

**TMJC Preliminary Examination 2022
PAPER 2 SUGGESTED ANSWERS**

1. In what way is the quote in lines 1-3 an effective introduction to the author's argument? (1 mark)

From the passage	Paraphrased
Poet Khalil Gibran once wrote that “your living is determined not so much by what life brings to you as by the attitude you bring to life; not so much by what happens to you as by the way your mind looks at what happens.”	<p>It is effective because it summarises/ neatly/succinctly encapsulates what the passage is about and this is how the author thinks we should lead our lives (explanation of the context of quote in the introduction) (1m)</p> <p>Or</p> <p>It is a perceptive frame through which we look or react to what we are faced with in life / what life throws at us.</p> <p>Note: Summarise/frame is not enough, some context of argument should be included about the persuasive effort by the author.</p>

2. In paragraph 1, what are the characteristics of optimism? **Use your own words as far as possible.** (2 marks)

From the passage	Paraphrased
Philosophically, optimism is linked to the notion that the world is fundamentally good , that it has purpose and meaning and that, therefore, one can reasonably expect fulfillment . There is a sense that one can control one's environment and destiny .	<p>A) the belief/view/conviction that the world is basically well-meaning/righteous/upright</p> <p>B) there is a plan/good reasons/explanation/intent and significance</p> <p>C) one can look forward to/hope for some measure of satisfaction/gratification/contentment</p> <p>D) one has power/authority over one's circumstances/course in life</p> <p>1-2 points = 1m 3-4 points = 2m</p>

3. By including the word 'counterproductively' in line 34, what is the author implying about 'the media's excessive focus on bad news' (line 33)? **Use your own words as far as possible.** (2 marks)

From the passage	Paraphrased
Often, the media's excessive focus on bad news creates stories about our world that distorts reality, divides us and counterproductively limits our ability to respond effectively to the challenges we face.	<p>A. Instead of propelling us into action to solve/mitigate our problems, (Expectation -1 mark)</p> <p>B. the 'media's <i>excessive focus on bad news is actually</i> <i>damaging/detrimental/debilitating</i> because it restricts/hinders our capability to react/address constructively/successfully to difficulties/struggles we encounter (Reality -1 mark)</p> <p>Note: Contrast between expectation and reality should be evident to depict 'counterproductive'.</p>

4. In paragraph 5, what reasons does the author give as to why 'Optimism is a slow march towards incremental betterment' (line 49)? **Use your own words as far as possible.** (2 marks)

From the passage	Paraphrased
<p>The reason we can and should still be optimistic is that our estimates of future woes do not take into account our ability to solve them.</p> <p>The ultimate reason we should (and can) be optimistic is not because our problems are smaller than we thought, but because our capacity to solve them is larger than we thought.</p>	<p>A) our judgement of hardships/calamity/pain/afflictions to come did not include / is not an accurate assessment/reflection (1m)</p> <p>B) of our corresponding capability/potential/skill to resolve them / work them out (1m)</p> <p><i>Zero to hero</i></p> <p>OR</p> <p>C) our capability/potential/skill to resolve troubles/difficulties/complications is more significant than (1m)</p> <p>D) our perception of the seriousness/extent of those issues (1m)</p> <p>*We are looking for the reasons for the quote, thus paraphrasing incremental is not necessary</p>

5. Using material from paragraphs 2 - 4 (lines 8 - 48), summarise what the author has to say about the value of optimism.

Write your summary in no more than 120 words, not counting the opening words which are printed below. **Use your own words as far as possible.**

One reason for optimism is

1. Optimism yields happier	Optimism brings joy/pleasure/contentment
2. and emotionally stronger people.	and makes for more assured/confident individuals.
3. Optimism equips people with a greater ability to deal with hardship and stress in their lives.	It enables people to cope with difficulties/adversity/pressures in their lives.
4. ...Rather, optimists believe that bad things are produced by temporary causes	Optimists believe that problems/unpleasant/unfavourable events/occurrences are not lasting/fleeting/not permanent
5. that can be overcome ,	And can be conquered/solved/resolved/worked out
6. It is a swap of the default - from the universe is conspiring against you, to the universe is conspiring for you.	Optimists think that everything that happens is for good/ are working in their favour
7. Optimism can be learnt , especially by children. Everyone is born with a different bias, but a child's assumption can be shifted towards a more optimistic view by parenting, training, and education.	Optimism is also a trait that can be nurtured/taught/developed
8. In this regard, optimism is a skill that anyone can get better at.	And we can enhance/improve our ability to be optimistic.
9. Likewise, at the societal level , optimism is a skill that bestows resilience and adaptability.	Optimism creates a society that embraces change and adjusts to new conditions easily. *resilience covered in point 3
10. But the bias towards optimism keeps us moving forward.	Optimism drives people towards advancement/betterment,
11. The unwavering belief that something can be better is what drives mankind forward.	With unfaltering trust/confidence/resoluteness/firmness of purpose that we will surpass/improve the current situation,
12. To make progress, we need to be able to imagine possibilities – better ones –	This enables us to dream of/envision exciting/novel prospects *Idea is to imagine
13. and we need to believe that we can achieve them.	And think that we can accomplish/attain them
14. Optimism thus underpins innovation.	Optimism supports/encourages/stimulates/nurtures ingenuity/inventiveness/creativity
15. It challenges us to doubt the status quo	We would then not be easily content with the existing state of affairs/situation
16. and ask probing questions for the world to change.	And continue to inquire/scrutinise/examine the world so that changes may be made.
17. Such faith in the possibility of a better future is what motivates mankind to pursue his goals.	Optimism thus inspires/propels/influences people to work towards their ambition/chase their dreams.

