2024 VJC GP Prelim Paper 1 Answer Scheme

Q1.	'In this global age, national boundaries are no longer relevant.' Discuss.

<u>Requirements:</u> Students need to first unpack the defining features of a global age, where the exchange of ideas, goods, and people is commonplace. Likewise, students need to display an understanding of national boundaries as countries' right to sovereignty, countries' specific laws and cultures that make up their unique national identity.

<u>Key words:</u>
"no longer relevant"
● Lost the necessity and importance, or are impossible to maintain; an absolute term.

<u>Point of contention:</u> In today's global world, national boundaries are relevant only to the extent in which they are enforced for benefits. Countries reaping the benefits of national boundaries will maintain the necessity of their country's sovereignty and borders.

<u>A likely approach:</u> Far from losing their relevance in our global society today, national boundaries enable countries to grow their economies and prevent escalation of cross border conflicts.

Arguments	**Explanations/Examples**
<u>Opposing Argument</u> National boundaries are problematic for economic development. It is unrealistic and impractical to expect countries to be self-sufficient in the manufacturing of most goods and services in the modern age.	**Explanation:** Most if not all countries need to be plugged into the world economy/global market to ensure sustainable economic growth. National boundaries restrict trade between countries, and some countries like America also impose tariffs on imports for industries to protect their own. **Examples:** While there are the ironically termed "Free-Trade-Agreements", they allow goods to flow freely only between countries that are part of the agreement. Developing countries are often made to open their economies so that the wealthier countries can purchase their natural resources, but they may not be given the same kind of access to those of the developed countries due to protectionist policies. On the other hand, multinational companies which are less restricted in their operations often have manufacturing facilities in one country, research and development facilities in another and their markets all over the world. These companies thus facilitate the flow of people, goods and resources across national boundaries, and countries suspend concepts of sovereignty to attract their investment. **Possible evaluation:** Economic boundaries make sense as a way of insulating the country from uncertainties from external economic factors. An example could be UK voting of Brexit, due to migration issues and funding of the European Union especially for the

	less productive countries. In such cases, boundaries do make some sense, especially if countries want to make a clear stand about safeguarding their economy and their citizens and not providing for the economically less productive countries.
Opposing argument The most pressing challenges of today's global age are cross-border issues such as environmental and territorial issues, which render national boundaries less relevant.	**Explanation:** The rise of regional and international organisations to foster international cooperation to resolve cross-border problems. **Examples:** Israel-Palestinian-Iran conflicts, terrorism, smuggling of weapons and drugs, human trafficking, haze etc. It is estimated that there are 27.6 million victims of human trafficking worldwide at any given time, according to the US Department of State. The think tank Global Financial Integrity's *Transnational Crime and the Developing World* report estimates the size of the global illicit drug market between US$426 and US$652 billion in 2014 alone. With a world GDP of US$78 trillion in the same year, the illegal drug trade may be estimated as nearly 1% of total global trade. In the 2024 edition of UNODC's (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime) World Drug Report, it states that in the Triple Frontier area of Argentina, Brazil and Paraguay, drug trafficking organizations capitalise on the porous borders, engaging in money-laundering and the smuggling of drugs and counterfeit goods. Similarly, the Golden Triangle, spanning the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Myanmar and Thailand, is a hub for opium and synthetic drug production and, more recently, wildlife trafficking and illicit resource extraction. **Possible evaluation:** National boundaries are important to prevent and mitigate cross border problems. Strengthening national boundaries will allow national and regional governments (i.e., ASEAN leadership) to monitor illegal activities in their states properly and to act on them more swiftly to remove these threats.
Opposing Argument National boundaries may be losing relevance as they reinforce unequal power structures and discrimination.	**Explanation:** All around the world, anti-immigrant sentiments are rising and cases of violence against migrants are commonplace. **Examples:** Anti-immigrant protests in Europe, Trump's anti-immigrant rhetoric...etc. There are some 183,000 refugees and asylum seekers in Malaysia, mostly from Myanmar. But xenophobic sentiments have increased — as have deportations, despite official opposition to Myanmar's military takeover. Middle- and low-income countries host a disproportionately large share of the world's displaced people, at 76 per cent, the statistics showed.

	A report by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) showed that there were 108.4 million displaced individuals at the end of 2022, up 19 million from 2021.What makes them displaced, however, is the concept of national boundaries. They are displaced only because they left the country of their origin and are not welcome in another. While national borders are not particularly restrictive to the highly mobile, cosmopolitan parts of the population, those who are refugees are usually shunned as they are seen as unproductive and resource-grabbing. The often-raised question of "Why are we providing them with housing etc. when they are not one of us?" reveals the mentality of scarcity and how citizens are conditioned to believe that the life of one of their own is more important to one not of their own.
<u>Supporting argument</u> National boundaries are crucial in ensuring a country's right to sovereignty.	**Explanation:** Sovereignty means the fulfilling of important responsibilities such as accountability to the people, assurance of the rule of law and inclusive governance. **Examples:** Russia's invasion of Ukraine prompted international outcry and protests as the invasion of a sovereign country is a gross violation of the principles of the UN Charter and of international law. Russia's unprovoked military invasion of Ukraine violates a key principle of international law: it is unacceptable for any power to violate a country's sovereignty, political independence and territorial integrity. Singapore's response: "Unless we […] stand up for the principles that are the very foundation for the independence and sovereignty of smaller nations, our own right to exist and prosper as a nation may similarly be called into question one day." - Minister for Foreign Affairs Dr Vivian Balakrishnan's Ministerial Statement on the Situation in Ukraine and its Implications, on 28 Feb 2022.
<u>Supporting argument</u> National boundaries are needed to protect and conserve unique cultures and traditions. All countries have specific political and social contexts that affect their policies and governing.	**Explanation:** Most if not all countries have unique cultural practices and heritage that they strive to protect. These national cultures help to promote a sense of belonging among citizens and social cohesion. Often, national cultures have specific trademark features or elements that citizens take pride in. Due to various historical and political reasons, borders are also enforced as part of a government's national policy. **Examples:** A case in point: the Korean Demilitarized Zone – the border between communist North Korea and democratic South Korea – is the most heavily militarised border in the world. The

	zone separates the two countries with barbed-wire fences, land mines, and armed guards. Citizens of most countries must have a passport and official permission to enter the borders of North Korea. North Koreans must also have official permission before they leave the isolated nation. With the rise of McDomination, governments around the world are more intentional in their efforts to fund national heritage programmes and efforts. National boundaries thus serve the function of preventing local cultures from being diluted by external cultural influences. **Possible evaluation:** The celebration of World Heritage Day suggests the possibility of a shared cultural heritage that transcends borders and brings countries and people closer.

Markers' comments: Weaker scripts assumed that just because the world is more interconnected through forces of globalisation and technology, national boundaries are no longer relevant at all. These scripts cited reasons, from the generalised ones like the availability of the Internet and its affordances, to more obscure ones like how academics share research across countries, to justify why we can do away with national boundaries.

Stronger scripts demonstrated insight by considering how the porous nature of national boundaries could have significant roles in the current context while also recognising that some functions may be declining in significance. This is a question where nuanced analysis is critical especially since "no longer" is an absolute term.

Q2.	Assess the view that the arts do not contribute to social change.

Requirements: Students need to consider the qualities and purposes of the arts that either enable or limit them from being a force for good. As they demonstrate awareness of the root causes of social issues which are to be addressed, it would also be useful to examine a range of art works and evaluate their effectiveness in targeting those issues.

Key words:
"Contribute"
- Help to cause or bring about.

"Social change"
- Occurs when various stakeholders work towards a common goal.
- Usually carries a positive connotation wherein it is associated with progress (e.g. improved standards of living, more equitable access to resources, etc), or even change in mindsets.

Point of contention: That the arts are ineffective in bringing about improvements to the state of society.

A likely approach: Because of the complexity of social issues and variety of social contexts, the extent of change that the arts bring about is uneven. Nonetheless, it must be acknowledged that bringing about social change is one of the roles and responsibilities many artists try to fulfill, and their works often leave an impact, be it short or long-term.

