

Anglo-Chinese Junior College
General Paper Preliminary Exams 2012
Paper 2 Answer Scheme

From Passage 1

1. How does the example of Hitler's extermination of the Jews in paragraph 1 illustrate the authors' argument that efficiency cannot be thought of as a moral virtue? (2m)

From the text	Inferred
It is a standard of quality pertaining to the action, but it cannot be considered a moral virtue, since the quality of good and evil does not derive from the form in which an objective is achieved but from the goal or end that the action achieves. To give an extreme example, one could say that Hitler and his engineers were extremely efficient in achieving the goal of exterminating Jews. (lines 5-8)	Moral virtue must result in the attainment of a good/morally sound outcome/end/objective. OR Efficiency has nothing to do with whether the outcome/end/objective is morally good or bad. (1m)
	However, the example illustrates that one can be efficient in the way/method of attaining one's objective even if the objective is an evil one. OR Hitler's goal/objective/aim of killing the Jews was done/carried out in an efficient manner although it was an evil goal. (1m)

2. According to paragraph 2, why is there a need for governments and institutions to be efficient in modern society? **Use your own words as far as possible.** (2m)

From the text	Paraphrased
In justifying efficiency, one should say that in modern times, reason has to apply its own rational parameters to action.../ Therefore, efficiency is a quality that derives from the rationalisation of action. (line 12)	Efficiency is used to explain/give supporting arguments for why or how plans/policies are carried out OR Efficiency is the most logical/sensible way to carry out plans/policies
...in order to organise a society that has grown to massive proportions (line 11) / In mass society... (line 12)	because governments and institutions have to manage/deal with a society which has a large number of/many people,
...in order to achieve a desired objective (line 13) OR ...social efficiency...action that has the most beneficial results for all society. (<i>unbold</i>) (line 16)	so as to attain the goal/aim/outcome they seek/want. OR so as to achieve the most positive/advantageous outcome for everyone.

1-2pt = 1m

3pts = 2m

3. Explain why the authors use the phrase “may seem” in line 17. (2m)

From the text	Inferred
It may seem heartless to worship efficiency at any cost, including lost jobs and decimated communities, but it is important to understand that increased efficiency is the only way a society's standard of living will improve. (lines 17-19)	On the surface/It appears to be the case/One may argue/It looks like it is true that it is ruthless to extol/laud the pursuit of efficiency due to the devastating consequences on society/people. (1m) Either 1 of the following: However, the authors do not agree with the view. OR However, the authors do not think that it is really ruthless to extol/laud the pursuit of efficiency. OR However, the authors think that it is the only way by which society's material well-being can be increased./as failing to do so may lead to even worse economic detriments. (1m)

4. Suggest how we as consumers “benefit from this competition” (line 26). (1m)

From the text	Inferred
So firms compete to become more efficient, and we as consumers benefit from this competition . (lines 25-26)	The quality of goods is better. OR The cost of goods will decrease. OR The variety of goods offered will be wider. (1m) <i>Accept any logical benefit to the consumer.</i>

5. According to the authors in paragraph 5, how do high interest rates help credit card companies achieve efficiency? **Use your own words as far as possible**. (2m)

From the text	Paraphrased
Credit card interest rates of 20 percent or more eliminate the need for credit card companies to spend time unproductively checking the credit of applicants.	Credit card companies do not have to waste time investigating/verifying whether the applicants have a trustworthy record/ the ability to foot future credit card bills. (1m)
High interest rates more than cover the occasional delinquent .	Even if there are applicants who sometimes default/ make late payments, the money earned from the high interest rates will make up for such lapses. (1m)

6. Explain the authors' purpose in referring to the examples of kitchen pipes and the car engine in line 42. (2m)

From the text	Inferred
Instead of having to go through red tape to get a loan ...you can just write a cheque. (lines 41-43)	The purpose of this is to highlight the significant benefits of having quick access to/convenience of having credit/ a cheque book. OR One does not have to go through the hassle of bureaucracy to borrow money due to the availability of ready credit (1m)
...when your kitchen pipes burst or when your car engine dies,... (line 42)	when one is in a state of emergency/crisis/situation that requires urgent help/aid/a speedy solution. (1m)

From Passage 2

7. Explain the author's use of the phrase "The odds are" (line 1). (1m)

From the text	Paraphrased
What is your first memory of being late? The odds are it had something to do with school. (line 1)	There is a high probability/Chances are very high/ It is very likely that one's first memory of being late is associated with the experience of school. (1)

