

2016 SRJC PRELIM PAPER 1 – APPROACHES TO ESSAY QUESTIONS

Question 1: 'Better to be a pet than a child.' Is this true of your society today?

Assumptions:

- There are expectations/experiences of child that is undesirable/difficult such that it is easier to be a pet because a pet's needs are often taken care of by its owner.
- There are characteristics of Singapore's society that have made the lives of children more difficult than that of pets.
- There are privileges and benefits accorded to pets which children may not enjoy.

Clarification of Key Terms:

"Better than" – Comparative question

"your society" – Reference to Singapore's context

"today" – refer to characteristics applicable to the current situation/context

"pet" – domestic animal which is often reared as a member of a family. To consider the upkeep, maintenance costs and difficulties as well as treatment and privileges enjoyed by pets in Singapore.

"child" – to consider the various expectations placed on a child.

Basic requirements of the question:

"Better than" – Students need to show comparison in every single paragraph between a pet and a child. The contention is between the seeming difficulties between being a child versus a pet/ the different treatment and privileges accorded to both groups - the student needs to consider the various forms of pets and children in question and evaluate the various difficulties Singaporeans will face with regard to these two subjects. The student could argue that due to many factors such as the high cost of living in Singapore, high levels of competition and lack of time, or even the unfavourable levels of stress children face today in this society that perhaps it is easier to be a pet than a child due to the demands placed on the latter.

Singapore context – examples given and arguments presented must be sensible and reflective of the Singapore context. The characteristics which can be considered in Singapore include:

- a) High cost of living
- b) Increasing stress levels
- c) Lack of time for pet/child and self
- d) Trends of marrying late

As always, students cannot rely on hypothetical examples but are expected to provide detailed examples.

Possible arguments to show that it is better to be a pet than a child

1. Given the academic rigour of school syllabuses/ the stressful academic expectations placed on a child in Singapore, it is arguable that it is easier to be a pet as its needs are taken care of. *Eg. Local newspaper The Straits Times reported that more than 70 per cent of parents sign their children up for these extra classes outside of school hours to help them brush up on English and mathematics. The median amount spent on tutoring classes ranges from \$150 to \$250 per month, creating a very lucrative industry. On the other hand, such expectations do not exist when it comes to pets and they are increasingly well-taken care of with the availability of pet nanny services.*

2. While the upkeep of both a pet and a child may be financially costly, an investment into a

child, beyond his basic needs tend to be focused on his academic/skills training as opposed to pets where pampering services are increasingly common.

Eg. The Wagington hotel is Singapore's first luxury pet hotel. Accommodations can cost over a hundred dollars per night. Interior of the hotel include chandeliers and a swimming pool. Spa services are also available.

Possible arguments to show that it is better to be a child than a pet

1. Nevertheless, Singapore remains a highly pragmatic society where the needs of child tend to be prioritised over pet. Pets are often bought as gifts for children in Singapore, so much so that a law requiring pet shops to screen potential owners had to be enforced to prevent impulse buying.

Eg. Many pets are purchased without any consideration of the responsibilities involved. Pets acquired on impulse, are treated as commodities, many are abandoned later, when the novelty wears off. As pet ownership has increased in recent years, so has the incidence of neglect and abandonment. (Source: Singapore Prevention of Cruelty to Animals).

2. Regardless of the numerous pet (and pampering services) available, one must not neglect the privilege of Singapore children in terms of being able to access world class education and other opportunities to further their talent, promising them of a bright, fulfilling and perhaps even prosperous future.

Characteristics of better scripts:

- Would consistently weave in characteristics of Singapore's society.
- Would consider a variety of ways to measure "better" as opposed to being focused on the "stress" aspect.
- Consistent inclusion of detailed examples

Question 2: 'We have become too reliant on medical technology today.' Do you agree with this statement?

Assumptions:

- We have invested a lot of faith into medical technology in the hopes of cures/betterment of people's lives
- Our dependency on medical technology must be measured, or else there will be negative repercussions

Clarification of Key Terms:

'Medical technology' - encompasses a wide range of healthcare products and is used to diagnose, monitor or treat diseases or medical conditions affecting humans.

'Too reliant' – suggests that we invest a lot of money, time and effort into using/developing medical technology. We also depend greatly on them.

'Today' – There are characteristics of the world today which demand for the greater use of medical technology.

'Do you agree' - Direct argumentative essay question

Basic requirements of the question:

"too reliant" – Yardstick question. Students need to show how there are negative consequences arising from our dependency on medical technology. Alternatively, students can show how we can stand to invest more time and effort into medical technology or our level of faith in medical technology is justified.

"today" – examples must be current. Students should also strive to weave in characteristics from our world today to justify their claims.

"medical technology" – students need to provide detailed examples of medical technology and show how they help to benefit/cause problems to peoples' lives

"do you agree" – students need to provide a balanced discussion. They will need to acknowledge/prove the given question statement.

Possible arguments to show that we are "too reliant"

1. With our increasingly busy lifestyles, people tend to opt for a quick fix to their ailments even when there are other alternatives such as maintaining a healthy lifestyle and eating well which would reduce the need for prescriptions, which can have negative repercussions on health.

Eg. In terms of over-the-counter (OTC) medications, 2012 research from the Consumer Healthcare Products Association found that 81% of adults in the US use such drugs as a first response to minor conditions. However, self-medication, even for minor ailments, could lead to medical complications. Tamil Nadu recorded the highest number of deaths related to drug overdose in 2014, according to the National Crime Records Bureau. At least 80% of them were caused by popping pills intended to heal.

2. Due to our quest for perfection, some individuals have developed an insatiable desire to improve their physical appearances via medical technology which may be damaging to one's self-esteem and could even result in risky and long term scarring.

Eg. Since 2000, the amount of money Americans have spent on Botox procedures has increased by 748%, or more than seven-fold. While these procedures may help to improve one's appearance, addiction may push individuals to find desperate and alternative ways of obtaining their desired appearance even if they may be cash-strapped or professional cosmetic surgeons decline to perform operations due to health risk. A British woman by the name of Joy Williams

went into the SP Clinic in Bangkok and believed she was about to undergo a straightforward cosmetic operation, at a very reasonable price, and at a modern facility which has been widely used, and often praised, by other patients from overseas. But her wounds became infected, and she died under anaesthetic as the clinic tried to correct what had gone wrong.

3. There have been concerns that our medical facilities might have the latest imaging devices and computer programs, but the human element is sometimes lost, and patients may be suffering as a result.

Eg. Steven McGee, a professor of medicine at the University of Washington and the author of a recent textbook on evidence-based physical diagnosis - studies have found that physical exam findings can be as accurate as their technological counterparts. Case in point: A pair of studies involving 185 acutely dizzy patients found that the presence of certain abnormal eye movements (observed by doctors) were more accurate than an initial MRI scan in distinguishing a serious stroke from a benign inner ear problem. This suggests that an overreliance could be costly. In "The Human Element", by David Boyles, he argued that one in ten patients in the UK ends up suffering 'measurable harm' due to technical mistakes and faulty equipment. These instances lead to prolonged stays, costing about 2 to 3 billion pounds a year. Instead, healthcare workers need to pay close attention to their patients instead relying on technological systems which control the way staff operate.

Possible arguments to show that we are "not too reliant"

1. As the field of medical technology continues to advance and new diagnostic procedures are developed, humanity is continually offered the hope of a better quality of life.

Eg: Nanotechnology can play a significant role in advancing medical technology as there is a large possibility of highly-targeted delivery of medical payloads, which could aid in reducing side effects and remove the need for invasive medical procedures. According to Gizmag, nanobots in blood is still an area of research that needs refining. As of yet, nanobots cannot be inserted into the body and left to their own devices. To address this, researchers are working towards finding a way to guide nanobots through bodily fluids. Several types of nanobots aimed at attaining this goal are currently under development. They include Microbivore, Respirocyte, Clottocyte, and Cellular repair nanobots which "can destroy bacteria, carry oxygen, create blood clots for wounds, and repair cells.

2. It is erroneous to argue that our use of medical technology has caused us to lose sight of other important complementary medical practices/services needed to improve a patient's overall health.

Eg. Complementary medicine is used together with mainstream medical care. An example is using acupuncture to help with side effects of cancer treatment. When health care providers and facilities offer both types of care, it is called integrative medicine. Other alternative non-medical technology methods of improving well-being include physiotherapy and occupational therapy where the role of the therapist, as opposed to excess reliance on technology is crucial in rehabilitating a patient.

