BACKGROUND INFORMATION

When Personal Mobility Devices (PMDs) such as e-scooters, hoverboards and electric unicycles started growing in popularity in the early 2010s, the Singapore Government initially embraced the role they played in complementing our then-strained public transport infrastructure. Based on recommendations from the Active Mobility Panel set up in 2015, rules and a code of conduct for PMDs were rolled out in 2016, with more stringent regulations in the Active Mobility Act coming into force in May 2018.

Despite these restrictions, however, the proliferation of PMDs over the years led to increased conflict between PMD users and pedestrians on footpaths, with accidents and fires caused by PMD batteries making headlines in the news and sparking debate over the value of PMDs in Singapore. Things came to a boil on 25 September 2019, when the death of a 65-year-old cyclist led to widespread outrage and a surge in petitions calling for a ban on PMDs.

On 4 Nov 2019, in response to queries by several lawmakers in Parliament about what the Government would do to address concerns about PMD use, the Ministry of Transport announced that it would ban PMDs from footpaths from 5 November. Facing complaints from food delivery PMD riders about the ban, the Government also announced on 8 November that it would help them switch to other forms of transport with an e-scooter trade-in grant co-funded by the three major food delivery companies.

Study the following sources to assess the impacts of the PMD footpath ban.

Question 1(a)

Study Source A.

Why did the Ministry of Transport publish this? Explain your answer. [6m]

Level of Response Marking Scheme

Level	Description	Marks
L1	Answer based on events/provenance	1
L2	Answer based on message	2
L3	Answer based on consideration of wider context	3
L4	Answer based on intent	4
L5	Answer based on intended impact	5-6

Expected Answers

- Message: The government <u>is helping food delivery PMD-riders to cope</u> with the ban

  - Should be supported with <u>quotes</u> and brief <u>explanation</u> on how the different measures work

- Context: a) Ban b) <u>triggered complaints</u> by food delivery riders c) because <u>livelihoods are threatened</u>

- Audience: Food delivery PMD-riders

Expected Answers

- Intent (if intent alone – max. L4): <u>Reassure</u> food delivery PMD riders (must have at least mentioned that they are worried about their livelihoods)

- Accepted intended outcomes:

  - Support/<u>comply with the ban</u>

  - <u>Stop complaints</u> (must have elaborated on what the complaints were about)

  - Trade in their PMDs (weak IO – max. 5m)

Common Mistakes

- Message
  - Vague (eg. help the PMD riders) or off the mark (eg. food delivery riders will face no problems despite the ban)
  - Not supported with details – measures not cited and/or explained
- Context did not mention why the food delivery PMD-riders were concerned or that they were complaining
- Audience is vague: PMD users OR the public

Common Mistakes

- Intended Outcome
  - Far-fetched – eg. gain trust for the government
  - Vague – "Stop complaints" without mentioning that people were complaining in the first place and/or what the complaints were about

- Intent – though not penalised, students should be aware of the difference between "assure" (tell, guarantee) and "reassure" (dispel worry or fear)

Question 1(b)

Study Sources B and C.

How similar are the sources? Explain your answer. [7m]

Source B: Comments by Minister of State for Transport Dr Lam Pin Min to the media, made on 12 November 2019 after a dialogue session with delivery riders.

Even with the announcement of the assistance package, not everyone will be happy. But they have to understand that what we're trying to do is to allow them to return to the trade that they want to continue doing. The authorities will continue to look at the cases of food-delivery riders who are affected by the ban individually, to help them address their problems.

We have always believed in using active mobility for the first and last mile… but unfortunately, over the past year, the situation doesn't seem to have improved. We've seen quite a significant number of injuries from accidents involving PMDs and pedestrians, and we have also seen several fatalities. After looking at the situation, we know that we have to do something to bring safety back to the footpaths. And therefore, we have this very difficult decision to prohibit the use of PMDs on footpaths.

Source C: From a statement on the Singapore Democratic Party website, published on 8 November 2019.

The ban on PMDs has caused much unhappiness among its users, especially those who depend on such devices for a living. This is a difficult situation because accidents caused by PMD riders on footpaths in the past have resulted in injuries and even death. The dangers of PMD use on footpaths must not be taken lightly.

But while recognising that the safety of pedestrians is of topmost consideration and the need to curb irresponsible PMD users, it is also problematic to issue a blanket ban on the use of such vehicles on footpaths as this affects the livelihood of many who are responsible users. There are alternative ways to deal with the problem. Banning PMD use outright is the easy and lazy way out. It breaks the rice-bowls of many of our fellow citizens who depend on PMDs for their livelihood but who are responsible users.

Level of Response Marking Scheme

Level	Description	Marks
L1	Similarity/difference in provenance/ source type	1
L2	Similarity OR difference in source content OR Both similarity AND difference in source content, unsupported	2-3
L3	Similarity AND difference in source content	4-5
L4	Difference in purpose, supported	5
L5	Similarity in content AND difference in purpose	6-7

Expected Answers

- 1 Similarity + 1 Difference
- Similarity: source content/message
  - PMDs on footpaths <u>are dangerous/cause harm</u>
  - <u>Decision to ban</u> PMDs on footpaths <u>not an easy one</u>
  - Ban <u>causes happiness</u>
  - Ban <u>brings negative consequences</u>

Expected Answers

- Difference: source content/message

  - Views on <u>whether the ban is necessary/ justified</u>

- Difference: purpose

  - Intended outcomes:

    - B: to reassure/placate/reduce tensions/ complaints, support govt., cooperate/comply with policy

    - C: to criticise, oppose ban, pressure Govt to revert decision, gain support for party

Common Mistakes

- Weak explanation for similarity/difference in source content

  - Some answers just quote and do not explain

  - Some answers do not explain the evidence properly – simply repeating the quotes

Common Mistakes

- Incomplete Purpose
  - Message not sharp: "ban is necessary" is correct, "address their problems" is acceptable, "return them to their trade" is not so clear
  - Missing evidence to support the (above) message
  - Not-so-correct audience for B: PMD riders > public
  - No context to clarify the situation/provide background
  - Intended outcome too simplistic – just leave it at "gain support" or "criticize government"

Question 1(c)

Study Sources D, E and F.