8. Explain how school teaches us "time behaviour" (line 2). **Use your own words as far as possible.** (2m)

From the text	Paraphrased
...whether it was rushing out the door to catch the bus or rushing through the hallways to beat the bell.	School teaches us "time behaviour" by teaching us to adhere to time limits/schedules/to be punctual/to be on time,
... time management was a central lesson in the school experience.	and how to prioritise/plan our use of time.
What we learned at school was a particular version of time — a time-logic — that is particular to our culture and our history.	School teaches us our own society's specific/unique way of perceiving/viewing/interpreting/valuing time. OR School teaches us a way of understanding time which is linked to our heritage and our past.

1-2pts = 1m

3 pts = 2m

9. Using material from paragraphs 2 to 5 only, summarise the benefits of efficiency and the reasons for the need to stop pursuing efficiency despite these benefits. 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.**

Efficiency is beneficial because

Lifted		Paraphrase	
The benefits of efficiency			
1	huge production increases could be won (lines 11-12)	1	It leads to a greater quantity of goods being made.
2	efficiency as an ultimate time value lifted many people to new levels of wealth (lines 14)	2	It has brought about greater affluence/ material well-being
3	and leisure (line 15)	3	and more entertainment/fun/forms of relaxation.
4	efficiency can lead to other outcomes, such as the streamlined production of higher quality goods, (lines 22-23)	4	It leads to the production of better/ superior products. (NOTE: #1 focuses on quantity while #4 focuses on quality)
5	While the possibility of efficiency gains seemingly never ends ,	5	The potential benefits/advantages of efficiency are numerous/infinite.
The reasons for the need to stop pursuing efficiency despite these benefits			
6	... production exists in a real world with real limits (lines 18-19) OR The recognition of limits stands as the global culture's strongest imperative to move beyond its current time-logic. (lines 24-25) OR The truth is that we have limits . (line 40)	6	There are insufficient or finite resources/practical constraints or restrictions. OR One cannot infinitely pursue efficiency.
7	More efficient forestation means running through forests faster . More efficient fishing methods means running through natural fishing stocks faster . (lines 19-20)	7	Greater efficiency means that natural resources/flora and fauna will be depleted <i>quickly/rapidly</i> . OR Forests and fish are being depleted <i>quickly/rapidly</i> .
8	Faster production of everything means more of everything — including more unwanted waste material (like greenhouse gases). (lines 20-21)	8	More efficient manufacturing of goods leads to more problems/negative consequences. OR more pollution/environmental degradation/undesirable byproducts /ecological damage.
9	... over consumption of finite planetary resources. (lines 23-24)	9	Efficiency leads to the excessive utilisation /unsustainable use/over depletion/ ruthless decimation of our limited natural resources.
10	As individuals, the desire to build a new time springs from our deeply felt need to reclaim value ...in our lives (lines 26-27) OR The relentless logic of efficiency can unintentionally strip the most valued qualities of human life... (lines 41-43)	10	As individuals, there is a need to reestablish/regain what is of importance/worth in our lives. OR The pursuit of efficiency deprives us of what is most important/has most worth in our lives.
11	and balance in our lives. (line 28) OR We spend more time at work, take fewer, shorter vacations ... (lines 29-30)	11	We need to find more work-life harmony in our lives./ We do not have time for family because of work. /We no longer have work-life harmony. OR We are spending more time on our jobs and taking fewer breaks/holidays.

