

the
Singapore

WAY

TEACHER'S GUIDE

**Leadership and
Governance**

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Leadership and Governance — Stability Through Vision

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1. Introduction to the Case

Purpose and Framing

This case is designed to provoke thoughtful analysis around the role of leadership in transforming systemic chaos into institutional stability. It invites participants to explore how consistent governance, clarity of purpose, and succession planning can anchor a nation—or any organization—during turbulent times.

Singapore serves as a compelling focal point not because of its size, but because of its outsized impact. Chapter 1 of *The Singapore Way* shows how Lee Kuan Yew and his successors embedded predictability into national governance through policy reliability, anti-corruption efforts, and long-term strategic projects like Tuas Port.

This is not about idealizing Singapore—it's about learning from the systems thinking and disciplined execution that underpinned its rise.

Key Framing Questions:

- What does leadership stability look like in practice?
- How can trust be built when resources are scarce and the future is uncertain?
- What makes Singapore's succession strategy unique and replicable?

Relevance to Leadership Education

This case enriches curricula on:

- Public policy & governance
- Strategic leadership & change management
- Organizational development
- Post-crisis recovery planning

It also helps bridge theory and action, showing how leadership is not only about bold vision—but about building systems and routines that outlast individual leaders

Conceptual Anchors:

- Predictability breeds trust: Citizens and investors value stability more than charisma.
- Succession is preparation, not chance: Grooming future leaders is a policy in itself.
- Leadership is measured in decades, not soundbites: Legacy stems from consistency, not volatility.

2. Pre-Class Preparation

Recommended Readings & Materials

To maximize engagement and critical insight, students should be exposed to the following prior to the session:

Core Reading:

- The Singapore Way – Chapter 1: Leadership and Governance – Stability Through Vision

Suggested Supplements (Optional):

- Lee Kuan Yew, From Third World to First (selected chapters)
- Harvard Business Review: What Makes an Effective Leader?
- EDB Singapore – Governance Rankings and Economic Performance
- Transparency International – Corruption Perceptions Index (latest)

Key Concepts to Review

Encourage learners to familiarize themselves with these foundational terms:

Concept	Definition
Visionary Leadership	Leadership that articulates a clear, long-term direction.
Governance Continuity	Consistent policy and leadership transitions without disruption.
Predictable Policy	Policies that are stable and consistent across administrations.
Succession Planning	Intentional identification and preparation of future leaders.
Anti-Corruption Culture	Institutional practices that prevent and punish abuse of power.

Pre-Class Questions for Reflection

Ask students to journal brief responses to these prompts (to bring to class):

1. What does “stable leadership” mean to you in your own country or organization?
2. Can predictability be more valuable than innovation in governance?
3. Why do you think Singapore’s leadership model has endured over 60 years?

Optional Pre-Class Poll

Conduct a quick digital poll (via Google Forms, Mentimeter, or similar):

“Would you support a political system where one party consistently wins elections—as long as it delivers results?”

Use the results to trigger early debate in the session.

Instructor Preparation Checklist

- Read Chapter 1 thoroughly with emphasis on Tuas Port and succession transitions.
- Prepare slides with:
 - Governance timeline (1959–2025)
 - Tuas Port project milestones
 - Comparative governance index rankings
- Print or share case handouts
- Prepare name cards or group assignments (optional role-play setup)

3. Session Plan

This session is designed to run in 60, 90, or 120 minutes depending on instructional time. It can be delivered as a seminar, workshop, or classroom discussion.

Session Duration Options

Format	Key Components
60 minutes	Rapid case overview, core discussion, 1 activity
90 minutes	Full discussion, breakout exercise, reflection
120 minutes	Deep dive with role-play or simulation

Learning Objectives

By the end of the session, learners should be able to:

1. Analyse the relationship between stable leadership and long-term national development.
2. Evaluate the trade-offs between democratic pluralism and policy predictability.
3. Identify how succession planning supports governance continuity.
4. Apply Singapore's leadership strategies to another country or organizational context.

Session Flow (Suggested for 90-Min Format)

Time	Activity	Purpose
0-10 min	Icebreaker Poll + Recap of Pre-Class Work	Warm-up and connect with prior knowledge
10-25 min	Case Recap (Instructor-led or video explainer)	Highlight Tuas Port and PAP governance arc
25-50 min	Guided Discussion (See Key Questions below)	Unpack core themes and challenge assumptions
50-70 min	Breakout: Governance Simulation (See Activity)	Practice decision-making and leadership role
70-85 min	Reflection & Debrief	Share insights and personal applications
85-90 min	Wrap-Up + Homework Brief	Reinforce learning, set up next steps

Core Discussion Questions

Use these in plenary or small group discussions:

1. What were the key enablers of Singapore's leadership stability?
2. Was Singapore's long-term leadership effective—or overly centralized?
3. How did projects like Tuas Port reflect Singapore's leadership mindset?
4. What leadership practices would (or wouldn't) translate to your context?
5. Is governance continuity more important than frequent electoral change?