Characteristics of better scripts:

- better scripts would consider a variety of types of medical technology for various purposes such as for improvement of health and aesthetic purposes.
- better scripts would weave in characteristics of today's society.
- students could also consider various contexts where reliance on medical technology might be excessive or otherwise.

Question 3: 'Migrants are an inconvenient necessity.' Is this true?

Assumptions:

- Migrants are fundamental to societies. Without migrants, there would be negative repercussions.
- Their presence brings about negative outcomes which affect the wellbeing/lives of the locals or the society at large

Clarification of Key Terms:

Migrants - a person who moves from one place to another in order to find work or better living conditions. This includes asylum seekers, refugees and expats. Students can also consider internal migration as well as voluntary/non-voluntary migration.

Inconvenient – causing trouble, difficulties, or discomfort

Necessity – Without the presence of migrants, there will be negative repercussions on the society/economy. Society cannot function without the presence of migrants

Is this true – direct argumentative question

Basic requirements of the question:

Students need to show how the presence of migrants pose difficulties in various aspects of the society not limited to the social environment

Students need to prove whether or not societies can function/flourish even in the absence of migrants

Both ideas of “inconvenient” and “necessity” must be necessary. Students can agree with the given statement, or choose to argue that migrants, while necessary, may not pose inconvenience if managed properly. Students can also choose to argue how migrants are not essential in some societies. They cannot treat the two terms as separate entities (e.g. one paragraph about how it is inconvenient and in another, how migrants are a necessity).

Possible arguments to show that migrants are an inconvenient necessity

While there are concerns that the presence of migrants would pose problems in the society due to their different customs and way of life, the reality is that many developed nations grappling with the issue of ageing population require the presence of foreigners to stay afloat.

Eg. In 2000, the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs ran a detailed simulation to see how many immigrants would be needed to support the population over 65 in developed countries. They found that with no migration, Europe's population is set to fall 17 per cent by 2050 – with a 30 per cent decrease in people of working age. To maintain overall numbers, the EU needs 850,000 immigrants per year

Possible arguments to show that migrants are a necessity and they might not be inconvenient

Low-skilled migrants are often very much demanded by developed nations as essential but laborious jobs tend to be shunned by the locals. Integration efforts have been heightened across many countries in the last few years so that the level of discomfort experienced by locals can be reduced.

Eg. A one-day course was jointly conducted by the Migrant Workers Centre (MWC) and NTUC LearningHub, and involved mostly workers in the construction and hospitality industries. It is hoped that the course will empower foreign workers with the knowledge to better integrate with Singaporeans through activities such as discussions, a field trip to places of interest - like Chinatown - and sampling of local culinary treats. Mr Yeo Guat Kwang, co-chairman of MWC, said “The programme will help these foreigners ease into local society quickly, making them feel welcomed and accepted.” During the lessons, students were also given a rundown of common Singapore laws and societal dos and don'ts.

Possible arguments to show that migrants are inconvenient and there are countries that do not necessarily need to depend on the presence of migrants

In societies where people are well-distributed across core industries, there is little need to engage the help of migrants who might challenge or erode the identity of the people.

E.g: In the case of Japan, leaders and citizens often believe that there is a direct correlation between national heritage and permission to immigrate: a people that has a solid and clear national heritage and identity will not allow the unemployed of the world to enter its country; and a people whose cultural heritage and national identity is weak and fragile, has no defense mechanisms to prevent a foreign culture from penetrating into its country and its land. This sense of Japanese exceptionalism is deeply rooted in the country, so much so that citizens take pride in their work regardless if it pertains to professional work or hard labour. It hardly needs migrants to fill in the gaps of the workforce.

Characteristics of better scripts:

- Would cover a variety of aspects of society which are affected by the presence of migrants
- Would show sensitivity to context as the level of inconvenience posed by migrants / how necessary migrants are is dependent on the type of society/country in question.
- Would show sensitivity to the different types of migrants

Question 4: 'Environmental conservation, not poverty alleviation, should be the priority of developing countries.' Comment.

Assumption:

Developing countries rely heavily on the environment for economic survival and thus, they should focus more on environmental conservation than poverty alleviation as environmental degradation makes survival more difficult, i.e. environmental degradation exacerbates poverty conditions.

Clarification of Key Terms:

- *'Environmental conservation'* – It is the sustainable use and management of natural resources including wildlife, water, air, and earth deposits, both -- renewable and non-renewable.
- *'Poverty'* – They are i) absolute and ii) relative poverty. [This question requires candidates to DISCUSS ABOUT ABSOLUTE POVERTY.]
 - *'Absolute Poverty'* - By the Copenhagen Declaration Absolute Poverty is a condition characterized by severe deprivation of basic human needs, including food, safe drinking water, sanitation facilities, health, shelter, education and information.
 - The term 'absolute poverty' is sometimes synonymously referred to as 'extreme poverty. Absolute poverty refers to a set standard which is consistent over time and between countries. It depends not only on income but also on access to services.
 - *'Relative poverty'* is defined contextually as economic inequality in the location or society in which people live.
 - Relative poverty views poverty as socially defined and dependent on social context, hence relative poverty is a measure of income inequality. [Thus, relative poverty IS NOT THE FOCUS OF THIS QUESTION.]
- *'Poverty alleviation'* - Poverty alleviation involves the strategic use of tools such as education, economic development, health and income redistribution to improve the livelihoods of the world's poorest by governments, NGOs and internationally approved organizations (INGOs and IGOs). They also aim at removing social and legal barriers to income growth among the poor.
- *'Priority'* - The fact or condition of being regarded or treated as MORE IMPORTANT THAN OTHERS. [This is a X, not Y question as it does require candidates to justify why environmental conservation is more important (i.e. a priority) than environmental conservation, or not.]
- *'Developing countries'* - According to the UN, a developing country is a country with a relatively low standard of living, undeveloped industrial base, and moderate to low Human Development Index (HDI).
 - HDI is a comparative measure of poverty, literacy, education, life expectancy, and other factors for countries worldwide.
 - The HDI measures the average achievements in a country in two basic dimensions of human development:
 - 1) A long and healthy life, as measured by life expectancy at birth.
 - 2) Knowledge, as measured by the adult literacy rate (with two-thirds weight) and the combined primary, secondary, and tertiary gross enrollment ratio (with one-third weight).

Basic requirements of the question:

- Candidates are expected to discuss BOTH environmental conservation AND poverty alleviation in every argument to justify which solution (environmental conservation or poverty alleviation) is more important than the other solution in improving developing countries' standard of living and quality of life.
- Possible stands to be taken:
 1. Yes. Environmental conservation, not poverty alleviation, should be the priority of developing countries.
 2. No. Poverty alleviation, not environmental conservation, should be the priority of developing countries.
 3. No. Both environmental conservation and poverty alleviation, should be the priority of developing countries.
- Points to be taken:

If the stand is YES, candidates are required to discuss why developing countries should focus on environmental conservation and not poverty alleviation. Examples:

Argument 1: Addressing environmental problems should be the priority instead of solving the problem of poverty when the environmental problems created are very serious which negatively affects people's well-being and thus, require urgent/immediate attention whereas the problem of poverty which is deep-seated in society does not require immediate attention. At times, the environmental problems could be permanent and irreversible.

E.g.1: The burning of Sumatran forest fires that created haze affected many neighbouring countries, including Singapore. The people who burned the forests were plantation owners and as well as poor farmers (shifting cultivators) in Indonesia. The immediate attention was given to addressing the burning of forests which caused air pollution instead of addressing the poverty-stricken way of living by the poor farmers. The farmers were advised not to burn the trees but little is mentioned about addressing the poverty faced by these farmers and their families. Tackling the environmental problems took precedence because in addition to causing serious health risks in Indonesia and its neighbouring countries, it created diplomatic embarrassment for Indonesia as its neighbouring countries were unhappy that the haze became a yearly occurrence since 1997.

E.g.2: As one of the world's most vulnerable nations in terms of the effects of climate change, Kiribati, a low-income country, has been an active participant in international diplomatic efforts relating to climate change, most importantly the UNFCCC conferences of the parties (COP). Kiribati is a member of the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS), an intergovernmental organization of low-lying coastal and small Island countries. Established in 1990, the main purpose of the alliance is to consolidate the voices of Small Island Developing States (SIDS) to address global warming. AOSIS has been very active from its inception, putting forward the first draft text in the Kyoto Protocol negotiations as early as 1994. In 2009, President Tong attended the Climate Vulnerable Forum (V11) in the Maldives, along with 10 other countries that are vulnerable to climate-change, and signed the Bandos Island declaration on Nov. 10 2009, pledging to show moral leadership and commence greening their economies by voluntarily committing to achieving carbon neutrality. In 2012, the government began negotiating with Fiji to buy land in to which it could move some of its population due to rising sea levels. Addressing environmental problem, namely, rising sea level, is of utmost importance to this small country state, as opposed to addressing its poverty as not doing anything about the global environmental problem threatens the very survival of this poor country.