How far can you believe what Source D says about the PMD footpath ban? Explain your answer. [7m]

Source D: A comment by Denis Koh, chairman of e-scooter enthusiast group Big Wheel Scooters Singapore, published in The New Paper on 5 November 2019.

The ban came as a big disappointment for the e-scooter community. The ban does not eliminate the problem of errant riding. We should focus on the problem of errant riding as the main culprit, not the device. Even with just bicycles, those who choose to display errant behaviour will continue to do so.

Many had adopted e-scooters as modes of transport and more importantly, many have built their livelihoods with it. To lose all that due to a handful of black sheep is a pity and a big blow to active mobility.

**Source E: From a TODAY news report, published on 30 November 2019.**

Punggol resident Ng Cheow Yong, 76, said e-scooters in his estate typically move at frightening speeds. As he walks while running errands, he worries that given his advanced age, he will be unable to react when an e-scooter approaches from behind.

Mr Ng said that he is less stressed now that there are fewer e-scooters. He sees about one or two on his walks, unlike before when about five or six riders would speed past him. When asked if he thought food delivery riders were having it tough, Mr Ng disagreed. "It's fair that these food delivery riders have to find alternative arrangements, as long as the pedestrians are kept safe. If they were to continue riding, then where should we walk?"

Source F: A cartoon by local artist Lee Chee Chew, published on his personal blog in November 2019.

E-scooters banned from Singapore footpaths

...but bicycles are still allowed on them.
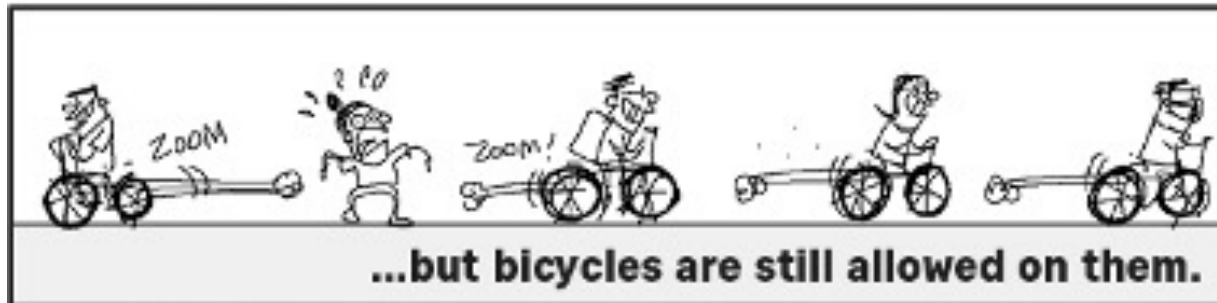
Level of Response Marking Scheme

Level	Description	Marks
L1	Believable based on provenance or description of source	1
L2	Believable based on source content	2
L3	Believable OR unbelievable based on cross-reference	3-4
L4	Believable AND unbelievable based on cross-reference OR Unbelievable based on purpose	4-5
L5	Believable AND unbelievable based on purpose	6-7

Expected Answers

- Message of D:

  - Ban was <u>ineffective</u> (unjustified/useless) because it <u>does not address the underlying problem</u> and <u>danger to pedestrians will still persist</u>

    - "The ban does not eliminate the problem of errant riding… Even with just bicycles, those who choose to display errant behaviour will continue to do so."

Expected Answers

- More/less believable based on CR

  - F supports D – ban <u>ineffective</u> as bicycles <u>will pose similar threat</u> to pedestrian safety.

    - F: Shows bicycles causing alarm to pedestrian the same way PMDs do, with first and third frames identical except that recklessly speeding PMDs are replaced with bicycles

  - E challenges D – ban <u>effective</u> as <u>pedestrians feel safer</u> with fewer PMDs.

    - E: "Mr Ng said that he is less stressed now that there are fewer e-scooters."

Expected Answers

- Less believable based on purpose

  - Provenance: author is leader/ representative of a PMD hobby group that is adversely affected by the ban

  - Audience: general public (or government)

  - Context: comments published on day ban took effect

Expected Answers

- IO: speaks out against ban to <u>gain public support</u> and <u>put pressure G</u> to possibly <u>reverse it or relax restrictions</u> in order for PMD users (like those represented by his hobby group) will be <u>able to continue using their PMDs and and pursue their hobby</u>

- Author therefore has a <u>vested interest</u> as he and his organisation <u>stand to gain</u> from the ban's repeal

Common Mistakes

- Some students still making mistakes with composing their response:

  - "Believable" not used – instead reliable, trustworthy, etc.

  - Not clearly linking cross references to question – "therefore the source is made more/less believable"

  - Not framing purpose as a vested interest/ ulterior motive

Common Mistakes

- Flawed cross-referencing

  - E misread/message not correctly identified (key phrase: "less stressed now that there are fewer e-scooters")

  - F not adequately described/insufficient evidence from source presented (inferred message only)

Common Mistakes

- Flawed purpose paragraphs:

  - IO not properly identified or explained ("gain support from the public" to do what?; "to have the ban repealed" – how?)

  - Gain not clearly stated – that author/group will benefit from ban's repeal, and how so