

- Stem cell technology possibility of reproducing without a female
- eggs were made from the stem cells derived from the skin cells of a male mouse. These eggs were fertilised with sperm of another male and then the fertilised egg was transferred into a female mouse where it grew and matured.
    - **Although just seven out of more than 600 implanted embryos developed into baby mice**, the pups grew normally and were fertile as adults
    - Useless discovery, opportunity cost incurred in the form of time and money to be researching actual cures for common diseases
- Stem cell therapy
    - Used in cancer treatment to destroy cancer cells or reduce risks of infection

food hunger

Don't only talk about how science will help increase supply of food, focus on the safety and quality of the food as well

- **Breakthrough of genome editing** that gives rise to the **world's first drought-resistant maize**, that on top of **tolerating the erratic rainfall of sub**

saharan africa possess desirable traits like **being disease resistant**. Crop yields **increase by 20-30 percent** in **sub saharan regions**
- The **consultative group for international agricultural research (CGIAR)**, a group of scholars and researchers take a science based approach on food security
    - Found that "reduced biodiversity" form a vicious cycle that reduces the momentum for the agricultural sector in Africa
    - Asia's rice-based farming systems have other challenges in "Low resource efficiency" and "unsustainable groundwater withdrawal"
    - In response, CGIAR has proposed target solutions, including the **use of cold chains for proper-harvest handling**, illustrating how science enables us to dissolve the overwhelming problem of global hunger into smaller sections that we can act on

- The **trans-Africa hydro meteorological observatory**, which forms a network of **20k weather stations across Africa** to provide both current and past weather data to agriculture workers. Additionally, it **helps to predict** when the next rainy season will start and time their seed planting to boost productivity.

- the 1950-1960s green revolution exemplifies this casual relationship between science, technology, productivity and sustainability, as the incorporation of innovations such as **controlled integration**, high-yield grains, pesticides
    - Today, we **only need 30 percent of the farmland** to produce as much as we did back in 1961
    - India has broken record every year after year with a **112.9 million tonne harvest in 2023 compared to the 10 million in 1968**, its **global hunger score went from 38.9 in 2000 to 27.2 in 2020**

- **nanotechnology** used to **kill gamma rays and x rays** that cannot be physically washed off
- Food fortification programmes

- One success story is the supplying of **one iodine fortified salt**, which is credited with having **prevented 750 million cases of iodine deficiency disorders globally**

- In 2020, the **UN World Food programme launched Hunger Map Live**, a machine learning-based model that taps on the latest data on the climate shocks to identify areas that are prone to food insecurity

(-ve)

In the field of GMO, a study by the **New England journal of Medicine** reported that **soybeans modified with genes from Brazil nuts** produced proteins that triggered a **strong, potentially deadly allergic reaction** in people **sensitive to latter**

Ethical concerns
- Xinjiang Emotion AI facial recognition
    - Use uyghurs as test subjects like lab rats, violates human rights

- **Rhesus monkey** always used to be tested for the breakthrough of medicine or psychological discovery
    - **Pit of despair**, **wanted to mimic an environment for how animals feel when they are depressed**

- Super salmon
    - Genetically modified to grow faster and bigger than the normal salmon.

- IVF - in virto fertilisation
    - complex series of procedures that can lead to a pregnancy for people who are infertile by allowing sperms and eggs to fertilize in a petri dish, then implanted back to the uterus

Golden rice - produce vitamin A

We place too much trust in science, while ignoring the self serving behaviour of those who develop these tools

- In may 2024, the UK introduced a new law that would **overturn the conviction of postmasters**, who has been charged for theft and fraud
- These postmasters were pursuers between 1999 and 2015 after the Post office **introduced Fujitsu's Horizon system** for accounting and stock taking across the organisation
- Despite complaints about the software problems from staff, the post office decided to **trust the accounting software where it flagged missing money**, leading to a**ccusations against 3500, and was further linked to 4 suicided**
- What was worse that they knew most of them were innocent as members of the development team on Horizon had found hundreds of bugs such as the tendency of the software to create duplicate transitions of its own

- From 1999 to the 2010s, **Don Poldermans**, was the **leading expert in the treatment of cardiac events after surgery**, publishing multiple articles that supported the use of beta blockers before certain surgeries, and Europe updated their guidelines in 2009 to reflect such groundbreaking research
    - However, it was only till 2014 when poldermans' data has been found out to be fabricated and beta blockers were not only ineffective, they **increased the likelihood of death by 27 percent**
    - In those 5 years, his lie had cost an **estimated 800,000 lives**
    - Self correction of using science works, but it takes too long

Rush, CEO of Oceangate, along with 4 paying passengers, were convinced to board on the submarine even though it was made of carbon, a poor alternative to titanium as it was created with assistance from Boeing, university of Washington, and NASA, would have lent credibility to OceanGate's claims

Thanks to its sophistication, it is often hard for a layperson to parse the correct information

Stakeholders/limitations

Ultimately, science in and of itself is simply a methodology for making sense of the world, not a force to (topic)… as it's real world impact is impelled by political factors

Organisations

(+ve) With such a globalised world, its more than necessary for organisations to work together, pool our resources and pursue our shared goals jointly, and advance scientific developments at the fastest rate

- With every country competing for supremacy in space, China is co-operating with EU in the **dragon program**, a research to study earth's magnetic field, with results being openly coordinated and combined to publish joint papers

- COVAX - ensuring resources are pooled between the north and south, ensuring universal access of vaccines, also ensures that studies regarding covid19 is shared among all countries. **By feb 2020, the genetic make up of covid19 was published by a team of chinese scientists**,
- followed by the mutations, allowing scientists worldwide to piece together a picture of covid's 19 movement and mutation on a global scale

(-ve)
- The pursuit of scientific endeavours, if privately funded from companies, tend to **serve the narrow interests of the elite rather than nobler causes such as uplifting humanity at large**, defeating their purposes
    - The **profit driven state of "Big Pharma"** reveals how bad things can get when only driven by profit motive, which **describes a trend of how researchers skew their data to positively reflect about the medication**, when there are drawbacks not displayed to the public.
    - In **2014, AstraZeneca halted research on malaria** - which mainly **plague developing countries** with poor sanitation systems – and its reason was that it **realised that there was not much money in catering to the poor and curing them of diseases.**
        - Today, its top products **address different types of cancers**, which bought in approximatel**y 10 billion dollars**, where it **caters to the need of the rich**
        - **Perpetuates global income gap and prolonged misery of millions** because monetary goals are sought after instead overly moral ones

- Similarly, one might look at the amount of attention to Elon Musk's two babies, **spaceX and Tesla**, to see how profitability and public interest often diverge. **SpaceX lavished 400m** to **develop its first prototype** where its **R&D is estimated to be 1.5**b. The readiness with thich he splurges on spaceX all over social media shows how lucrative it is, what with all the billionaires visiting space and all the babble about terraforming Mars, as of **2023 the company is valued at 140 billion.**
    - Private companies leverage their power as its benefactors to redirect scientific research **towards only the most lucrative pursuits**, **and only benefits the small minority, who are already living the most comfortable lives.**

- **Speed is key when it comes to maximise profits. "All else being equal, the fastest company in any market will win."**
    - As it turns out, this is **very different from safe science research practices, which must be slow and procedural** - because the process of achieving accurate results, addressing all possible side effects.
    - In the pursuit of creating the first vaccine for covid 19, **many erodes the pillars and principals of scientific progress and endangering humankind**
        - The oxford-**AstraZeneca vaccine** caused serious **blood clots in 25 European patients soon after its rollouts, 9 of whom died,** and thus it was **suspended in the EU states**. Investigation rolled out and found out the private sector had **failed to exercise due diligence in its haste.**
        - **Pfizer** reported that its **vaccine had over a 90 percent success rate in its trials.** However, they failed to account the effects of the vaccine on **different races**, and later found out the vaccines only had a **74.4 percent success rate on asians**. **Israel had it the worst, with only a 40 percent success rate, after paying hundreds of millions for them**
            - Also shown **suspiciously high death counts in elderly**

Additionally, it takes many years, many hurdles to be crossed, before scientific knowledge can be applied to help society

- Gregor Mendel, the father of modern genetics, discovered the possibilities of reducing food shortage by creating GMO food in mid 19th ceuntry, it was not till more than a century later in the 1990s that the first genetically modified tomato

became commercially available and only in 2015, was the first GMO animal, a salmon, allowed on supermarkets
- Science takes a long time for results to yield, where authorities are willing to let into their countries and citizens are willing to let in their bodies

- **Oxford and cambridge**, which **previously received over 130m annually from the EU, now share a measly 1m**, causing the departure of researchers and dissolution of research projects, threatening the development of science in the nation
- According to CGIAR, the problem of of global hunger struggles with a persistent funding gap of some 33-50b each year, representing a failure of politicians
- The problem got so dire in 2021 that the world food bank had to beg billionaires like Elon musk to donate 6b to save 42 million people on the brink of famine
    - Even if governments or private companies will dilute the true scientific process to serve their purposes, **such scientific research needs to have the resources to even make any progress**, which only these stakeholders can provide

- Conclusion: **Diversifying the sources of scientific funding** makes for the **best** outcome overall, where there will not be a strong one strong non-directional influence to serve one purpose, or **from the government, as it only will want the best for its citizens.**
    - In Singapore, many projects are **backed by the government agency AStar** where it **makes significant breakthroughs such as the invention of SARS detection kits**.

Governments
- **Politicians intervening** in scientific developments **that they are ignorant and ill-suited** (lack information) to take the lead will likely lead to worse outcomes than if they had stayed in the end.
    - **In 2001, President Bush banned** the use of **federal funds for research on embryonic stem cells,** causing research projects on their curative capacity to cure diseases to grind to a halt. His **unobjective justification** was as follows " My **position on these issues is shaped by deeply held beliefs"**
    - **President Trump hampered scientific progress** with brutal budgetary cuts to important institutions, chiefly the **Environmental Protection Agency,** which in his **2018 budget proposal**, ironically titled A New Foundation for American Greatness, **suffered a 31 percent (2.7 billion) spending reduction, the steepest among all agencies. In 2019,** the cut

is **further reduced by 40 percent for Energy Efficiency and Renewable energy's expenditure**. In **his 2021 fiscal budget, federal spending would drop by 40 percent for scientific infrastructure,** and instead **reallocates most of its budget to space travel** - something that only benefits the minority.