Argument 2: Environmental conservation should be the priority over poverty alleviation when poor countries are provided an option to accept debt-for-nature swap (to clear their foreign debt by addressing their environmental problems) by rich countries. Through this scheme, the poor countries are obliged to keep their environment intact which inevitably benefits the poor who rely on the environment for their living. The rich countries offer this deal because of environmental significance to the world such as CO₂ reduction by keeping forests intact instead of being cut down or saving near extinct animal species. Also, through this, the poor people such as the indigenous people, who live off the forest, stand to gain as well.

E.g.1: In 2009, United States has signed an agreement to forgive nearly \$30 million in Indonesian debt in return for the large Southeast Asian country agreeing to protect forests on Sumatra Island. The deal is the largest debt-for-nature swap the U.S. government has organized so far under the U.S. Tropical Forest Conservation Act. It is the first such deal with Indonesia - which has one of the fastest deforestation rates in the world. Another fallen tree in the forests of Indonesia - a country which loses an area the size of Switzerland each year to logging. Indonesia's massive deforestation rate makes it the world's third-largest emitter of carbon dioxide behind the United States and China. Deforestation also affects the country's wildlife. The forests are home to some of the world's most endangered species including endangered tigers, elephants, rhinos and orangutan. In a new deal, the U.S. has agreed to trade \$30 million in debt repayments for increased conservation of their habitat. The deal signed by the US Treasury Department permits Indonesia to put the money into a trust to protect 13 areas of forest on the island of Sumatra. Conservation International says the deal is an innovative way of helping both the people and the species of Indonesia. The United States has signed similar, smaller agreements with countries such as the Philippines, Guatemala and Peru.

If the stand is NO, candidates are required to discuss why developing countries should focus on poverty alleviation and not environmental conservation OR why developing

countries should focus on BOTH environmental conservation and poverty alleviation.

Examples:

Argument 1: Solving people suffering from poverty should be the priority over environmental conservation so that the poor would not further damage the environment upon which they rely on to survive.

E.g. 1: Many poor people in developing countries such as Nigeria and India have built permanent squatter settlements in urban centers (Lagos and Calcutta, respectively). These poor people usually migrate from agrarian rural areas to the already overpopulated urban areas to seek jobs and a better living. However, with little education and skills, they are unable to get any jobs. They end up doing odd jobs. Hence, to have a roof over their heads, they 'squat' on private or government state land illegally. They damage the land by stripping off vegetation and build makeshift huts, and pollute the land and waterways by dumping untreated human sewage which causes water-borne diseases such as cholera and typhoid to spread easily, killing many people especially the children. It is a huge environmental problem brought upon by the poor in the urban areas which negatively affects their health conditions. It is, therefore, vital to address their basic needs such as providing basic housing and jobs to get them out of this poverty cycle first before the government could do anything about replanting trees or cleaning the waterways as the poor will continue to remove vegetation and pollute the waterways. There are examples where the government of Nigeria tried to clear the squatters without solving the poverty faced by these people. The poor simply moved from one part of the demolished squatter settlements on the beach to another part of the beach in Lagos. This clearly shows that the immediate problem of poverty has to be addressed first before tackling the environmental problems as the poor would further worsen the environmental problems if their situation is not improved which further exacerbates their standard of living.

Argument 2: It is possible to solve environmental problems and problem of poverty hand in hand when poor countries can earn money from their natural environment which is pumped back to sustaining both the environment and the poor people it supports. Hence, ecotourism is one way in which a poor country can address both its environmental problems and problem of poverty, and improve their standard of living.

- Ecotourism is rapidly becoming a leading way for developing countries to bring in foreign revenue by preserving their rainforests. Eco-tourists pay to see a country's natural beauty, not the destruction caused by short-run exploitation. Money spent directly in the local economy helps give economic value to forest preservation. The locals, along with the government, can see the importance of keeping the forest intact. Most tourists are willing to pay directly for preservation in the forms of park entrance fees and donations.
- Ecotourism can provide local people with economic assistance by offering them employment opportunities as wildlife guides and rangers for parks, and as workers in the service force of hotels and lodges. This employment provides a relatively even flow of income often higher than they would receive from selling their marginal, small-scale agricultural crops at market. With eco-tourism, income is earned from preserving the ecosystem, and forest clearing is discouraged because it is detrimental to income. Similarly, ecotourism can reduce the need for poaching and hunting of forest animals for income.

Examples: In West Africa, former poachers are hired as park rangers since they have intimate knowledge of local animal wildlife. Ecotourism also provides the opportunity for intellectual advancement for locals educated as wildlife guides. With an education, their children will have a better chance of breaking out of their subsistence lifestyle and improving their livelihood. Finally, local communities can earn supplementary income from the fabrication of handicrafts. Costa Rica is one of the best examples of a tropical country developing its ecotourism potential to its fullest.

Characteristics of better scripts:

- Better scripts would recognize the value of both environmental conservation and poverty alleviation in improving standard of living in developing countries as there are wide-ranging complex situations in these countries.
- Other than discussing the role of governments of developing countries in environmental conservation and poverty alleviation, better scripts would discuss other key players and their motives: e.g. developed countries, MNCs, NGOs and INGOs and IGOs.

Question 5: Should freedom of speech be protected no matter the cost?

Assumption:

Freedom of speech is one of our basic human rights. It involves the right to seek, receive and impart information and ideas of all kinds, by any means. Thus, it makes sense to protect it no matter the cost. Is it?

Clarification of Key Terms:

- '*Freedom of speech*' - The right to seek, receive and impart information and ideas of all kinds, by any means.
- '*Protected no matter the cost*' – It is an absolute assertion as it means safeguarding, no matter what the losses are (e.g. loss of lives, civil unrest), the right to seek, receive and impart information and ideas of all kinds, by any means.

Basic requirements of the question:

- Candidates are expected to explicitly identify and discuss the specific form(s) of freedom of speech and what form(s) of cost are incurred.
- **If the stand is YES, i.e. freedom should be protected no matter the cost [An absolute assertion]**
 - Candidates are expected to justify why freedom of speech should be safeguarded no matter how extreme the negative outcomes might be that impact person(s), community, nation, etc.
- **If the stand is NO, i.e. freedom should be protected which might involve some costs in some situations, but it should not be protected at all costs.**
 - Candidates are expected to justify why freedom should be restricted to avoid certain negative outcomes from taking place, AND when it should not be restricted, despite incurring some costs as there are overriding reasons to have freedom of speech.

Points to be taken:

If the stand is NO, candidates are required to acknowledge by providing convincing reason(s) why protecting freedom of speech is worthwhile despite incurring some costs.

Argument 1: Freedom of speech should be protected for journalists as they face particular risks such as threats and imprisonment because they expose any kind of information or activity that is deemed illegal, unethical, or not correct within an organisation that is either private or public. Furthermore, for a journalist, protecting sources is essential. Many journalists have even gone to prison to defend these relationships, knowing quite rightly that whistleblowers will not talk to them if they know their details can just be handed over. The history of journalism is full of examples such as Watergate or Wikileaks that show states would like some facts kept secret—but it is for the common good to bring them to light. Countries, therefore, have a responsibility to protect the journalists' right to free speech.

E.g. 1: Can Dunder, editor-in-chief of Turkey's *The Daily Cumhuriyet* was arrested on November 26 2015 along with Erdem Gul, the paper's bureau chief in the capital city of Ankara. The arrest followed a story published in *Cumhuriyet* about Syrian-bound Turkish intelligence trucks filled with weapons for rebel groups fighting against Syrian President Bashar al-Assad's regime. Mr. Dunder and Mr. Gul were charged with espionage and for being members of a terrorist organization. Video footage the journalists released in May was also allegedly in violation of state security. Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan personally filed the charges against the newspaper. "This paper has engaged in acts of espionage," he said in May. "Whoever wrote this story will pay a heavy price for this." If found guilty, the two will face life in prison.