12	There are statistics enough to show how the acceleration of life under modern time has stressed our personal ecosystems of family, friends and community. (lines 28-29) OR True connections between family, friends and colleagues cannot be compressed down to tightly scheduled "quality time". (lines 40-41)	12	The fast pace of life that we lead today has taxed/strained our personal relationships with others. OR Deep/genuine relationships with people need time to develop/cannot be packed into a short period of time.
13	... and report an increased sense that we are unable to complete the tasks given to us. (lines 30-31)	13	We increasingly find that we cannot finish the work/duty assigned to us/ cannot meet the demands of our jobs.
14	In fact, our stress inducing time-logic leaves its imprint across all of our daily experiences . (lines 30-31)	14	Efficiency leads to pressure/strain/tension which has consequences/impact/leaves a mark on every aspect of our lives.
15	The frustration and hopelessness we can feel (lines 33-34) OR leaving us drained before the day even begins. (line 36)	15	Pursuing efficiency has led us to feel exasperated/despair/impatient/miserable OR Pursuing efficiency has led us to feel tired/exhausted/mentally sapped
16	...even in short traffic jams is indicative of the constant struggle to do more in less time.	16	<u>Inferred</u> (We feel frustrated...) even when we experience minor delays
17	When our morning commute fails to hit its expected mark, then, like dominoes, the time-logic of tightly stacked to-dos and appointments topples , (lines 34-36)	17	<u>Inferred</u> (We feel frustrated...) and when our planned schedule/work plan is disrupted.
18	The value of efficiency we learned as children drives the expectation ... (line 37) OR ...taking efficiency to new imaginary limits... (lines 37-40)	18	The pursuit of efficiency leads us to set unrealistic targets/goals/ leads us to think that we can meet unrealistic goals
19	...that we can "time –manage" our way out of impossibly overbooked schedules . (lines 37-38) OR The myth of multitasking has only compounded this dilemma (lines 38-39) OR ...where we can somehow duplicate ourselves and get twice as much done . (lines 39-40)	19	and delude ourselves into believing that we can do more things simultaneously when we have insufficient time.
20	In both instances, what is left has been denuded and made barren . (line 41- 43)	20	Efficiency leaves our lives empty/desolate/bleak.

Allocation of Marks:

No. of points	1-2	3-4	5-6	7-8	9	10-11	12-13	14+
Marks	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8

10. Vocabulary

Vocabulary	1m	0m
<p>a) parameters (passage 1, line 11) <i>noun</i></p> <p>"In justifying efficiency, ...reason has to apply its own rational parameters to action in order to organise a society..." (lines 10-11)</p>	<p>limits boundaries</p>	<p>limitations/ characteristic/ borders/ element/ reasons/ rules/ regulations/ scope/ standard/ yardsticks/ benchmark/ framework/ guidelines/ guiding principles/ measurement/ restrictions</p>
<p>b) decimated (passage 1, line 17) <i>adjective</i></p> <p>"It may seem heartless to worship efficiency at any cost, including lost jobs and decimated communities..."</p>	<p>annihilated exterminated obliterated reduced to nothing wiped out</p> <p>with a large population killed or destroyed</p> <p>utterly damaged/destroyed totally ruined totally eradicated</p> <p>*2 part answer is required.</p>	<p>reduced/ damaged/ slaughtered/ executed/ massacred/ devastated/ destroyed/ dispersed/ marginalised/ segregated/ divided/ shrivelled/ made smaller/ extremely fragmented/ disintegrated/ eliminated/ removed completely/ crippled/ drastically reduced/severely reduced</p>
<p>c) proceeds (passage 1, line 38) <i>noun</i></p> <p>It was possible to get the land now and pay for it over time, in part with the proceeds from newly cultivated acres."</p>	<p>profits monetary gains earnings monetary returns revenue income derived money earned</p>	<p>produce/ product/ advancement/ continuation/ yield/ takings/ funds/ resulting products/ payoffs/ gains/ harvests/ money raised</p>
<p>d) streamlined (passage 2, line 12) <i>verb</i></p> <p>"...huge production increases could be won when each 'work process' was broken down into simple elements and streamlined."</p>	<p>simplified to attain greater efficiency/productivity</p> <p>made more efficient by removing unnecessary processes made more efficient through specialisation</p> <p>made more efficient and economical organised/optimised for maximum efficiency</p> <p>*2 part answer is required.</p>	<p>simplified/ organised/ smoothened out/ made smoother with less friction/ made easier/ to change to attain more profits/ effectively organised/ boiled down/ improved/ refined/ minimised/ minimalist/ specialised/ made more efficient/ finetuned</p>
<p>e) imperative (passage 2, line 26) <i>noun</i></p> <p>"...on the level of the individual, the imperative to change emanates from a different source."</p>	<p>mandatory/compulsory requirement absolute necessity essential need</p> <p>*2 part answer is required.</p> <p>(compulsory) (essential) (must)</p> <p>#ungrammatical answers</p>	<p>importance of/ reason for/ strong desire/ strong need/ unavoidable need/ necessity/ compulsion/ must vital importance/ high importance/ extreme importance/ mandate/ command/ order/ inherent need/ necessity/ essential trigger/ paramount need/ impetus/ drive/ strong motivation/ urgency/ urgent obligation/ exigency</p>

11. Anna Rodrigue and Barry Schwartz think that the pursuit of efficiency is beneficial, whereas Adam Frank thinks that it is detrimental to both the individual and society. Which view do you and your society subscribe to and why? Illustrate your views with reference to the ways in which you and your society regard the pursuit of efficiency.