	*Idea is to take action
18. limits our ability to respond effectively to the challenges (S12 inferred point – optimism is needed to respond effectively to challenges)	Optimism is needed to act/react/behave appropriately/constructively/productively/ to obstacles/difficulties
19. Rather, a more inspiring lens on the world is needed to better reflect the positive trends .	The media should offer a more upbeat/hopeful/cheerful perspective of the world (in other words, optimism in news coverage and reporting) to show/affirm the good things happening
20. It wields a powerful influence over our individual and collective mind states ,	Because this has a forceful/compelling effect on the way people think, on an independent and group level,
21. and it guides our shared story .	And steers/shapes our common/combined view/outlook/perspective/opinion of the world.

Points	1 – 2	3 – 4	5 – 6	7 – 8	9	10 – 11	12 – 13	14+
Marks	1m	2m	3m	4m	5m	6m	7m	8m

Sample summary: Optimism brings joy (1) and makes for more assured individuals (2) who can cope with difficulties (3). Optimists believe that problems are fleeting (4), happens for good reason (6) and can be resolved (5). Optimism is a trait that can be taught (7) and enhanced (8). Optimism creates a society that embraces change (9) and drives people towards betterment (10), with unfaltering confidence (11). Optimism enables us to dream of exciting prospects (12) that we can accomplish (13) and nurtures ingenuity (14). We would not be easily content with the existing situation (15) and continue to inquire and make changes (16). Optimism inspires people to work towards their ambition (17) and is needed to react constructively to obstacles (18). News coverage should offer a more hopeful perspective of the world to affirm that good things are happening (19). (119 words, 19 points)

6. Explain what the author means by stating that ‘in preparation, one should assume the worst in order to hope for the best’ (lines 5-6). (2 marks)

From the passage	Paraphrased
Nonetheless, in an increasingly VUCA world where the realities of economic downturns, disease outbreaks, environmental issues, conflict and humanitarian crises dominate our newsfeeds, it seems more sensible that in preparation, one should assume the worst in order to <u>hope</u> for the best . Thus, pessimism is instead the key for the maintenance of good societies.	When one plans for as many negative outcomes as possible, he/she will be well-equipped to mitigate or overcome issues (1m) <i>Action+ Planning</i> Accepted: negative outcomes *Inference qn. Unpacking the quote is not enough – must draw links to context.
	and thus be more confident about succeeding (1m)

7. How does the author illustrate the idea that ‘everyone, however outwardly normal, is flawed’ (line 8)? **Use your own words as far as possible.** (2 marks)

From the passage	Paraphrased
At the core of pessimism is the idea that everyone, however outwardly normal, is flawed: short-term, vengeful and prone to recklessness. Even tennis icon Serena Williams, known as a role model not only for her sporting success but also her push for gender and racial equality, caused controversy during the 2018 U.S. Open Women’s Final when she had an emotional outburst and a heated exchange against an umpire over accusations of cheating.	A. The author cited the example of Serena Williams and her quarrel with the tennis match official (1m)
	<p>B. Where despite being exemplary in significant areas</p> <p>C. She also succumbed to emotional impulsivity/became emotional in the heat of the moment during a tennis match. (1m)</p> <p>A – 1 mark B and C – 1 mark</p> <p>*To show expectation and some subversion of the expectation. * Accepted: Role model – succumbing to her emotions/losing her cool, or an athlete questioning the decision of the umpire.</p>

8. What are the differences between ‘boring and extremely steady politicians’ in pessimistic societies and ‘eloquent but reactive ones’ (line 16)? **Use your own words as far as possible.** (2 marks)