Argument 2: Freedom of speech in the form of expressing the need to have equal civil rights should be protected as it is morally acceptable for people to oppose discrimination which occurs when the civil rights of an individual are denied or interfered with because of their membership in a particular group or class.

E.g.1: The civil rights movement was a struggle by African Americans in the mid-1950s to late 1960s to achieve civil rights equal to those of whites, including equal opportunity in employment, housing, and education, as well as the right to vote, the right of equal access to public facilities, and the right to be free of racial discrimination. No social or political movement of the twentieth century has had as profound an effect on the legal and political institutions of the United States.

This movement sought to restore to African Americans the rights of citizenship guaranteed by the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments, which had been eroded by segregationist Jim Crow laws in the South. It fundamentally altered relations between the federal government and the states, as the federal government was forced many times to enforce its laws and protect the rights of African American citizens. The civil rights movement also spurred the reemergence of the judiciary, including the Supreme Court, in its role as protector of individual liberties against majority power. In addition, as the Reverend Martin Luther King Junior, and other leaders of the movement predicted, the movement prompted gains not only for African Americans but also for women, persons with disabilities, and many others. Despite facing harassment, physical abuse and deaths, African Americans firmly believed that it was their right to seek equal treatment in civil liberties.

When freedom of speech should be restricted,

Argument 1: Governments have an obligation to prohibit hate speech and incitement as these might threaten peace and result in conflict in a society such as civil unrest, religious or ethnic strife, which destabilises the society.

E.g. 1: Singapore applied its Sedition Act on several occasions. An instance is Yang Kaiheng and Ai Takagi allegedly published seditious articles on the website between October 2013 and February 2015. One of these articles falsely claimed that an incident between police and some members of the public during a Thaipusam procession on Feb 3 had been sparked by a Filipino family's complaint that the drums played during the procession upset their child. The contributor of the article posted on another website that the allegations made in the TRS piece were untrue. According to the charge sheets, the particular articles have the "tendency to promote feelings of ill-will and hostility between different groups of people in Singapore, name, between ethnic Indians in Singapore and Philippine nationals in Singapore".

E.g. 2: **Germany's constitution strongly and explicitly protects the freedom of speech. Still, the country's highest court has in 2005 said that -- given the injustice and horrors of the Nazi regime -- it is constitutional to make an exception that bans speech glorifying Hitler's ideology.** Restrictions can also be justified if they protect specific public interest or the rights and reputations of others. The amendment was meant to make it easier to outlaw neo-Nazi commemorative marches in Wunsiedel (Dressed in black, these neo-Nazis come to march in commemoration of Rudolf Hess, the Hitler deputy and convicted war criminal who has been buried here since 1987.) and elsewhere.

Argument 2: Restrictions on freedom of speech should be justified in the form of some criminal laws, namely counter-terrorism laws, as they aim to prevent national security or public order from being compromised.

- Example 1: In 2014, the Australian Government has announced a suite of new anti-terrorism law to target so-called foreign fighters as well as those engaging in terrorist activities in Australia. According to this law, it is an offence to "advocate terrorism", including on social media, which carries a maximum penalty of five years' imprisonment.

Characteristics of better scripts:

- Better scripts would recognise the need for protecting freedom of speech that aim to alleviate unfairness, discrimination against groups of people and moral decay in private and public sectors. BUT AT THE SAME TIME, there is a need to restrict freedom of speech to avoid very negative consequences that jeopardise the very survival of a country due to terrorism, civil unrest or ethnic or religious strife, etc.

Question 6: 'Modern methods of transport have brought the world closer together.' How far is this beneficial?

Assumptions:

- Modern methods of transport have brought the world closer together.
- The annihilation of distance is beneficial.

Clarification of Key Terms:

- Modern methods of transport: air transport, fast-speed, cross-border trains that cover long distances in a short period of time; to some degree sea transport such as commercial vessels or passenger ships
- Have brought the world closer together: has enabled people to travel to other parts of the world, even to distant land and remote places, more easily and in much shorter period of time; greater interaction and inter-connectedness
- Beneficial: positive impacts - economic, social, political, environmental, health; benefits may be for individuals, a country or the world
- How far: extent

Basic requirements of the question:

Students must focus on assessing the degree of benefits; the dangers and harm brought about by this phenomenon should only be brought in as comparison to the benefits to assess the overall extent of good.

If the stand is 'It is largely beneficial'

- Students need to acknowledge the dangers of the increased movement of people from one region to another and from one country to another, such as the challenge of preventing diseases from spreading, and the greater difficulty in detecting international crimes such as human trafficking and terrorism. Students need to show how these are not inevitable or can be mitigated with sound national migration policies or through greater security measures.
- Students could emphasise the huge economic benefits accrued to individuals, corporations and to a country – greater employment opportunities overseas and possibility of investments in far-away continents such as Africa and South America. For example, a significant factor for economic growth in many African countries has been the rapid increase in China's DFI. China has become Africa's greatest trading partner, exchanging about 160b worth of goods a year, with more than one million Chinese, most of them labourers and traders in the continent in the last decade. This, together with investments from other Western countries, is crucial in the world's attempt to eradicate absolute poverty in the poorest nations in the world.
- Students could discuss how it has provided a means to escape death and seek a better life for the millions in war-torn regions of the world. Examples could include those who Syria, Afghanistan and Iraq who have successfully settled down in European countries like Germany and France despite the many challenges. This has alleviated the humanitarian crisis.
- Students could point out that it has enabled political leaders – of nations and global organisations – to gather more quickly and more often to discuss and resolve key global issues, thus reducing the risk of such issues escalating out of control. Examples could include climate change and military conflicts.

If the stand is 'The benefits are limited.'

- Students could use the same examples above to point out how although there are indeed benefits, the benefits are not widespread or are rather superficial or largely eroded by the problems that arise.
 - For example, students could discuss how the economic benefits from increased investments from countries like China and India are gained primarily by huge businesses and political leaders in the African countries rather than significantly benefiting the ordinary people. The economies of the countries could grow but the trickle effects of growth is too little and too slow. Students could point out how many farmers have suffered from land-grab by foreign investors, particularly Chinese investors.
 - Students could also argue that the more frequent gathering of political leaders have not often led to real, positive outcomes – for example, there is more pomp than genuine actions in the

climate talks; while political leaders might meet, they have hardly been able to prevent or resolve conflicts such as the Syrian civil war or increasing terrorist threats.

- Students might also consider how the greater access to other lands have enabled may refugees to escape death in their homeland, for many, it has not brought about the kind of life that they had dreamt of and risked their life in their arduous journey for – could talk about the plight of the refugees in Europe. Students could also talk about how such access has also had huge repercussions on the countries that have taken them in.
- Student could also discuss how much of the benefits are offset by the challenges and dangers of this increased physical proximity and rapid movement of people that governments have not been able to effectively handled.

Characteristics of better scripts:

- Better scripts demonstrate knowledge of key global issues and current affairs.
- Better scripts cover a wide range of issues rather than limit their discussion to the economic aspect.

Question 7: To what extent is poor governance responsible for the increasing insecurity in many countries today?

Assumptions:

- There is increasing insecurity in many countries today.
- Poor governance is a reason for the increasing insecurity.

Clarification of Key Terms:

- Increasing insecurity in many countries today – domestic challenges which may be due to internal or external factors; could include food insecurity or widening income gap; economic uncertainties; greater risk of epidemics; increased terror threats; increased threat to democracy and freedom; greater political instability or arm conflicts; intensified effects climate change threatening water and food supply or even survival; countries face different types and degrees of insecurity; includes both developing and developed countries
- Poor governance – governments which are ineffectual in tackling a particular domestic problem; corrupt governments; governments which resort to all means to hold on to power, including suppressing dissidents and targeting innocent civilians;

Basic requirements of the question:

To assess the degree to which poor governance is to be blamed for the worsening insecurities (either in number or scale) in their country, students need to weigh the roles played by governments that directly cause such problems against inevitable external forces which any government, even a good government, do not have much control over.

If the stand is that poor governance is responsible only to a limited extent (More Challenging)

- Students need to acknowledge that in some countries, poor governance does play a significant role in the increasing challenges faced by the nation.

Example 1: The inability and lack of political will of successive Nigerian governments – previously under Goodluck Jonathan and currently under President Buhari – are largely responsible for the increasing threat faced by civilians posed by Islamic extremist group Boko Haram, including the abduction of 200 schoolgirls, and massacres. According to Amnesty International estimates, the five year insurgency has killed more than 10,000 Nigerians and displaced 1.5million. President Buhari recently arrested former President Jonathan's security adviser on charges of awarding fictitious contracts to buy a dozen helicopters, four fighter jets and ammunition to combat Boko Haram. However, Amnesty International reports have revealed that the security forces under President Buhari are also reluctant to act upon advance warnings of Boko Haram attacks.