Optional Media Enhancements

- Short documentary (3–5 mins) on Lee Kuan Yew or Tuas Port
- Time-lapse visual of Singapore's skyline or infrastructure evolution
- Leadership quote wall: Students match quotes to leaders' actions

4. Case Facilitation Tools

This section equips you with interactive tools to spark rich dialogue, critical thinking, and engagement during your facilitation.

Key Teaching Questions (With Facilitation Prompts)

Question	Activity
"What makes leadership stable over decades?"	Probe for structures vs. personalities. Ask: "What happens if the leader exits?"
"Is consistency always good—or can it breed stagnation?"	Encourage debate. Offer examples of both sides.
"Would you accept fewer freedoms for greater stability?"	Frame this as an ethical and practical dilemma. Use contemporary analogies.
"How does Tuas Port embody the leadership philosophy?"	Use this to introduce system thinking and visionary execution.
"What risks do governments face without a succession plan?"	Have participants reflect on case examples (e.g. unstable transitions in other states).

Case Timeline (Visual Aid)

Period	Event
1959	PAP wins first election
1965	Singapore gains independence
1970s–80s	HDB & anti-corruption drive reshape domestic trust
1990	Lee Kuan Yew hands over to Goh Chok Tong
2004	Lee Hsien Loong becomes PM
2015	Tuas Port development announced
2025	Lawrence Wong takes over; Tuas Phase 2 operational

Use this to visualize continuity, not just through people—but through consistent planning logic.

Role Play Prompt: “Cabinet in Crisis – 1965”

Scenario:

Students form a mock Singapore Cabinet immediately after the split from Malaysia. Each team member takes on a different ministerial role (e.g. Finance, Defence, Trade). The group must draft a 3-point plan to stabilize the country.

Debrief Questions:

- What assumptions did your team make?
- How did you balance long-term vision vs. short-term needs?
- Who emerged as the stabilizer in your group?

Interactive Tools to Use

Tool	Usage
Mentimeter or Slido	Run live polls: “Would you vote for the same party 5x if results were great?”
Padlet or Jamboar	Vision Board: Students contribute principles of strong governance
Kahoot or Quizizz	Quick-fire quiz on Singapore’s leadership milestones

Whiteboard Mapping Template

Create this on your board or screen to synthesize inputs:

GOVERNANCE STABILITY FRAMEWORK

Visionary Leaders	Institutional Trust	Succession Systems
LKY, Goh, etc.	Anti-corruption laws, Transparent policies, Deep bench of ministers	Grooming Future PMS, Low policy turnover

Encourage students to contribute real examples as you fill it out.

5. Group Activities & Teaching Tactics

This section gives you high-impact, collaborative activities that bring the case alive and help students internalize the leadership lessons through experiential learning.

Activity 1: “Governance in Crisis” Simulation

Objective: Recreate 1965 Singapore’s moment of political uncertainty.

Time: 30–45 mins

Materials: Role cards, country profile handout

Instructions:

Divide students into 4–5 teams representing new governments of recently independent countries. Each team must:

- Draft a 5-year stabilization strategy
- Address leadership, infrastructure, trust-building, and policy planning
- Prepare a 3-minute “Prime Minister’s Address to the Nation”

Debrief:

- How did your team prioritize decisions?
- What long-term structures did you put in place?
- Which leadership models did you draw inspiration from?

Activity 2: “Succession Scenarios: Keep the Vision Alive”

Objective: Explore how to groom future leadership in an evolving context.

Time: 20–30 mins

Setup: Distribute 3 fictional transition dilemmas to small groups.

Example Scenarios:

1. Your founding leader announces sudden retirement.
2. Public trust is high, but your next-in-line is unpopular.
3. An external crisis demands urgent leadership change.
- 4.

Task:

Groups must:

- Choose a course of action
- Justify it with principles of governance continuity
- Present their plan to the class
-

Debrief:

- What values did your plan protect?
- How realistic was your transition model?
- How would Singapore’s PAP handle this?

Activity 3: “Build a Stability Playbook”

Objective: Synthesize insights into a transferable framework.