- In **1939, the "monster study"** - **stuttering was Purposely induced in otherwise fluent Iowan orphans (22)** by **belittling them for speech imperfections**. This study remains to **today the best source of scientific data on stuttering and its psychological impacts**, but it crossed a line and **caused more suffering than it was worth, for the sake of scientific pursuits as it left them with psychological trauma**
- **Chinese scientist He Jiankui** (sent to prison for 3 years) shook the world with **his "designer babies"**, where he **genetically edited 3 babies**. **122 chinese scientists condemned his behaviour and called on authorities to strengthen legislation**, as **existing laws had been rendered impotent and irrelevant by the novel CRISPR gene editing technique.**
    - Chinese state **drafted new regulations** requiring researchers working with "high-risk" technologies, like the manipulation of genes

- However, if politicians interfere the scientific research, to influence such research to serve the good of society, **where governments could guide such scientific research to strike a balance of power between the two**, to ensure the process is **funded**, **serve for the good of society and ethical**
    - Singapore laid out its **Model AI Governance Framework in 2019** to **govern future research** into and **use of AI**. It **establishes abstract ethical principles**, demanding that **decision-making in AI deployment** is explainable, fair, and **transparent, and above all "human-centric"**

Additionally, if scientific research is not restricted to the scientists and is **available to everyone, we can put them accountable for their research**

- In 2023, Harvard's Gino, a behavioural scientist studying honesty, was indicted for dishonesty. Many published works had to be retracted because the data driving it was found to be falsified: she would add new entries to excel sheets

representing make-belief experiment subjects and assign them extreme data point to strengthen her hypothesis. It only came to light when the media, in the form of **DataColada, an online newspaper exposed it, and was only possible as her findings were publicly available**

- Yoshiki sasai, once one of the country's foremost experts in biology, was found to falsify his claims about reducing the risk of bone fractures, using stem cell. However, academics realised the unrealistic numbers he conducted he researched on by himself, such as getting 280 male stroke patients in a month, which would be humanly impossible. Many scientists also replicated his findings, but could not get any similar results.

The realistic view however, is that scientific research should be available to most, but not all, as the risk of misuse…

- Nuclear science - link to nuclear weapons

Care work

- The **international labour organisation estimates 16.4 billion hours per day** are **spent in unpaid care work,** and how it is **necessary for the people in need of care will increase to 2.5 billion.**
    - Care work is also **gendered**, **76.2 percent of unpaid work** is performed by women
    - **2013 research by ChildTrends** found that presence of **one or more committed adults** participating in **care work** for a child increases the likelihood that children and youth **flourish and become productive adults**.

    - **21st century trends such as ageing population, increasing female participation in the workforce, and insufficient social spending for the vulnerable, makes care work essential in today's world.**
    - Technology and modernity have liberated women from the rigour of household chores, allowing greater workforce population.
        - With a washing machine, laundry went from a full day process to taking just a few hours

- **From 2018 to 2023, the number of women CEO appointments rise from 5 to 12 percent.**

- **Yougov** showed that **15 percent of human resource decision makers** said that they will **take into account whether a women who is pregnant or has children when consider about career progressions or promotions**, and unsure to hire women who have children in the future
- **Singapore 2022 white paper** on SG women's development found that **women were 4 times more likely as men to manage housework and caregiving duties**, further putting a burden on women.
    - Shows how **deeply rooted our conservative nature and patriarchal values are here**
    - **57 percent of singaporean men**, according to **2024 Ipsos survey**, think that **women's equality has gone too far that it discriminates against men**
- **The Equal opportunities Commission in Hong Kong** states that only **47 percent of employers said they would offer jobs to mothers**.
    - Emphasis the fact how the care penalty adversely affects the employability of a caregiver, how society has a bad perception and a stigma about it. This **stigma also discourages men from entering care work, further propagate the belief that care work belongs inherently to women's domains.**

- **2022 study by the University of Cambridge** has confirmed **higher cognitive empathy scores for women**, and **society tends to view women as being more empathetic and communicative**. Even if women may be better at some empathetic aspects of work, this **does not explain the disparity of pay in the working world.**

Environment/sustainability

- In **2015**, the **UN World Tourism Organisation** published a report citing the **potential of tourism, which contributes to all 17 of UN's sustainable development goals**, because tourism **tends to leverage a country's innate cultural or natural heritage rather than its human capital**, creating jobs for low skilled workers in the less developed countries, liberating them from the poverty cycle
    - Global tourism industry **reached 1.4 trillion in 2023**, almost back to its pre covid levels
    - Covid 19 costs the global tourism industry **more than 4 trillion in lost GDP** in 2020 and 2021 and **put 100 million jobs at risk.**

- **tourism is essential to the Maldives economy, contributing 30 percent of its gdp. In turn, 30 percent of its domestic budget is in turn spent on conservation efforts or more tourist attractions.**

Japan's mercury poison
- **1950 industrial disaster, Waste water from a chemical plant seeped into the Minamata Bay**
- Contain toxic organic compound **methylmercury → damage to brain and nervous systems.**
- **Only 528 ppl survive from among the 3000 victims**, more than **20k sought to be designated victims**, hoping for legal compensation

The Deepwater Horizon oil spill
- **Biggest oil spill on April 20, 2010**
- An **offshore oil rig in the deepwater horizon exploded**, as the oil rig were working to close an exploratory oil **well 5600m below sea level**, even though it **was only authorised to operate in waters up to 3000m deep,** causing **high pressure rush of methane gas** from the well that rose into the rig due to the **failure of a "blowout protector"** , causing a huge explosion (which was designed as an emergency valve to cap the well)
    - Investigations found out that the materials used for the blowout protector has **previously been tested 3 times before putting it into live usage, with the previous 3 times all failed.**
- The explosion not only led to the **deaths of 11 people**, the leaked oil, forming **150k square km**, has a**lso caused many habitats nearly living in the Gulf of**

Mexico still suffering with health problems even till today, with research still ongoing to understand the full ecological impact
- The **fossil fuel company was fined 65 B**

More vigorous and unpredictable El nino conditions causing **warm water to rise to the surface suppressed the upwelling of cold**, nutrient-rich water, **destroying the living conditions for fishes**. In **2016**, **sustained drought** in **Southern and Eastern Africa** led to a **loss of 80000 jobs in the agricultural and food sector.**

According to the **world food bank programme, Chadians** (people from Chad) are "**among the most affected by the global climate breakdown**" , as many agricultural sector many depend on to survive cannot keep up when "rain patterns are changing and droughts are frequent
- 37.8 percent of children under 5 are suffering from malnutrition

In 2011, Madagascar experienced its **most critical drought in four decades** - the **world's first famine caused entirely by climate change**

Globally, 14 percent of all food produced is wasted between harvest and retail, and further 17 percent of is wasted between retail and use, amounting to what the UN estimates is more than enough the feed the number of hungry people
- In US, 34 million food insecure individuals, along with 70 million obese individuals, further showing how if there are improvements to food production, it may just Channel up to more people being obese, instead of being materialised by the hungry.

One study **estimated that by 2050**, **19 percent** of the world would be a **barely liveable hot zone**, and **between 150 to 200 million** people will have to **leave their homes** due to desertification, rising sea levels and extreme weather conditions.

China, the world's largest carbon emitter, **promises carbon neutrality by 2060**, and is undertaking a **massive national project of expanding forest cover** and **experimenting with green energy**.

Responsibility of climate change
- The **richest 1 percent globally were responsible for more carbon emissions than the poorest 66 percen**t. Billionaires have also drawn attention for building

"doomsday bunkers", **insulating themselves from the environmental effects that their wealth and companies have caused**

- The **international Monetary Fund** reported in **2021** that **Africa's 1.4 billion people (20 percent of the world's population)** were responsible for l**ess than 3 percent of the world's total greenhouse gas emissions**, while **Africa** g**enerates 1 tonne of CO2 per individual per year**, the **average american generates 15 tonnes** while the **average singaporean generates 8.5 tonnes.**
- In **Kenya**, the government **severely restricted charcoal trading in 2018** due to environmental concerns. **80 percent of urban households in kenya use charcoal for cooking**, with **users mainly coming of middle and low-income households**, when the **cost of charcoal increases by 27 percent**, many families in Kenya **resorted to burning plastic and other materials** - **harmful to both health and the environment**, showing how the effects of climate change **impacts the poor more than the rich, and the blame is shift to the relatively powerless.**

- In 2022, plans were confirmed to **clear 31 hectares of forested region**s for housing developments and roads for the upcoming **Bayshore precinct in Bedok**
  - Meet people's practical needs rather than preserve nature for the sake of it

Lifestyle/trends
- A **wildlife Reserves Singapore survey** from **2020** found that most of the public views conservationism positively. **1 in 2 youths made a contribution towards conservation, 38 percent said they want to but don't know how**
  - However, the national **environmental counci**l found out that **70 percent were not fully aware of what could be recycled in SG**
  - Despite the **rising cost of living**, **51 percent of Gen Z consumers are now spending more on sustainable products**, a **UOB survey stated.**

- In June, the **National Environment Agency (NEA)** released **Singapore's waste statistics for 2023**, which showed that the **overall recycling rate** here had declined over the past decade, **from 62 per cent in 2013 to 52 per cent in 2023**, due to **rising consumption patterns**, and **increasing transport costs to facilitate the manufacturing of good from recycled materials**
  - Projected to **fail to hit zero waste plan** where it **targets 70 percent of citizens to recycle by 2030**
  - has **aimed to have 80 percent of green buildings by the end of 2030, and quadruple our total solar energy development.**

- Despite this, **SG still is third best nation in waste recycling rates**, showing how everyone in the global stage needs to step up

- **Green options exist now where none did before**
    - **AI-powered thermostats,** which are installed in **air conditioners** provide the precision needed to **prevent excess cooling and heating** and thus energy waste.
    - Technologies especially **smart home networks such as Alexa** also enables electronics to switch off with smart sensors if users forgot to switch them off
    - **LED bulbs 90 percent more energy-efficien**t compared to normal **fluorescent bulbs**
    - Increasing trend of **developments of more effective solar panels being installed on houses**, however, it **only takes 15 years on average for a household to break even on their investment**
        - All together, a **study on European homes** has found out all these home **automation technologies will reduce CO2 emissions by 13 percent.**
    - **EVs**, which according to the **European Energy Agency** produce **17-30 percent less carbon dioxide than their traditional gasoline-fuelled counterparts**

- A **2016 Nelson study** found that the **demand for Almond milk** had surged by **250 percent in the 5 years** prior to **becoming the most popular plant-based milk.**
- Even in stingy singapore, it was common to see **cafe goers shell out an extra 1 dollar for a latte made with that seemingly sustainable option**, notably in **starbucks**
    - Emphasise how tastes and preferences are changing and how us as consumers, **acknowledge the intrinsic value of the environment and not only the quality of products.**
- However, many **profit driven** companies make use of the rise of environmentally conscious consumers by **"greenwashing"** (pretending to be green without actually being so) them.
    - **In 2019, Mcdonald** admitted that it **replaced its recyclable plastic straws with non-recyclable paper ones**, while **marketing that they are recyclable**, destroying the planet while **deluding buyers into thinking they were making the right choice.**

- In **2020, IKEA,** which projects an **eco-friendly soy ice-cream, and plant based meatballs**, was linked to **illegal logging operations in protected Ukrainian forests.**
    - Extremely unlikely that any **products pops up on the market is a truly sustainable one**, with a **system that naturally puts economic gains first.**

(+ve examples)
- **Coca-Cola's carbon footprint shrunk** by **24 percent over the decade beginning in 2010**; on their website, they also proudly proclaim that they aim to **recollect and recycle every bottle they sell**, and parade the fact that they **return all the water they use in their drinks**, and have **provided more than 20 million people with safe drinking water**

- To capitalise on the rise of the ethical consumer market, and safeguard itself from being 'cancelled' in our woke culture
    - Since 2017, Google has transited to **purchasing 100% renewable energy for its operations**, including its offices and data centres.
    - **Starbucks'** innovation over the years to **expand the use of its Circular Cup (reusable coffee cup) and strawless lids**, and the research and development to **transit to carbon neutral green coffee** and adopt a sustainable dairy sourcing blueprint
    - Apple: **carbon neutral since 2020**, used **75% less single-use plastic packaging than in 2015**. The **iPhone 14 is made of 100% recycled rare earth elements in all magnets**, and **100% recycled gold in the wire of all cameras** and in the plating of multiple printed circuit boards, among other innovations to reduce its carbon footprint.