From the passage	Paraphrased
...the world needs well-advised leaders with acumen and composure instead of those who give in to the whims and fancies of the people.	<p>Criteria 1: Traits of leaders</p> <p>The first difference is that leaders in pessimistic societies have traits that make them likely to be informed, able to make good decisions and are collected (either one)</p> <p>instead of being indulgent to people’s fickle-minded desires. (1m)</p>
boring and extremely steady politicians are valued over eloquent but reactive ones	<p>Criteria 1: Traits of leaders</p> <p>Another difference is that leaders in pessimistic societies tend to be dull</p>

	instead of well-spoken. (1m)
Pessimistic societies prefer measured, slow-moving governments which are rational and deliberative , rather than those that react haphazardly to the fluctuations of public opinion which are prone to hysteria and overreaction.	<p>Criteria 2: Appropriateness of response in policymaking</p> <p>The second difference is that in policymaking, the authorities/institutions carefully and logically take action instead of rashly responding to the desires of the people. (1m)</p> <p>Any two pairs for 2 marks</p>

9. In paragraph 4, explain why paternalistic societies are willingly accepted by pessimists. **Use your own words as far as possible.** (2 marks)

From the passage	Paraphrased
'Understanding that mankind is flawed by nature',	A) As pessimists believe/accept that man/humanity is corrupt/irrational/imperfect (1m)
<p>...self-destructive tendencies ...so willingly accept a paternalistic government as the price for limiting those tendencies.</p> <p>Or</p> <p>'Public housing, state schools, public hospitals and transportation will be superb...dependent on them to make sound decisions to provide for a reasonable standard of living and quality of life</p>	<p>B) they willingly require that the authorities regulate their actions to prevent the harm they could bring. (1m)</p> <p>Or</p> <p>C) they are dependent on the authorities to provide outstanding public amenities/utilities for a high quality of life/standard of living. (1m)</p>

10. Why has the author written 'bright future' (line 36) in inverted commas? (2 marks)

From the passage	Paraphrased
... prepare for an increasingly volatile and disrupted global economy...The curriculum is not merely focused on technical skills though; there is a lot of help around emotional issues too, as it is acknowledged that students are highly stressed and tightly wound in the pursuit of academic excellence to secure a well-paying job for a 'bright future'.	<p>Function The author wants to challenge/question/cast doubt/disagree/is critical that the future is bright because (1m)</p> <p>Context the increasingly volatile and disrupted global economy would make it unlikely/uncertain to say with certainty that good grades will pave the way for a successful life ahead. (1m)</p> <p>OR</p>



	with the emotional and mental trauma that results from their education journey, it is questionable if they will be able to persevere and truly enjoy a successful life in time to come. (1m)
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Application Question

11. Kevin Kelly argues that there is value to optimism in our lives while Alain de Bruyne argues that pessimism is the key to a good society. How important is it to be optimistic or pessimistic for you and your society? Support your answer with examples drawn from your own experience and that of your society.

From Passage 1	In support of optimism	A consideration of pessimism in Singapore society
Optimism yields happier and emotionally stronger people. Optimism equips people with a greater ability to deal with hardship and stress in their lives (para 2, lines 8-9)	Nurturing students to have a positive outlook is an important aspect of holistic education in Singapore schools. This is because having a positive outlook is thought to help students overcome setbacks and achieve their goals. Happy and resilient students are more likely to enjoy learning, be motivated to succeed and bounce back from setbacks and failures. Optimism thus plays a crucial role in nurturing resilience and mental well-being. This is supported by Stanford psychology professor Carol Dweck who found in her research that students vary in their mindsets or beliefs about their intellectual ability. Students with a fixed mindset see intelligence as something that they cannot change, no matter how hard they try, while students with a growth mindset see intelligence as something that they can improve with effort and persistence. Professor Dweck and her colleagues discovered that, compared with students with a fixed mindset, those with a growth mindset display a more resilient pattern of responses in the face of academic challenges and have greater well-being than those with a fixed mindset. Thus, there are educational intervention programmes in Singapore schools designed to develop a growth mindset to convince students that their brains can	(rebuttal to point on optimism) Be that as it may, it is difficult to maintain a positive look in a hyper-competitive environment. Although the Singapore education system has tried to bring emphasis away from examination and test results, students still face test anxiety amidst personal and parental expectations and the idea that academic achievement is a necessary ingredient to obtain lifelong success. This can be a corrosive mindset and a commonly cited issue that afflicts many students who need psychological help. The intensified dread over academic performance may be due to the competitive culture in Singapore. Singapore's success has been largely attributed to the system of meritocracy, where the best and brightest rise to the top by their own merit and hard work, and tales of leaders emerging from humble backgrounds are largely celebrated as testimonies that the system works. Over the years, meritocracy has worked well to sieve out scholastically inclined students and develop them into prominent leaders and captains of industry. This, in turn, reinforces the belief that doing well in school equates to doing well in life, and conversely, doing badly comes with adverse consequences. Many students and parents, driven by this belief, place utmost emphasis on academic achievement. But an overly competitive