Example 2: Escalation of Greece's economic crisis in the last decade to the point of bankruptcy has been largely the result of years of mismanagement of the economy by Greece's government under different leaders – government fudged public finances to be accepted into the euro zone; successive governments promised more and more largesse in order to win votes, thus ballooning Budget deficits that had to be financed by borrowing; populist governments padded the civil service, bloating it to one million out of a workforce of four million with generous perks, bonuses and pensions; failure to curb tax evasions resulting revenue losses estimated at 3-4 percent of GDP. According to World Bank, Greece's indices for effectiveness of governance and corruption are significantly below the rest of the EU.

Example 3: Political insecurities in many countries in the Middle East and Africa have heightened because of government's inability to maintain stability or governments resorting to violence to suppress or combat rebel groups. Examples could include South Sudan – already a country mired in great poverty and economic insecurity - where a full scale civil war broke out in 2014. Soldiers loyal to President Kiir took up arms against followers of the then vice-president Machar. The conflict is along ethnic fault line, with Kiir's loyalists belonging mainly to his Dinka ethnic group while Machar is a Nuer. The struggle for or the retain power has resulted in roughly two million people displaced. Tens of thousands have died and many starved to death. Similar situations can be found in Syria and Lybia. Civil wars in these countries have also given opportunity for the currently most deadly terrorist group ISIS to gain power, further threatening the lives of the citizens.

- Students then need to show how external forces or current global conditions are so strong that even governments which by any reasonable standard can be considered good are not able to insulate their country and people against the increasing threats and insecurity

Example 1: In the light of economic globalization, economic upheavals in the world or challenges

encountered by economic powerhouses inevitably increase economic uncertainties of other countries. There is a limit to how much a government is able to protect its country from such impacts. Singapore is a good example of how the slow-down in China's economic growth and the financial challenges faced in Europe have impacted its own economic prospect.

Example 2: Climate change is a global phenomenon that has exacerbated food and water insecurity in many poorer nations such as those in the Sub-Saharan Africa and Kiribati. These are conditions beyond the control of governments which can at best try to mitigate the effects.

Example 3: Rising trend of religious extremism and militancy, together with advance communications technology, has resulted in increased security threat. While good governments are able to put in place measures to mitigate the risk of attacks, it is extremely challenging to cushion the country and its people totally. Examples can include France, Belgium, UK, Singapore.

If the stand is that poor governance is to a large extent responsible for the increasing insecurity in many countries,

- Students need to acknowledge global phenomena and current trends as factors that hinder governments from ensure security for their people.
- Students are then required to show how good governments can significantly reduce the threats posed by such external factors. Examples could include how, despite globalization and mass movement of people around the world, vigilance and stringent border checks can significant reduce the risk of dangerous diseases and individuals entering the country.
- Students could also discuss how even governments which in general can be considered good can make poor political decisions that result in situations which increase social and political tension. Examples could include how the EU countries handle the refugee crisis – having no quota on the number of refugees was an unwise, unsustainable policy that was bound to cause discontent and increase fear especially in the context of heightened terror threat. The increased political uncertainty in many countries in the West with the rise of popularity of the far-right political parties could also be attributed to the governments' long term neglect of the segment of the population who have been negatively affected by economic globalization and immigration policies.
- Students could also discuss how foreign policies by the arrogant powerful West, particularly in promoting and exporting their brand of democracy to other parts of the world has to a significant extent been responsible for the political upheavals in these countries that have allowed terrorism to thrive. This has in turn bounced back on their own country and threatened security.
- Students could of course discuss obvious cases of poor governance that have exacerbated economic, social and political problems in their country. (refer to the balance points in the previous stand)

Characteristics of better scripts:

- Better scripts discuss a range of problems rather than limit it to the economic or political aspect.
- Better scripts go beyond the obvious cases of poor governance to consider how even good governments can make unsound decisions that bring about insecurity for its people.

Question 8: How far should a criminal's age determine the nature of the punishment?

Assumptions:

Age of a criminal, either too young (infants, toddlers, small children, teenagers) or too old (the elderly) should determine the type of punishment that is meted out. The punishment must serve the purpose of rehabilitation or retributive action and the appropriate punishment that is given keeping in mind the age of the offender should meet these purposes.

Clarification of Key Terms:

Criminal - a person who has committed a crime, whether serious or trivial

Should – prove by showing consequences and benefits, students can bring in moral reasons but, this would likely be a minor point

Punishment – types of punishment include, probation, fines, restitution, parole, capital punishment, caning, etc.

Basic requirements of the question:

Students must be able to explain the range considerations about the attendant social issues when it comes to determining the nature of punishments because of the age factor.

Students should consider the range of different ages, and the implications of the age group when a particular type of punishment is employed, and evaluate the efficacy of the punishment.

Stand: Large Extent

Argument 1: Children accused of committing serious crimes should be given sentences with a greater factor of rehabilitation, as their youth and ignorance is a strong contributing factor to their deviance. Additionally, their minds are more susceptible to change and reform, as they are less set in their ways, as compared to hardened criminals that are older.

Example: Robert Thompson (born 23 August 1982) and Jon Venables (born 13 August 1982) who were convicted for killing a 3 year old toddler, James Bulger. The pair were found guilty on 24 November 1993, making them the youngest convicted murderers in modern English history. They were sentenced to custody until they reached adulthood, initially until the age of 18, and were released under new identities and on a lifelong license in June 2001. They were provided rehabilitation and could resume their lives with new identities. During the rehabilitation process, the 10-year-olds were not put through a comprehensive programme of psychotherapy, education and consistent, strict discipline. Peter Minchin, head of placements at the Youth Justice Board, mentioned that the issue of protecting the public from committing horrific crimes is equally as important as trying to address the behaviour of the young people that have committed them. He mentioned that it has to be done in parallel, and that the offenders because of their age deserve another opportunity.

Argument 3: Pacifists may believe that the elderly should also be given reprieve from harsh corporal punishments, as their age would make it such that harsh corporal punishment may be difficult or fatal to bear.

Example: Men above the age of 50 cannot be sentenced to caning in Singapore.

Stand: Small Extent

Argument 1: Regardless of the age of the offender, justice must be served and even the very young should face the consequences of their actions, especially if the crime is very serious. The end result of a heinous crime remains the same, no matter who commits it. The justice system depends upon holding perpetrators responsible for their actions, and the severity of the crime makes harsh punishment justifiable, regardless of

the young age of the offender.

Example: At a minor age of 13 in 1987, Craig Price murdered neighbor Rebecca Spencer, a 27-year-old mother of two, by stabbing her 58 times. He was arrested in 1989 for four murders committed in his neighborhood: A woman and her two daughters that year, and the murder of another woman two years prior. Due to the brutality of his crimes and the opinion of state psychologists that he was a poor candidate for rehabilitation, a group called Citizens Opposed to the Release of Craig Price formed to lobby for his continued imprisonment. Price was charged with a variety of crimes, including criminal contempt for refusing a psychological evaluation, extortion for threatening a corrections officer, assault, and violation of probation for fights while in prison. He was sentenced to an additional 10–25 years, depending on his cooperation with treatment. Harsh sentencing acts as a deterrent to youth who are considering committing crimes. Trying children as adults has coincided with lower rates of juvenile crimes. Light sentences do not teach youths the lesson they need to learn: If they commit a terrible crime, they will have to pay the price.

Argument 2: The argument that youths are too young to be fully aware of the extent of their crime is untenable as the youth today are more sophisticated at a younger age; they understand the implications of violence and how to use violent weapons. It is absurd to argue that a modern child, who sees the effect of violence around him in the news every day, does not understand what killing really is. The fact that child killers know how to load and shoot a gun is an indicator that they understand exactly what they're doing. Therefore, despite their age, ignorance of youth is not a convincing factor to reduce their sentence, as youths these days are worldly and are certainly conniving enough to commit heinous crimes.