Requirement:

Students should -

- a) explain which view ~~they feel~~ their society ~~should~~ subscribes to
- b) support their views with reasoned arguments
- c) show understanding of the ideas and views raised in the passages
- d) explain why they agree/disagree with them

Explanation:

Discuss some of the following in relation to their own society -

- a) the pursuit of efficiency being essential for the material well-being/economic success of their society
- b) the need for the government to be efficient due to the massive size of their society
- c) companies' need to be more productive in order to pay employees higher wages
- d) the need for companies to be efficient in today's globalised economy so as to survive
- e) how customers stand to gain when companies are more efficient
- f) whether or not having more efficient economic transactions is obviously good for the individual/company/society
- g) the expectation to be efficient leading to negative impact on the individual, family and the environment
- h) there is a limit to being efficient due to the finite nature of resources and an individual's ability to cope

Evaluation:

- a) question/show reasons for subscribing/not subscribing to the authors' views
- b) give examples from their own society to support their views

Coherence:

- a) adopt a consistent viewpoint
- b) argue logically
- c) organise answers into cohesive, themed paragraphs
- d) link paragraphs to show continuity and direction of argument
- e) maintain relevance to the task in everything they write
- f) end with a summative or clearly concluding paragraph/ sentence

11. Anna Rodrigue and Barry Schwartz think that the pursuit of efficiency is beneficial, whereas Adam Frank thinks that it is detrimental to both the individual and society. Which view do you and your society subscribe to and why? Illustrate your views with reference to the ways in which you and your society regard the pursuit of efficiency.

Passage 1: Anna Rodrigue and Barry Schwartz think that the pursuit of efficiency is beneficial

References (Key Ideas)	Guiding Questions/ Discussion Issues	Agree with author (i.e. the pursuit of efficiency is beneficial)	Disagree with author (i.e. the pursuit of efficiency is detrimental)
Claim: "Efficiency is the shortest, fastest and simplest way of achieving a planned objective with a minimum of cost." (lines 3-4)	Do individuals/businesses/the government believe that the best way to achieve their planned goals is to be efficient? Is it true that efficiency is the shortest, fastest and simplest way of achieving a planned objective?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> On the individual level, due to the increasing demands of work or school and the hectic pace of life in Singapore, the pursuit of efficiency means that one can multi-task so as to complete the work/task required and succeed. For example, working mothers need to have good time management skills as they need to juggle the heavy demands of both work and family. This means that they need to either complete their work duties more efficiently and/ or be efficient in fulfilling their household responsibilities. Otherwise, they will face problems meeting the expectations of their employers as well as their family. For businesses, Singapore firms often pride themselves for having a reputation for efficiency. This has enabled them to keep business costs low so as to maximise profits as well as stand out in the climate of intense economic competition when they gain a reputation of being able to get the job done quickly. On the governmental level, government efficiency is what has made Singapore an attractive place for MNCs/firms to set-up base here. For example, Singapore poses the least challenges for setting up a business, as securing company name approval and filing incorporation documents can be completed within 24 hours. Singapore is ranked as the third most competitive economy in the world in 'The Global Competitiveness Report 2010-2011' released by the World Economic Forum due to government and business efficiency. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not all Singaporeans think that the pursuit of efficiency should be society's top priority. The pursuit of efficiency is often considered as the reason for society becoming less considerate towards the needs of others. In fact, many people are of the opinion that society should slow down and be a more caring and compassionate society. Business societies have been urged to focus more on benefitting the society than to just focus on the profit margin and productivity of their workers. The government and people have urged employers to hire people who may not necessarily be efficient workers (e.g. hiring the intellectually challenged or the elderly). For example, the Silver Co-op, launched by Central Singapore, North East and South East Community Development Councils in 2009, hires the elderly for ad-hoc jobs in light manufacturing or in the assembly of products out-sourced by commercial companies. It is not true that efficiency is the best way to attain one's business objective. To be a successful businessman, one needs to have the right contacts and be adept at socialising with business partners. This is especially true in Singapore as Asian societies often prioritise relationship building when it comes to establishing working partnerships. In addition, consistent customer experience is the key factor that will take Singapore businesses to the next level of success. Singapore businesses need to focus on creating a better customer experience to remain competitive as customers are expecting more and more personalisation.