	<p>be trained to learn better through hard work and persistence. Parents and teachers also help to promote students' growth mindsets through subtle messages in the form of feedback and praise.</p>	<p>culture can be detrimental for students' mental health. High expectations can lead to excessive stress and anxiety, especially during major examinations that have perceived consequences for one's future. There have been positive moves in this direction, with the shift away from the narrow focus of grades and academic achievements. Developing a positive outlook in students by moderating expectations, focussing on effort rather than results, having open dialogues and being empathetic may go some way but ultimately there is a need to shift the national mindset to one that is more encompassing, more accepting and less competitive.</p>
<p>...at the societal level, optimism is a skill that bestows resilience and adaptability (para 2, lines 17-18)</p>	<p>The Singapore government has always been 'cautiously optimistic' (this is Singapore's brand of optimism) on matters and decisions relating to the economic growth of Singapore. There is always the consideration of risks and complexities. Even as we are called on to stay open, to make our economy stronger, more resilient, seize opportunities for growth, develop new capabilities and become a more competitive economy, we are reminded of the realities and challenges arising from the volatility of the world situation. We are reminded of displaced workers post-COVID-19 recovery, of Russia's invasion of Ukraine and the far-reaching impact on the world and on Singapore, international tensions that will affect Singapore, disruptions in the global supply chains, inflation and how tightly integrated Singapore is in the global economy. We are constantly reminded that given our small size, in world markets, we are always a price taker with little bargaining power. Thus, even as the government shares the bright spots in our</p>	<p>Pessimism may be protective and potentially empowering. It can be said that in Singapore, we are socialised from birth to be more cautious, wary of others, and fear losing out (or being kiasu). Harking back to our migrant ancestors' early years in Singapore, there was much uncertainty over the future and whether they would be able to eke out a decent living to support their families. They took huge risks in leaving their countries of birth to seek a better life, and to be cautious, anticipate threats and dangers to their survival was a self-protective measure then.</p> <p>Even today, from young, we have been taught to err on the side of caution. In some ways, caution and pessimism go hand in hand. In defence of pessimism, it was noted in a German article published in the Psychology and Aging journal that older people were cautious and had low expectations for a satisfying future, were more likely to live longer and healthier lives than those who were less cautious. This may be because they are often better</p>

	economy, expounds the government's efforts to revive it, and urge Singaporeans to stay positive, pivot and adapt to new changes happening, this is set against the background of caution of the mounting challenges ahead.	prepared for tough times and may avoid risks that those less cautious might ignore. They may be more careful to avoid potential problems or dangers. They may also be more likely to plan for difficulties ahead.
The unwavering belief that something can be better is what drives mankind forward. To make progress, we need to be able to imagine possibilities – better ones – and we need to believe that we can achieve them (para 3, lines 24-25)	The government has often reminded Singaporeans of the Singapore Story , that for our plans to succeed, for our hopes and dreams to come true, the main ingredient is the unity and resilience of the people. We are constantly reminded that our forefathers weathered many storms, looked ahead and did not flinch at hard choices and challenges. Similarly, today, we should only grow more determined as we face fearful odds, discover reserves of strength in ourselves and emerge from crises transfigured and renewed.	A recent TODAY survey 2021 found that a majority of those aged between 18 and 35 have become more cautious, fearful and pessimistic. The finding showed that the pandemic has led to greater insecurities among youths and a recalibration of their plans and priorities. With businesses freezing headcounts and the competition tightening around the limited vacancies for highly sought-after jobs, more than 40 percent of the respondents believed that they would be worse off than their parents in holding secure jobs, having enough money to live well, owning their home and living comfortably in retirement. If youths do not have an optimistic view of the world, their despair and anxieties over job insecurity and their sense of self will affect the way they develop themselves. These will also have an impact on whether they find it possible to fulfil their dreams and potential.
Optimism thus underpins innovation. It challenges us to doubt the status quo and ask probing questions for the world to change (para 3, lines 26-27)	Kishore Mahbubani in his book "Can Singapore Survive?" said that what Singapore can do to enhance her long-term survival is to go back to her roots, and that is, to follow the examples of the founding fathers, to be optimistic and go for bold, even risky public policies. Instead of being paralysed by fear, the founding fathers displayed extraordinary courage and succeeded. Success, however, has in turn, led to a natural result – a culture of risk aversion. Mahbubani said that the culture of risk aversion is one of Singapore's biggest challenges. So, the	Singapore's innovation journey had been necessitated by the need for survival and anticipation of threats and dangers. The country has had to tackle some big macro problems such as long-term potable water supply, food security, and affordable housing infrastructure, among others. In 1965, for instance, when Singapore became independent, we faced such water stress that water had to be rationed to meet minimum needs. Today, thanks to an integrated water management strategy nationwide, Singapore is one of just a few cities in