Example: Two teenagers who were in care and described as being out of control have been sentenced to life in custody for torturing a vulnerable woman to death in a “cowardly attack” that lasted more than nine hours. Angela Wrightson, an alcoholic who craved company and regularly invited strangers into her home in the hope of conversation, was murdered last year by the two girls in her own living room. On 8 December, 2014, on one such occasion, two girls aged 13 and 14 visited her home and demanded she buy them alcohol. Wrightson considered the two girls friends, the court heard, and she obliged. In the hours that followed, the 39-year-old suffered more than 100 injuries. The teenagers turned on her, launching a sustained attack using a television set, coffee table and wooden stick to torture and eventually kill their host. The pair – who cannot be named because of their age – were found guilty of her murder earlier this week after an eight-week trial. On Thursday as the judge gave them life sentences, ruling that they should be detained for a minimum of 15 years, sobbing was heard from their families in the public gallery.

Characteristics of better scripts:

Better scripts will be able to evaluate with clarity the implications of a broad range of ages with regards to punishments.

Better scripts will also be able to cite a broad range of punishments that are available in different contexts.

Better scripts will be able to evaluate the rationale for the punishment and explain how the appropriate punishment for the particular age group satisfies the rationale, either as a form of deterrence or retribution.

Question 9: 'International cooperation has no place in this competitive world.' Discuss.

Assumptions:

In the competitive world of today, where the order of the day is very much “every man for himself”, cooperation between countries, businesses and individuals goes against the current modus operandi of the world.

Clarification of Key Terms:

International cooperation -- International cooperation refers to a group of actions and/or resources exchanged between two or more different countries, voluntarily and according to their own interests and strategies.

No place –Absolute term, must discuss whether international cooperation is important or relevant. Students need to show whether international cooperation serves a purpose/ has a role to play

Competitive world – A world where there are not enough resources and opportunities for all countries aspiring to do better to achieve their goals. A world that is based on a zero-sum game, where countries feel a deep anxiety to out-perform, out-smart, and act as quickly as possible to seize opportunities when they come.

Basic requirements of the question:

Students should be able to refer to a range of methods of international cooperation.

Students should be able to refer to the characteristics of a competitive world that works in opposition to cooperation.

Stand: International cooperation has a place in the competitive world

Argument 1: In the globalized world of today, where markets are becoming more porous by the day, countries must cooperate economically through trade agreements, in order to remain competitive.

Example 1: The positive effects of an open market are clearly evident in the stellar growth of the U.S. economy over the past decade. Since 1990, the U.S. economy has grown by more than 23 percent, adding more than \$2.1 trillion to the nation's gross domestic product (GDP) and raising the wealth of the average American consumer by more than \$5,500.[2] The economy responded well to the expansion of trade that occurred after the signing of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) in 1993 and the establishment of the World Trade Organization (WTO) in 1995 as a forum for settling trade disputes. This would not be possible without the NAFTA, and America would have lost its place as the premier economy of the world, without opening its border. Even Cuba has opened its borders and signed a trade agreement with the USA despite their past troubled political relationship.

Argument 2: Small states outnumber big ones by far. Yet, they have often complained that despite their majority, the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) is less responsive to their needs than to those of a handful of large, dominant players. Small countries must band together and cooperate, so as to maintain political clout and “punch above its weight” in a world where competition for stewardship over world events is stiff and every country tries to establish its dominance over world issues.

Example: Forum of Small States (FOSS), an informal grouping established by Singapore in 1992 and currently led by New Zealand, is starting to address this imbalance. The Forum is an informal grouping of states for countries with a population of fewer than 10 million. It now has over 100 members across the world, and members regularly come together to discuss issues, exchange ideas and coordinate positions.

Stand: International cooperation has little place in the competitive world

Argument 1: The recent economic crisis hit the international developments sector by IGOs particularly hard. Not only did the sector suffer under extreme budget cuts by donor governments and international organisations leading to financial gaps and instability, but it also faced an increasingly distressed

developing world suffering under the pressures of the global economic turmoil. Many developing countries faced increased trade prices, and constantly shifting commodity prices bringing along extreme instability and little ability to plan ahead. The reaction by NGOs and other executive actors clearly showed where their true cooperative nature lies. Long-term programmes such as the Millennium Development Goal implementation plan were minimised. Many target countries and governments had to reassess their prospects and curb their progress. The shift towards self-preservation rather than international cooperation were dramatic and self-explanatory: in times of distress groups protect themselves first, rather than pretend cooperation with outsiders (local beneficiaries).

Example: Didier Burkhalter, Switzerland's foreign minister, says planned cuts to humanitarian aid spending are necessary given the country's economic outlook, despite the overall budget surplus reported for last year. He also said the world needs Switzerland's good offices now more than ever. In an interview with Swiss public radio SRF on Saturday, Burkhalter argued that the planned CHF100 million (\$102 million) in cuts simply represent a slowing to the growth in spending. "We are just halting the growth we wanted to have because we don't have as much money," he said. "The economic situation in Switzerland has been quite difficult recently, and we have to prepare for the future." Burkhalter said the foreign ministry could stretch its budget by increasing efficiency through partnerships with NGOs and private companies.

Argument 2: At the international level, the overall benefits of cooperation are less clear, and often phrased as increasing well-being for recipients. Therefore, international cooperation via military support in war-torn countries are less likely to happen as countries cut back on defense budgets in a bid to control government expenditure and remain competitive during this global economic slump.

Example:

11,000 British soldiers will leave Germany by 2016, and the remaining 4,500 will come home in 2019. In addition, the British Ministry of Defense (MoD) will provide for the 17,000 relatives and support staff who are also currently in Germany. An MoD source said the withdrawal would save the military £240m a year, and that the money for house-building should boost growth: "This will not only provide a boost to the economy, but also see the soldiers and their families benefit from new and upgraded accommodation.

Characteristics of better scripts:

Better scripts will be able to explain how international cooperation and the conditions behind the cooperation are constantly in flux and changing because of the competition in the world. Hence, the definition of cooperation is also constantly changing.

Question 10: Is the term 'spoilt generation' a fair description of today's young in your society?

Assumptions:

- (a) A 'spoilt generation' has a negative connotation and it is only applicable to the young in Singapore today.
- (b) Our young Singaporeans are widely known to be spoilt or have an inordinate sense of entitlement towards some things in life.

Clarification of key terms:

- This is a direct argumentative, Singapore-based question type with the focus on the word 'fair'. Fair = reasonable, just, rational, objective, impartial, unbiased, even-handed, honest, dispassionate.
- 'Spoilt generation' = Reference to the sense of entitlement, whinge/complain when things do not go their way or they do not get what they want, being pampered and/or sheltered by their indulgent parents. A particular cohort/generation.
- Spoilt = Indulged, pampered, cosseted, become soft on, make a fuss over.
- Today's young in our society – Those born after 1995. (They would be 21 this year if they are born in 1995.) They could be children, teenagers and young adults.

Basic requirements of the question:

- The students must be able to show understanding of what being 'spoilt' means and what constitutes a 'generation'. The reference to a generation should be quite clear that it refers to a select age group due to the context of the question, that is, 'spoilt generation' = today's young in Singapore.
 - Hence, students must be able to provide characteristics of this particular age group, 21 and below, in Singapore, so as to ascertain objectively if these characteristics are fair or not.
- Essays have to be based on the context of Singapore today (PERMS) and whether these aspects, in any way, influenced the behavior of the young people and if so, could this correlation (or causal effect) have any bearing on whether it is still 'fair' to label the young people as being 'spoilt'. For instance, could we be a victim of our own success? [NB: This is not the same as being 'spoilt for choice' and different from placing blame on our parents, society, government etc for being spoilt.]
 - (i) **Political** = Highly efficient, high functioning, systematic and strong government in place that meets the needs of the nation and its people well. Populace expects problems/issues solved very quickly and to some extent, demands efficiency from the same government that constantly reminds its people to be more productive.
 - (ii) **Economy** = Strong economy with government investing in the infrastructure and improving its peoples' skills constantly. Parents of the young people are probably working and able to provide for most things that the young people need, and more. Singapore's economy still creating jobs and most young people should be able to find something suitable within a few months if they are not picky.
 - Strong economic growth over the last several years has helped to spread wealth throughout ASEAN. In 2012 there were an estimated 190 million people in Southeast Asia who could be defined as middle class—people with disposable income of \$16-\$100 a day. But according to Nielsen, that number will more than double by 2020, to 400 million people.
 - More money means more houses, cars, technology, education, and a greater need for financial services. And as the population becomes more urban, increased demand for luxury consumer goods is anticipated. (<https://www.futurereadysingapore.com/2016/quartz-bulletin1.html>)
 - (iii) **Education** = In 2014, 51.2 per cent of the resident population aged 25 years and over had at least post-secondary qualifications, higher than 33.9 per cent in 2004. Specifically, university graduates made up 27.7 per cent of the resident population in 2014, up from 17.4 per cent a decade before. Those with diploma & professional qualifications also accounted for a larger share at 14.7 per cent in 2014, compared to 10.1 per cent in 2004 (Singapore Dept of Statistics, Population Trends 2015). A projection of this trend strongly suggests that more than half of all young Singaporeans aged 25 years and over in 2020 will have at least post-secondary education.
 - With greater opportunities and educational pathways now compared with 10 years ago, some young Singaporeans are free to pursue their aspirations and goals that may not follow the