- **Consumers have the power to change production measures**, only if consumers are willing to go all out for change
    - **Shell**, despite routinely being hammered in the press, has **always been uncooperative about its unethical drilling practices.** However, environmentalist organisations have made inroads by putting pressure on its stakeholders. **Greenpeace strongarmed it into stopping its oil drilling operations in the high-profile Save the Arctic movement**, which **drew enough bad press that it backed out**. **Activists started to block Shell's ships**, while others piled up hate through **the people vs shell, shell no, and you shell not pass campaigns**, with **7 million signatories on a petition.**

- **Urban last-mile delivery** has become particularly pollutive. As n**ew technologies enable goods to be transported at unprecedented speeds**, the number of consumers who request **same-day and instant deliveries** has been **growing at an annual rate of 36% and 17%**, respectively. This is especially so in **China**, with these deliveries **averaging nearly three million parcels on a daily basis.**

The world food programme supplied stable supply of food to 370 million schoolchildren in the midst of covid19, one such initiative in Libya provided mineral fortified date bars to support 18k children

UNEP

COP28, known as the **28th Conference Of the Parties**, was hosted by Dubai, and explicitly addressed the need to **end the use of coal, oil, and gas, the main drivers of the climate crisis.**
- The agreement also calls for a tripling of renewable energy capacity globally by 2030, and the acceleration of technologies such as carbon capture and storage. Discussions were made on whether carbon capture was a viable alternative due to its high cost.
- COP28 started promisingly that included billions of dollars for green solutions and vulnerable communities. **Al Jaber, president of COP28, got more than 50 major oil and gas companies to promise to stop methane emissions**.
- However, **Saudi Arabia would "absolutely not" agree to phase down fossil fuels**. The head of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries rejected any language that called for reducing fossil fuel production. **Because COP28 decisions are made by consensus, a single country could block a deal.**

POTENTIAL SOLUTIONS

ECOSYSTEM RESTORATION

Ecosystem Restoration, initiated by the UNEP in 2021, has sparked a global movement dedicated to the revitalization of ecosystems. This collaborative effort not only aims to sequester carbon but also seeks to enhance "ecosystem services" as a defence against some of the most devastating impacts of climate change. Urban forests, for instance, play a critical role in cities by cooling the air and mitigating heat waves. Beyond urban areas, ecosystems like

mangrove forests along coastlines act as natural sea defences, reducing the height and strength of sea waves during storm surges.

Additionally, **UNEP is actively engaged in ecosystem-based adaptation projects**, such as the urban ecosystem restoration in **Laos**. By **restoring urban ecosystems in major cities, the project aims to mitigate flooding and enhance resilience**, directly benefiting a significant portion of the population. Ecosystem restoration contributes to the green economy by providing sustainable solutions that address climate challenges. Ultimately, ecosystem restoration initiatives contribute to building a more sustainable and resilient foundation for economies, aligning with the goals of the green economy.

LONG-TERM PLANNING

Climate adaptation solutions are most effective when seamlessly integrated into long-term strategies and policies, with National Adaptation Plans serving as crucial governance mechanisms for forward-looking planning. These plans involve a comprehensive assessment of climate scenarios decades into the future, coupled with vulnerability assessments across different sectors. By combining these insights, governments can strategically prioritise adaptation needs, guiding decisions on investments, regulatory changes, fiscal frameworks, and public awareness initiatives. Notably, these plans can enhance the adaptation elements within Nationally Determined Contributions, playing a vital role in meeting the goals set by the Paris Agreement. As the 28th United Nations Climate Change Conference in November 2023 approaches, focusing on adaptation, finance, and a long term transition. Most importantly, such policies can be implemented without much costs, making it accessible to developing countries who are less financially secure.

ICELAND AND DENMARK

Iceland and Denmark are a crucial driving force of the green economy. Ranked one and two respectively in the green future index 2023, topping the charts of energy transition, green

society and clean innovation, its policies are evidently effective. Both countries enforce their green policies to all, making strict laws to encourage its citizens to practise green practices.

For example, **Iceland established their climate action plan in 2018, with 34 different new changes being made to facilitate a green economy**. Measures **include a landfill tax** that will be designed and employed, with the aim to decrease the landfilling of organic waste, **wetland restoration which will be made and funded**, in order to reduce emissions from drained wetlands, as well as restoring natural habitats.

REGION OF AFRICA

Africa, being both a large continent and an area filled with **less developed countries, is a leading example for such countries to follow its sustainable footsteps** by following similar measures that it places, influencing other countries to do the same.

In November **2011**, Africa took a bold step towards a greener future by **signing the Green Economy Accord**. The accord was signed by every country in Africa, making the impact of the policy significant. This landmark agreement **prioritises creating jobs while protecting the environment, offering a win-win for both people and the planet**.

By putting job creation and sustainability at the heart of its strategy, Africa has created a model for other nations to follow as we navigate the path towards a greener future. Likewise, Singapore and Australia were influenced by Africa and came together to establish a green economy agreement to accelerate both countries transition towards a green and sustainable future, to drive green economy cooperation regionally and globally.[1]

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[1] "Singapore-Australia Green Economy Agreement | Australian Government Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade." n.d. Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade. 2024.
https://www.dfat.gov.au/geo/singapore/singapore-australia-green-economy-agreement.

THE INTRODUCTION OF CARBON CAPTURE

Carbon capture is one of the new viable solutions to address the carbon problems. Carbon capture and storage facilities aim to prevent carbon dioxide produced from industrial processes and power stations from being released into the atmosphere. Most of the carbon dioxide produced from burning fossil fuels is captured, transported, and then stored deep underground.

However, developing carbon capture infrastructure is energy intensive and expensive. This implies that not many countries could utilise carbon capture. Additionally, carbon capture is mainly used for extracting carbon and then repumping it into the soil to extract more oil. Extracting more oil will release more carbon dioxide that the roots absorb from the ground, making carbon capture contribute more to climate change.

<u>Plastics</u>

- **Singapore uses 400 million tons of plastics every year**, where it winds up in landfills, where it is non degradable, our **semakau landfill** will be fully filled by **2035.**
- **Poly chlorinated biphenyl in plastics** are found to be **hormone-disrupting**, where it is **linked to infertility problems in Singaporean women**, while o**thers may be carcinogenic**.
    - **52 percent of sea turtles** and **90 percent of seabirds** have **eaten plastics** means human, **the apex predator in the animal kingdom**, will **eventually be affected**
- The environmentalists in us have turned to eco-friendly alternatives than plastic bags, however, **paper bags are 400 percent more energy intensive to make than plastic bags**, The **UK's environmental agency** calculated that **each cotton bag has to be used 131 times before it offsets the climate heating effect of plastic bags**.
    - Additionally, **E. coli (which causes food poisoning)** is present in **8 percent of reusable grocery bags**

- Studies have shown that **only after the 150th use of a metal straw**, then there is a reduction in carbon footprint as compared to plastic straws

Culture

- **Denmark** is home to a concept **known as hygge**, in its tourism website defined as **"creating a warm atmosphere and enjoying the good things in life with good people."** It can be **"cosying up with a loved one"** and "sitting around with friends and family." - this vague explanation, is due to the fact that the meaning behind **hygee has no correspondence to any existing English word**, showing how **unique their culture and way of life is that one can truly understand only by living there** —> their **strong cultural identity also leads them to the world's 2nd happiest country** (according to **UN's 2024 rankings)**

- language used in culture where it shows the **different ways to address someone,** and can **derail interactions/relationships if used wrongly** —> **Chinese culture** where they call **customers as "laoban"** or **blue collar workers as "shifus"**
  - **Japanese and Korean** languages are **most well known in this regard with their systems of titles**. **Sama and San** are attached to names akin to "**Mr" and "Mrs**" while **-chan and -Kun are for friends**
  - Can state any Singlish or gen z cultures as well

- learning a language doesn't mean they understand how to use it
  - **Oxford English Dictionary** incorporated **a few singlish entries in 2016**, like **"blur" and "sabo"** where it also **featured "lah" in 2000** and **"kiasu" since 2007,** however foreigners that come to Singapore uses them inappropriately as the dictionary dont capture the meaning of how we use the words
  - Furthermore, **Singaporeans prides our bilingualism** and tend to jumble up using English and mother tongue in our day to day conversations

MUSIC/Arts

Oscar Wilde, writer of the picture of **dorian grey**, stated that **"All art is useless"** as "its aim is **simply to create a mood.** It is **not meant to instruct, or to influence** in any way." showing that since **everyone will have different perceptions on art**, the true intention of the art piece created by the creator is often missed, and argued it depended **more on the audience than on the artist**.

- As **Historian Yuval Hariri** writes in **21 lessons for the 21st century**, "Humans **think in stories rather than in facts**, numbers, or equations, and **the simpler the story, the better**"
  - **Cyril Wong** has been dubbed **"Singapore's first confessional poet"** for the careless self questioning in his poetry. He explored themes such as **homosexual awakening and the individual's conflict with society.** Such experiences are common to the LGBTQ+ community in conservative Singapore, as they often have to come to terms with gender identities that are assumed to be abnormal by society's standards. Yet, they are often foreign to "everyone else, with the tendency being to underestimate the self-questioning and trauma of being "born a crime".
    - **LGTBQ+ people may feel a sense of solidarity as such experiences are related to them** and **non LGTBQ+ people may also benefit by deconstructing their own biases** and developing a sense of empathy and sensitivity that helps them in engaging with such communities
  - Recognising the importance of exposing youths to Singaporean issues through Singaporeans themselves, **Cyril Wong's short stories "Here and Beyond"** of how it describes the state and value of Singapore, is now **prescribed O level literature text**, and **the A level syllabus was updated to include SingLit**.

