GP Notes

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This compilation of notes are meant to be used as a reference for the GCE "A"-level General Paper essay as well as an evidence database, typically presented in the form of essay question analysis and outlines.
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Good luck with your exams.

Legend:
DYA = Do you agree
TWE = To what extent
D = Discuss
C = Comment

1 Media

1.1 Purpose and Value

Tl;dr: To "Inform, ediucate and entertain"

Purpose and value are two very distinct sets of questions, but still govern the questions asking the whys of media. Purpose itself pertains to the idealistic use case of different forms of media and less so of how efficient they are at achieving goals, whereas value pertains to the worth of the existence and use of a form of media be it originating from the way it is conveyed to the content that is conveyed to the effectiveness of the form of media, typically alternating between different timeframes of past success and future potential of a form of media to argue for one's value or lack thereof.

1.1.1 Purpose

Consider the argument that the main purpose of television should be to educate than simply to entertain. (GCE-A/15) -

How far is the media responsible for promoting democracy in your society? (RJC/14) -

DYA that the mass media should pursue responsibility and not profit? (RJC/11) -

1.1.2 Value

Do films offer anything more than an escape from reality? (GCE-A/14) -

Consider the view that spoken language is more important than the written form. (GCE-A/13) -

Is there any value in horror films and books? (RJC/14) -

Are bookstores still relevant in today's world? (RJC/13) -

TWE does the media create mediocrity? (RJC/11) -

1.2 New Media

1.2.1 Managing the New Media

'The media needs to exercise more responsibility.' DYA? (RJC/15) -

Analysis Do note the qualifier 'More' as well as have a clear understanding of what the media does, as well as society's expectations of the media, namely accuracy, objectivity (to its most possible extent), timeliness, quality and ethical practice and the implications of proper practice and malpractice (misinformed public, societal insecurity etc). Reduce question to "Where has the media been irresponsible and where can it improve"

For Points :

Biased Reporting of mainstream media is still rampant and leads to the media misinforming the general public and ultimately leading to harm. Institutions such as Fox News in the USA as well as tabloids such as the British-based Sun tend to err on the side of hyperbole and extravagance to appeal to the baser instincts of the general public, such as accusing Obama of being a Muslim and more recently, the success of Donald Trump's campaign whose rhetoric, though misleading, appeals to many due to the extreme but appealing views he presents. Online institutions with low barriers of entry make the situation worse in that they prioritize appealing content over truthful content, hence leading to the proliferation of "clickbait" which spans the whole of social media, including sites like Buzzfeed and Cracked. Misleading information can spread as well - medical studies with the slightest glimmer of potential can end up being extrapolated out of proportion - studies conducted on eating chocolate during pregnancy which had no substantial conclusion was reported to the public that eating chocolate would improve blood flow. A similar fake study was released in 2011 where an institution reported that humans eat more than five arachnids during sleep over a month and it spread like wildfire over the media, only to be revealed a year later that it was all a hoax.

Cultural Insensitivity in that the media, in their process of exercising freedom of speech and lesser so to make money, will end up crossing cultural boundaries which anger a population. Charlie Hebdo's comics which enraged Muslim assailants to shoot up their office and the backlash of people screaming "Cultural Appropriation" when screened with Coldplay's *Hymm for a Weekend* also come to mind.

Money and Morals where the media work against social standards and goals in the pursuit of profit. Especially in the case where gender stereotypes are perpetuated in advertising with the portrayal of women being submissive to men while looking 'pretty' work against the progression of cultural standards.

Against Points :

Self-Censorship where many media outlets do attempt to maintain a high barrier of entry to publication through putting public-sourced responses through the same rigorous editing and curation process of typical media. The successful maintainance of quality in the Straits Times Forum section, especially the recent backlash against Lee Wei Ling who had retracted her affiliation with the fourth estate due to failure to uphold publishing standards like integrity.