	<p>best way to change this culture of risk aversion is to launch bold, iconic policies that will catch the attention of the world. One idea he advocated is that Singapore should strive to be the first city in the world to move towards a zero-car ownership city. By displaying extraordinary courage in going for such a bold new policy, it would demonstrate that the culture of risk-taking was not confined to just the generation of founding fathers of Singapore. Instead, it would demonstrate that the culture of risk-taking has been hardwired into the DNA of Singapore. This will ensure Singapore's long-term survivability as many new challenges come our way.</p>	<p>the world to harvest stormwater and practice large-scale water reuse as part of its diversified water supply approach. We have turned water vulnerability into an opportunity to pilot new technologies and innovative solutions. This was primarily borne out of our insecurities and fear for the future.</p>
<p>Often, the media's excessive focus on bad news creates stories about our world that distorts reality, divides us and (counterproductively) limits our ability to respond effectively to the challenges we face (para 4, lines 33-35)</p> <p>Where the media puts its attention and how it frames the information it presents is a precious choice. It wields a powerful influence over our individual and collective mind states, and it guides our shared story (para 4, lines 45-47)</p>	<p>Since we are currently in a global pandemic that has caused the deaths of thousands of people and numerous economic problems, it is not surprising many people are searching for things to take their minds off the gloom. What they are clinging to and sharing on social networks is often explicitly good news, be it heartwarming stories about children having virtual birthday parties or people clapping and singing to celebrate healthcare workers.</p> <p>In addition, during the pandemic, the media outlets in Singapore played a critical role in the dissemination of information to the public so that Singaporeans could be steered to take action to curb the spread of COVID-19. Josephine Teo, Minister for Communications and Information said the efforts of the local media was one of the reasons why people in Singapore cooperated and stayed home during the "circuit breaker" and why people and businesses could</p>	

	<p>adjust quickly to changes in public health protocols and safe management measures. It was also one of the reasons why Singapore achieved a high vaccination rate, paving the way for the country to move towards the endemic phase of COVID-19.</p> <p>There are also encouraging signs of an appetite for constructive or solutions-focussed journalism today. Sharing solutions-based stories creates a 'we're all in this together' movement. There are examples where readers/the audience have responded with donations to a cause or to the launch of campaigns on an issue raised in a story. One example is the recent story of President Zelenskyy wearing a t-shirt bearing an illustration designed by a Singaporean teenager, Ava Soh. She was inspired to help Ukrainians and at the same time promote self-belief and confidence that women too can build a country. The illustration is of a girl spray painting the blue and yellow colours of the Ukraine flag. The Spray Paint Ukraine piece is sold as a 'wearable NFT' to raise funds for Ukraine, with sales proceeds donated to the Ukrainian Embassy in Singapore. President Zelenskyy used this as a point in his speech about believing in what can be possible.</p>	
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From Passage 2	Pessimism is the key to a good society	Why pessimism is not the key to a good society
At the core of pessimism is the idea that everyone, however outwardly normal, is flawed:	<p>Pessimism is an important attitude to keeping Singapore a diverse yet harmonious society.</p> <p>Singapore's government has been famously</p>	