Time: 20–25 mins

Format: Group Poster/Padlet Jam

Each group answers:

- What are the 5 core practices of stable governance?
- What tools or safeguards ensure consistency?
- What does "vision beyond tenure" look like in action?

Display outputs gallery-style and allow groups to walk around and comment using sticky notes or emojis (if digital).

Quick Teaching Tactics

Tactic	Description
“Hot Seat” Challenge	Put a student in the “PM’s chair” and ask: “How will you handle a leadership vacuum?”
“Quote & Apply” Cards	Hand out leadership quotes; students apply them to Singapore’s journey
“1-Word Round”	Students share a one-word reaction to LKY’s 31-year tenure—and defend it

6. Assignments and Post-Class Engagement

This section helps extend learning beyond the classroom, offering activities that reinforce the case's themes through writing, analysis, and creative application

Assignment 1: Reflective Essay

Title: "What Stability Looks Like in My Context"

Objective: Encourage students to personalize the lessons from Singapore's case.

Length: 800–1000 words

Prompt:

Drawing on the Singapore case, reflect on your country, organization, or a group you belong to. What structures or leadership habits create—or disrupt—stability? What would you change, and why?

Assessment Criteria:

- Thoughtful engagement with the case themes
- Clarity of reflection and argument
- Realistic, context-specific application

Assignment 2: Comparative Analysis Brief

Title: "From Singapore to (X): Comparing Governance Models"

Objective: Develop analytical skills by comparing Singapore with another nation.

Length: 2-page memo or presentation deck

Instructions:

Choose another country and:

- Compare its governance style to Singapore's
- Analyse outcomes in political stability, investment, or succession
- Recommend one element from Singapore's model to adopt
-

Suggested Countries:

Rwanda, South Korea, Botswana, UAE, Chile, or your home country.

Assignment 3: Creative Poster Project

Title: “Leadership for the Long Haul”

Objective: Use visual storytelling to synthesize leadership insights.

Format: Digital poster, Canva/PowerPoint slide, or physical poster

Components to Include:

- Quote from The Singapore Way
- One visual metaphor (e.g. bridge, compass, anchor)
- 3 key takeaways on stability and governance
- One suggested action for today’s leaders
-

Students can present in 2 minutes or submit as a gallery display

Ongoing Engagement Ideas

Post-Class Activity	Description
LinkedIn Article Challenge	Students publish a mini-reflection on “What my country can learn from Singapore.”
Peer Interviews	Pairs discuss how stability shows up in their families, communities, or workplaces
Policy Design Jam	Organize a 1-hour workshop where students design a stability policy for a city or school system

7. Assessment and Feedback Tools

This section provides ready-to-use rubrics and feedback instruments to evaluate student performance and learning outcomes effectively. The focus is on critical thinking, participation, creativity, and applied understanding.

A. Participation Rubric (In-Class Discussions & Activities)

Criteria	Excellent (5 pts)	Good (3–4 pts)	Needs Work (1–2 pts)
Quality of Contributions	Insightful, grounded in case material	Relevant, makes clear points	Off-topic or minimal
Critical Thinking	Challenges assumptions, applies context	Shows understanding, asks clarifying Qs	Repeats known ideas, lacks analysis
Engagement	Highly engaged; builds on others' ideas	Participates regularly, listens actively	Rarely contributes or distracts others
Collaboration	Encourages team, shares time	Works well in group settings	Dominates or disengages

Total Score (out of 20): ____

B. Written Assignment Rubric (Essay / Policy Memo)

Criteria	Excellent (5 pts)	Good (3–4 pts)	Needs Work (1–2 pts)
Clarity & Structure	Logical, well-organized	Mostly clear	Lacks structure or coherence
Case Integration	Effectively uses case examples and data	Some use of examples	Vague or minimal case linkage
Analysis & Insight	Deep analysis, creative thinking	Competent, clear arguments	Descriptive or superficial
Application	Applies to real-world or personal context	Some relevance shown	Weak or unclear connection
Language & Grammar	Polished, error-free	Minor errors	Frequent errors, hinders clarity

Total Score (out of 25): ____

C. Self-Assessment & Peer Feedback Form

Provide this after group work or simulations.

Name: _____

Date: _____

Group Activity Name: _____

1. How did you contribute to your group's discussion or output?

- Shared key ideas
- Took on leadership/facilitator role
- Helped connect our plan to the case
- Synthesized others' contributions

Other: _____

2. What's one insight you gained from a peer?

3. What could your group do better next time?

D. Instructor Debrief Checklist

Post-Session Review	Done
Were all voices included in discussion?	
Did the session stay grounded in case themes?	
Did students connect case insights to their own context?	
Did at least one activity show clear application of leadership?	
Did students express curiosity about other governance models?	