1.2.2 Impacts of New Media

New Media and Communication :

To what extent has new media made us poor communicators? (RJC/14) -

TWE has new media changed the face of human interaction? (RJC/11) -

To what extent are young people in your society slaves to the mass media? (RJC/12) -

New Media and Advocacy :

To what extent is social media a useful platform for change? (RJC/13) -

Discuss the impact of new media on social cohesion in your society. (RJC/12) -

TWE DYA that the media has been a liberating force? (RJC/11) -

Do you agree that the tools of social media have reinvented social activism? (RJC/12) -

'Social media has changed the face of politics.' TWE is this true? (RJC/11) -

New Media and Morals :

'New media is a new evil.' Discuss. (RJC/12) -

1.2.3 New vs Old Media

'Books serve little purpose in education as technological developments become more sophisticated.' How far DYA? (GCE-A/15) -

In the digital age, do newspapers still have a role in your society? (GCE-A/11) -

1.3 Privacy

Privacy is defined as the state where one is not observed or disturbed by other people, but typically with regard to media, the former definition is more important. Mass surveillance seems to be the key action taken by many global governments in identifying criminals and threats before they strike, through mass collection of data and background checks, such as the USA's National Security Agency and its many data collection programs. Especially in the proliferation of the digital age, privacy has become even more queer an issue, where using the internet can enhance privacy through anonymity, but at the same time leaving people vulnerable to surveillance.

National Security is where a government takes action to work against the possibility of and current crises, typically demarcated as internal and external threats. In the case of Singapore, external threats are mostly addressed through active diplomacy with many countries including the ASEAN coalition and ASEAN's alliances with many of the world's giants and the maintenance of our own military, whereas internal threats are addressed through the maintenance of the military, initiatives of "Total Defence" as well as by policy such as the Internal Security Act where suspected criminals can be detained without trial. Especially worrying is the recent trends in terrorism, with Indonesia and Malaysia being hotspots for ISIS cells as well as the recent incarceration and deportation of more than 20 foreign workers suspected of planning terrorist attacks, as well as global trends such as the attacks in Brussels and Paris. Singapore's Criminal Procedure Act and Telecommunications Act give the government power to request data from internet services, and regularly inquires information from Microsoft, Facebook, Google and Twitter

'Personal privacy and national security cannot coexist.' Comment. (RJC/15) -

Analysis Consider the when, how and why national security requires privacy to be relinquished and back up with real world cases of threats and counter-threats. Points should range from finding an extent which privacy and security are mutually exclusive to considering the advantages of using other solutions to address national security, such that security can be maintained but without as much involvement of infringing privacy.

For Points :

Changing Threats mean that new national security threats are increasingly hard to spot and new criminals who do not have previous records force governments to resort to mass surveillance and intelligence management.

Value Systems in societies which place higher priority on safety than individual liberty are able to relinquish privacy to ensure security.

Against Points :

Passive Surveillance distances data collection from infringing privacy by arguing that no human eyes are actually prying on data, up until flags are tripped, much like the many systems used in the USA's NSA program, though it is rebutted by anecdotal evidence that employees still often exploit data collected for their own personal gain.

Distrust arises when infringing privacy is tapped on as the main method to address national security and sours the relationship between the governed and the governor, eventually weakening

national security. Cases such as the worries of local Bangladeshi workers when reports of their coworkers being deported on grounds of suspected terrorism can be used. Economic implications also come into play, where trade deals such as Huawei's expansion into the USA are halted due to their connection with the Chinese Government, as well as AT&T's delayed expansion into Germany after the scare of the NSA being revealed.

Inefficacy of mass surveillance is very real, where too much data means that the important information is buried and goes unnoticed and hence fail to deliver. Consider the intelligence on the 9/11 attacks, where the "Stellar Wind" program collected so much data that 9/11 intelligence was ignored.

Corruption of the government occurs when it has too much power to infringe upon privacy. Privacy is hence needed for checks and balances against the government, especially in instances of revolution or where political dissidence occurs as a necessary step in the political process.