<p>short-term, vengeful and prone to recklessness. (Para 2, lines 8-9)</p>	<p>attributed with creating a ‘nanny state’ with little trust in its citizens. With a ‘polyglot population of migrants with myriad religions, cultures and belief systems’ according to Tharman Shanmugaratnam, the dominant view is that Singapore’s success is fragile and could be lost due to disharmony and a lack of drive to strive for excellence. Especially on the aspect of racial and religious harmony, Lawrence Wong remarked in 2021 that racial and religious harmony are not naturally achievable and people by nature will tend towards those who are ‘most like us, and to keep a distance from others.’ The racial riots in the 1960s are also remembered with much solemnity and individuals caught making derogatory remarks about the race or religion of others are dealt with sternly, even by the law. With such a low view of the citizenry’s ability to integrate on their own, policies on race and religions have been premised on the idea that people need to be nudged in that direction. Action like imposing ethnic quotas in Housing and Development Board flats, making English the common language for school and work, ensuring election policies guarantee minority representation and even invoking the Internal Security Act against ethnic chauvinists are examples of the government acting upon a pessimistic view of race relations in Singapore.</p>	
<p>... in an ideally pessimistic society, boring and extremely steady politicians are valued over eloquent but reactive ones. (Para 3, lines 15-16)</p>	<p>The Singapore narrative has been commonly woven around the idea of a ‘miracle’. As a small country without natural resources, we were not expected to make it and today, the government still warns that we cannot afford to be</p>	<p>Even though the PAP government still dominates the Singapore parliament and boasts of a positive track record in governing Singapore, recent elections show that people are increasingly yearning and optimistic about a greater variety of political</p>

<p>Or...</p> <p>people are sobering up to the reality that the world needs well-advised leaders with acumen and composure instead of those who give in to the whims and fancies of the people. (Para 3, lines 18-19)</p>	<p>complacent in a world where economic competition is high, and the success built is against immense odds of not having natural resources, a hinterland, and an experienced government and defence force. Singapore's founding leaders were known to be steadfast, firm and unwavering even in the midst of challenges, sticking to their guns even when they had to make tough and unpopular decisions like instituting National Service or interfering in the private lives of citizens. Today, the Singapore government still regularly warns that Singapore needs to remain competitive and vigilant amidst global challenges to maintain an edge over competitors. The ruling PAP government often espouses the need to screen and recruit talents from the private and public sector to ensure that the best are chosen by merit (competent, intelligent, experienced leadership) and not popularity/charisma, even if people feel that their choices are cookie cutter politicians. They also boast of their track record in keeping Singapore successful. Political stability is said to be closely intertwined with investor confidence and is something to be protected. This mostly works with the electorate, as PAP politicians are mostly voted in, even if popular opposition figures promising radical changes challenge for seats in elections. E.g. The PAP have won so many elections and have created a largely successful political and economic system that even the opposition regularly concede that they are not there to replace them as the government, but to provide a 'check and balance'. Even popular opposition politicians like Tan Cheng Bock and Nicole Seah ultimately lost in the 2020 elections despite garnering much support</p>	<p>contestation for the good of the society. Despite the PAP's pessimistic warnings that voting in opposition politicians could undo or impede the progress that the PAP government has made as elections become more for the short term, it has not stopped voters from being bolder in voting in opposition politicians whom the electorate find more relatable. The younger population in particular want to follow a leadership they are inspired by. Optimism has instead grown regarding the need and ability of Singapore to have political change, and this follows a trend of varied political expression over social media, a rise in the quality of opposition politicians and younger voters who are not beholden to the PAP's leadership and are eager to consider more political options. The expanding influence of the Worker's Party in gaining two GRCs since 2011 at the cost of voting out prominent PAP office-holders (George Yeo and Ng Chee Meng) as well as the increasing popularity of opposition voices like Pritam Singh, Jamus Lim and Nicole Seah illustrate that having a stable track record and credentials is increasingly inadequate if they do not demonstrate relatability with voters.</p>
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	and attention during rallies. With occasional freak results like the loss of Aljunied and Sengkang GRC, results still show that stability is key for Singaporean voters.	
Pessimistic societies prefer measured, slow-moving, governments which are rational and deliberative, rather than those that react haphazardly to the fluctuations of public opinion which are prone to hysteria and overreaction. (Para 3, lines 20-22)	While Singapore's political leadership has been praised for its remarkable growth as a nation, Singapore's Public Service has been largely credited for the nation's development as well. Having observed from Singapore's past about how the progress of many nations was easily hampered by rampant corruption in the public service, Singapore's founding fathers made it a point to establish a capable and clean public service which, while neutral, could also serve the government well in long-term policy work. The Public Service has made modern Singapore possible, through meritocracy, dedication, integrity and ingenuity in every field – securing an island, housing a city, growing an economy, educating a people, nurturing a community – to build a thriving nation once considered impossible. Today, Singapore's bureaucracy is renowned for being impartial, responsive and often innovative, always working for the betterment of the nation, with the public good at heart. The system is slow-moving in the sense that ministries and statutory boards are run autonomously and focus on specific functions with their own Chief Executives and Managing Directors, thus largely insulating them from political volatility. Irrespective of the political complexion of the government, the public service is held to political neutrality and to discharge its duties with	(Different understanding of a preferred government in Singapore's pessimistic society than the author) While Singapore's civil service is renowned for its high quality and ability to run Singapore well, pessimists argue that it is not insulated from the fluctuations of public opinion. The government has warned that stable political leadership is still necessary for Singapore's public service to run effectively and not doing so can derail Singapore's progress. According to PM Lee, a competent civil service may be able to keep the country going on "autopilot" for some time, even if its politics are divided, or its political leaders well-meaning but mediocre. But under such circumstances, the civil service cannot launch major policy, set new directions or mobilise the population to mount a national response to major challenges. In Singapore, the political climate and leaders support and enable the public service to operate in a rational, efficient, systematic way. And just as public servants must understand the political context, ministers are expected to be "hands-on executive leaders" rather than simply providing strategic guidance, PM Lee said. This means that if they are not up to scratch or cannot play their roles properly, the public service will not function well. The country therefore has the luxury of looking beyond the short-term, and the confidence that it will be able to fund and carry out longer-term plans. Only when senior public service