Arguments	Explanations/Examples
Supporting argument The Arts seek to raise awareness of social issues to inspire action.	**Explanation:** The arts can effectively foster empathy when their portrayals of social issues are vivid and engaging enough to motivate the audience to take actions for a better society with less social injustice and more compassion. **Examples:** Protest art casts the spotlight on social issues, so that viewers can be inspired to create changes. ● Ai Weiwei's politically charged installations often fight for human rights, freedom of speech and democracy in regimes around the world. Many of his works have left the international community questioning and demanding accountability from the Chinese government. Consequently, he was detained by the Chinese authorities in 2011 for his art. ● Banksy's artworks, such as Girl Frisking Soldier, often grapple with issues like war and inequality. His street art creations often invite the masses to make meaning out of them, as they consider what social critique he has embedded in his works. Banksy has also invited a new generation of street artists to follow in his footsteps of using art as a form of socio-political protest. **Possible evaluation:** While protest art, especially in the form of street art, can be cost-effective, very accessible and reach out to more viewers, not all art forms are effective in provoking critical thinking and inspiring action for change. At times, the focus of viewers may not extend beyond the aesthetic value of the art pieces. **Examples:** Keith Haring's art is known for its distinct playful imagery, consisting of bold lines, bright colours and dynamic human figures. Viewers who are drawn to the strong visual appeal of his works may not be able to fully appreciate their deeper meaning, such as activism for AIDS awareness.
Supporting argument The Arts is a platform for depicting marginalised voices and giving representation to minority groups, so that the larger	**Explanation:** Cognisant of the arts' ability to represent experiences and tell stories, many artists have used the arts as a platform to represent minority groups and raise awareness of the issues they face. Many artists also highlight shifting values to challenge norms set by the larger majority, reimagining alternative ideals for society to aspire towards.

society can work towards increased inclusivity.	**Examples:** ● *This Is Who I Am,* a digital theatre project featuring autobiographic monologues by disabled artists from Singapore and the UK, examines various access barriers that people living with disability face. It compiles personal stories to increase visibility of the creative case for diversity and furthers the agenda of access and inclusion in the arts. It also aims to shift perceptions around disability. ● W!ld Rice's *National Day Charade* reimagines how National Day can be celebrated in Singapore, wherein stories of marginalised groups are told and the narrative of the people's relationship with the state is not just of love and admiration, but of disappointment too. **Possible evaluation:** The arts often resonate more strongly within specific social or cultural groups that already share similar values or perspectives. It is likely that many viewers of art works that represent the marginalised already possess the beliefs that the artists wish for the larger society to be exposed to. In addition, the effectiveness of the arts may be limited by persons of privilege finding the marginalised's experiences unfamiliar or choosing to actively avoid learning about them, since challenging or changing their existing mindsets may prove to be uncomfortable or difficult. This further prevents real social change from happening fast or widespread enough.
<u>Supporting argument</u> A closer-knit society can be forged via the process of collaborative creation and engagement in shared experiences.	**Explanation:** Attending a concert, discussing portrayals in theater works and visual arts, or reading works of literature can spark conversations and create common experiences for consumers of the arts. Community art projects, such as murals or local theater productions, encourage collaboration and teamwork to unite people around a common goal and strengthen community bonds. **Examples:** ● In Singapore, the "Paint My Queenstown" project invites volunteers to paint murals that reflect their memories of life in Queenstown. The experience creates a closer bond amongst the residents as they share more about their heartwarming stories with each other. Likewise, the #ArtsInYourNeighbourhood initiative by the National Arts Council seeks to create opportunities for interaction amongst communities in neighbourhood spaces, to build a more connected society. ● In Australia, community arts programmes are initiated to improve the well-being of communities, in the wake of natural disasters. The "New Art New Walls" project brings together families affected by bushfires to create paintings for their newly rebuilt houses to help them feel like homes again. Families in affected neighbourhoods were given

	opportunities for connection, respite, and emotional processing via this creative recovery project. **Possible evaluation:** There needs to be sustained engagement with these projects for there to be stronger community bonds forged over time. Many individuals may not always feel equipped to participate in the arts because of their perception that it requires a lot of skills and arts education. Hence, it is important to empower and enable their participation.
Opposing argument Political and social constraints may stifle artistic expression, via censorship imposed on works that address controversial issues, limiting the arts' ability to effect change.	**Explanation:** With their creative license, artists may push boundaries in their use of the arts as an alternative platform for socio-political protest and commentary. However, depending on social contexts, there are varying extents of censorship measures that may prevent artists from effecting the change they desire. **Examples:** ● Chong Tze Chien's *Charged,* an army drama that confronts race relations and brings to light the secret prejudices in Singapore's multicultural environment, received an R18 rating from the Media Development Authority. This rating prevents under-18 teenagers about to do full-time National Service (NS) from mulling over racial tensions and how they can play a part in mitigating the issues when they eventually serve NS. ● In 2023, *Goodbye in Seoul,* a satirical art exhibition was abruptly cancelled and forcibly removed the day before it was scheduled to open in South Korea's national assembly. The artists' intention to promote conversations about how the government can do better, such as in its response to the Itaewon crowd crush tragedy, could not materialise. **Possible evaluation:** Even when more liberal societies have greater tolerance for a wider range of art works with harsher socio-political critique, it takes more than robust discourse to bring about effective change. Social issues like prejudice and poverty require relevant stakeholders to overhaul their deeply entrenched mindsets and redesign key policies, all of which take a long time and require sustained commitment.

Markers' comments: Weaker scripts focused more on describing what certain artworks aim to do, instead of evaluating their outcomes and explicitly identifying the differences brought about by these pieces. Some misconstrued 'social change' to mean negative changes.

More insightful scripts defined or scoped 'social change' and assessed the extent of change, ranging from intangible ones like shift in mindset to something as tangible as legislative implementation. Successful scripts paid attention to the word 'contribute', noting that the arts

can be a part of the change without necessarily being the only driver/impetus or triggering far-reaching impacts.

Q3.	To what extent should we be concerned about artificial intelligence developments today?

Requirements:
Students need to touch on current artificial intelligence developments and discuss what major areas of concern might be. They should unpack the notion of "concern", then take a stand on whether we should indeed be concerned about artificial intelligence developments, or whether such concerns are unwarranted/overblown.

Key words:
"Extent"
- This refers to the degree or level to which a particular issue is of concern. In this context, it asks how much we should be worried about AI developments.

"Concerned"
- This refers to the state of being worried or anxious about something. In this context, it pertains to the apprehension or fear regarding the developments in AI.

"Artificial intelligence developments"
- This refers to the advancements and innovations in the field of AI, including new technologies, applications, and their implications.

Point of contention: The primary point of contention should be the extent to which society should be concerned about the rapid developments in artificial intelligence. This involves weighing the substantial benefits AI offers against the potential risks and ethical challenges it poses. While AI can drive economic growth, improve healthcare, and enhance quality of life, it also raises significant concerns regarding job displacement, ethical dilemmas, and unintended consequences.

A likely approach:
The essay could argue that we should largely be concerned that AI developments might be taking a dangerous turn, as more and more complications and ethical issues arise. However, that is not to say that all AI is bad and that we should stop using AI. A balanced stand should be taken which acknowledges and expresses the concerns about the risks of AI, but also suggests potential solutions, such as regulatory frameworks, education and workforce development, and international cooperation, to ensure that AI advancements are harnessed responsibly and ethically.