'There is no such thing as privacy today.' Comment. (RJC/15) -

To what extent have people given up their freedom for comfort? (RJC/14) -

'Privacy is dead, thanks to new media.' TWE do you think this is detrimental to modern society? (RJC/12) -

1.4 Advertising

'There is no such thing as bad publicity.' TWE is this true? (GCE-A/15) -

TWE do advertisements have a negative impact on society? (RJC/13) -

'Public campaigns are rarely effective.' TWE is this true? (RJC/13) -

'Advertising reflects the values of society but does not influence them.' What are your views? (RJC/12) -

'Advertisements truly reflect what a society desires.' DYA? (RJC/11) -

1.5 Censorship and Free Speech

Censorship is defined as the suppression of speech, public communication or other forms of media which may be considered harmful, insensitive, politically incorrect or inconvenient as deemed by parties such as governing bodies and media outlets. Key examples of modern-day censorship include the Great Firewall of China, China's censorship of the Tianmen Square

massacre, US omission of the KKK in history textbooks, Japan's omission of WWII crimes and Singapore's Internal Security Act as well as the local system of OB markers

How far, in your society, should unpopular views be open to discussion? (GCE-A/13) -

With the rise of new media, censorship is needed now more than ever. DYA? (RJC/15) -

'Freedom of speech should be a privilege, not an entitlement.' How far DYA? (RJC/15) -

Analysis Need to make the distinction between privilege which suggests that it is provided and can be relinquished and entitlement which suggests that free speech is a right. Reduce the question to "should we be able to remove peoples rights to free speech"

For Points :

Abuse of free speech is a real possibility where undue libel and attacks of people can have external repercussions. For example, the recent rise of social media vigilantism as well as doxxing as a very real phenomena. Countries like Singapore and the UK all have laws against hate speech, especially in the realm of religion.

Harmful Potential of free speech, especially in multicultural societies where strong beliefs and opinions are more than likely to clash and result in harm, as such having the power to remove freedom of speech enables people to be protected, right to comfort and safety of opinion and thoughts with regard to culture is preserved. Examples include the 2015 Charlie Hebdo shootings and other similar incidences.

Against Points :

Protection of Rights in that free speech is a guarantor of other rights and freedoms, where having the power to remove freedom of speech compounds into issues of preventing checks and balances on government, as well as checks and balances on the presence of other rights. Having the ability to restrict rights may also open doors to other rights being infringed upon, considering cases such as the tight control the Chinese government has over the whole country.

Practicality in that there is no truly objective judgment of what is offensive and inappropriate, at that point the governing bodies are given too much power.

'Censorship is both harmful and futile in today's society.' Comment. (RJC/14) -

'With the emergence of new media, there is a greater need for censorship.' How true is this of your society? (RJC/13) -

'We should have the freedom to read and watch what we like.' Comment. (RJC/13) -

2 Social Issues

2.1 Family and Marriage

'Parents have no right to impose their own values and beliefs on their children.' Discuss. (GCE-A/15) -

'Traditional marriage is an outdated concept.' TWE is this true of your society? (GCE-A/15) -

Should people be allowed to have children by artificial means? (GCE-A/12) -

Discuss the view that marriage should be for life. (RJC/15) -

Analysis Though the question asks for "Should", it is not a matter of which is the ideal situation as arguing for and against ideals results in a largely evidence-lacking essay. Aim to provide a moderate and realistic opinion on marriage and its changing nature as seen today. Think of scenarios where it is no longer applicable for marriage to be expected to last for life, and especially since there is a direct anti-thesis to marriage (divorce), also consider the scenario where that is permissible.

For Points :

Against Points :

Conscious Uncoupling is a new phenomena brought about by the fact that marriages are now lasting longer since people are generally living longer, which leads to the scenario where people change and grow incompatible over time.