	<p>excellence so that Singapore can still function as a nation.</p>	<p>leaders work closely with their elected political counterparts will both parties be able to give effect to the will of the people, and deliver on Singaporeans' expectations and aspirations, PM Lee added. "It is a fine balance - for the public service to be neutral and non-political, insulated from the hurly-burly of party politics, and yet politically sensitive and responsive to the nation's priorities and aspirations," he said. "But this is inherent in the role of a public sector leader."</p> <p>https://www.straitstimes.com/singapore/to-succeed-spore-needs-high-quality-public-servants-to-be-aligned-with-first-class</p>
<p>...understanding that mankind is flawed by nature and therefore prone to self-destructive tendencies, pessimists (who value order and self-control) willingly accept a paternalistic government as the price for limiting those tendencies. (Para 4, lines 23-25)</p>	<p>One of the principles that guide the Singapore government is that of pragmatism, where policies are justified based on whether they produce concrete and tangible results, rather than being subject to consistent rule-based ideals. This has been consistently demonstrated by the People's Action Party's (PAP) willingness to make intrusive interventions into the personal lives of its citizens from religion, public housing racial segregation, abortion, or something as trivial as a ban on chewing gum. With the meteoric rise of Singapore as a successful nation, many citizens have accepted such actions as the price worth paying for the high standard of living they now enjoy. Even though there is grumbling on social media or occasional protests for more civil liberties, elections have still regularly swung in favour of the PAP government, showing an acceptance of their methods in keeping Singapore prosperous and living standards high, or simply, the fear of losing the prosperity they have</p>	<p>Singapore's highly urbanised and digitally connected citizens are now more exposed to regional and international political developments, from which they draw lessons for Singapore. It is no longer the same pessimistic outlook that drives them to simply accept the paternalistic style of government. As they routinely express in writing and on social media, younger people are optimistic about having a more consultative style of governance and accountability, more emphasis on social inclusiveness and justice, and greater environmental sustainability. Increasingly, more of the citizenry do not hesitate to call out the leadership when mistakes are made and inconsistencies are observed. They question the need for highly paid political leaders and bureaucrats and the need to maintain huge fiscal reserves. Instead, they emphasise the need to protect local talent and businesses against the huge influx of foreigners. More than just demands over bread-and-butter issues, the population in Singapore today also</p>

	<p>because of a new and unpredictable opposition government – rhetoric regularly espoused by the PAP government. The PAP has traditionally won the majority of seats in parliament and Singapore's General Elections in 2020 saw the PAP retaining a supermajority of 83 of 93 available seats despite rising opposition voices on social media. Opposition politicians like Tan Cheng Bock and Chee Soon Juan, who have garnered much support online, still ultimately failed in their pursuit of an election victory.</p>	<p>demands for greater transparency (e.g. privacy, data issues) and inclusivity (e.g. race relations, people with diverse learning needs etc.) They fear that in the long term, Singapore's progress will be hampered without a new norm of a significant opposition in Parliament that provides checks and balances and offers diverse perspectives on policy. Even PM Lee acknowledged this in the wake of the 2020 General Elections when he commented on how the fourth generation of PAP leaders has been leading initiatives to encourage people to come forward and express themselves, such as through the Emerging Stronger Conversations. The hope is that through those platforms, Singaporeans will feel empowered to make a difference and contribute to society, working together with the PAP.</p>
<p>...citizens assume that the raw human mind needs a huge amount of structured, targeted help to cope with life's challenges and prepare for an increasingly volatile and disrupted global economy. Therefore, education systems are elaborate, broad, ambitious, and well-resourced. (Para 5, lines 30-33)</p>	<p>Manpower is posited Singapore's only resource. It is also a major limiting factor in its growth and could become an impediment to new investments and business expansion if it is not developed well. Singapore's government therefore emphasises fully developing its manpower resources to hone its competitive edge and remain relevant in an increasingly competitive global environment (PM Lee's 2017 quote to union leaders about the need to "make sure you steal somebody else's lunch" to secure good jobs for Singaporeans). Hence, Singapore needs to develop constantly new capabilities and competencies. One critical area is the development of a globally competitive knowledge-based (skilled) workforce. To prepare for that, Singapore invests about \$12.63 billion (2020) on its education system and constantly revamps the curriculum to best prepare students for the future workforce.</p>	