Arguments	Explanations/Examples
Supporting argument AI poses significant ethical concerns, as bad actors might use AI for	**Explanation**: AI could be used to generate deep fakes with malicious intent or to spread untruths and misinformation. The stakes may be high when it comes to issues of national importance, such as elections, and there should be some attempt to regulate or clamp down on such malicious use of AI.

their own agenda and should be stopped	**Examples** • Calls to regulate the use of deepfakes: Andrew Critch, an AI researcher at UC Berkeley put together an open letter together with many other tech sector luminaries including the 'Godfather' of AI, Yoshua Bengio, calling for regulation of deepfakes, arguing that deepfakes often involve sexual imagery, fraud, or political disinformation. Since AI is progressing rapidly and making deepfakes much easier to create, safeguards are needed. • A recent example would be the AI deepfakes of Kamala Harris calling Biden senile aimed at inflaming partisan tensions and casting aspersions on Harris's character. (https://www.ndtv.com/world-news/kamala-harris-joe-biden-and-donald-trump-targeted-ai-deepfakes-fuel-voter-manipulation-and-partisan-tension-in-us-elections-6265887) • **Possible Evaluation** The concern and need for regulation is rather pressing, especially with important issues at stake for example the U.S. presidential election coming up. Deepfakes and AI could be used to sway unsuspecting or naïve voters into swallowing untruths and thereby effectively "stealing" their votes, or worse, stoking tensions and conflict.
<u>Supporting argument</u> AI could indirectly cause harm to society and the economy by pushing out jobs and making existing conditions worse	**Explanation**: AI is supposed to make menial work easier or less onerous, ostensibly making life better especially for the working class but it can actually have the opposite effect. Adopting AI solutions could then cause companies to give more tasks to their workers and sometimes even cause blue-collar workers to lose their jobs. **Examples** • Supermarket cashier counters in America and other developing countries are increasingly being replaced by self-checkout counters and "smart" kiosks, in some cases entire supermarkets are unstaffed and run by AI and robots. E.g. Cheers and even Chateraise, a confectionary chain having "just walk out" outlets in Singapore • In South Korea, there has been a huge drop in staff in the workforce across supermarkets and retail chains employing AI cashiers, down some 453,000 workers compared to the past. https://koreajoongangdaily.joins.com/news/2024-01-29/business/tech/AI-cashiers-conspire-to-drive-down-retail-worker-numbers/1969436

	Possible Evaluation: Although such initiatives appear to reduce work or take over physically demanding task, in reality, according to a Bloomberg article the real goal is not to enhance worker welfare but to cut costs. https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2024-06-28/will-ai-take-my-job-45-of-firms-using-it-seek-to-cut-staff-costs The use of AI cashiers also means large numbers of former cashiers or retail staff are displaced or made redundant like in the South Korean example. This could lead to social and economic problems, as the country struggles to re-train and re-absorb these workers into other sectors. Such re-skilling costs money and time, and these blue-collar workers could also have dependents which would place additional strain on the government and social services as they would have to provide support to such families in the interim.
<u>Opposing argument</u> However, just because there are concerns with AI does not mean we should reject AI unequivocally, as AI still has many benefits to offer us. As long as we can regulate or calibrate the use of AI, it remains a powerful tool that can serve us well.	**Explanation**: AI advancements have the potential to drive significant economic growth, enhance healthcare, and improve overall quality of life. These benefits can lead to increased efficiency, better outcomes, and a higher standard of living. **Examples**: ● In the United States, IBM's Watson has been used in oncology to provide treatment recommendations, significantly improving the accuracy and speed of cancer diagnosis and treatment. ● AI is also used in keyhole surgery through systems like the da Vinci Surgical System, which enhances precision and control during procedures. By providing real-time 3D imaging and AI-driven guidance, it allows surgeons to perform minimally invasive surgeries with greater accuracy, reducing recovery times and improving patient outcomes. This technology has been particularly beneficial in complex procedures such as prostatectomies and cardiac valve repairs. **Possible Evaluation**: ● AI-driven advancements in healthcare can lead to earlier and more accurate diagnoses, personalised treatment plans, and improved patient outcomes. This can reduce healthcare costs and improve the quality of care provided to patients. The treatments themselves like complex keyhole surgeries, might not even be possible without the use of AI as they would require many more man hours from a surgical team to execute or are too impractical without support from AI.
Markers' comments: Students should avoid drawing substantiation from fictional work or hypothetical speculations, as the premise for their arguments should be based on real life	

trends. Not all technology is specifically AI, so students need to be mindful of their choice of examples to ensure relevance.

Weaker scripts tended to list down benefits of AI **without** highlighting why societies need not be concerned with how AI is developing or being used and had example-driven paragraphs (1 paragraph on the arts, 1 paragraph on healthcare, and 1 paragraph on the environment…).

Students need to be mindful that simply stating the benefits of AI does not automatically mean they have explained why we need not be too concerned. Benefits and concerns are not mutually exclusive; there should be some weighing of the concerns to evaluate if the benefits are worth the trade-offs.

Very few scripts mentioned the lack of rigorous AI regulations and how there are no common frameworks to govern the development and use of AI.

Q4.	Consider the effectiveness of your country's education system in preparing students for the future.

Requirements: Students need to first highlight the VUCA (Volatility, Uncertainty, Complexity and Ambiguity) nature of the world and draw links between Singapore's education system and how it enables students to thrive in the future. Key policy shifts and changes in Ministry of Education (MOE)'s national curriculum should be included in the response.

Key words:
"effectiveness"
- Usefulness, practicality, success rate…

"Your society"
- **Singapore, for most students.** Consider both general society as well as specific demographics such as the lower-income groups, for whom access to educational technology or opportunities is not equal.

Point of contention: The future is unpredictable and even with our best efforts, we cannot guarantee our students are fully equipped and ready to thrive in the future.

A likely approach: While the future is uncertain, Singapore's education system is largely effective in preparing our students for the future by equipping students with essential skills and leveraging modern-day technologies.

Arguments	Explanations/Examples
Opposing Argument Critics of the education system in Singapore argue that it does not prepare students for the future as current practices primarily focus on rote	**Explanation:** The Singapore government has always been resolute about the fact that education should be aligned with the needs of the economy, and the education system has as a result been very focused on producing students who fulfill the workforce's needs. But the nature of Singapore's economy has changed over time, and it is now one that will have to rely on innovation and disruption for future growth. The education system produces

learning and academic excellence.	individuals who excel in conventional industries of the past but is often seen to be failing to groom the innovators of tomorrow. To thrive in today's world, youths need to have a strong set of soft skills to prepare them for their future job landscapes, which our current education system does not prioritise. Academic rigour and excelling in exams are still the primary focus of Singapore's education system. **Possible evaluation:** Nevertheless, increasingly, this claim is becoming limited as the government is reinventing policies and introducing structural changes to the education system. **Examples:** *Moving away from an over-emphasis on academic results* • PSLE subjects will be graded in 8 bands called Achievement Levels instead of using a T-Score • Removal of all weighted assessments at Primary 1 and 2 • By 2021, mid-year examinations will be removed for all Primary 3, Primary 5, Secondary 1 and Secondary 3 students. *Greater flexibility to develop students' individual strengths* • Introduction of Full Subject-Based Banding (SBB) in all secondary schools by 2024 • Revised Gifted Education Programme (GEP) will focus on nurturing and developing students' talents in every school from 2025's Primary 1 cohort. Singapore's 15-year-olds came out top in an international benchmarking study on creative thinking, even though they do not think of themselves as creative. Singapore students were tested on how well they generate creative ideas, as well as evaluate and improve on them in the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) 2022. Subjects like Project Work and core subjects have developed stronger real-world application and connections over the years. Students learn critical problem-solving skills and design thinking principles. Enhanced teaching and learning pedagogies also focus more on integrating knowledge and skills across subjects.
<u>Supporting argument</u> The education system in Singapore prepares students for lifelong learning, which enables them to pursue alternative pathways for a successful future.	**Explanation:** The continual nature of learning cannot be overstated in the context of Singapore as the Singaporean government has implemented reforms in recent times to instill this as a twenty-first-century competency in students. **Examples:** *Aptitude-based admissions*