Availability of divorce makes ending a marriage ever more easy. As of 2010, the USA provides no-fault divorce across the country, following similar countries like Sweden, Spain and Australia.

Externalities in that marriages can and will turn sour, through abuse or general disagreement. In this respect, ending a marriage is advantageous to the parents as well as to children who are victims of a dysfunctional parenthood.

Independence in that reasons for women staying in abusive or unfavorable marriages are no longer as prevalent, such as the rise of financially independent women as well as the recent development of womens domestic rights.

Cultural Shift towards a more libertarian opinion of marriage, as seen by the development of social policy and also the rise of alternate family structures.

In the family, should the most important role of a man be that of a breadwinner? (RJC/15) -

'Good parenting has little to do with how children turn out.' Comment with reference to your society. (RJC/14) -

Is marriage still relevant in modern society? (RJC/13) -

'Modern life is not conducive to th survival of the family.' Comment. (RJC/13) -

'The traditional institution of marriage is in decline.' Is this a cause for concern? (RJC/12)

'The family has suffered at the expense of economic growth in Singapore.' Comment. (RJC/11) -

'An unhappy marriage is best resolved with a divorce.' Comment. (RJC/11) -

2.2 Gender (Inequalities)

2.2.1 Causes of Gender Inequality

'The media is to blame for gender inequalities.' DYA? (RJC/14) -

2.2.2 Gender Roles and Responsibilities

Consider the view that some careers are more suited to one gender than the other. (GCE-14) -

In the family, should the most important role of a man be that of a breadwinner? (RJC/15) -

'Women are a decorative sex.' How far is this still an issue today? (RJC/13) -

Does is matter that the leaders of most countries are men? (RJC/12) -

'Women are not suitable for politics.' TWE is this true? (RJC/12) -

2.2.3 The Current State of Affairs

'It is increasingly challenging to be a man today.' DYA? (RJC/11) -

'Women in the developed world have never had it so good.' DYA? (RJC/11) -

2.2.4 Fixing Inequality

The world would be a better place if women had a greater say in politics. TWE DYA? (GCE-A/11) -

'No country can really develop unless its women are educated.' DYA? (RJC/14) -

'The pursuit of gender inequality will do more harm than good.' Discuss. (RJC/12) -

'A nation cannot really progress until it empowers its women.' DYA? (RJC/11) -

2.3 Social Stratification

2.3.1 Equality for All

In your society, how far is equality for all a reality? (GCE-A/12) -

Is equality for all within your country a realistic and desirable aim? (RJC/13) -

2.3.2 A Caring Community

'Education has provided a population that is literate but not compassionate.' How far is this true of your country? (RJC/15) -

Analysis Question suggests that there is a cause and effect relationship between education and lack of compassion, and though framed as a strong statement it still is to be treated like a extreme position. Reduce the question to "Have we neglected compassion in our pursuit to educate people," not just "Are there compassionate and educated people in Singapore today?" (Side note: This essay does not lend itself well to the argument-counterargument format, heres a compromise)

Sample Thesis While successful in producing literate people, the education system in Singapore has also tried to inculcate compassion but such measures have not been successful.

Points :

  Social Priorities entertain the view that education and literacy is more important than compassion.

  Competition among schools and among students corroborate the stress to perform academically rather than to be developed emotionally, as well as the fact that the competition between students is held mostly through comparison of tangible achievements like grades and competition placing rather than soft, emotional skills.