Famous author **Richard Wright** once said, **"All literature is protest".** In many cases, writers actively craft their stories in direct response to the realities around them, explicitly designed to speak truth to power.

- The **Chinatown shop mural** depicts a **samsui woman smoking a cigarette**, and is meant to be a tribute to the women who helped built Singapore. However, activists found it too glamorous and state it did **not reflect the reality of samsui life** or find it promoting smoking to young kids. A member of the public states it **"look more like a prostitute than a hardworking samsui women"**

- Recipient of the **golden globe award**, the **2023 barbie movie** serves as an illustration how it was intended to talk about **the "tightrope" which women have to walk in society**. However, many critics viewed it as **messages of sexism or "wokeness"**
  - **Govt of Kuwait banned** the film for "ideas and beliefs" that are alien to its society

- Squid game, **netflix's most watched series with 142 million viewers**, and was also nominated for outstanding drama series, was meant to depict the **difference of behaviours of different classes, class inequality, and exploitation of workers.** There was one scene where the contestants were voted to leave the game, but were **ultimately forced back due to their economic hardships** → show how desperate the poor is to experience wealth **if presented an opportunity even if it meant death**
    - However, memes and other spin off series diluted the meaning of what the original creators of squid game wanted to portray. **The squid game: the challenge** and **Mr Beast's $456000 squid game** amassed **700 million views since 2020**. Both spin offs just featured contestants playing simple games to **win a prize with no consequences** if they lost. (different from the **cutthroat rigged** systems **fight to the death** environment) → criticised for "not getting the point"
    - The success of these spin offs, especially mr beast's, suggests the **general audience was more interested in the game show aspects of the original squid game**, and not the deep subtle meaning it was trying to portray about our society

- On halloween of **2021**, **Kyota Hattori** stabbed a passenger and attempted to set fire to a Tokyo train while dressed as the joker - upon his arrest, he told the police he **just adored the batman villian**
    - In 2012, **12** were killed in a **theatre screening of the dark knight** by a man who told authorities **he "was the joker"**
    - The **attempts to ban any joker related film (Japan and china)** is to protect the audience from getting radicalised from the violent messages

- **W!ld Rice** has presented plays such as **Cinderel-lah! And The Asian Boys Trilogy** that examine **ongoing singapore issues**, from gambling addictions to challenges faced by the LGBTQ+ community

Kpop → ongoing trend, popularity of kpop rapidly increases due to new catchy beats and technology, matched with dance moves → appealing to masses
Additionally, as Gen Zs like to follow trends, kpop is a trend setter, and many follow kpop brands to follow the trend
→ give south korea a national and cultural identity, known for its kpop culture. Tourists go to korean for kpop souvenirs.
→ brings economic growth to the country

Some niche parts of music in terms of how catchy it is, is commonly used for tik tok. These kinds of songs are different from the main genre of songs. More niche types of songs can get popularised due to the large number of youths using it
→ redefine what we know about music

Taylor swift → sold out tickets, hosts the biggest concerts
Travis scott → astroworld concert, 10 people died due to overcrowding and weak security measures. Travis scott got criticised and his reputation is tarnished. → shows how much passion people have for music that they will risk their lives to just listen to their favourite singer's music.

Some local celebrities go to other countries to get more collaboration opportunities and music infrastructure. Examples like JJ Lin, went to China to further his range of audiences. It also serves as a proud moment for Singaporeans as it shows that we are capable and talented to be at the global stage when it comes to music
However, even though Singapore has a small audience pool due to its small population, efforts have been made to increase the presence of music studies in singapore.
Schools like Sota, Laselle college of arts, NAFA , are introduced to nurture art skills for people who are looking for a career in it. Music is involved in co-curricular activities in Singapore such as choir, band to upskill students who are interested in arts, who have no art background or have financial issues.

Singapore is a STEM hub (known for A star lab), and in order to increase the nation's productivity, one must attract more foreign direct investment from investors, increasing the economic growth of the nation.

Opportunities are disproportionate regarding STEM and Arts in SG.
Being a pragmatic country, most people would want a return of investment when enrolling in something. As stem related jobs guarantee one a decent and stable salary, most people would choose to do such careers compared to risky jobs in the music industry, especially in such a knowledge based economy, and is the **best way to achieve social mobility.**
Stigma against arts being "useless"
-   This is further seen in 2020, where the **Sunday Times** published the results of a survey during covid, where **artists were ranked the least essential workers** by Singaporeans.
-   However, a study conducted by the **American Journal of Arts Therapy** found that participants engaging in art therapy reported a **77% reduction in anxiety levels** and a **60% reduction in depression levels**. The study involved

individuals participating in online art therapy sessions during the pandemic, where they created art to express their feelings and cope with stress.
- Literature and arts **cultivates creativity and critical thinking**, which from the **World Economic Forum report deems these 2 as the most important skills** to acquire in the **21st century.**

- **National day song " there was a time when people said that SG wont make it, but we did!"** - Remind us what makes Singapore singapore.
    - 2021's song "the road ahead" features four singers of the 4 racial groups in singapore, and show segment in 2024 ndp titled "we achieve" where the performance's narration explicitly frames this to "our diverse heritage and communities"

- **Wall murals** by **Yip Yew Chong** are well known for their nostalgic themes, the fact that the **government bought it means the artwork remains property of the public.**

- Mass Rapid Transport systems evolved into our island's largest art showcase **comprising 440 artworks by 100 artists**, **including students from diff schools across 100 stations**. -> remind us everyday about our history and remnant of art into singaporean culture.

Stakeholders
- **Singapore Art museum** underwent a **90m revamp all from the governmen**t→ shows how **government is the biggest stakeholder to integrate arts into our lives**
- Singapore's economic strategy depends on how innovative we are and our relationships with the outside world, **sg aims to become an art hub, in order to achieve global city status.**

- "**The art of Charlie chan Hock Chye**" shows how the government has leverage over the artists. **8k was founded for this book**, however the **book offers an alternative history of Singapore, different from the narrative in our history textbooks**. SG **removes its funds** and claims it **"undermines the authority or legitimacy of the SG government."** Thus, art is restricted and it cannot be as authentic as possible.

- **#LookAtMe** is a 2022 Singaporean film **directed by Ken Kwek**. It was **premiered at 2022 New York Asian Film Festival**. The film was inspired by

Amos Yee's 2015 vlogs that criticised Lee Kuan Yew and Christianity, and other real life events. The film was banned in Singapore as Singapore **claims "it may cause social divide"**

- **Ken Kwek's Sex.Violence.Family Values.**, a film made up of **"three dirty stories from the world's cleanest city"** was **banned in SG due to sensitive topics** even though it won awards overseas. (The shows **used slurs like "abu neh neh" not as insults, but in an ironic way as a commentary on racism in SG**)
- **OB markers** → it forms what is permissible to be discussed. OB markers are entrenched in the minds of artists, writers, and **artists may not able to express their artistic talents out of fear** they may not get their art founded or face charges of deformation.
- **Updated copyright laws in 2021** to **protect** "artistic", "literacy", and "musical" works **from theft** - **anyone who shares art online must credit their creator**, and anyone who does so can be sued.

New types of art
- AI Art - The advent of technology has presented us with abundance of knowledge
  - New software such as procreate, **Adobe photoshop** Sketch, and Affinity designer
  - **Apple's new technology Augmented Reality technology allows photos or videos to be beautified with AR filters.**
  - AI generated voice allows new creation of vids
  - **Technology increased visual effects (VFX) implementation in both big-budget films, eg. Avatar,MCU.**
    - **James Cameron** had actually been slated to start filming Avatar (3.5b grossed) in **1997**, but the **computer graphics (CG) technology required to raise his artistic vision simply did not exist at that time**, and thus the production has to be delayed till technologies improved. During the shooting, **directors like George Lucas (the star wars guy), Peter Jackson (the lord of the rings guy), and Steven Spielberg (the jurassic park guy) grasp the techniques used by James to enhance their movies**
      - The 2022 sequel brought movies visuals to greater heights, with the **use of motion sensors and VR to allow actors to "walk"** around in it

- **Electronic music**, is the **joint achievement of man and machine**: Digital keyboards replace pianos, drum machines replace drums, **generating sound from electrical signals rather than mechanical movements**
- New genres of music/dance exist and more widespread → In the 2024 olympics, breakdancing was introduced, where it received many positive comments
    - Metro boomin uses unique sound tracks he creates to integrates to popular songs
    - Autotune

Authenticity
- **In 2018**, the **AI generated portrait** of **Edmond de balamy** portrait was **bought for $430K**. Such simple use of AI to generate artworks **discredit the artists who actually use their own creativity and skills to design an art piece**, where AI generated ones are even being used **as a means for monetary gains**, jeopardising the very meaning of art.
    - the use of AI, **which follows algorithms and patterns**, **will only result in designs that only follow the most popular ones**, and will **not create anything new.**
    - Consider **Picasso**, who is estimated to have **produced 150k pieces of art** in his lifetime, where **he specialises in different fields of arts during different periods, shows how long it takes to evolve one's crafts**. However, now, **Picasso AI**, an AI image generator will allow anyone to 'publish' an artwork with just a few seconds.
    - However, one of the artists embracing AI as a potential ally has been **Refik Anadol**. He used AI to generate the art for his **Echoes of the Earth:Living Archive exhibition** using **135 million ethically sourced images of coral reefs**. It used one of AI's weaknesses, its **tendency to 'hallucinate' patterns that do not exist, to create new**, otherworldly forms of art. It was **trained on 200 years of art** from the Museum of Modern Art's collection.

Are Arts only for the wealthy
YES
- Artistic talent is rare to begin with. **Singapore's School of the Arts, for example accepts only 20 percent of its applicants**, making for an annual cohort of **fewer than 1200 students in the school** - miniscule compared to the 160k kids enrolled in secondary schools.