	• Direct School Admissions for both Secondary School and Junior Colleges • Early Admissions Exercises at both the polytechnic (Poly EAE) and ITE level (ITE EAE) • Aptitude screening for more Nitec courses at the Joint Intake Exercise (JIE) *Work-study programmes* Skills are also best learnt on the job, which is why work-study pathways have been introduced to allow students to learn by doing. By learning work-relevant skills through real-world experiences, students are better ready for work. • SkillsFuture Work-Study Programmes • ITE Work-Learn Technical Diploma
<u>Supporting argument</u> Acknowledging the fact that the world today is technologically driven, Singapore's education system has already begun integrating EduTech tools and platforms to help youth leverage modern-day technologies.	**Explanation:** Globalisation, changing demographics and technological advancements are some of the key driving forces of our current times, and they will continue to shape our future. Our students will have to be prepared to face these challenges and seize new and exciting opportunities. Shifts in the use of technology in Singapore's education, coupled with changes in national policies have enabled stronger connections between classroom learning and real-world applications. **Examples:** ● More schools in Singapore are incorporating "maker education" into their curriculum, which encourages students to design and build objects that are meaningful personally or to the community. "Makerspaces" in schools are dedicated learning spaces set aside for students to tinker with a wide range of high-tech equipment and materials. ● The Ministry of Education (MOE) also offers an annual fund of S$50,000 to develop Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics Applied Learning Programmes (STEM ALP), aimed at helping students to make a connection between science knowledge and real-world applications. ● MOE has also enhanced the national curriculum to help students strengthen digital literacy through the launch of a National Digital Literacy Programme for schools and Institutes of Higher Learning (IHLs). This better enables our students, at different stages of their education journey, to acquire the digital skills required to navigate

	the digital age through four components in the 'Find, Think, Apply and Create' framework.
Supporting argument Singapore's education system is placing a growing emphasis on the teaching of soft skills and 21st century competencies necessary for the future.	**Explanation:** To help our students thrive in this fast-changing world, MOE has identified a suite of core values and competencies that are increasingly important. They underpin the holistic education that Singapore's schools provide to better prepare students for the future. **Examples:** MOE rolled an enhanced CCE curriculum in 2021 to anchor our students on a strong foundation of moral values, good character and resilience. Schools also regularly include events and lessons that encourage students to play a more active role as citizens of Singapore. Building on a sound character foundation, the following Emerging 21st Century Competencies enable students to thrive in and beyond school while living, learning and working in rapidly changing, highly digitalised, and interconnected environments: ● Critical, Adaptive and Inventive Thinking ● Communication, Collaboration and Information Skills ● Civic, Global and Cross-Cultural Literacy

Markers' comments: Weaker scripts' understanding of 'future' tends to be short-term and individualistic, limited to university enrolment and attainment of scholarships/jobs. The context of 'the future' should be understood as a collective future and unpacked as having qualities of VUCA or BANI, and/or having elements of being technologically driven, complex geopolitics, evolving employment landscape etc.

Tuition classes that parents send their children for and SkillsFuture courses offered to working adults are not features of the education system per se.

Many scripts were generally descriptive in nature, with limited evaluation of whether the education system achieves what it sets out to do to ensure students' future-readiness. Students should be mindful not to treat the essay as an opportunity to 'rant' about the stress of studying.

Q5.	Examine the claim that social media worsens human relationships.
Requirements: Candidates should examine both the positive and negative impacts of social media on human relationships, acknowledging that while social media can foster connectivity and support, it also has the potential to degrade communication quality, affect mental health via unhealthy connections, and erode privacy and trust between self and others. **Key words:** **"Social media"**	

- Platforms and tools that allow people to create, share, or exchange information, ideas, and content in virtual communities and networks. Examples include Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and LinkedIn.

"Human relationships"
- Interpersonal connections and interactions between individuals, including friendships, family relationships, romantic relationships, and professional relationships.

"Worsens"
- To make something worse or more severe, in this context, the deterioration of the quality or depth of human relationships.

<u>**Point of contention:**</u> That social media can only worsen and not improve relations between people.

<u>**A likely approach:**</u> Candidates should acknowledge that social media has both positive and negative effects on human relationships and examine how the impact of social media depends on how it is used and the context in which it is employed. Emphasis can be placed on the importance of mindful and balanced use of social media to mitigate its negative effects and enhance its positive contributions to human relationships.

Arguments	Explanations/Examples
<u>Opposing argument</u> Social media can degrade the quality of communication in human relationships.	**Explanation:** Social media platforms often prioritise brevity and visual content over in-depth, meaningful conversations. This can result in interactions that are more superficial, fleeting and less fulfilling than face-to-face or more traditional forms of communication. (https://www.straitstimes.com/opinion/loneliness-and-social-isolation-a-public-health-threat-for-societies) **Examples:** ● Shallow interactions: social media often promotes quick, superficial interactions rather than deep, meaningful conversations. It encourages quick likes, comments, and shares, which do not foster deep connections. ● In Singapore, some families report that members spend more time on their phones at dinner, leading to less meaningful family conversations. ● Research by the University of Pittsburgh found that increased social media use was associated with higher levels of perceived social isolation, suggesting that social media may not fulfill deeper social needs. **Possible evaluation:** While social media provides an easy way to keep in touch, the quality of interactions may suffer. This superficial communication can lead to weakened emotional connections, as deep, meaningful interactions are essential for strong relationships. However, there are instances where social media can facilitate deep conversations. For example, long-form

	posts on platforms like Facebook or personal blogs can allow for detailed, thoughtful exchanges. **Examples:** Platforms like Reddit or specialised forums often host in-depth discussions on various topics, demonstrating that meaningful interactions can occur online.
<u>Opposing argument</u> Social media can negatively affect mental health, which in turn can harm human relationships.	**Explanation:** Constant exposure to others' curated lives can lead to negative self-comparisons and feelings of inadequacy. These mental health issues can strain personal relationships. Passive scrolling can heighten feelings of loneliness when one compares one's own life with the seemingly rosy lives of others, though engaging more on social media can also come with the risk of opening one to negative feedback and ostracism. (Remes, Straits Times, 2024) **Examples:** ● Comparison and envy: Seeing idealised versions of others' lives can lead to feelings of envy and dissatisfaction with one's own life due to feelings of inadequacy and jealousy. In Singapore, popular Instagram influencers such as JianHao Tan and Naomi Neo often showcase their luxurious lifestyles and achievements. Followers may feel inadequate or envious when comparing their own lives to these seemingly perfect portrayals. Students in Singapore often post their academic achievements and study routines on platforms like Instagram and TikTok. This can create a competitive environment where students constantly compare their performance with peers. The pressure to achieve similar success can lead to stress, anxiety, and burnout. Students may become more isolated and less communicative with family and friends, focusing excessively on their academic performance. ● A study by the Royal Society for Public Health found that social media platforms like Instagram have a negative impact on users' mental well-being, contributing to anxiety, depression, and poor self-esteem. International celebrities like Kylie Jenner and social media influencers often post about their glamorous lifestyles, luxury purchases, and perfect appearances. Followers who compare themselves to these idealised images may feel inferior and dissatisfied with their own lives. The constant comparison can lead to body image issues, low self-esteem, and depression. These mental health issues can make individuals less engaged in their

personal relationships, leading to conflicts and reduced emotional support from loved ones.

- On LinkedIn, professionals often share their career achievements, promotions, and successes. Seeing these posts can create a sense of inadequacy among peers who feel they are not progressing as quickly in their careers. This comparison can lead to job dissatisfaction, stress, and anxiety. Professionals might become disengaged at work and in their personal lives, affecting their relationships with colleagues, friends, and family.

Possible evaluation: The pressure to maintain an idealised online persona can strain real-life relationships and lead to mental health issues. Poor mental health can further deteriorate relationships, as individuals may become more withdrawn, irritable, or less available for meaningful interaction. However, some users report that social media has positively impacted their mental health by providing a sense of community and support. While social media can provide a platform for connection and support, its tendency to highlight the best aspects of people's lives can lead to unhealthy comparisons. This can result in mental health issues such as depression, anxiety, and low self-esteem. These negative feelings can, in turn, affect personal relationships, leading to isolation, withdrawal, and conflicts. It's important for users to be mindful of the potential for negative comparisons and seek a balanced perspective when engaging with social media.