Has competition resulted in a less compassionate and caring society? Discuss this with reference to your country. (RJC/15) -

2.3.3 "Success" and its Process

To what extent can technology be a solution to social problems? (RJC/15) -

'Competition breeds success.' TWE is this true? (RJC/14) -

'Success is determined by one's intelligence.' Discuss. (RJC/12) -

2.4 Poverty and Social Mobility

2.4.1 Causes of Poverty

It is inevitable for technology to be more responsive to the problems of the rich than the poor. Discuss. (GCE-A/11) -

Technological advancement has worsened the problem of poverty.' DYA? (RJC/14) -

'People who are in poverty have only themselves to blame.' (RJC/12) -

2.4.2 Addressing Poverty: Whos and Hows

In times of economic hardship, should a country still be expected to provide financial or material aid to others? (GCE-A/14) -

'We do not do enough to help with the less fortunate.' Is this a fair assessment of your society? (RJC/14) -

Is your society doing enough to protect the rights of the disadvantaged? (RJC/15) -

Is it always the responsibility of the state to help the poor? (RJC/11) -

2.4.3 Does Mobility Exist?

'There are enough opportunities in your society to improve one's life.' DYA? (RJC/15) -

DYA that we can now do little to help the poor in our world? (RJC/12) -

How far is increased prosperity for all a realistic goal in your society? (GCE-A/13) -

2.5 Discrimination

Can prejudice ever be eliminated? (GCE-A/11) -

'Ours is a country of divided people.' Is this a valid comment on your society? (RJC/15) -

'Not in my backyard.' TWE is this a growing problem in your society? (RJC/12) -

'Increasingly, Singaporeans are feeling displaced in their own country.' To what extent do you think this is true? (RJC/09)

2.5.1 The Victims

Should society pay more attention to the needs of criminals? (RJC/15) -

'Foreign is always better than local.' To what extent does this reflect the attitude of the people in your society? (RJC/15) -

Examine the impact that foreigners have on your society. (RJC/14) -

Consider the view that multiculturalism inevitable leads to conflict. (RJC/14) -

2.5.2 Fixing Discrimination

'Laws are the most effective way to combat prejudice and discrimination.' How far would you accept this view? (RJC/15) -

Is it ever possible to eliminate stereotypes in your society? (RJC/12) -

2.6 Aging Population

2.6.1 Approaches to Aging

TWE is old age considered a burden to your society? (RJC/15) -

Analysis Need to consider the rest of society's opinion about managing the aging population, in the Singapore context. "Burden" implies some extent of heavy, unwanted load that is borne by society. Arguments should examine the impacts of managing an aging society as well as causes and scale (validity) of said impacts, and in extension also consider if there is a current trend of change in society's opinion of aging.

For Points :

Financial Burden in that money is used up when having to care for elderly. With aging comes extra needs, care and resources which can create a financial burden for their families as well as on the government. Singapore's social security system, as a part of the budget involves handouts of $320 million in its first year, in addition to current policy such as the Pioneer Package which involves $8 billion in handouts.

Inefficient Workers in that elderly are ultimately less physically able, reliable workers and hence are unfit to contribute to the economy in the way they once were.

Emotional Burden in that elderly are an extra liability to those who take care of them, draining time and effort off the current workforce.

Against Points :

Financial Gap-filler where the elderly, with their excess of time and still present ability are able to fill the gaps in the economy which desperately need workers, e.g. cleaner staff, hawkers. Older workers has grown more than three

times in the past decade, providing more filling for previous economic gaps. The number of elderly workers in Singapore who earn over $1k a month has quadrupled in absolute numbers over the past decade as well.

Experienced Workforce where elderly are already trained and experienced in their own fields, and are hence less indispensable than perceived. Local business experts praise elderly workers as having commendable work ethic, commitment, ability to mentor juniors and independent (low maintenance).

Secondary Caretakers where the elderly population are there to back up families, especially in the Singaporean context where 54% of married couples are dual-income and two thirds of the elderly population cohabit with their children. Elderly provide an alternate support network to complement daycare centers as well as domestic workers in the matter of childcare.