- However, as of 2017, **over 70 per cent of the graduates from the School of the Arts** went on **to pursue non-arts related university courses**, showing that despite their initial interest in the arts, a significantly large number eventually conform to more traditional careers.
- For example, Broadway tickets to watch live **action performances like Hamilton and The Lion King costs 200$**, where **tickets to watch kpop boy band BTS was being resold at 12000$**
- Similarly, **entrance into the Singapore Art Museum costs more than a day's sustenance (up to 30$)**, punishing art lovers who **need to state their stomachs before their souls.**
- The **famous Mona Lisa painting**, by da Vinci, is valued at **over 900 mil today**.
    - Showing how demand exceeding supply has turned the enjoyment of the Arts into an **inaccessible luxury**
- In **Maslow's hierarchy of needs** shows **five-tier model of human needs**, where **basic needs are placed at the bottom**, where only the poor can be concerned about achieving it, while **self-fulfilment needs such as enjoying the arts are placed at the highest tier**, where only the wealthy can enjoy as they can easily secure their basic needs

NO

2021 population survey on the arts, **8 in 10 singaporeans** agree that art inspires their studies and agree **it contributes to the economy, greater sense of belonging**, and **improve our mental wellbeing** and **90 percent** of singaporeans feel that **arts give us a better understanding of people of different backgrounds and people**

Even though many artworks are expensive, or creative art skills are hard to earn, these **artworks are universally free to be displayed by everyone,** making it accessible for everyone to enjoy
- **Ai wei wei** explains that **"Life is art. Art is life. I never separate it"** , where to truly appreciate life, art can be found in any shape or form, where to him, is a **medium of communication**, speaking to something deep within human nature, which is the way to help us **fully understand the beauty of life.**
- **Street art**, which exists in the public realm, with Graffiti and wall murals light up our built environment, **adding splashes of colour to the grey bricks, to be able to be even enjoyed by beggars**
    - The **most famous street artist is Banksy**, where his art is accessible to everyone by nature, to politically charges messages to the masses
    - A **banksy original, Girl with Balloon**, was **auctioned off for 1.4 mil in 2018**, before it promptly **self-destructed by descending into a shredder**

hidden in its frame, due to anti capitalist sentiments: the **Arts ia a public property, never to be cordoned off behind a price tag.**
- However, due to this unique incident, the **value of the art piece skyrocketed till 25.9 mil in 2021.**

- Works of art are now available in digital guises, with examples of E-books
  - Reported that **Amazon sells 500 million kindle e books a year**, which make up **only 21 percent of total book revenue but 36 percent of total book sales**, suggesting that such **ebooks bring cost benefits, and suggests more people enjoy e-reading**.
  - More people today have airpods and an apple music/spotify premium account where artists can share their music to a wider array of audience - the **most streamed song on spotify, Blinding lights by Theweeknd has been streamed 4.2 billion times**, which amounts to half of the world population listening to the song once.

- In SG, **the busking scheme introduced in 1997** to **'enliven city life"** and **"energise urban spaces"**, gives opportunities for people to **share their creative expressions and interact with audiences**, and get more people to **know our diverse culture**

Buildings (significance vs not significant)

- SG → need to consider land space and the opportunity cost if we were to demolish the old buildings
  - Singapore is the **third most densely populated nation** in the world, with a land area of **700 square km**, and a population density of **8500/square km**
- **Old national library built back in 1960** was **demolished in 2004** to **make way for the fort canning**, despite the old national library being an **iconic status as Singapore's first library.**
  - Despite heavy protests, the government still decided to proceed with the plans as it results in a **more effective transport system in the**

downtown line in the CBD district area, showing how the demolition of buildings due to pragmatic purposes will reap more benefits.

- **Bukit Brown Cemetery** is a Chinese public cemetery **opened in 1922**, and its used as a burial ground, where all it lies are all those who contributed to the past development of Singapore, **showing the importance of how much it represents the chinese culture**. It is notable in **displaying Chinese beliefs in feng shui**, with the placement of **graves as auspicious spots rather in orderly rows**.
    - However, the **decline in the Chinese cultural practice of ancestor worship**, and with many youths **no longer wishing to claim the remains of the bodies**, there is no longer the need for such graves that serve no purpose and thus the government **cleared 3700 graves to make way for an eight lane highway in 2011**.

- Singapore plans to **build 11 infrastructure projects** in 2023, in the **woodlands regional centre** and the **changi region** for increasing production of goods to **facilitate as the largest economic hub** in singapore in the northern region → necessitate buildings to be removed

- The **Hiroshima Peace Memorial** in Japan **commemorates the city's atomic bombing**. It was transformed into an exhibition hall that sat directly below the explosion, therefore it was **the only building that survived during the bombing**.
    - Serves as a reminder to everyone to never press the nuclear button again
    - In **1982**, following the potential deployment of **nuclear missiles during the tensest periods of cold war**, **200k anti-nuclear advocates** at the **peace memorial park** as their protest site, and was even paid a **visit by president obama** later on.

- **"Memory classrooms'** preserved in their original state, with clocks **stopped at 4:16 pm**, the time the ship sank - serves as a **reminder of the 2014 wrecking of MV Seweal**, and the students, and **to make sure history never repeats itself. 304 of its 500 students drowned** in an event involving human mistakes where the **cargo was carrying twice the weight limit,** and the ship eventually capsized. CEO of the operating company and some crew members were found guilty with murder and **violation of maritime law.**

(+ve)

- The **dragon playground at Toa Payoh** remind many singaporeans of their roots and childhood, as these **animal themed playgrounds were built in 1970-1990s** and thus an iconic part of their childhood, **even featuring in Singaporean children's books**.
    - However, many were taken down due to "safety concerns" in the late 1990s, and soon the dragon playground was the **last of its kind**.
    - With the looming demolition of the blocks around the playground, **Singaporeans railed online to petition for its preservation**. In **2014**, HDB confirmed that they would leave the playground and its sandpit (a rarity in modern playground designs) would be preserved, where **singaporeans can pass on these memories to their young, reminding us of our roots**.

- In **2022**, right after covid 19, the tourism industry in **singapore generated 14 billion SGD,** showing how much tourism contributed to our economy even during worldwide crisis.

- **Singapore heritage plan, in 2018**, highlights contributions by the Singapore Tourism Board to **promote Singapore's heritage and museums on the global stage** → particularly **historic buildings in chinatown** (in which have **muslim mosque and hindu temple to include the minority**), **kampung glam**, **and little india.**
    - Labelled as **"Instant Asia"** describing our **multicultural and historical heritage** as a way for tourists to **experience the whole of Asia just by travelling to SG.**
    - **New national gallery of singapore**, **64000m square** → collection of 9000 items, **holds the largest public collection of Art in South East Asia**, **attracts 2 mil tourists annually**
        - **Consists of 2 preserved prison cells from the supreme court** section of the national gallery, **reminds singaporeans our legal past and our struggles overcoming WW2 as a collective nation**
    - National Museum of Singapore is the nation's oldest museum, provides **free educational activities for P5 kids and other workshops to younger adults.**

- **Lau Pa Sat** - was conserved from its use in the 1970s as a hawker centre → the **only hawker centre left serving residents of SG's central district** → preserves our multicultural food culture

- **Google Arts and Culture** also allows users to view iconic museums for free via street view technology. It is supplemented by contextual information, making it more informative than a real life tour. Its additional educational (in the form of quizzes) and entertainment (selfies) features truly underscore how everything can be achieved online.
    - **In 2019**, the **louvre launched Mona Lisa: Beyond the Glass**, an exhibition **employing virtual reality technology** to bring viewers face to face with the **prestigious mona lisa**

STEM

- High paying jobs such as data analytics, business accounting, requires highly marketable skills such as critical thinking skills and knowing how to apply it.
- **In 2020**, **40k students sat for their PSLE**, and **85 percent scored in between a C and a A in math**, but once it gets more complex, **uptake falls off drastically**, in the **NUS only 18 ppl received a bachelor's degree in maths in 2021.**

- Things such as **bioethics that we should learn are often neglected**. Bioethics → crucial for decision making and ensure well being for all, especially in gene modification and medical technology.
Eg. Stem cell experiments not being done safely, modification of gene of a human, donated sperm/egg to produce a kid in another mother's womb.

    Singaporeans tend to define themselves as what job they are in instead of what they like or what their hobby is → pragmatic and humanitarian approach as it means how much people earn, how much they contribute to the good of society, how much people respect you
    → Singaporeans can get psychological issues, invoke more social stigma between different social classes → leading to existential crisis.
    - A **2022 Institute of policy studies** found that **67 percent of Singaporeans consider job title and status** to be **important indicators of social standing.**
- Thus, we **need Arts to educate the public about how everyone has an individual choice and rectify the pragmatic culture Singapore has adopted.**

However, Arts is a good long term solution to increase nationalism and pride among Singaporeans.

- Should we keep on developing such medical treatments for the minority that are not fertile?
- Should we keep developing space infrastructure catered to the billionaires even though that are billions starving
- Is it being monetised to be only benefited for the wealthy of the minority

How important understanding Mathematics and STEM is
- **UK, outlier of today's world**, make **mathematics universally compulsory up to the age of 18**, per prime minister Sunak's **to prepare young people for a "world where data is everywhere"**
- Singapore's idea of a pension plan, The **Central Provident Fund** is a system so **mathematically formidable** that it is **impossible for anyone without some skill with numbers to manoeuvre through**, yet alone manipulate it to their advantage. → therefore to address this, the govt runs **frequent webinars and workshops to educate the public**, especially the **non-educated elderlies**, even **providing a calculator on its site for the public's use.**
- **OCBC's 2021 Financial Wellness Index to measure how we balance our spending** , SIngaporeans are "good at the basics", saving **an average of 26 percent of our salaries**. **69 percent set budgets and stick to them** and **82 percent have sought medical insurance coverage** → indicates mastering our financial well being

- **MoneySense** is a national campaign that since 2003 has **worked to render financial knowledge** - how to put up secondary steams, and **plan for retirement**

UN/Governance

Small vs big countries (or general examples)
Can use for democratic questions

- In the UN, **big countries have a greater hold of power, P5 includes russia,china, US, UK and france** → have the **power to veto over any resolution, regardless the lvl of support**
- UN Started the **world food programme, the world bank, world health organisation** to ensure everyone has a fair part to play and ensures how no battles will be fault
- Every one of its 193 member states has one vote, no matter how big or small it is, regardless of strength and influence of the country. → **require a ⅔ majority for a veto to pass, diluting the influence that major countries have**
    - small states still have a chance to influence in decision making, during covid 19, when **small countries especially australia wants investigations into the origins of covid 19 in china. China responded saying it was too early, and also banned australia beef imports**. China govt criticise Australia, recommending people to not go there. However, **many small countries sided with Australia's aid, wrestling in the investigations being carried out.**

Small countries need to stand out economically to have a say in the global world.
- **Taiwan semiconductor industry** makes the world **most advanced computer chips**, **dominates over 55 percent of the global chip market**
    - Its **location** makes it pivotal to **ship to both China and US easily**

- An example is the semiconductors sector, in which **Singapore accounts for more than 10 per cent of the global market** and **20 per cent of semiconductor equipment in the world**, **despite not being the cheapest location to have operations**. DPM Wong also said Singapore has been able to distinguish itself as a stable and trusted financial centre, which is why there is a continued inflow of investments, capital and talent.
    - The **new refundable investment credit (RIC)** scheme comes with a **refundable** cash feature. **Activities in support of the green transition and those to do with new innovation and research and development are some of the investments eligible for the scheme**, as is the setting up or expansion of manufacturing facilities. **Provide 50 percent grant of costs**
    - **SG invests $6 billion in R&D in 2024**

ICJ (international court of justice) - a middleground to keep peace between nations or to punish nations who unfairly uses their power. **Failure to obey UN's resolutions, as when states are aggressive towards to other states**, is punishable under **Article**