Examples:
- Platforms like Facebook and Reddit have groups dedicated to mental health support, where members share experiences and coping strategies, contributing positively to users' well-being. The Mighty: is a platform on Facebook where people with health challenges share their stories, including mental health experiences. It includes dedicated groups for specific conditions like depression, anxiety, and PTSD. On Reddit, the site r/depression is a subreddit group where users discuss their experiences with depression, seek advice, and provide support to each other.

Opposing argument Social media can lead to an erosion of privacy, and trust issues in relationships.	**Explanation:** The nature of social media encourages sharing personal information, which can sometimes lead to unintended consequences and conflicts.

	Examples: ● Excessive sharing of personal details can lead to misunderstandings, jealousy, or conflicts within relationships. A person might post about a private argument or share a controversial opinion, leading to conflicts with friends or family. ● Instances of relationships being damaged due to partners finding incriminating evidence such as flirty messages or photos on social media, leading to trust issues and potential breakups. Internationally, incidents like the Ashley Madison data breach revealed the identities of users on the dating site, leading to numerous cases of broken relationships and divorces. ● A study by Pew Research Centre captures the feelings of insecurity and jealousy when they see their partners being distracted by their mobile devices or use social media to track the activities of ex-partners and even current ones. Dating and Relationships in the Digital Age | Pew Research Center **Possible evaluation:** While social media allows for transparency, it can also lead to privacy breaches and mistrust. This can negatively affect the intimacy and trust in relationships, as individuals may feel exposed or betrayed by the information shared online. However, some individuals use social media with strict privacy settings and boundaries, maintaining trust and privacy in their relationships. **Examples:** Platforms like Facebook and Instagram offer robust privacy settings that allow users to control who sees their posts, helping maintain privacy and trust.
<u>Supporting argument</u> Social media can enhance relationships by keeping people connected and providing support networks.	**Explanation:** Social media facilitates communication across distances and can help people maintain relationships that might otherwise be difficult to sustain. **Examples:** ● Social media helps maintain connections despite geographical barriers, allowing for continuous communication and sharing of experiences. E.g. a family member studying abroad can stay in touch with their relatives through video calls, messages, and shared photos on social media. ● Platforms provide support by hosting spaces for people with shared experiences (e.g., health issues, hobbies) to connect and offer emotional support. E.g. online communities for people dealing with specific health conditions, such as cancer support groups, can offer comfort and advice. The "SG Support Group" on

	Facebook is a community where Singaporeans provide emotional support to one another on various issues, from mental health to parenting advice. Platforms like "Humans of New York" on Facebook share personal stories and create a sense of global community and support.
	Possible Evaluation: Social media can foster strong, supportive communities and maintain relationships across distances. This demonstrates that social media's impact is not universally negative and can be beneficial when used to enhance existing connections and provide support. However, some long-distance relationships might suffer due to over-reliance on social media, leading to misunderstandings and reduced face-to-face interaction.
	Examples: Studies suggest that while social media can support long-distance relationships, they still require occasional face-to-face interaction to maintain intimacy and trust.
<u>Supporting argument</u> Social media can broaden social circles and introduce people to diverse perspectives.	**Explanation:** Social media allows people to connect with others beyond their immediate social circles, expanding their horizons and potentially enriching their lives. **Examples:** ● Networking opportunities: Platforms like LinkedIn facilitate professional connections, while Facebook and Instagram can help people meet new friends or partners. Professionals might find new job opportunities or mentorship through LinkedIn connections such as Singapore Business Network and Singapore Marketing Professionals where groups of professionals network, share insights, and discuss business or marketing trends and strategies in Singapore. LinkedIn also has the Women in Technology International (WITI) group that connects women in technology across the globe to support each other's careers and share experiences. People might meet new friends or romantic partners through shared interest groups or dating apps on social media. The Singapore Running Club (Facebook Group) allows runners connect to share training tips, plan group runs, and support each other's fitness goals. The WW (formerly Weight Watchers) Connect Members support each other in their weight loss journeys through shared tips and encouragement.

	Possible evaluation: While social media can facilitate new connections, the depth and authenticity of these connections can vary. It is important to balance online and offline interactions to ensure that relationships remain meaningful and authentic. However, some online connections can lead to deep and meaningful relationships that transition into real-life friendships or partnerships. **Examples:** Many people have successfully met their spouses or long-term partners through social media and dating apps, indicating that genuine and lasting relationships can originate online.
<u>Supporting Argument</u> Social media can improve relationships for individuals who are better at expressing themselves in writing than face-to-face.	**Explanation:** Some people find it easier to articulate their thoughts and emotions in written form. Social media provides a platform for these individuals to express gratitude, love, and other emotions more effectively, thereby strengthening their relationships. **Examples:** ● In the context of Asian countries where individuals may be more reserved about expressing their apologies or affection face to face, be it between parents and their children, or between spouses, friends and even colleagues, social media permits them to express their true feelings with reduced levels of embarrassment and awkwardness. During occasions like Chinese New Year or Hari Raya, many Singaporeans use Facebook or Instagram to publicly express gratitude and love for their family members, writing detailed posts about their appreciation and affection. Such sharing of gratitude can strengthen family bonds and make recipients feel valued and cherished. ● International bloggers like Heather Armstrong (Dooce) have shared intimate details of their personal lives and relationships on their blogs. These written narratives allow them to express complex emotions and experiences that might be difficult to convey in face-to-face conversations. By sharing their stories and emotions online, these bloggers foster a sense of connection and understanding with their readers, strengthening their personal relationships and building supportive online communities. **Possible evaluation:** Relying too much on written communication can hinder the development of verbal communication skills, which are crucial for personal and

	professional interactions. This dependence can limit one's ability to navigate complex conversations in real-time, ultimately impacting the quality of relationships. Recipients may also prefer the authenticity and immediacy of face-to-face interaction. Delays in response can cause anxiety and misinterpretations. Individuals might also feel ignored or undervalued if their messages do not receive prompt replies, leading to potential conflicts. Recipients may also prefer intimate or private exchanges rather than have details shared so publicly.

Markers' comments: Students were generally able to demonstrate an understanding of some key features of social media.

There is a tendency in weaker scripts to discuss the benefits and drawbacks of social media without consciously relating them to the given claim i.e. that it *worsens* human relationships. Students should also examine assumptions (e.g. just because it is accessible, it does not mean that everyone is connected).

More successful scripts evaluated the quality of human relationships with the advent of social media and how it negotiates with physical encounters. They showed an awareness of the elements that are needed to maintain human relationships such as trust, communication, understanding etc.

Q6.	'Public health campaigns have been successful in combating lifestyle diseases.' How far is this true of your society?

Requirements: Students need to first identify root causes of lifestyle diseases that are prevalent in their society and consider characteristics of public health campaigns that have attributed to their success or failure. The evaluation of the campaigns' success should ideally be substantiated with clear indicators and measurements of their effectiveness.

Key words:
"Public health campaigns"
- Organised efforts to promote public well-being and raise awareness about health issues.

"Successful in combating"
- Effective in educating the masses on how to target root causes of lifestyle diseases.
- Shapes the public's behaviours so that desirable outcomes, such as more people living healthily and reduced contraction rates of lifestyle diseases, are attained.
- Successful implementation of a public health initiative requires five elements: good data, rigorous analysis, sensible guidance, broad buy-in, and effective action.

"Lifestyle diseases"
- Illnesses that result from patients' way of life, which give rise to their prolonged exposure to three main modifiable lifestyle behaviours – smoking, unhealthy diet, and physical inactivity.

- Can also be associated with affluence that enables people to live unhealthily in excessive indulgence.
- Examples include obesity, diabetes, heart diseases, some types of cancer.

Point of contention: That public health campaigns have enabled SG's government to reach out to various groups of stakeholders and overcome factors that prevent them from living healthily and illness-free.

A likely approach: As knowledge does not necessarily lead to practice, and there are also many competing needs and wants of Singaporeans' daily lives, public health campaigns' attempts to help people build healthy living habits may still be met with some resistance and other challenges to overcome.