Is old age approached with horror in your society? (RJC/12) -

Is longer life expectancy a blessing or a curse? (RJC/11) -

'Retirement is a redundant word today.' TWE is this true? (RJC/11) -

2.6.2 Tackling an Aging Population

When a government's finances for social welfare are limited, should they be directed to the young or the old? (GCE-A/15) -

How far DYA that it is the responsibility of the young to take care of the elderly in your society? (RJC/12) -

TWE are the young in Singapore favored at the expense of the elderly? (GCE-A/04) -

2.7 Youth

2.7.1 Nurturing the Youth

'Parents have no right to impose their own values and beliefs on their children.' Discuss. (GCE-A/15) See section 2.1 Family and Marriage

When a government's finances for social welfare are limited, should the be directed to the young or the old? (GCE-A/15) See section 2.6 Aging Population

TWE are the young in Singapore favored at the expense of the elderly? (GCE-A/04) See section 2.6 Aging Population

Are the youth in Singapore prepared for future challenges? (RJC/12) -

2.7.2 Current State of Youth

'Young people today think of nothing but themselves.' Is this a fair description? (RJC/14) -

2.7.3 Youth and the Future

DYA that teenagers in your society have a bright future ahead of them? (RJC/14) -

With reference to the developments in the world today, TWE would you agree that the future holds much promise for young people? (RJC/13) -

'Always follow your dreams.' Is this good advice for young people today? (RJC/13) -

Is too much being expected of today's youth? (RJC/11) -

2.8 Education

2.8.1 Medium of Education

'Books serve little purpose in education as technological developments become more sophisticated.' How far DYA? (GCE-A/15) See section 1.2 New Media

Consider the argument that the main purpose of television should be to educate than simply to entertain. (GCE-A/15) See section 1.1 Purpose of Media

2.8.2 Manner of Education

'Only grades matter in education.' Discuss. (RJC/14) -

'Intelligence plus character - that is the goal of true education.' Discuss. (RJC/13) -

TWE should schools use examinations to evaluate students? (RJC/12) -

2.8.3 Matter of Education

'Education should only be concerned with what is useful in life.' Discuss. (GCE-A/13) -

Is the study of history increasingly losing its relevance in today's world? (RJC/15) -

How important is the study of History for a nation's future? (RJC/15) -

Consider the view that the study of history is essential for mankind. (RJC/14) -

TWE do you think that creativity can be cultivated? (RJC/14) -

How relevant is the study of History in our world today? (RJC/14) -

'The teaching of literary classics should be made compulsory in schools.' Discuss. (RJC/13) -

'Singapore can do without the study of the humanities.' Discuss. (RJC/13) -

2.8.4 Impacts of Education

Does better education necessarily lead to a better standard of living? (GCE-A/11) -

'Education has produced a population that is literate but not compassionate.' How far is this true of your country? (RJC/15) See section 2.3 Social Stratification

'Qualified but not enlightened.' Is this a fair description of educated people today? (RJC/13) -

2.9 Activism

'Education has resulted in only more inequality.' DYA? (RJC/11)

How far is it important for people to be aware of current events in countries other than their own? (GCE-A/14)

Why should we be concerned with current affairs when most of them will soon be forgotten? (GCE-A/13) -

How far, in your society, should unpopular views be open to discussion? (GCE-A/13) See section 1.5 Censorship and Free Speech

Do you agree that the tools of social media have reinvented social activism? (RJC/12) See section 1.2 New Media

TWE does your country challenge the current state of affairs? (RJC/11) -

2.10 Identity

3 Arts

3.1 Culture

3.2 Language

3.3 Value of Language

Is there any value in preserving minority languages in the world? (GCE-A/12) -

4 Science

4.1 Research

4.1.1 Motivating Research

'We should only fund scientific research which benefits our quality of life.' (RJC/15) -

Analysis

For Points :

> **Pragmatism** This opinion is suitable in situations where funding is scarce, and the most pressing form of research which is necessary is that which directly impacts quality of life rather than esoteric causes.
>
> **Stakeholders** Funding of research ultimately needs to translate into returns, and from the standpoint of private economic entities or from governments, not creating a bar to restrict funding for research results in irresponsible management of funds. A* uses $5 billion in funding annually for science research and large pharmaceutical companies like GSK and Bayer AG approximate that each drug released to the public ultimately costs $5 billion to produce.