	<p>Traditionally, a competitive and centralised education system focussed on rote learning and grades earned Singapore high PISA rankings. With a disruptive and fast-changing economy now the norm in this technologically driven world however, Singapore's education system has been reducing the emphasis on formal testing and making learning more flexible through Subject Based Banding and Work-Study Programmes like the SkillsFuture Work-Study Programmes and the ITE Work-Learn Technical Diploma. Technological skills are being increasingly emphasised too. From refreshing syllabi to the infrastructure and programmes of the education system to prepare students for work, Singapore's education system has proved to be instrumental for its success.</p>	
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Paper 2 Marking Rubrics

Application Question (10 marks)

Marks	Descriptors
Band 1 8 – 10	<p>1 REQUIREMENTS: Systematic reference to the requirements of the question with evidence of a balanced treatment.</p> <p>2 EXPLANATION: Shows a good or very good understanding of terms and issues.</p> <p>3 EVALUATION: Makes very convincing evaluation by making judgements and decisions and by developing arguments to logical conclusions, and includes elaboration and support through personal insight and apt illustration.</p> <p>4 COHERENCE: Very clear shape and paragraph organisation and cogent argument.</p>
Band 2 4 – 7	<p>1 REQUIREMENTS: Covers requirements of the question adequately but not necessarily a balanced treatment.</p> <p>2 EXPLANATION: Shows an adequate level of understanding of terms and issues (which may include minor distortion).</p> <p>3 EVALUATION: Evaluation is attempted but is not always convincing, and tends to be superficial with limited development of ideas, and is not as thorough in support.</p> <p>4 COHERENCE: Paragraphing is sometimes helpful and there is a recognisable over-all shape to the answer; arguments are generally cogent.</p>
Band 3 1 – 3	<p>1 REQUIREMENTS: An incomplete and/or unbalanced treatment of the requirements.</p> <p>2 EXPLANATION: Shows very limited degree of understanding and a higher incidence of misinterpretation.</p> <p>3 EVALUATION: Tends to be a mere summary of restatement of the text with a few simple and undeveloped judgements, with very thin support.</p> <p>4 COHERENCE: Paragraphing and organisation are haphazard; arguments inconsistent or illogical.</p>
0	Nothing in the answer meets any of the criteria.

Use of English (15 marks)

- Assessment must be based on the individual candidate's performance across the whole paper.
- Generally, look for sentence length, the range and variety of vocabulary, and the incidence, range and severity of the following types of error: spelling, vocabulary, tense, number, sentence construction.
- Apply the 'best fit' principle when not all the descriptors of a single band are found within a script.

Marks	Descriptors
Band 1 12 – 15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Very good to excellent linguistic ability: very few serious errors; only a few slips or minor errors. • Assured command of language: it is clear, fluent, effective and appropriate throughout. • Answers are cogent, concise and well organised. A wide variety of apt vocabulary is used and sentence structure is inventive, developed and appropriate. • There is a sustained attempt to rephrase the text language for all the answers.
Band 2 8 – 11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good to very good linguistic ability: a number of errors of various kinds but they do not seriously impede the flow of the writing. • Competent command of language: the Candidate usually writes in convincing and idiomatic English, with some positive merits. • Vocabulary and sentence structures are varied and appropriate but not necessarily outstanding. • There is a noticeable attempt to avoid the text language for all the answers.
Band 3 4 – 7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Satisfactory / mediocre linguistic ability: errors of various kinds are frequent but the English is for the most part intelligible. • Moderate command of language: the English is at times halting, repetitive and generally insecure. • Misuse of vocabulary and/or breakdown of syntax or grammar. Only simple statements attempted successfully. • There are recognisable but limited attempts to rephrase the text language in the answers.
Band 4 1 – 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Weak linguistic ability: frequent and serious errors of various kinds, rendering the English muddled or unintelligible at times. • Very poor command of language. • Widespread misuse of vocabulary; sentence linking is inappropriate or haphazard. • Answers mostly comprise wholesale copying of the text language. Any attempts to use own language are limited to single word expressions.