Arguments	Explanations/Examples
<u>Supporting argument</u> With their very wide outreach, public health campaigns in SG have left an impression on the general populace, successfully raising most people's awareness of how to live healthily.	**Explanation:** The government partners and utilises numerous media channels to educate various social groups on how to make better decisions for their health. A significant amount of budget is set aside to support such engagement efforts as the government believes in the long-term cost savings of having a healthy population. With such investment of resources that leads to the pervasiveness of the campaigns, most Singaporeans would certainly come across posters, banners and more collaterals heavily promoting one health campaign or another in numerous spaces, either online or offline. **Examples:** The "Less Salt, More Taste" campaign included on-the-ground promotions such as taste tests of lower-sodium products, and media involvement to drive public messaging about the risks of high sodium consumption and promote the use of lower sodium alternatives. As a complement to these education efforts, decals are available for hawkers and restaurants that serve meals prepared with lower-sodium ingredients. **Possible evaluation:** The pervasiveness of numerous public health campaigns targeting different behaviours, such as consumption of sodium, sugar, tobacco, etc, may lead to an overwhelming amount of information released to the people. This may cause them to be desensitised to the important messages that the campaigns carry. Furthermore, awareness does not always translate to action. Even with the knowledge that they should live healthily to avoid preventable chronic diseases when they age, it takes a lot of willpower and discipline for people to overcome poor health habits that have developed over a long time. **Example**: The Health Promotion Board (HPB)'s I Quit 28-Day Countdown programme (a component of the anti-smoking

	campaign titled "I Should Have Said"), was meant to provide smokers with knowledge and motivation to give up the habit. Though more than 20,000 signed up for it in 2018, only about 10% stayed away from cigarettes for the entire duration of the programme.
Supporting argument Public health campaigns in SG are cleverly designed to incentivise the masses to act in the interests of their health.	**Explanation**: The government understands that initiating new behaviours for the prevention of lifestyle diseases must be accompanied next by encouraging repeated behaviours. This can be done through offering attractive incentives, so that the masses can stay engaged with the desired behaviours. **Examples:** The National Steps Challenge leverages behavioural insights and technology to encourage Singaporeans to take more steps and clock moderate-to-vigorous physical activities daily. Rewards and fun gained from thematic challenges are meant to motivate participants to reach higher physical activity milestones. Results have shown that participants' overall activity levels have indeed improved in both volume and intensity. **Possible evaluation:** While the use of incentives to achieve the health campaigns' aims has proven to be helpful, such extrinsic motivations may not be as sustainable as intrinsic motivations. Some participants have also been reported to exploit loopholes in the reward system, gaining incentives without actually taking meaningful action for their health. Generally, it has been observed that people have the tendency to be less intrinsically motivated about maintaining good health until they are sick and want to get better.
Supporting argument SG's public health campaigns are comprehensively designed in the way that they engage many key stakeholders to ensure a higher degree of success.	**Explanation:** The government partners various stakeholders to turn the campaigns into a whole-society effort. When relevant groups of people play their respective parts, they create physical and social surroundings that are influential on individuals' actions. This facilitates the attainment of better health for the larger majority. **Examples:** - Healthier SG, besides targeting the masses who receive care, also depends on partners such as community service providers and family doctors who have been tasked with drawing up and managing care plans for their patients. - HPB's Healthier Dining Programme partnered with food and beverage (F&B) operators to offer lower-calorie

	options, so that consumers who are aware of the importance of addressing their over-eating are enabled to do so.

Possible evaluation: There are challenges in involving numerous stakeholders, who must first be empowered to play their roles in the health campaigns. Especially when the initiatives are novel, they will require time and effort to ease into their new roles. The objectives of the campaigns may therefore take quite a long while before they are achieved.

Examples:
● As family physicians in the Healthier SG movement transcend their traditional roles of treating patients for common illnesses, they have to gain new competencies such as dispensing health advice and understanding human behaviour to gain patients' buy-in.
● F&B operators may also run into operational challenges and cost issues when coming up with lower-calorie options for their consumers. |
| <u>Opposing argument</u>

Public health campaigns in SG may take a long time to overcome deeply ingrained cultural and lifestyle factors that give rise to preventable diseases. | **Explanation:**

As Singapore has a prevalent food culture, where celebrations of special events and many traditional cultural practices revolve around food, it is challenging for public health campaigns to address the issues of overeating and excessive consumption of sugar and sodium. Furthermore, many ethnic groups' traditional food recipes which have been passed down from one generation to another are not adequately adapted to meet healthier dietary standards that are advocated by the health campaigns.

Examples:
● Staples like white rice and noodles are part of many cultural groups' diets. Yet, they are high in glycaemic index, which may lead to diabetes. To help consumers overcome the inertia of making the switch to whole grains and even incentivise them, NTUC Fairprice offered price adjustments to make healthier goods (e.g. brown rice) cheaper.
● During festive seasons that are celebrated by various ethnic groups, gatherings are usually held over meals where many would spend quality time while feasting together. This may lead to mindless eating, as not many may thoughtfully consider their calorie intake, let alone regulate it.

Possible evaluation: Although habits and preferences cannot be modified easily, with consistent messaging from public health campaigns, the importance of doing so will gradually be ingrained in consumers' consciousness. It also helps that with technological advances in the food industry, more healthier food |

	options have become increasingly palatable, so that consumers may not resist making the switch.

Markers' comments: Not a very popular question but it was generally well done as most students understood the need to effectively contextualise their responses to key realities of the Singapore context.

Stronger scripts were able to meaningfully unpack the criteria for "success" and consider broader reasons why our campaigns have been effective. Weaker scripts were largely example-driven, where the paragraphs were split according to singular areas like diet and exercise.

Q7.	'Society has lost its trust in public figures today'. Do you agree?

Requirements: Candidates should examine current trends and realities of the world today and assess if these trends are affecting the level of trust we have in public figures. The concept of trust should also be unpacked and a range of different types of public figures across different domains of society should be considered for scope of discussion.

Key words:
"trust"
- Candidates need to consider what it means to trust a public figure. It typically involves a feeling of certainty in believing that public figures will live up to their promises, will remain consistent in relation to values and ideals they espouse, will be honest, truthful, and transparent, and will remain a good role model (depends on the context & type of public figure).

"lost"
- An absolute term that suggests that trust has been eroded or diminished. Candidates are encouraged to identify and utilise key trends relating to today's context to assess if the trust has truly been lost.

"public figures"
- Different types of public figures across different areas of society including politicians/political leaders, celebrities, famous athletes, famous artists, social media influencers etc.

"today"
- Key trends and realities of today's context that would influence the level of trust we have in public figures. These may include access to more information through the internet and social media, public figures facing greater transparency and exposure in relation to their public and private life, increasing prevalence of scandals, greater expectations placed on public figures to fulfill obligations of being trustworthy, rise of misinformation etc. On the flip side, having more robust accountability mechanisms and active public engagement could explain why the level of trust is not necessarily waning.

Point of contention: That the nature of society today has indeed caused us to lose our trust in public figures.

A likely approach: Even though public figures are becoming more savvy in engaging the public to maintain their image and garner support, the immense scrutiny they face in the digital age is causing society today to lose their trust in public figures as they are increasingly embroiled in scandals and disappointing situations. The underlying assumption in the question is that the level of trust society has in public figures is decreasing. Even if candidates disagree with the question, this given claim needs to be meaningfully acknowledged and addressed through evaluative analysis.	