- conventional O, A-Levels and university route.
 - The Ministry of Education has emphasized the building and teaching of values and character in the public schools from young, especially resilience and perseverance, as more students begin to show an inability (or lack of motivation) to cope with difficulties, changes and stress, giving rise to the term, 'a strawberry generation'.
 - (iv) **Media** = Access to media – print, television, radio, online, is not a problem for almost all Singaporeans since there are public libraries providing free access to a very wide range of media sources. The ease at which young people are able to obtain information or conduct research online compared with a decade or so ago, has also changed the process of how students learn and internalize information and details. It is observed that young people rely extensively on information from the internet and using visually attractive (albeit superficial) social media tools like Instagram, Snapchat and the like, to share information about themselves with others.
 - Online shopping = E-commerce revenue hit USD\$3510m in Singapore in 2015, with 10% of that revenue coming from shoppers aged 16-24. (<http://www.go-globe.com/blog/e-commerce-singapore/>) Those who spent the most online (32%) belong to the 45-54 years age group.
 - (v) **Social** = According to the Population trends in Singapore, the size of an average family is 3.4 in 2014 (Singapore Dept of Statistics, Population Trends 2015), suggesting that many families only have one or two children. Parents may spend more on their child/children now, compared with an average family size of 4.8 in 1980. About one in five households employ a foreign domestic helper in 2010 (<http://www.research.uwcsea.edu.sg/G8Migration/FDW>).
- With the young people growing up in an environment that is safe, efficient, well-managed and affluent (growing middle class and upper middle), this is the reality that the young people grow up in and has become the 'new normal'. Hence, is it fair to describe the young people of today as being pampered, sheltered with a great sense of entitlement when the environment has changed dramatically in the last 10-20 years in Singapore?
- What role do parents and the society at large play in molding and shaping each cohort of young people? Thus, can we honestly say, with objective reasons, that the young Singaporeans of today, are spoilt?

If fair to say that the young ARE spoilt:

- Some young people lack the discipline and drive to work hard in their studies or persevere in working towards their goals because they receive an inordinate amount of support and hand-holding from their parents and/or teachers. They also become very dependent on explicit, structured notes provided for in school and passively wait for information to be given to them instead of taking the initiative to read beyond what is within the examination syllabus. For example, some students ask for model essays or answers to the examination questions just so that they are able to do well in their examinations instead of learning for the sake of pursuing an education.
- Many parents exercise tight control and supervision over their children even until they enter the university and some support their children financially, indefinitely, after graduating from the university. This phenomenon of parenting, sometimes referred to as 'helicopter parenting', has led to many young adults depending on their parents even until adulthood and they do not have any sense of urgency or need to support themselves or their parents.
 - Other parenting categories include:
 - (a) Tiger parents, who are seen as pushing their children to succeed according to the parents' terms.
 - (b) Helicopter parents, who take over every aspect of the child's life.
 - (c) Snowplough parents, who remove obstacles to make life easier for their child.
 - (d) Free-range parents, who allow children a great deal of freedom.
 - (e) Attachment or gentle parents, who are relaxed but set limits in line with the child's needs and character.
- (<http://www.straitstimes.com/opinion/what-type-of-parent-are-you>)
- Associated Press described one 15-year-old girl who never made her bed, cleaned up her room, ironed her school uniform or straightened her 50 pairs of shoes because her family had three

Philippine maids to do those things for her. “Whatever I need,” she said I ask for. It’s true, I can’t do anything.” (http://factsanddetails.com/southeast-asia/Singapore/sub5_7b/entry-3730.html)

Unfair to say that the young are spoilt:

- There are young Singaporeans who support and lead worthy causes in Singapore without drawing attention to themselves or expect anything in return. They empathise with people in our society who may need help and take the initiative to help them. For example, haze-hero Jeremy Chua. After witnessing how many people were complaining about the smog in 2013 and the authorities’ response — though few were doing anything about the situation — then 25-year-old school-dropout-turned-scholar sprang into action. He started a Facebook page calling for people to donate their excess masks and mobilised hundreds of volunteers to distribute masks to the needy. Soon enough, like-minded people joined his cause and the team tapped online platforms to channel manpower and resources to, for example, estates with a large proportion of elderly. A Google document was also set up for volunteers and donors to list the ways they can contribute, such as cash or mask donations, or air-conditioned rooms for others to sleep in.
- Young people in Singapore are also more willing and daring enough to take the road less travelled and pursue their dreams and aspirations without much support from their family or the government. They explore opportunities and will go where their dreams take them, surviving on bare essentials if need be. To debunk the myth that youths are only interested in cars, condominiums, cash, credit cards and country club memberships, there are those like Ms Delfina Utomo, 25.
- She is the lead editor for Singapore’s first live local music gig finder website, Bandwagon.sg. “My family was concerned, because after eight years of studying and two degrees, they wanted me to be holding perhaps a S\$4,000-a-month job,” says Ms Utomo, who holds a master’s degree in journalism. “I may not get the best pay at Bandwagon.sg, but I’m passionate about what I do and, every day, I come to the office with new ideas.”
- For others, the Internet has, in fact, helped to make it less of a dilemma in having to choose between pursuing a passion and having a stable job that pays the bills. Civil servant Kwok Jia Chuan and consultant Jeremy Au — who are both 25 — are the proud co-founders of Conjoint Consulting, which is touted as Asia’s first pro-bono consulting firm for non-profit organisations and social enterprises. “There is a growing wave of empathy for the community, a growing sense that all of us have the ability to act and the capability to make a difference,” says Mr Au, who attributes this in no small part to the digital revolution, which has allowed problems faced by some in Singapore to surface quickly. Singaporeans have many great ideas and lots of “pent-up energy” that need a constructive avenue, the co-founders say. (<http://www.todayonline.com/singapore/singapore-youth-apatetic-no-more?singlepage=true>)

Characteristics of better scripts:

- Better scripts will present arguments addressing the descriptors of the term ‘spoilt’ against the backdrop of the Singapore context (PERMS) and analyse why or why not those descriptors are objective and justifiable.
- Special attention will be paid to the milieu in which young Singaporeans are in, vis-à-vis those who labelled them as the ‘spoilt generation’ who may be older Singaporeans who grew up in more challenging circumstances and had to struggle to achieve what they have today. The older Singaporeans thus have a perception of the younger generation not having to work very hard for what they have, or whinge easily when things do not go their way, or have the perception that whatever they have now is a matter of course, contributing to a sense of entitlement.

Question 11: Is national identity still important when the world is becoming increasingly globalised?

Assumptions:

- National identity is important for every country, every citizen.
- National identity is more important for the ruling government/party.
- A globalised world questions the need for and importance of having a national identity when geographical borders are no longer an issue when there already exists free movement of goods and people between countries. (Mutual exclusivity)

Clarification of Key Terms:

- 'Still' = Comparison between past and present situations/circumstances required. It implies that something practised in the past continues to be practised today. Should something that is important in the past (national identity) continue into the present (increasing globalisation)?
- Globalisation = Globalisation is the process by which the world is becoming increasingly interconnected as a result of massively increased trade and cultural exchange. Globalisation has increased the production of goods and services. The biggest companies are no longer national firms but multinational corporations with subsidiaries in many countries.
 - Globalisation has been taking place for hundreds of years, but has **speeded up enormously over the last half-century** and has resulted in:
 - (i) increased international trade
 - (ii) a company operating in more than one country
 - (iii) greater dependence on the global economy
 - (iv) freer movement of capital, goods, and services
 - (v) recognition of companies such as McDonalds and Starbucks in Less Economically Developing Countries (LEDCs).
- National identity = A sense of a nation as a cohesive whole, as represented by distinctive traditions, culture, and language. It is a socio-geopolitical construct.
 - The construction of any certain identity is an inclusive process with the internalization of the same values of identifier (govt/ruling power), but it is also an exclusive process with the elimination of other identities (Inac and Unal, 2013).