References (Key Ideas)	Guiding Questions/ Discussion Issues	Agree with author (i.e. the pursuit of efficiency is beneficial)	Disagree with author (i.e. the pursuit of efficiency is detrimental)
<p>Claim: “...it cannot be considered a moral virtue...” (lines 5-6)</p> <p>Claim: “It may seem heartless to worship efficiency at any cost, including lost jobs and decimated communities...” (line 16)</p>	<p>Why is efficiency not necessarily a moral virtue?</p> <p>Is it true that there is a need to pursue efficiency despite the potential negative impact on people/society?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The benefits of pursuing efficiency outweigh the detrimental consequences to society. There have been detrimental consequences such as the retrenchment of workers (e.g. the elderly, workers with lower productivity) and there are fewer job opportunities for locals as compared to foreigners (e.g. Marina Bay Sands, Resorts World) due to the need to maintain high standards of efficiency. However, the pursuit of efficiency is beneficial to Singapore and its economy as it enables the country to maintain its good image and competitive standard. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Given the negative consequences of pursuing efficiency, there have been calls by the people and steps taken by the government to moderate and reduce employers’ and industries’ expectations of high productivity from workers. For example, the government has instituted a 5-day work week and capped the number of foreigners that companies can employ.
<p>Claim: “...in modern times, reason has to apply its own rational parameters to action in order to organise a society that has grown to massive proportions.” (lines 10-11)</p> <p>Reason: “In mass society, institutions and policies have to be previously planned in order to achieve a desired objective...” (lines 12-13)</p>	<p>Does the government view the pursuit of efficiency as the best way for it to organise a society that has grown/is growing bigger (e.g. population size, scale of the economy)?</p> <p>Does the government use efficiency to justify its unpopular policies? Are people convinced by such justification?</p> <p>Do governments/institutions have to pursue efficiency in order to achieve their goals/aims?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Singapore government often prides itself for being one of the most efficient governments in the world. For example, it is consistently ranked in the top 5 positions in the World Competitive Yearbook (one of the four main factors which are assessed is government efficiency which comprises criteria such as public finance, fiscal policy, institutional framework, business legislation, etc.). This makes Singapore an attractive environment that sustains the competitiveness of enterprises and thus lures businesses here. As the Singapore economy grows and expands, government efficiency is seen to be even more vital to maintain Singapore’s competitive edge. As the Singapore society expands (e.g. population increase, more diverse groups of people from different nationalities), the need for the government to quickly address (and if possible, pre-empt) the needs/demands of these groups of people is seen to be vital. For example, the rising cost of public housing (esp. resale HDB flats) has been met up with much displeasure by the people since GE2011. As a result, the government has to quickly launch and build new HDB flats, as well as plan ahead to meet future housing needs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Government efficiency has also been viewed negatively by the people. Citizens have complained that unpopular policies and decisions are made and rolled out quickly without adequate consultation to seek the people’s feedback. As a result of this, the Singapore government is now taking time to seek public feedback instead of being efficient in quickly implementing policies as it deems fit. For example, the Singapore government has now launched a new website to get public feedback on population issue before releasing a White Paper at the end of this year (2012). Perhaps there is a need for the government to stop pursuing efficiency and take time to review and consult the people on issues or policies which can affect them precisely because the country/society has expanded, as there will be more differing viewpoints and competing needs. The government recognises that government efficiency in implementing policies is not always the best way to tackle problems faced by the country. For example, the government acknowledges that its decision to quickly increase Singapore’s population size by letting in a flood of new citizens and foreign workers is