41 of the **UN charter which allows it to "apply any measures not involving the use of armed force to give effect to its decisions"**

- help resolve a disagreement over the status of land in the singapore strait between malaysia and singapore in 2008, where it ruled that the **middle rocks** was Malaysia's and **Pedra Branca** was singapore's, which both countries accepted
- **In 1999**, the **democratic republic of congo** complained to the ICJ of **armed aggression by Uganda as between 1998 to 2003**, Uganda occupied land of the DRC, and **murdered 15000 people** of DRC while collecting valuable loot for themselves. The **ICJ ordered Uganda to pay 325 million in compensations to the DRC.**
  - However, **China can be above the rules** the ICJ (international court of justice) imposes. Due to its great influence, **china was not criticised for advancing their territory to the south china sea (90 percent of it)** and claiming it as theirs against the philippines
    - China and philippines always have conflicts about the south china sea, **leading to trade disruptions, and security instability between the seas**

  - To pessimists like **SG's foreign affairs minister**, this r**esults in a world where "might takes right", or where "the strong can do what they can and the weak suffer what they must"** → shows how international laws are shaped by huge nations, where no one cares about the opinions of small nations such as…

  - **SG funded FOSS in 1992** and consists of 108 small nations
    - **SG launch "FOSS for good" in 2022, where we provide courses in digital transformation for the other nations in FOSS**

  - **Paris climate agreement** - **Trump pulled out**, later reversed by biden, by a superpower pulling out, it **leaves a greater responsibility for the rest of the world to combat against climate change.** In **2022, Biden invested 369b** and signed the **inflation reduction act** - "the biggest step forward on climate ever" → helped **grow clean energy jobs in the US by 4.5 percent**
  - US, under Trump, **withdraw their funds to WHO, hampered the speed of developing a vaccine**

- **Iceland, a small country of 100000km^2**, was pressured by the US to join the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation, NATO. However, it **barely contributed anything to meetings** and only contributed when a fish war resulted in its own country to seek for help→ shows how useless small countries are even if they are given the opportunity to contribute

- **North korea** → famous for **"hermit state"**, passed by precious development opportunities - **did not gain benefits through trading with the rise of globalisation**, where north korea just focus on its hard power, and **did not follow the spread of capitalism**. As a result → its **gdp per capita at $654 according to 2021 UN estimates, one of the lowest in the world.**

Foreign aid
- **In 2021**, many developed countries announced they would **reduce their aid contributions to the UN from 0.7 percent to 0.5 percent of their gross National income**, citing the pressing need to free up more cash to spend on pandemic and save local lives

- **In 2011,** Japan mourned 15000 lives lost to the Tohoku earthquake **(largest in japan's history)** and tsunami, **destroying 100k houses.** Thankfully, rescue and recovery effects benefited greatly from aid **totalling almost 5 billion from 163 countries and 40 international cooperations**
    - Even in **UN designated "least developed countries", including Bangladesh and Afghanistan contributed**
    - However **in times of crisis, such as covid 19**, during the **2021 earthquake in Haiti**, there was a severe lack of aid where **UN appealed for 122m in aid to meet its humanitarian needs**, it was **unable to meet the goals** as most countries just focus on its own national problems instead

Refugees/immigrants
- Refugees
  UDHR articles
    - UDHR which reads as follows "we hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal - that they are endowed by their creator, with certain unalienable rights"
    - **Article 3** of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) affirms "**everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person**." → applies to all humans by virtue of their humanity

- **Article 2** of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights states that **everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms** set forth in this Declaration, w**ithout distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status**

- **in fact, Article 1 explains why freedom is fundamental to our species "All human beings are endowed with reason and conscience"**
    - **Shows we are sentient creatures, with a capacity of autonomous thought where we have our individual desires and dreams**

    - **UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)**, **44 million refugees** worldwide lives on the line, displaced out of all country borders, and **predict will hit 1.2 billion in 2050**
    - **69 percent of all refugees are held in neighbouring countries**, where **neighbouring countries are more likely to be poor**, refugees are still stuck in poverty or in a worse position, **especially in the middle eastern sections.**

    - For countries facing a population decline, open borders are a good way to bolster the local workforce.
    - **Open Political Economy Network** → published a **report in 2016** detailing **benefits refugees bring with them**, explains how it **will increase the supply of cheap labour, doing 'dirty' jobs**
        - Japan's ageing population has led to a labour crunch ,**Japan has the highest proportion of elderly citizens in the world**
        - Citizens **aged 15-63** (the working-age population) **represents a mere 59.5% of the total population**(Asia Nikkei, link)
        - **More than half of Japan companies are suffering from labour shortage** (Survey by Teikoku Databank in 2022)

    - MNCs also create jobs for locals: **the 10 biggest MNCs in Singapore alone create around 30,000** (local professional, manager, executive and technician (PMET) jobs

    - Refugees proved to be capable → **in 1975, after WW2**, the **125000 Vietnamese boat people were forced to migrate to US**. Now, their

median income is 70k, higher than locals, 64k, showing they are an assert to **drive the economy.**

- **Philosopher peter singer, who writes in Famine, Affluence, and Morality: "if it is in our power to prevent something bad from happening, without thereby sacrificing anything of comparable moral importance, we ought, morally, to do it"** → shows how it is a morally right how we SHOULD help people if we have the capacity to.
- Another quote by Peter Singer **illustrates the drowning child argument;** "**If I am walking past a shallow pond and see a child drowning in it, I ought to wade in and pull the child out. This will mean getting my clothes muddy, but this is insignificant - while the death of the child would presumably be a very bad thing"**

- Sometimes, the **clash of cultures can be a clash of fundamental values**, leading to **deep-seated societal instability.**
- France **has 6.5 million immigrants, or 10% of the total population**. This has led a number of culture wars.
    - The rules about hijab wearing has been very heated, with **France insisting that Muslim women not wear the headscarf as it goes against French values of gender equality and freedom.**
    - Even more devastating is the clash over freedom of speech. F**rance's support for complete freedom of speech, to the extent of supporting the mockery of religions, has led to bloodshed in racial riots.**

soft/hard power
- Both hard power and soft power is equally important. With influence but no might or all might with no influence.
- In **hollywood films such as 2008 Ironman and 2019's captain marvel**, they **displayed US military might by borrowing almost 1 billion worth of military equipment and the US air force, projecting its hard power through soft power**
- Kpop
- SG and SK military service → talk about famous ppl who still needed to go through NS, shows it is a national duty and how serious these countries take their security.
    - SG's military technology and equipments are advanced, **how our SARS 21, tanks and fighter planes are being bought by other asian countries.**

Belt and road initiative

In **2013**, china launched the belt and road initiative, to **invest in emerging markets around the world**, by creating a **vast network of railway**s, highways and energy pipelines. If **economies around china are stronger, it will only strengthen the economy of China.**
- As of **August 2023**, the BRI has covered more than **149 countries**.
- However, many **criticised China for being predatory by "extending aid" to poorer countries** in building infrastructure while **forcing them to repay loans at high interest rates.**
    - In **2018, Sri Lanka had to hand over a 99-year lease for its major port to china due to its debt**
    - In **December 2023, Italy,** the **only major western nation to sign to the BRI**, announced that they would be pulling out of the deal, stating that a **fraction of the Euro 20bn worth of investments promised by Xi in 2019 has never materialised.**

Progress/activism/change

"It is through disobedience that progress is made" effective/impact qn

- **Malala Yousafzai** → pakistan girl who advocates for women's education rights, going against the cultural requirements for girls to be submissive to men.
"How dare the Taliban take away my basic right to education", followed was a long campaign, gathering masses of support.
    - President had to give in and commit a **10 million donation to Malala fund and by 2019. Literacy rates had risen from 50 percent to 60 percent.**

- **In early 2020, in Thailand, thousands of youths are disillusioned with a society absent of basic human rights.** After decades of the **monarch ruling and unrealised promises of democracy,** a corruption scandal drives the people over the edge.
    - Even if they are breaking the laws by criticising them, they persisted nonetheless for change
    - Resulting in 2 amendments being enacted, even if impact is small, but would have never materialised were it not for the masses political agenda.

- **Resulted in the formation of the "milk tea alliance", where they protest for democracy**

- Environmentalist activist, **Greta Thunberg** inspired **4 million students worldwide** to embark on climate strike, creating the term **'fridays for future'** protest
    - In response, the **EU commission pledged a quarter of its budget** for the next decade to climate mitigation, and aims to be the **first continent to reach carbon neutrality in 2050**

- **2020 Geroge flyod's killer that triggered the BLM → the decision to resort to force, violence and unlawful behaviour from campaigns fed them a negative outlook on the public. Pew research centre stated that nationwide support for BLM decreased from 70 percent in 2020 to 55 percent in 2021.**

- The **Arab Spring** was a loosely related group of protests that ultimately resulted in **regime changes** in countries such as **Tunisia, Egypt and Libya**. Not **all of the movements, however, could be deemed successful** - at least if the end goal was increased democracy and cultural freedom, as **most rulers were just replaced by more authoritarian rulers**
    - These short term protests led to the **installation of authoritarian governments being more forceful** or **ongoing violence resulting in civil and political instability,** where it influenced many around the world to follow suit and oppose the government.

- The countries highest on 2024 human development index (**a measure comprises of real GDP per capita, life expectancy and years of education**) - switzerland (0.967) and norway (0.966) **did not get there via bursts of brutal war → no unlawfulness**

- **National Trade Union Council in SG in 1961** to **protect worker rights and pre-empt a repeat of the 1955 bus riots**, where a combination of low pay and long working hours **compelled 2000 bus drivers to riot, causing a few deaths**.
    - **2012 SMRT strike → ended in 25 dollar pay raise**.
    - **In 2023,** they intervened **when 300 workers were firstly demoted then demanded to work extra hours**
    - **Limit workday to 9 hours and work week to 44 hours**

- **In the US, Since 1866**, the **national labour union was founded**, union workers **earn 10.8 percent more** than non-union workers as they protected workers conditions and pay **from organisations such as starbucks, amazon, new york times.**

Pragmatism vs empathy/morality (forceful vs no force)

"Consider the view that we need more empathy and less hostility today."

After all, as we have been warned by George Orwell in 1984, absolute power corrupts absolutely, for a centralized, authoritarian government can wield immense control over its citizens.