Use this for refining your teaching strategy each time you deliver the case.

8. Instructor Notes and Commentary

This section provides guidance to help you deliver the case with confidence, anticipate student responses, and steer discussion toward meaningful insights.

Teaching Philosophy for This Case

This case is not about promoting one political model, but rather about helping students examine the principles and structures that sustain effective leadership and national resilience.

Encourage students to explore:

- The balance between individual leadership and institutional continuity
- The trade-offs between efficiency and pluralism
- The translatability of Singapore's model to other political and cultural contexts

Key Takeaways for Students

By the end of this case, your learners should walk away understanding:

1. Stability isn't passive — it's built.
 - Singapore's leadership invested in long-term policy continuity, not just reactive governance.
2. Trust stems from performance and fairness.
 - Clean governance, clear rules, and delivery on promises shaped citizen confidence.
3. Succession is a strategy, not a surprise.
 - Grooming new leaders early and methodically was key to Singapore's smooth transitions.
4. Mega-projects like Tuas Port reflect long-term thinking.
 - Governance is not just about legislation—it's about visionary execution of infrastructure, technology, and public trust.

Steering the Conversation: What to Expect

Student Reaction	Instructor Insight / Reframe
"But Singapore is authoritarian..."	Explore the outcomes vs. systems debate. Ask: "Can democratic systems adopt any of these governance principles?"
"Isn't this just good PR?"	Dive into the measurable outcomes: GDP growth, corruption index, public housing, investor trust.
"That wouldn't work in my country."	Invite exploration: "Why not? What would need to change for it to work?" Shift to context adaptation.
"Too much power in one party!"	Discuss checks and balances that Singapore employed (CPIB, judicial independence, structured opposition growth).

Pro Tips

- Use Tuas Port as a tangible illustration of leadership vision + system execution.
- Link to modern transitions (e.g. Lawrence Wong's rise) to show that stability is still a living project.
- Don't shy from political critique—invite it, but ask for evidence and logic. This isn't a fan club, it's a case lab.

Bonus Insight

"Succession isn't luck. It's preparation."

— This quote from the book is a great entry point for discussing leadership pipelines, whether in politics, companies, or NGOs.

9. Additional Resources

This section provides curated materials to enrich your class discussions, support deeper learning, and enable comparative analysis.

Recommended Readings

Title	Source/Author	Why It Matters
From Third World to First	Lee Kuan Yew	First-person account of Singapore's early leadership decisions.
The Art of Governance	Harvard Kennedy School casebook	Explores public leadership in varying political contexts.
How Nations Succeed	Murat Yülek	Provides comparative public policy frameworks.
Good Governance in the 21st Century	UNDP / World Bank Reports	Universal tools for evaluating governance systems.

Documentaries & Video Clips

Title	Link or Platform	Usage Idea
Lee Kuan Yew: The Man Who Made Singapore	CNA Insider (YouTube)	Use short clips to open discussion on visionary leadership.
Singapore: City of the Future	Bloomberg QuickTake	Illustrates how long-term planning materializes in infrastructure.
Inside Tuas Port	PSA / MPA Singapore	Brings the mega-project alive through visuals.
World Bank - Governance Matters Index	worldbank.org	Great for assigning comparative analysis by region.

Tools & Templates

- **Governance Evaluation Template:** A downloadable worksheet students can use to assess their own country's leadership model across criteria like transparency, planning, succession, and inclusivity.
- **Leadership Legacy Map:** Visual tool to chart a leader's decisions, outcomes, and legacy ripple effects.
- **Interactive Timeline Builder:** Use tools like Timeline JS to have students build a visual history of Singapore's political evolution.

Comparative Case Suggestions

Country	Angle to Explore
Rwanda	Post-crisis leadership and institution-building
Botswana	Resource management with political continuity
South Korea	Developmental state with democratic evolution
United Arab Emirates	Visionary megaprojects and succession strategy
Chile	Economic liberalization under stable leadership

These cases offer varied socio-political contexts while highlighting shared themes of vision, trust, and transition.

Guest Speakers / Field Experts

- Invite local government officials, leadership consultants, or policy researchers to reflect on what "stable leadership" looks like locally.
- Consider a virtual guest from the Singapore Civil Service College (many officials do speaking engagements via Zoom).