References (Key Ideas)	Guiding Questions/ Discussion Issues	Agree with author (i.e. the pursuit of efficiency is beneficial)	Disagree with author (i.e. the pursuit of efficiency is detrimental)
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> With the Singapore population expected to grow in the next 5-10 years, the government needs to be efficient in building the necessary infrastructure to continue to make Singapore an attractive place to live. For example, there are plans to extend the MRT networks e.g. Downtown Line, Brown Line. 	<p>simply a short term solution and needs to be reviewed. It has already started to reduce the number of new citizens and foreign workers as a result of negative backlash from Singaporeans during GE2011.</p>
<p>Claim: “...it is important to understand that increased efficiency is the only way a society’s standard of living will improve.” (lines 18-19)</p> <p>Reason: “It is only if your company and others find a way to pay you more without charging more that your living standard goes up.” (lines 22-23)</p>	<p>Is increased efficiency seen as the only way that your society’s standard of living will improve?</p> <p>How does the pursuit of efficiency lead to a higher standard of living?</p> <p>Can companies not be more efficient and still pay higher wages to employees?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There has been much call to raise the wages of low-skilled workers so as to narrow the income divide and to raise their standard of living. However, to do so, companies have to improve their work processes and workers have to be more productive and efficient. The government has been moderating the inflow of foreign workers. By having a tighter grip on foreign workers, wages will be pushed up in the short term. However, this may hold back many companies that are eager to expand but cannot find enough workers. As such, in order for local companies to continue to compete in a globalised and capitalist world economy, workers and companies have to become more efficient, and hence the pursuit of efficiency is considered to be necessary. To raise the productivity levels in Singapore, the government has enhanced the Productivity and Innovation Credit (PIC) Scheme to encourage local firms to invest in structures and processes which would lead to an increase in productivity. This is especially so for SMEs where the best competitive advantage they can build is to increase the operational capacity of their company and raise staff productivity levels. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Due to the widening income gap in Singapore, MPs, unionists and even some employers have argued the case for some form of minimum wage. This is a departure from the standard argument that an increase in productivity is the only way for wages to rise for low-skilled workers. For example, some have called for the government to step in by giving direct wage supplement to the lower-wage workforce. To help low-wage workers, the National Wages Council (NWC) has recently recommended a S\$50 wage increase for those earning S\$1,000 and below.
<p>Claim: “...as markets have become ever more globalised, increased efficiency of companies has become a condition</p>	<p>Do companies in your country have to become more efficient in order to successfully compete in today’s globalised economy?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The pursuit of efficiency by workers and companies is seen to be crucial so as to bring about increased productivity, which will make the country more competitive both regionally and globally. This not only protects current jobs, but will attract more foreign companies and MNCs which 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Instead of the pursuit of efficiency, the pursuit of innovation is viewed as the key to commercial success. More Singapore companies are implementing concrete measures to drive innovation. For example, many of 3M’s hit products have been born because the staff

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<p>for their very survival.” (lines 24-25)</p> <p>Claim: “So firms compete to become more efficient, and we as consumers benefit from this competition.” (lines 25-26)</p>	<p>Are companies today competing with one another on the basis of their productivity/efficiency?</p> <p>Do customers really benefit if companies become more efficient? Why or why not?</p>	<p>will create additional jobs and greater opportunities for workers at all levels.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> By raising productivity, the Singapore economy can continue to thrive despite more intense global competition. Globalisation has shortened economic cycles. Ups and downs happen much faster, and with less warning. Economic forecasts are less predictable. Every country is more exposed to global competition, and Singapore more than most. As such, for Singapore firms to continue to thrive and tide smoothly over periods of economic downturn, it is essential for firms and their workers to be even more efficient. As firms compete for consumers, they will seek to be more efficient, find means to lower their costs and the best way to produce their goods and services. As a result, firms are spurred to be more dynamic and innovative. This means that customers then benefit from a greater variety of products, having their needs met more quickly and being able to purchase products at a lower price. 	<p>members were not stifled by the pressure of trying something new or making mistakes. For example, the Singapore Budget 2010 speech urged Singapore enterprises to distinguish themselves - by building distinctive brands. This is also the crux of the Singapore Brand Conference, an annual conference designed with the needs of the Singapore company in mind, to help local enterprises understand the powerful principles of branding that have transformed many companies from promising local companies to successful global brands.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> When companies become more efficient, customers do not necessarily benefit. Companies can actually increase the prices of their products by claiming that being efficient means that they can produce better products or provide a better service. For example, the clinical services in Singapore emphasise excellence in delivering efficient service and fast results. As such, the list prices of clinical services in Singapore are higher than other Asian countries.
<p>Claim: “Each of these developments has made it easier to do one’s business without wasted time and energy — without friction. Each has made economic transactions quicker and more efficient. That is obviously good.” (lines 44-46)</p>	<p>Is the pursuit of efficiency beneficial to financial companies? Why or why now?</p> <p>How does the individual benefit when financial companies pursue efficiency?</p> <p>Is it beneficial for the individual/companies/society when economic transactions become more efficient? Why or why not?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> One of Singapore’s core strengths, built up over the 1980s, has been her financial centre status. It is intimately linked to Singapore’s status as a trading and regional business hub, given the importance of financing and credit to business. Efficiency is one of the key attributes for a top banking system, and this is one of the key features driving Singapore’s rise as a financial centre. As such, to maintain her status, the pursuit of efficiency (e.g. reducing red tape) is seen to be beneficial by businesses/the society/government. Singaporean banks are focusing on bolstering operational efficiency within the organisation, as well as risk management, and improving the overall customer experience in order to retain and grow their customer base. This focus on improving efficiency thus benefits the customers and gives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Making it easier and faster for people to get access to ready credit can also put banks at risk of customers defaulting on payments (e.g. this was what happened in America in the subprime crisis when homeowners defaulted on their payments). In addition, it also encourages people to spend beyond their means and run the risk of chalking up credit card debts, which can lead to social problems (e.g. borrowing from loan sharks, gambling, increased crime rates, etc.). As such, banks/the government does not pursue efficiency without due caution. Customers today give a higher emphasis on customer experience and are willing to compromise on efficiency. For example, customer satisfaction in Singapore hit a record high in 2011, with the banking industry showing