Against Points :

> **Stepping-Stone Science** where Science is a process which builds upon previous knowledge, and that certain facets of scientific study do not have any clear goal, motive or benefit to quality of life end up being the foundation for other knowledge that can improve quality of life, such as the theory of relativity and its applications in GPS and satellite building and x-rays to its medical applications.
>
> **For the Sake of Knowledge** can also be brought up as a point, in that funding research to purely benefit understanding and knowledge is permissible.
>
> **Practicality** in that creating this barrier to funding forces scientists into working with an end-product in mind and its implications to the rest of the field of science, such as when foreign talent Neal Copeland and Nancy Jenkins emigrated to Houston, Texas to conduct research and Lee Wei Ling criticizing local funding boards citing the fact that Biopolis and Fusionopolis overemphasized economic output.

4.1.2 Limiting Research / Ethical Research

To what extent is it desirable to place limits on scientific research? (RJC/15) -

'Unlimited scientific research is the only way to make real scientific progress.' DYA? (RJC/15) -

TWE can the regulation of scientific or technological developments be justified? (GCE-A/14) -

TWE should we limit technology's influence on sports? (RJC/14) -

'Moral Considerations hinder scientific progress.' C. (RJC/12) -

Should every country have the right to carry out unlimited scientific research? (GCE-A/09) -

Are there any circumstances in which it would be acceptable to use animals for scientific research? (GCE-A/06) -

4.1.3 Niche Research

Consider the view that advances in gene therapy research have gone too far. (RJC/14) -

DYA that exploring space should not be a priority in today's world? (RJC/14) -

Can space research be justified nowadays? (GCE-A/11) -

'Air travel should be discouraged, not promoted.' TWE do you agree? (GCE-A/08) -

4.2 Science and Society

4.2.1 Quality of Life

'Books serve little purpose in education as technological developments become more sophisticated.' How far DYA? (GCE-A/15) -

'Technology has failed to simplify our lives.' TWE is this true? (RJC/12) -

Consider the view that most work these days should, and could, be done from home. (GCE-A/11) -

D the view that science and technology gives us hope for the future. (RJC/11) -

TWE has technology had a negative impact on the skill levels of the people? (GCE-A/10) -

TWE has technology had an impact on both privacy and security in your country? (GCE-A/09) -

4.2.2 Inequity

TWE can technology be a solution to social problems? (RJC/15) -

'Technological advancements has worsened the problem of poverty.' DYA? (RJC/14) -

How far is it acceptable for technology to be used only for financial benefit? (GCE-A/12) -

Consider the view that modern technology is the only answer to world hunger. (RJC/12) -

Should research into expensive medical treatments be allowed when only a few can afford them? (GCE-A/14) -

'The young embrace modern technology; the old feel threatened by it.' Is this true? (GCE-A/06) -

4.3 Dependence and Dangers

Are we overdependent on digital technology? (RJC/15) -

Is fear of artificial intelligence justifiable? (RJC/15) -

Does technology facilitate crime? (RJC/11) -

4.4 Energy

Should there be any controls over the production of energy when the need for it is so great? (GCE-A/15) -

D the view that, with an increasing global need for energy, every possible source should be exploited. (GCE-A/14) -

'The dangers of nuclear energy far outweigh its benefits.' D. (RJC/11) -

Can national nuclear programmes ever be justified? (RJC/11) -

How important is it to explore alternative forms of energy? (GCE-A/06) -

4.5 Environment

'Protecting the environment is a futile pursuit.' D. (RJC/12) -

'Environmental concern and economic growth cannot co-exist.' DYA? (GCE-A/11) -

Are concerns about the need for us to conserve our environment exaggerated? (RJC/11) -

4.6 Medicine and Bioethics

How effectively is public health promoted and managed in your society? (GCE-A/15) -