Arguments	Explanations/Examples
Supporting argument The world today has seen an increase in transparency due to digital and social media. Public figures are under constant scrutiny, and their actions are more likely to be exposed and criticised as the increased visibility can amplify scandals and mistakes.	**Explanation:** The heightened sense of scrutiny and judgment brought about by the digital media is causing public figures to be exposed in ways that are unprecedented. As cases of scandals and corruption become more commonplace on headlines and news feeds, it is not surprising that many are starting to lose trust in public figures who they have placed on a pedestal. **Examples:** ● Scandals involving infidelity permeate different fields from entertainment celebrities like Adam Levine, Jada Pinkett-Smith and Tristan Thompson, to politicians like Bill Clinton, Arnold Schwarzenegger and even local Singaporean politicians, Nicole Seah, Tan Chuan-Jin and Cheng Li Hui. ● Apart from cheating, public figures are getting instantly exposed for mistakes such as Justin Timberlake being arrested for driving under the influence of alcohol and NBA's Anthony Edwards being exposed for making homophobic comments on social media. ● International organisation, Transparency International, regularly speaks up about combatting political and business corruption involving bribery and money laundering. Notable cases include US Republican state lawmaker, Neil Clark's bribery scheme, Japan's Liberal Democratic Party's involvement in kickbacks and falsifying accounting reports, Operation Car Wash and its effect on Brazilian politics and Singapore minister S.Iswaran's corruption charge.
Supporting argument With higher levels of education and access to more information in today's context, there is a growing demand for	**Explanation:** In today's society, people are exposed to more sources of information and are exercising greater levels of criticality when forming opinions and judgments. As a result, public figures are held to higher standards which can lead to a loss of trust when these expectations are not met.

accountability from public figures. The expectation is that public figures should not only be effective in their fields but also honest and ethical.	**Examples:** ● Elon Musk faced criticism for his management of X and Tesla, including erratic decisions and controversial statements. This has led to a decline in public trust, reflecting a broader trend where accountability is increasingly expected. ● Will Smith experienced a significant loss of public trust following the 2022 Oscars incident where he slapped comedian Chris Rock. The incident sparked widespread debate about his behaviour and character, reflecting a broader impact on trust in public figures in the entertainment industry, acknowledging the expectation they face to be good role models. ● The decline of trust is particularly significant especially in industries that espouse good values. Examples include CEOs of Nestle, Coca-Cola and Starbucks who faced immense public backlash for greenwashing and making empty promises in relation to sustainability in a bid to drum up public support.
<u>Supporting argument</u> Additionally, the rise of political polarisation and the spread of misinformation have contributed to a fragmentation of trust of public figures.	**Explanation:** Due to the way new media is structured, new age threats such as greater polarisation and misinformation have caused people in society today to lose trust in public figures who often become symbols of ideologies, thus affecting how they are perceived and regarded. **Examples:** ● Narendra Modi, Prime Minister of India, faced criticism and a decline in trust due to his handling of the COVID-19 crisis and controversial policies like the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA). The resulting protests and dissent that were fuelled by conflicting and misleading information revealed how polarised the Indian society had become in relation to their political views. ● Similarly, following Brexit, the UK is seeing a massive in decline in public trust for its leaders. According to a survey commissioned by The Institute for Public Policy Research, only 5% of respondents believed that current leaders were motivated by their country's best interests instead of self-interest.
<u>Opposing argument</u> However, while there are numerous factors that	**Explanation:** Public figures today are aware of the need for them to raise their standards to meet the rising demands of an increasingly politically and socially conscious populace. Despite individual

contribute to the erosion of trust, it is possible for public figures to maintain trust by committing themselves to effective crisis management and consistently delivering on their promises.	controversies, trust in institutions can remain stable, if they are perceived as effective and committed to transparency. Public figures associated with reputable institutions may benefit from this residual trust. **Examples:** ● Former New Zealand Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern's response to the Christchurch mosque shootings and expanding gun control measures garnered widespread acclaim and trust due to her empathetic and decisive leadership. ● Scandinavian leaders in countries such as Sweden and Denmark, have robust ethical standards and accountability mechanisms that are regularly refined to prevent corruption and foster trust. These strong institutional frameworks for transparency and accountability, consistently rank high in public trust and low in corruption perception indexes. **Possible evaluation:** However, it must be acknowledged that the success of these efforts is highly context dependent. Societies that take the trust held by the public seriously enough to ensure that they make good on their promises, are those that have already consistently established a baseline level of trust. This creates a self-fulfilling prophecy which unfortunately cannot be said for some contexts. **Examples:** In societies like the US that are fragmented and tend to distrust public figures and institutions as the default mode of operation, it can be observed that efforts to reinstate trust among the population can be extremely challenging. This was evident during the COVID-19 pandemic when Dr Anthony Fauci faced severe backlash in relation to his stance on vaccination and mask wearing.
<u>Opposing argument</u> In fact, the very same exposure that causes public figures to be negatively scrutinised, can be artfully repurposed as a tool to forge even greater trust through effective public engagement and charisma.	**Explanation:** The rise of digital communication platforms has allowed public figures to engage directly with the public, fostering a sense of connection and relatability. This direct engagement can enhance trust, even amidst controversies. Public figures who can respond positively will be able to succeed in the pursuit of a trustworthy image. **Examples**: ● Tim Cook, CEO of Apple Inc., has maintained a positive reputation through his transparent leadership and commitment to user privacy and innovation. Despite

	occasional controversies, Cook's consistent communication and Apple's focus on ethical practices have helped sustain trust in both him and the company as seen by its loyal global customer base.
	● Canada's Prime Minister, Justin Trudeau, has managed to maintain public trust through strategic media engagement and communication, despite facing various challenges.
	● Celebrities like Taylor Swift, Dwayne Johnson and Chrissy Teigen who purposefully use social media to directly connect with their fans and share genuine moments of their private lives to build trust among their following.
	Possible evaluation: Yet, a more cynical perspective would posit that when public figures across different domains seek to use digital media to build trust by being honest and possibly even vulnerable to the public, it can actually be viewed through the lens of the 'paradox of authenticity'. The paradox highlights that public figures simply cannot be trusted when they do this because the authenticity they aim to display is ultimately manufactured, curated and steeped in vested self-interests.

Markers' comments: Some scripts tend to be example-driven, focusing more on examining particular public figures instead of general social trends or traits that are mostly applicable to public figures at large. Weaker scripts did not consistently and thoroughly engage with the key word 'today' and so arguments tended to lack substance.

Successful scripts examined the qualities/manifestations of 'trust', which can be an effective way to evaluate the relationship society has with public figures. They also recognised that the level of trust one has in public figures is likely to vary based on factors like type of public figure, what they say vs what they do, context, circumstance etc.

Q8.	How important is it for countries to invest in sports infrastructure?

Requirements: Students are expected to evaluate the importance for countries (referring to the state as having the resources, will and powers) to invest in sports infrastructure.

Key words:
"invest"
- to devote resources to a particular undertaking with the expectation of a worthwhile result in tangible (e.g. profit, ROI) and/or intangible (e.g. reputation, branding) forms.

"Sports infrastructure"
- facilities/amenities that are constructed for sports training, recreational or competitive activities to take place. Some examples are gymnasiums, stadiums and tennis courts, and can extend to outdoor fitness facilities or parking and shower amenities for cyclists.

Point of contention: Students should consider the extent of importance for countries to invest in sports infrastructure. They can demonstrate the value that these facilities/amenities hold to benefit the various stakeholders; that it warrants the use of resources to build them. Conversely, for countries which do not find it important to invest in sports infrastructure, students should consider the drawbacks of building these facilities/amenities and/or if the tangible or intangible costs are not worth the effort.

A likely approach: Although cost is a significant factor to consider when investing in sports infrastructure, countries should adopt a long-term approach and consider factors like developing a culture of sporting excellence and improving community cohesion that are challenging to achieve without these infrastructure.