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		<p>local banks a competitive edge over foreign banks.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> When banking firms make their economic transactions more efficient (e.g. making it easier and faster for budding entrepreneurs and start-up firms/SMEs to get access to loans and credit), this will foster a business climate of innovation and entrepreneurship. For example, OCBC has the Business Entrepreneur Account, which offers a low initial deposit of S\$500, instant account opening, and unlimited free cheques. DBS has the Entrepreneur's Account for Start-ups, which also offers a minimum deposit of S\$500, two year's free subscription to their online banking portal, and more. StanChart has Essential Lite, which has no minimum balance requirement. 	<p>some of the biggest improvements, according to the Customer Satisfaction Index released by the Singapore Management University's (SMU) Institute of Service Excellence. Overall, customers rated local banks more favourably than foreign banks with DBS Bank coming in tops among all banks and insurance companies measured. DBS had implemented a lot of security measures like real-time SMS alerts. Though customers are a little inconvenienced, they are appreciative of enhanced security during financial transactions. Hence, it is possible for financial companies to compromise on efficiency to deliver a higher service quality.</p>

Passage 2: Adam Frank thinks that it is detrimental to both the individual and society

References (Key Ideas)	Guiding Questions/ Discussion Issues	Agree with author (i.e. the pursuit of efficiency is detrimental)	Disagree with author (i.e. the pursuit of efficiency is beneficial)
<p>Claim: “...over the last century our modern time-logic has led to the over consumption of finite planetary resources.” (lines 23-24)</p> <p>Claim: “...production exists in a real world with real limits.” (lines 18-19)</p>	<p>Does efficiency lead to the destruction of the environment? Why or why not?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Although Singapore is not involved much in production within its borders, the demand from Singapore spurs production in other parts of the world. In their pursuit of efficiency, Singapore firms often relocate overseas to cut costs and this leads to the over consumption of planetary resources elsewhere. Singaporeans are advocating to cut down on our rapid consumption of goods so as to save Mother Earth. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The world today has been taken over by the green revolution. We are now addressing the need for efficient use of finite natural resources. As such, the need for sustainability, with the aid of modern technology, has led to the pursuit efficiency to save on natural resources instead (e.g. energy-efficient light bulbs, water saving washing machines, cars cover more mileage on less fuel). Due to Singapore's limited land area, there is, in fact, a greater need for Singapore to pursue efficiency in terms of city planning and ensuring that there are adequate green spaces (i.e. the concept of a City in a Garden). For example, the government has built Gardens by the Bay in the city area as well as a park in the National Library building. Singapore has also launched the BCA Green Mark Scheme which awards any form of construction which efficiently utilises resources or integrates greenery into the urban landscape.
<p>Claim: “...the desire to build a new time springs from our deeply felt need to reclaim value and balance in our lives.” (lines 27-28)</p> <p>Reason: “There are statistics enough to show how the acceleration of life under modern time has stressed our personal ecosystems of family, friends and community.” (lines 28-29)</p>	<p>Is there a lack of work-life balance in Singapore as a result of the need to be efficient/expectation to be efficient? Why or why not?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The pursuit of efficiency has been viewed to have a detrimental impact on the family. Often, as a result of expectations placed by employers and the convenience created by modern technology enabling us to work from home, there is no clear line between work and family life/home. Singaporeans tend to take home work after office hours and tend to lack time to spend with family leading to less interaction between family members and to an alteration of roles within the family. For example, parents engage the help of domestic helpers and tutors to cater to the needs of their children due to the lack of time and energy to handle both work and family life. The lack of work-life balance as a result of an expectation to be efficient has negatively affected the personal lives of Singaporeans as well. For example, taking work home or having to complete 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Singaporeans do not think that efficiency is detrimental since a balance can be struck. The Singapore government has been emphasising the need to preserve the family unit in view of the low birth rate. As such, many policies/schemes have been introduced to encourage Singaporeans to have more balance between work and life and to allow them to spend more time with their families. For example, the Singapore government has introduced a five-day work week for civil servants and increased maternity leave and child-care leave for mothers. Modern technology (e.g. Facebook, Twitter) has empowered the individual to maintain close social relations with friends and family, and this can reinforce or enhance deep relationships. As such, the pursuit of efficiency does not necessarily result in the dilution of one's personal relationship