DYA that the best way to combat disease is through science? (RJC/14) -

Should everyone be expected to donate suitable organs after death? (RJC/12) -

D the extent to which it has become harder to lead healthy lives today. (RJC/12) -

How far should medical resources be used to extent life expectancy? (GCE-A/11) -

'The key to good health is lifestyle rather than medicine.' How far DYA? (GCE-A/10) -

'Disease is not just an individual concern, but a global one.' What is your view? (GCE-A/06) -

4.6.1 Science and Religion

'Human actions should be based on scientific fact, not religious faith.' How far DYA? (GCE-A/15) -

Consider the view that science serves mankind better than religion. (RJC/15) -

4.7 Niche Science

'Mathematics is the most reliable way of understanding the world.' D. (RJC/15) -

TWE can mathematics be considered a form of art? (RJC/15) -

D how robotics contributes to the modern world. (RJC/14) -

5 Politics

5.1 Democracy

5.2 Global Governance

5.3 Diplomacy

6 Philosophy

6.1 The Human Condition

6.1.1 Immorality

To what extent is fame overrated? (RJC/14) -

7 Essay Technique

7.1 Question Analysis

Identify Extreme Positions: Extreme positions are hard to defend and most of the time students should aim to conclude with a more moderate view.

7.2 Question Prompts

DYA Thesis is a distinct stand

TWE Thesis contains qualifying criteria and then determines a slant. This is generally the most demanding question, consider all questions as a **TWE** question when revising to account for worst case scenario

Comment Thesis involves some synthesis / balancing of information to reach a conclusion

How far... Similar to **TWE**

7.3 Question Qualifiers

Only indicates a extreme position as well as usually indicating the presence of a criteria when making a decision. Consider other criteria that can satisfy a substitution test with this criteria when looking for points, where such a judgment is suitable as well as the dangers of having such a narrow view (think missed opportunity etc). Conclude with a compromise between the for and against of this opinion.

More/Less indicates a change in state, describing the current trend and future trends or supposed better trends to aspire towards. Taking a stand with such a questions requires you to substantiate the fact if the trend exists or not, followed by which course of action should be taken.

Excess/Lacking indicates that a large or little trend is extreme to the point of harm or dysfunction, and in taking a stand you need to show the extent of these harms.

Cause/Effect indicates a process which will need to be elaborated on when explaining most points, be it identifying the causes which lead to a certain effect or the effects which stem from causes.

Problem/Solution to problems need to be considered as a system of cause and effect in addition to considering the nature of the problem and its solution. Many problems and solutions involve some extent of multifacetedness which is where an essay's balance view will stem from. Always consider the whats, hows and whys of a certain problem before attempting to approach it, especially in questions which have an implied problem and solution set.

7.4 Question Triggers

Your Society implies that points need to pertain to the local, Singaporean situation. Hence, knowledge of the local culture, demographic, current affairs, politics and other matters are crucial to GP, especially once the application question comes into play. Key unique characteristics about Singapore that changes what points are applicable to us include:

Multiculturalism with multiple local races and religions as well as a open attitude towards inflows of foreigners and foreign talent

Asian Values which place much focus on conservatism as well as importance of family-oriented values of loyalty

Political System with one largely long-serving and dominant party, described as many as a benevolent dictatorship

Globalised implies that points should be applicable across physical and political boundaries, hence examples should either be applicable to many countries at once or should be sourced from multiple different countries, opposite that of **Your Society**. Pulling examples which directly involve increased cross-boundary flows of humans and knowledge are best.

Modern/Today limits the key scope to the near past. Points need to have some involvement with recent global trends, specifically that of technology, globalization and so on. Points involving the internet, travel, economic growth, global trends are good to tap on.

Quality of life has the dictionary definition of the standard of health, comfort and happiness experienced by an individual or a group. Do note that when this phrase appears, distinct and solid links between actions and quality of life should be made.

7.5 Essay Structure