- Continuity and change - compare past and present and evaluate how things will change
- Trade-offs - the implications and consequences of progress
- Power - must be enough to threaten, military might
- Conflict - hostility must arise from conflict

- Comparison question → case for empathy or hostility far expresses the other, under what circumstances would hostility be more effective.
    - Discussion should focus on weighing the implications and consequences of both approaches.
    - Compare by thinking of tradeoffs when morality or empathy is present, can make a point and have an example of morality and empathy in the same point, compare them

Introduction
- mentioning and comparing both empathy and hostility
- Give more than one example

Pragmatism

(+ve)
- Singapore's leaders, who are **more than happy to sacrifice moral concerns**, typically in the form of freedoms and rights, **in the name "of the greater good",**

stating "it only allows for more effective governance" (use pofma and lgbtq mentioned earlier)

- **Lee kuan yew declared in 1984**: "**either the drug traffickers hang, or the drug problem will never stop**" → **only 2000 arrested in SG per year, where its a far cry from the 20 million in America, when their popn is only bigger than us by 60 times.** Even if there are other reasons for them drug trafficking such as having a low IQ or mental health problems, they **will also be executed, eg Nagaenthran, IQ of 69** → shows no exemptions made → enhance the deterrence effect
- **Interested in investing in nuclear plants even if there is strong public disapproval**
    - A growing number of singaporeans disagree with the government stringent on welfare such as not having a minimum wage or compensation about how "unfair" the meritocratic system here - **that we should be self - sufficient, and not suck the state's resources dry** is just a tactic to keep government expenditure low
    - However, most of them failed to realise **SG must remain competitive in order to survive and SG has been running on a budget deficit in the recent years**, further enforcing that pragmatism is key to governance
- **ISA - (the youngest lone wolf was 16 when he planned to attack mosques near his home in 2020 who had planned to go to Syria to take up arms and even planned to mount an attack in Singapore if called to do so)**

- The **misuse of drugs act in SG** is one of the only few laws that has **extraterritorial jurisdiction**, meaning that **consuming drugs aboard is still an offence, and is punished if the offence occured outside of SG**
- However one specific, drug, cannabis was often used globally and influenced youths with the internet. Of 1k Singaporeans polled by the Sunday times in 2022, **53 percent said that Singapore should legalise cannabis for medical purposes**
    - In 2022, Joseph schooling confessed to taking cannabis in Vietnam while participating in the SEA Games
    - Was **barred from disrupting his NS**, and only fined 10k
    - S**hows how resistant and pragmatic SG is**

- The **USA's patriot act**, passed in the **aftermath of the 9/11 attack**, exemplified decisiveness in tackling an existential threat, when survival is at stake.

Surveillance techniques like arrests without trial, searches without reliant, and by 2019, th**e "land of the free" had 50 million close circuit cameras.**

- In the US, many protested against lockdowns and mask mandates, arguing variably that the virus was a "chinese scam", that it was less deadly than the common flu, that masks were useless in containing the particles that spread it
    - In September 2021, the **unpopular decision of President Biden** finally announced policies **forcing two-thirds of all US employees to get vaccinated**. His **approval ratings fell to tragic lows**, and some policies were contested legally, but his approach represented a step in the right direction based not on what the freedom-loving crowd wants, but what is best for the country.

(-ve)
- The **pragmatic nature to have a growth at all costs society to maximise a country's economic developments have major consequences**
    - Due to **capitalism in the US**, powerful firms tend to exploit the masses, and is the most prominent in the healthcare sector, where the healthcare system is "simply broken" - The **average annual amount lost to healthcare is 11000**, which is **double that in comparable developed countries**. It also performs **shockingly poorly in life expectancy (31st in the world) despite being a major superpower**

    - On the other hand in China, due to the prioritisation of industrialising the country, over the past decade, China carbon emissions have tripled, emitting **14 mil tonnes of CO2** - **China's air quality is the 11th dirtiest globally** and caused **1.4 mil premature deaths.**

Morality
- For example, when Obama took office, The US was struggling with its worst recession since the great recession, and **unemployment surged past 10 percent**. He launched a **787 billion aggressive stimulus package**, which in conjunction with taxing the rich, steadied the ship, and by the end of his 2nd term he had **record figures in income, jobs, and household net worth**.
    - However, when **advised to travel the nation to conduct his explanations on his economic policies and its merits**. Obama did the "right" thing by staying in DC, **choosing to work on policy rather than on policy messaging unlike trump, who all is talk but no action**. However, obama failed to account for the volatile political climate, and surrendering the limelight instead of seizing it like a more pragmatic politician, have allowed the republicans to control the narrative and

convince the public that his policies were ineffective, leading to **irresponsible waste of money and "lazy" to not go for speeches**.
- Not only did his humility **cause his approval ratings to remain stubbornly in the red, it also hurt his ability to push new policies - most notably the Affordable Care Act** (also known as Obama care), which republicans think it's just a further waste of money, and result in its **smaller scale** during implementation **(44 percent of public opposed it, and only 40 percent approved of it by Pew in 2010),** even though it proved to be one of the most important policies to date, helping the poor with cheap access to healthcare.
- Lamenting his lack of political capital and how it prevented him from doing more, he said "**the truth of the matter is that if we had been able to communicate more effectively all the steps we had taken…then we might have maintained a majority in the House**" during the implementation of Obama Care.

- Germany's recent denuclearisation due to a meltdown among anti-nuclear protests due to the fukushima incident (which radiation wiped a whole city out, leaving it isolated), and its leaders decided to take the moral route and respect the shift in public sentiment.
    - Impractical decision from the govt that had pledged to reach carbon neutrality by 2045. **In 2021, coal** - the dirtiest fossil fuel - returned to become the biggest part of **german electric source sitting at 4th highest usage in the world.**
    - Also has **side effects of making germany more dependent on the ruthless Russia** - and hence **less able to stand up to, from where it imported its natural gas**
    - Ethical concerns clouded logic, bringing the country back into the 20th century. A pragmatic government would have insisted that nuclear energy is one of the safest sources of energy, and replacing it with unclean alternatives would be more costly and detrimental to our health in the long run.
    -

Gender

When Jane Austen wrote that "It is a truth universally acknowledged, that a single man in possession of a good fortune, must be in want of a wife"

more than 200 years ago, she probably did not expect that women would one day define their own path in life, much less run a country. Yet, however much we have achieved today, there is more to be done…<stand> (Conclusion)…and that, would indeed be an outcome that Jane Austen would have welcomed, without pride or prejudice.

To what extent has gender lost its meaning today

- **World Economic Forum 2024 Global Gender Gap Report**, where the **political gap has closed by 8 percen**t and **95 percent of educational gap** has been closed between genders **since 2006.**
    - 33 countries have achieved full parity in terms of putting boys and girls in school
    - Women now compromise of 42 percent of global workforce
    - **97 percent of all nations have made some efforts**

- The less society differentiates and discriminates between females and males, the less of a need to split people by gender.
    - In the past, traditional media and mindsets segregated the roles of men and women, where the men are obliged to defend and provide for the defenceless shown in how the **Titanic evacuated "women and children" first**
    - Now, as society gets more progressive, In European countries, fathers and mothers get an **equivalent amount of parental leave, like Iceland with 180 days**, showing how the responsibilities of upbringing a child should be equal for both parents
    - **In Singapore, maternal leave for men is increase up to 10 weeks announced in 2024 SG budget**
    - In **2021, NYC** introduced legislation requiring public venues such as cafes and concert halls to **provide gender neutral toilets.**
    - In the UK, several schools have started to install semi general neutral toilets

- **Miley Cyrus**, whose styles alternates between feminine and masculine
    - Celebrities promoting inclusivity of gender, where it is okay to cross dress

- Gender neural title **"Mx" to its dictionary in 2016**, followed in **2019 by the non-binary pronoun "they"**
- In 2021, **Argentina allowed "X"** as a **third gender option on identity documents**, where even the **international civil aviation organisation, which accepts "unspecified" as a gender**

- Identify of people cannot be captured by the concept of gender as many **people are defining themselves as whatever they want in a liberal and progressive society, and how people are encouraging it**

However, it is not true that gender discrimination no longer exists, and thus the concept of gender is important for us to fight for our causes
As long as females have it worse than males in some regards and vice versa, we still need to invoke the terms of "females" and "males" in the fight of gender equality

The crime sexual harassment, is labelled as a **gendered crime**, as women are more disproportionately suffer from it
- **Australia's 2022 national survey** revealed that in the workplace, **40 percent of women compared to 14 percent of men** attract sexually suggestive comments, and in **77 percent of cases, the harasser is male**
- In **Singapore, 21 percent of female managers** faces promises or threats about their career prospects from superiors seeking sexual favours

Around the world
Gender discrimination in Iran
- (2022) **In Iran, Juna Amini,** a 22-year-old Kurdish student was **killed by the "morality police" in her home country for "improperly" wearing her hijab**
- Amini's death triggered widespread protests manifested by generational oppression and frustration, which began in the Kurdistan province and soon **spread to as many as 80 cities in Iran**. Protests were held by women from all walks of life (rural to working class, politicians, schoolgirls) by **refusing to wear their hijabs and filming it.**
- **Iran, also known to be discriminatory to females, where 40 percent of females are not in employment or schooling, which elevated to other forms of protest that focuses on women rights.**
- Moreover, the revolution has penetrated the entirety of social media, with the hashtags **#WomenLifeFreedom** and #HairForFreedom has been trending on Twitter since the protests began. (to express the desire for, and commitment to, equality, safety, and choice for women in Iran.
- On September 30, over 80 women's rights organisations from the Middle East, Asia, Africa, and Latin America issued a statement to Raisi's government urging the state to repeal Article 638 of the penal code, **review and change all laws that discriminate against women, and to ratify the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women** (CEDAW)

- However, these protests were subdued by 2023, the **government instituted harsh measures to do so**: they **shut down both the internet and phone networks**, used **live ammunition** against demonstrations, and conducted mass arrests, the movement was not as impactful.

Gender discrimination in Argentina
- In Argentina, civil and human rights are a concern, especially towards women, where a **high amount of rape cases caused alot of unwanted pain and suffering**, especially when abortion was illegal. In the **final days of 2020**, it **legalised abortion** - a bill that has been rejected many times due to cultural reasons, finally **showing that the concerns of the female have been heard.**

Gender discrimination in Taliban
Since the takeover of Afghanistan by the Taliban in August 2021, **women have been wholly excluded from public office and the judiciary**. Today, Afghanistan's women and girls are **required to adhere to a strict dress code** and are **not permitted to travel more than 75 km without a mahram**. They are compelled to stay at home.

- In nepalese villagers, **women on their periods are banned** from touching crops or food due to believes **linking the natural process of menstruation to notions of impurity**, and **sometimes even banished to menstrual huts (where many die)**

Misogyny
- Andrew Tate says women belong in the home, can't drive, and **are a man's property**
- He also thinks rape victims must "bear responsibility" for their attacks and dates women aged 18–19 because he can "make an imprint" on them, according to videos posted online.

Sports
- **Netfix's documentary "Athlete A"** discusses the psychological and sexual abuse faced by female gymnats, where it tells stories of girls like **Maggie Nichols**, who was **dropped from the US olympic team in 2016** when she **reported her experience of sexual abuse to the police**.
    - However, her going public eventually exposed the rot at the core of the sports industry, the **doctor, Larry Nassar,** who oversaw the young girls and women at USA gymnastics for nearly twenty years, was found to have

sexually abused the females under his care. The film **explored testinomals from hundreds of victims.**

- Difficult training gave doctors like Nassar the chance to manipulate and assault over 260 women and girls, and by offering sympathy and food to these athletes, he was able to gain their trust.