References (Key Ideas)	Guiding Questions/ Discussion Issues	Agree with author (i.e. the pursuit of efficiency is detrimental)	Disagree with author (i.e. the pursuit of efficiency is beneficial)
<p>Claim: “The truth is that we have limits.” (line 40)</p> <p>Reason: “True connections between family, friends and colleagues cannot be compressed down to tightly scheduled “quality time.” (lines 40-41)</p>		<p>tasks at work after office hours is often cited as one of the reasons for later marriages or not marrying at all. Young adults lament the lack of time for social interaction to meet new people.</p>	<p>with others.</p>
<p>Claim: “Our stress inducing time-logic leaves its imprint across all of our daily experiences.” (lines 31-32)</p> <p>Claim: “The myth of multitasking has only compounded this dilemma, taking efficiency to new imaginary limits...” (lines 38-39)</p> <p>Reason: “The relentless logic of efficiency can unintentionally strip the most valued qualities of human life...” (lines 41-42)</p> <p>Reason: “...what is left has been denuded and made barren.” (line 43)</p>	<p>Are Singaporeans able to cope with the expectation to multi-task and be efficient? How do they cope? What sort of sacrifices do they make if they cannot cope?</p> <p>Do efficiency and multi-tasking necessarily lead to stress?</p> <p>Is stress necessarily a bad thing?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As a result of the expectation to be efficient, many Singaporeans live a highly stressful life which has taken its toll on them. Over the years, there has been an increase in mental health issues and suicide rates. There were 401 such deaths, up from 364 in 2008, with the young being the most affected in 2009. (Source: Samaritans of Singapore (SOS)) Hence, Singaporeans do think that pursuing too much efficiency can be harmful to their mental and even physical health. In fact, Singaporeans blame the poor social graces exhibited by people on the way society has pursued efficiency. For instance, people, in their rush to work or get things done as quickly as possible, often pay little heed to the needs of others when using public transport. There have been videos placed on STOMP and online criticisms made of the way Singaporeans push and shove to get onto MRT trains. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Being efficient allows us to handle the many obligations/tasks that we encounter so that we are able to free up time for rest and relaxation. For example, completing tasks at work or school at a faster rate ensures that we end up with more time for leisure or to spend with family and friends. This then results in less stress. Even though the expectation to be efficient leads to stress, this stress serves as a driving force to get us to complete our tasks. In this competitive society, we need stress to push us to give our best even though we may be swamped with work. For example, Singapore students face multiple and demanding academic and co-curricular activities. As such, there is a need for them to multi-task. In fact, someone who can effectively multi-task and complete his duties efficiently is deemed to be an outstanding student. Singaporeans enjoy the challenge of multi-tasking as it makes their life more exciting and also increases their sense of achievement when they get rewarded (e.g. money, promotion) for their efficiency, especially since employers are looking out for efficient workers.