Arguments	Explanations/Examples
Opposing argument The main argument against investing in sports infrastructure is always its steep cost. The main consideration for the expense is that these facilities/amenities are permanent structures that need upkeep and warrant regular use.	**Explanation:** Initial investment in sports infrastructure can be high, and funding can be a challenge, particularly for developing countries or in times of economic downturn. Subsequently, sustaining the quality of sports facilities requires ongoing investment in maintenance, which can strain budgets if not properly managed. **Examples:** The cost of building and maintaining the Olympic infrastructure was substantial, requiring careful financial planning to ensure long-term sustainability. ● After hosting the 2016 Rio Olympics, Brazil faced significant challenges with maintaining the Olympic venues and managing associated debts. The investment did not yield the long-term economic or social benefits anticipated, partly due to the economic downturn and political instability that followed. ● After the 2008 Beijing Olympics, the iconic Bird's Nest Stadium faced issues with high maintenance costs and underutilization. Despite its architectural significance, the stadium struggled to find consistent use, leading to financial strain. The high operational costs were not always offset by revenue from events, highlighting the challenge of sustaining such large-scale investments. **Possible evaluation:** While the benefits are apparent, the costs associated with building and maintaining sports facilities can be high. Careful planning and management are required to ensure that the investments are sustainable and provide value for money. In addition, resources and funding set aside for these infrastructure should not be done at the expense of other more pressing concerns. **Examples:** ● The Tokyo 2020 Olympics were delayed to 2021 due to the COVID-19 pandemic, leading to increased costs and public debate. The pandemic intensified scrutiny of the

	investment in sports infrastructure, as many argued that funds could have been better spent on pandemic response and recovery efforts. The focus on hosting the Games was criticized in the context of ongoing health and economic challenges. ● Also, Mumbai has faced criticism for prioritising large-scale sports projects over more urgent social issues. Investments in high-profile sports infrastructure have sometimes been seen as diverting resources from pressing needs such as affordable housing and public health, leading to public debate about the allocation of funds.
Supporting argument Regardless, countries can take a long-term view to the financial investment. Investing in durable and multi-purpose sports facilities ensures long-term benefits and reduces the need for frequent replacements or upgrades. There are also positive economic spin-offs from such investment like job creation and tourism revenue.	**Explanation:** Well-planned sports infrastructure can provide long-term benefits beyond the initial investment. Facilities designed for multi-purpose use ensure that the benefits extend well into the future. Moreover, major sports events often lead to urban redevelopment, revitalizing areas and leaving a lasting legacy of improved infrastructure. **Examples:** ● The infrastructure developed for the 1996 Atlanta Olympics continues to benefit the city in various ways. ● The infrastructure built for the PyeongChang Olympics, including new sports venues and improved transportation networks, has had lasting benefits for the region, boosting tourism and enhancing local facilities for residents. **Extension:** It is also undeniable that the construction and ongoing operation of sports facilities create jobs. Major sports events held at these facilities can also attract tourists, boosting local businesses and generating additional revenue for the community. **Examples:** ● Quality sports infrastructure can enhance property values in the surrounding areas and contribute to urban revitalization, as seen with facilities like the London Olympic Park. The London 2012 Olympics led to the development of the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park, which has become a significant economic asset. The area has attracted new businesses, increased property values, and boosted local tourism. The event created thousands of jobs and generated long-term economic benefits for East London.
Supporting argument	**Explanation:** Countries with strong sports infrastructure often see better development of local talent. The success of nations like the

High-quality sports infrastructure is crucial for the development of elite athletes, providing them with the resources and facilities needed to reach their full potential. Countries with strong sports infrastructure often achieve better results in international competitions, enhancing national pride and international prestige.	United States and Australia in international sports is partly due to their investment in high-quality sports facilities and programmes. **Examples:** ● Established in 1981, the Australian Institute of Sport (AIS) has been pivotal in Australia's success in international sports. The institute provides world-class training facilities and support services for elite athletes, contributing to Australia's strong performance in global competitions like the Olympics. ● Hosting major international sports events like the World Cup or the Olympics can elevate a country's global standing and enhance national pride, as evidenced by the positive impacts of such events in cities like Barcelona and Sydney.
<u>Supporting argument</u> Beyond pursuing sports as a profession, the public too benefit from sports infrastructure in aspects of public health, youth development and community engagement.	**Explanation:** Access to well-maintained sports facilities encourages regular physical activity, which can help combat lifestyle-related health issues such as obesity and cardiovascular diseases. **Examples:** ● Countries like Japan and Finland have demonstrated the benefits of investing in sports for public health. ● Singapore invested in the Sports Hub, a state-of-the-art facility that includes a multi-purpose stadium, aquatic center, and sports hall. This infrastructure supports public health by providing residents with access to high-quality sports and recreational facilities, encouraging physical activity and healthy lifestyles. ● Post-2010 Winter Olympics, Vancouver invested in community sports centers that cater to residents of all ages. These facilities promote physical activity and offer social and recreational opportunities, contributing to improved public health and community cohesion. **Explanation:** Sports facilities also serve as community hubs, fostering social interaction and a sense of belonging. This is especially important in diverse and growing urban areas. **Examples:** ● The 1992 Barcelona Olympics transformed the city, leading to extensive urban renewal and increased tourism. The Olympic Village was repurposed for residential use, boosting property values and contributing to the city's economic development. ● After the 2011 earthquake and tsunami, Japan invested in rebuilding and upgrading sports facilities, which played a role in community recovery and provided new

| | recreational spaces. The investments helped foster community spirit and supported physical and mental health in affected areas. |
| | ● In his first National Day Rally this year, PM Wong said, "We will make Kallang a new lifestyle destination for people to watch more sporting and entertainment events; take part in sports; and enjoy quality family time together!" The Kallang Alive Masterplan seeks to rejuvenate and centralise Singapore's sporting infrastructure, making the area the premier sporting hub for everyone. In his words, "You do not need to be an elite athlete to enjoy the facilities at Kallang." The idea is to build sports infrastructure, enabling us to host more top-tier events and local athletes to compete on home ground, so that "Singaporeans will have more opportunities to cheer them on". |

Markers' comments: Students need to understand that listing the benefits of sports infrastructure is not the same as explaining why it is important for a country to invest in it. To effectively engage with the question, the perspective of the country needs to be meaningfully considered.

Stronger scripts discussed a range of different types of sports infrastructure while weaker scripts only mentioned a few token stadiums. Those which considered the impacts on various stakeholders, not just athletes, tended to score higher due to a wider scope of discussion.

Use of Language

Most responses were appropriately organised in paragraphs and with logical sequencing that discussed one side of the argument followed by the other. They were also framed by a complete introduction and conclusion. However, some responses appeared to be poorly organised, with numerous insertions of sentences (and even paragraphs!) on the pages or few pages later.

Stronger responses used discourse markers and linking devices appropriately to signal the continued or changing direction of the argument or perspective. In weaker responses, these discourse markers were not consistently utilised, leading to abrupt or illogical changes in the direction of the discussion, which can be confusing to follow.

More successful responses demonstrated ambition and variety in their use of vocabulary and sentence structures. Some weaker responses lost control of longer sentences and there were instances of inappropriate use of vocabulary in context. Students should take note to avoid comma splicing and fragmented sentence structures.

Students should aim to use qualifiers in their expression, as some tended to contradict themselves in their phrasing of the topic sentences at the start of each paragraphs. E.g. In one paragraph, it is written that boundaries are "no longer relevant", but in another paragraph, it is stated that "they are still relevant". The use of qualifiers (e.g. "some", "most") can help students avoid making sweeping generalisations.

Finally, bearing in mind that the essay is a formal piece of written work, students should avoid using colloquial expressions or adopting a conversational tone by addressing the reader / 'you'. They should also familiarise themselves with when and how to use the apostrophe appropriately. The apostrophe should be utilised in possessive nouns (e.g. in **today's** world, not **todays** world) and not in contractions that are unsuitable for formal writing (e.g. it is, instead of it's).

Some commonly misspelled words:

accommodate (double m)	separate (not seperate)
occurrence (double r)	definition (not defination)
harassment (1 r)	privilege (not priviledge, privillege and other variations)
occasion (1 s)	relevant (not relavent)
hierarchy (not hierachy)	prominence (not prominance)
receive (not recieve)	existence (not existance)
convenient (not convinient)	guarantee (not garantee)
argument (not arguement)	maintenance (not maintainence)
truly (not truely)	athlete (not athelete)
amidst (not admist)	sovereignty (not sovereignity)
utmost (not upmost)	hindrance (not hinderance)
myriad (not myraid)	equipment (not equipments). This is an example of a mass noun, so it does not have a plural form. Other common mass nouns include furniture, infrastructure.