- In **2021, a chinese tennis star peng shuai** revealed on **weibo** that a high ranking official in China has invited her into his home and coerced her to have sexual intercourse, **"I was crying the entire time," she wrote.**
    - However, she later resurfaced in a video call with a smile, and in her first interview after the incident, she **claimed that everything was well**, and also **denied to have made sexual allegations in the first place**.
        - Shows how much the **government has authority over atheletes careers, where it forced them to abide to certain rules**

In Singapore

- **According to a survey conducted by NLB in 2022, 50% of women in STEM feel gender discrimination at work. 40% feel discriminated against during job interviews because of their gender.**
- **2021 AWARE survey that two in 5 workers had experiences sexual harassment at work in 5 years, but only three out of the 10 had reported sexual harassment at work**
    - Talk about the monica baey incident or the #metoo campaign
- Carework (refer to section)

- **In 2023, Suntec Singapore Exhibition Centre made one toilet gender neutral for one of its events** —> triggered massive displeasure about the nation going "woke", indicating lack of readiness to integrate male and female spaces together
    - A **2022 YouGov poll found that 87 percent of people wanted different gender toilets**
    - **SG passed a law to make it compulsory for all toilets in public spaces to be segregated by gender**
    - Many gyms in Singapore only allow women to enter, eg, **Activ.co and Mom in balance**

Measures:
- From urging more flexible work arrangements to greater protection for victims of domestic violence, the **White Paper on Singapore Women's Development unveiled in 2022** (March 28) outlines the Government's plans to improve the lives of women here.

Equal opportunities in the workplace
- New laws to ensure fair employment practices, plus ensuring those who come forward to report issues have their identities protected and are not retaliated against.
- **New Tripartite Guidelines on Flexible Work Arrangements by 2024, to require employers to consider employees' flexiwork requests fairly and properly.**
- **Career mentorship, networking opportunities and training programmes for women at work and re-entering the workforce.**

Recognition and support for caregivers
- **Home Caregiving Grant will be increased from $200/month to up to $400/month.**

Protection against violence and harm
- Penalties for three sexual offences have been raised
- Greater protection for victim-survivors of family violence, including a helpline with expanded capacity and multiple modes of reporting, such as a mobile app.

Other support measures f(low-income family/single parent)
- Pilot child-minding service so parents can work with piece of mind
- **Expand kidSTART to support more families with young children**

General

Show how our current world is getting more educated
- **World bank data** states that **global literacy rates** have climbed drastically over the course of the recent 3 decades, **from 74 percent in 1991 to 87 percent in 2020**, and **primary education enrolment has risen to almost 90 percent as of 2018**, while **secondary (55 to 66 percent)** and **tertiary education (19 to 40 percent)** has also increased dramatically since 2020

A less democratic/controlled society
- As recorded in **Freedom House's 2024 in the world report**, civil liberties (freedom of action) have **been on the retreat for 18 consecutive years**, with **52 countries becoming less democratic in 2023**, **29 percent of the global population lives in countries classified as "not free"**.

Showing how democratic countries leads to happiness

- when we put **UN's World happiness report** and the **economist's democracy index side** by side, we can see the respective nations where all of the world's happiest nations are democratic nations that guarantee their citizens extensive civil liberties, while none of the least democratic nations where people cower in the darkness of totalitarian repression with no power over their own fates are happy nations

Poverty is a big problem today
- The UN estimates that, as of 2023, **165 million people worldwide live on less than $3.65 per day**, while the **average global gini coefficient sits somewhere around 0.4.**

How we only take in information that we only care about, and **how we already have a biased view to consider to take in what kind of news that fit our narrative**
- P**ew research centre's** state of media 2016 study found that **one third of social media users in the US did not perceive much diversity of opinion** in their news feeds. When participants were confronted with content **they considered 'controversial', 83 percent chose to ignore it**, which 31 percent would customise their feeds to see less content of such in the future, while **1 in 4 would block the source**

In singapore, we value honesty in relationships, we prefer our loved ones to be open with us and it is done out of kindness.
- A 2023 bumble survey found that 81 percent of us value "kindness" in a potential partner over good looks, with 53 percent in turn defining "honesty" as a defining feature of kindness, and 28 percent would not date individuals that "play mind games"

Gloabalsiaton
- The world bank stated that globalisation has caused global rates of absolute poverty took only a **quarter of a century** to **fall from 36 percent to 9 percent in 2023**, whereas **global gdp has increased from 20t in 1989 to 88t in 2019**

- Singapore signed 27 distinct FTAs
    - **Indian employment pass holders rose from 14 percent in 2005 to 25 percent in 2020**
    - In the past 20 years, SG has **contributed 140b to India's development**

- UN formed a counter-terrorism committee that enables member states to share information on terrorists

- SG's own **Mas Selamat**, who had **plans to blow up Changi Airport**, was first caught by Indonesia, and then after his escape, by Malaysian authorities in johor.
- These 3 countries had been exchanging intelligence reports, showing how countries collaborating on a global problem shows how it will ensure our safety

- Brexit
- Uk's withdrawal from the EU, which links 31 countries with free trade and services
    - Driving force behind the move was to distinguish the UK as one country, with locals lashing out at the EU's generous immigration policies, as a result of foreigners were allegedly diluting and destroying what it meant to be British -> to **path a way for a stronger cultural identity**
    - By the end of 2021, Brexit was calculated to have **reduced trade with the EU by 15.7 percent**, the **centre for economic policy research** estimates that their GDP has fallen by 2-3 percent, and the UK **barely had a 0.1 percent GDP growth**, making it the worst performing nation in the developed world -> trade off for economic losses

- As **96 percent of Egypt's land area is desert**, it is the largest importer of wheat in the world
    - **85 percent of its wheat comes from Ukraine**, and the russia vs Ukraine war **causes the price of wheat to rise by 44 percent**, causing a crisis for the poor in Egypt

Philosophies
- Humanism - from a humanist perspective, wants to make life better for us human beings, where human beings are valued
    - Eg. the government should take a greater hand in ensuring that the poor in society have greater access to medical, educational opportunities
    - Eg. rich countries should have the responsibility to help poor nations due to…

- Liberalism - worldview founded on ideas of liberty and equality, support ideas such as free and fair, where freedom is prioritised

- About being free from the rigid control and the presence of choices, for society to progress
- Eg. can use for examples where people choose to go against them being discriminated where they want a world of equality

- Morality/ethics
  - Refer to section

General Quotes

Naomi Klein – No Logo

…as Naomi Klein, author of No Logo pointed out, globalisation has resulted in…

The Rise of Brand Power

- **Shift from product to image:** Companies focus more on selling a lifestyle or identity rather than the actual product.
- **Global dominance of brands:** A small number of powerful brands control vast segments of the global economy.
- **Exploitation of labour:** To maintain low costs, brands often outsource production to countries with poor labour conditions.
- **Environmental impact:** The pursuit of profit and growth leads to environmental degradation.

The Impact on Society

- **Consumerism:** Brands promote a culture of consumption and materialism.
- **Loss of identity:** The homogenization of culture through branding erodes local identities.
- **Weakening of democracy:** The power of corporations over governments undermines democratic processes.

- **Rise of anti-corporate activism:** Growing public awareness of corporate abuses leads to resistance movements.

…as Naomi Klein, author of No Logo pointed out, globalisation has resulted in…
…calls for change…because of the need for

- **a new economic model:** The book advocates for a shift away from consumerism and towards a more sustainable and equitable system.
- **support for local economies:** Building strong local communities is crucial for resisting corporate power.
- **empowerment of workers and consumers:** Individuals have the power to challenge corporate practices through boycotts, protests, and other forms of activism.

In essence, No Logo argues that the dominance of global brands has created a world characterised by inequality, environmental destruction, and a loss of cultural diversity. It calls for a fundamental rethinking of our economic and social systems.

Aldous Huxley – Brave New World
Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World* is a chilling dystopian vision of a society obsessed with stability and happiness at the cost of individuality and freedom…

…just as Huxley warned in 'Brave New World', we seem to be losing the profound depth of human connections while embracing the superficiality fostered by a society obsessed with stability and pleasure.

Brave New World serves as a cautionary tale about the dangers of sacrificing genuine human connection for the pursuit of superficial happiness, but it appears that we are deaf to Huxley's warning.

George Orwell - 1984
George Orwell's *1984* is a chilling portrayal of a totalitarian society where individual thought and freedom are suppressed:

After all, as we have been warned by George Orwell in 1984…
…Absolute power corrupts absolutely, for a centralized, authoritarian government can wield immense control over its citizens.

…it is important to have a system of checks and balances because the absence of any opposition or oversight allows governments to act with impunity.

…technology has the potential to allow mass surveillance to be a tool of control which governments can use to instill fear and conformity

technology, achievements in science, dangers posed:
Many are familiar with the story of how Adam ate an apple from the tree of knowledge and hence suddenly understood good and evil. Yet, despite the parallel of that symbolism to science, many more are ignorant of the power of technology to harm and only celebrate the positive outcomes of its use in medicine, communications and automation.
(Conclusion)…so that we can see that sometimes, the fruit of science can indeed be rotten.

Russia's invasion of Ukraine

Geopolitical Lessons
- **Weakness of Deterrence:** Despite Western warnings and sanctions, Russia proceeded with the invasion, highlighting the limitations of deterrence in the face of determined aggression.
- **Unity of the West:** The conflict has solidified Western unity against Russian aggression, demonstrating the importance of collective action.
- **The Return of Great Power Competition:** The war has marked a resurgence of geopolitical rivalry, challenging the notion of a unipolar world.

Military Lessons
- **Importance of Intelligence:** Accurate and timely intelligence has been crucial for both sides, demonstrating its significance in modern warfare.
- **Logistics and Sustainment:** The war has underscored the critical role of logistics and sustainment in prolonged conflicts.
- **The Power of Modern Technology:** Drones, precision weapons, and cyber operations have played a significant role, highlighting the importance of technological superiority.
- **The Human Factor:** The Ukrainian resistance has shown the critical role of morale, leadership, and national unity in overcoming numerical and technological disadvantages.

Economic Lessons

•**Economic Weaponization:** Sanctions have been used as a tool of economic warfare, demonstrating their potential impact.

- •**Energy Security:** The conflict has highlighted the vulnerability of European countries to energy supply disruptions.
- •**Global Supply Chain Resilience:** The war has exposed vulnerabilities in global supply chains, particularly for essential commodities.

Humanitarian Lessons

- •**The Cost of War:** The conflict has caused immense human suffering, emphasising the importance of humanitarian aid and refugee protection.
- •**The Role of Media:** The war has shown the power of media in shaping public opinion and influencing political decisions.