Basic requirements of the question:

- Students must be able to show some understanding of what globalisation means – its characterisations and how it is increasing in recent years. After stating the defining traits of globalization, the essay should proceed to explain what is meant by a national identity and **why** it is important to countries in the past and in the present.
- National identity is essential in nation building and serves to establish and/or support the legitimacy of the nation and the ruling government in addition to the following functions:
 - a) To create a national economy – achieve productivity, meeting country's needs with their comparative advantages (e.g. Singapore's emphasis on a highly-skilled workforce)
 - b) To constitute and extend control over all entities within the nation-state
 - c) To create a national culture (the system of common values and expectations) and define an identification depending on the newly created culture (Inac and Unal, 2013).
- Hence, governments articulate the specific traits that encapsulates the spirit, culture and traditions of their peoples as the national identity, creating a common identity where citizens can ascribe or subscribe to.

If the stand is STILL IMPORTANT (from govt/country's POV)

- National identity serves as a point of reference for all citizens and members of the society in the country. It is a symbolic and ideological tool used to bring together the diversity and differences within a society towards a common ideal and position, especially when differences are volatile and threatens the security of the country. These differences could be exacerbated by the pull of globalisation if the country has ties with several other countries or is very dependent on the global economy. For example, France, UK, Hong Kong, USA etc.
- For young countries that have gained independence in the last 100 years or less, among the many immediate concerns would be to provide a compelling reason (moral and prag) for its people to build roots and loyalty to the sovereign state to minimize lure by other countries that

have better opportunities. For example, Singapore, Maldives, Equatorial Guinea and Botswana.

- Countries that are dependent on the global economy are exposed to the different values and work ethics of professionals from all over the world. Hence, it becomes even more important for the country to establish a clear national identity that represents the values and culture of their own country so that these external standards and practices do not dilute their norms – worse when they try to impose unethical practices on the host country. For example, Indonesia, US, Singapore.

OR

If the stand is NO LONGER IMPORTANT (from citizen's POV)

- Borders have become porous and the movement of people and goods across countries have grown exponentially with the improvement in transportation and an affluent middle class. Attempts to impose an identity on her people may be met with resistance or apathy as people are exposed to other countries through work and/or travel opportunities. Especially when the children of citizens are born in a different country, it may be more difficult to demand allegiance and loyalty to the home country of their parents. Borders become mere geopolitical constructs for people of these times.
- People connect with other people from different countries all over the world due to interaction at the workplace, in schools (especially tertiary education overseas) or on the internet and these connections and relationships may be stronger and more tangible than an attachment to the country of birth. If made to choose between national identity that is abstract and impersonal, persons may decide to affiliate themselves with a more meaningful and rewarding relationship that can bring them immediate and tangible outcomes. For example, people who choose to relocate for better work opportunities, marriage, pursuit of self actualisation, retirement etc.
- With the improvement of transport methods and communication tools, people are able to travel freely or even relocate without compromising their allegiance to their country of birth. They may still identify themselves with the values, tradition and cultures of their birth country, but it is less important in the face of immediate concerns present in the country where they are physically at at the moment.
- In January 2007, Channel News Asia reported: "Despite having gone through national education at school, 37 percent of Singaporean youth say they are not patriotic. In fact, more than half want to migrate overseas if given a chance." (http://factsanddetails.com/southeast-asia/Singapore/sub5_7b/entry-3730.html)

Characteristics of better scripts:

- Essays will be able to state/analyse that the key purpose of expressing and aligning oneself with a national identity serves more the needs of the country and ruling government than the citizen per se. It helps deepen the roots and bonds a person has with the country through their family, communities and grassroots organisations, having a strong national identity works best for the interests of the country and this could be part of the social contract a citizen has with her nation.

Question 12: 'Public money should not be wasted on supporting the Arts.' Discuss this view in the light of your society today.

Assumptions:

- The Arts is not worth supporting by the government and its people.
- Public resources are finite and given the pragmatism of the Singapore government, we should invest our money on causes that benefit more people. (Utilitarianism)
- There are no returns or benefits to be had from spending on the Arts in Singapore.

Clarification of Key Terms:

- 1) Should = (a) Prag: Cost and benefits, especially financial ones, of supporting the Arts.
(b) Moral obligations: Social contract of looking after the needs of all peoples, using public funds.
The Arts serve as an artistic outlet and creative space for those who are artistically inclined and/or have a passion for the Arts.
- 2) The Arts = The various artistic disciplines - visual arts, literary arts and the performing arts (dance/ theatre/ music/ film), among others.
- Some features of the arts include:
 - (i) Creative means through which ideas/ opinions/ key themes can be expressed
 - (ii) Engage with audiences both emotionally and visually
 - (iii) Culture
- 3) This is a direct argumentative, Singapore-based question type.

Basic requirements of the question:

- Students should acknowledge the traditional notions of the Arts that has little or no tangible/pragmatic returns. The Arts is a subjective area with different interpretations, although there are established methods of valuing the Arts by experts and curators.
- Essays have to provide characteristics of the Singapore society today and how these characteristics help explain and justify why the government should or should not support the Arts.

If the stand is SHOULD SUPPORT

- The Arts help ensure the holistic development and progress of a nation through its creative and artistic pulse and expression. The unpredictability and abstraction of the Arts are a means to articulate aspects of life that cannot be expressed in conventional modes of communication. To measure them using pragmatic means alone (for example, Return on Investment) would not be fair nor suitable. The Singapore Government, through the National Arts Council, introduced a 'Patron of the Arts' scheme in 1983 to encourage philanthropy for the nascent arts scene in Singapore to augment the public expenditure spent on developing the arts.
- The Arts evoke and draw out different responses from its viewer-participants and this may ignite latent talent and/or abilities of its people to innovate and contribute to the nation artistically. Some artists have captured and retold stories of Singapore and her people, shaping the history and future of our nation-state through different perspectives and modes. The Arts is also part of the national school curriculum in the form of art and music lessons, the humanities subjects and co-curricula activities.
- Funding for the Arts is not a significant portion of the national budget and some causes, like enhancing the quality of life for its people, and preserving the culture and heritage of a particular ethnic group, must be supported even if there are no financial returns. Without the Arts, Singapore may lose its vibrance, diversity and heritage as a multi-racial, multi-religious society and become a city-state that is only driven by practical outcomes without many opportunities and outlets for its people to celebrate their ethnicity, culture, religion or even just

to de-stress and relax.

- Furthermore, investment in the arts would also boost the tourism industry by having the infrastructure and manpower to stage world-class productions and festivals celebrating all art forms. For example, the Singapore Biennale in 2016 (<https://www.singaporebiennale.org/>).
- It is not always true that the Arts are not financially self-sustaining and there are some local artists who have been able to obtain economic returns on their work. For example, Liu Kang, Chen Wen Hsi, Jack Neo, Royston Tan, Sam Willows, or the Vertical Submarine. Providing them with financial support using public funds at some point of their careers is a form of recognition of their artistic contributions to the society and country to the world at large.

If the stand is should NOT SUPPORT

- Singapore, as a small economy that is vulnerable to external shocks and military incursions, must ensure that its economy and infrastructure are well-supported so as to ensure the livelihoods and security of its people. Hence, the bulk of the national budget must be set aside for the welfare, education, trade and military expenses that ensure the prosperity and longevity of our sovereignty.
- The Arts, with its minimal impact and influence, do not matter to the majority of Singaporeans and we should not divert funds meant for Singaporeans to be spent on a minority group of people who have particular needs, especially when it is not productive and does not generate revenue.
- The needs of Singapore in the future must be taken into consideration when spending public funds since we live in a volatile and unpredictable world environment - we cannot take our current success and financial security for granted. Substantial reserves must be set aside for the survival of generations of Singaporeans who will come after us and may face crises that may take decades to overcome.

Characteristics of better scripts:

- Better scripts would show a clear understanding of how perception of the arts is evolving in Singapore and people no longer subscribe to only the traditional notions of the arts of not being practical, not pragmatic, serving no purpose in society. This is because of our exposure to and appreciation of different art forms through education and awareness of the world around us.
- Furthermore, there is also an acceptance of the role of the arts in our lives and even the need to support them so that our society will become more holistic, more balanced and more inclusive of the different aspirations of our people – enhancing the quality of life for Singaporeans.
- This means a balancing of our need for the aesthetic and beauty (therapeutic), culture, heritage and tradition, with financial outlay and returns.