

1. Pride is always harmful. Do you agree?

Question Type: Absolute

Key words: pride – always - harmful

Question Requirement: Pride in itself is not a bad thing and can be very useful for maintaining standards. However, it is named as one of the Seven Deadly Sins in recognition of its shadow side, where it is mainly about feeling superior to other people. This is often described as 'being prideful', as opposed to the more personal 'being proud'.

Pride is usually harmful because	Pride may not be harmful or Pride is beneficial because
<p>Pride can lead to arrogance and complacency.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> When a person has too much pride, it can lead to a show of arrogance or overconfidence that can be self-destructive. Although he was one of the more accomplished boxers of his time, Muhammad Ali has a following of opponents who hated his trash talking. He claimed to be the "the greatest - I said that even before I knew I was". He was "the astronaut of boxing. Joe Louis and Dempsey were just jet pilots. I'm in a world of my own." He was so fast "that last night I turned off the light switch in my hotel room and was in bed before the room was dark". As much as his brash nature glamourised his profile, he was not seen as a role model because of his cockiness. Likewise, Paul Gascoigne and George Best, 2 of the most talented footballers to have graced English football became too carried away by the hype and the pride they had in their skills. They cut down on training, confident of their flair, and this complacency led to their eventual downfall from the game. Usain Bolt, one of sports' greatest showboaters, claims that his trash talking and arrogance helps him to push his own boundaries and attain better timing for his sport. <p>Pride can lead to ethnocentrism and discrimination that can result in segregation or marginalisation in society.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> When ethnic pride consumes an individual or group, it reaches the standards of ethnocentrism. This will evolve to prejudice or hate that can lead to segregation within a society. From Japanese pride in their imperialism and militarism to the Germans' Aryan race 	<p>Pride is particularly useful when it helps to set and maintain standards.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> When firms and production companies take pride in their work and products, it will enhance the quality and reputation of their goods. Japanese electronic goods are world renowned for their superior quality and performance. Japanese firms take pride in their goods' quality and reliability to meet customer needs. Fujitsu's slogan, "quality built-in, with cost and performance as prime consideration," illustrates this point. Sony's definition of a next-generation product is "one that is going to be half the size and half the price at the same performance of the existing one." Quality and reliability are so integral to Japan's electronics industry. Japan also has a saying that "Quality control starts with training and ends in training", which means that they motivate their people in order to produce high quality products through the quality and organize system. Thus, the most important aspect of Japanese quality was their way of thinking quality assurance in every product that they made in order to give full satisfaction to the customers. That is why the Japanese take pride in their products because of their high quality control. <p>Pride can also be a unifying force in a group of people</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pride can be a collective entity that can help to bond communities and societies. China, despite its huge size and population has successfully bonded its people through nationalistic pride that is infused from young through the education system. The Chinese people are generally proud of their roots and do not take criticisms or perceived attacks on their country lightly. As a society, their reaction to the Daiyou Island conflict with Japan and the courage the public meted out to the student protestors during the Tiananmen Square protest are testament to how much pride the Chinese have on their country and how it results in them being so united.

and Zionism, the world witnessed how too much of pride can be detrimental to society when countries or ethnicities impose their superiority on others.

- Moreover, the alleged xenophobia in Singapore is attributed to the rise in locals wanting to be distinguished by their nationality and not be associated with the influx of foreigners. This again is because of their pride in their identity.
- The deeply entrenched caste system in India is again a result the obsessive pride the various groups have on their sense of belonging. This has led to numerous ethnic clashes and with strong rejection of inter-caste marriages that can lead to honour killings.

Pride, especially false pride, may lead to people becoming narcissistic and self-centred.

- Pride makes one wanting to conform to society's standards of success and makes one feel ashamed when they do not possess these elements of success.
- A new analysis of the American Freshman Survey, which has accumulated data for the past 47 years from 9 million young adults, reveals that college students are more likely than ever to call themselves gifted and driven to succeed, even though their test scores and time spent studying are decreasing.
- Psychologist Jean Twenge, the lead author of the analysis, is also the author of a study showing that the tendency toward narcissism in students is up 30 percent in the last thirty-odd years.
- The impact of media and technology on children, adolescents and young adults, particularly as it regards turning them into faux celebrities—the equivalent of lead actors in their own fictionalized life stories.
- This drives them to want to have material goods they cannot afford, where wants become needs. This is corroborated by banks across the world where statistics point out that today's young spend beyond their capacity and many become debtors very early in adulthood.

2. To what extent is good governance essential in your society?

Question analysis:

Content area: “good governance” – according to the United Nations it is characterised as: participatory, consensus-oriented, accountable, transparent (corruption is minimised), responsive to present and future needs of society, effective and efficient, equitable and inclusive (views of minorities and voices of the most vulnerable in society are heard in decision making) and follows the rule of law.

While the Singapore’s interpretation of the same term focuses on the following characteristics:

- (1) an accountable and transparent government,
- (2) a long-term orientation by the government in deciding policy options for its society, and
- (3) social justice - equality of opportunity irrespective of race or religion.

Context: ‘ your society’

Qn type: **Absolute: ‘essential’/key/crucial /central** element that determines the continued existence of the country

In most instances good governance is essential in my society because ...	In some instances good governance is not essential in my society because...
<p>P: It promotes accountability and transparency of the country’s government towards their people.</p> <p>Expl: By keeping the public informed on the country’s wellbeing and showing how the taxpayers’ money are spent, the government is likely to garner support from its citizens to enforce policies as they are ensured that their interests are well represented by their leaders due to their past track record.</p> <p>Eg: Various government agencies and offices are closely scrutinised when it comes to their procurement and appointment processes to ensure that decisions made are based on sound principles and serve best the needs of population. Internal and external auditing and National Day Rally speeches by the PM are means to keep the population informed of how the country deals with corruption and how the tax payers’ money was used is for the benefit of the country.</p> <p>L: All these ensure that the country’s leaders are responsible to their citizens for the manner in which they utilise public funds</p>	<p>P: Respecting the rights of the citizens may cause more trouble than benefit as different political views may not add variety to the country’s one-party dominated political discourse.</p> <p>Expl: In liberal ideology a government is ‘the guardian of their people- created by the people with the purpose of protecting their inalienable rights’ and it should not restrict any of these entitlements. In the local context the right of freedom of the press, the freedom of speech and assembly are severely restricted in the name of national security and as such the governance may be perceived as ineffective.</p> <p>Eg; the country was ranked on 135th place in in the 2011 (well behind Hong Kong which ranked 54th) in terms of press freedom index. Some would argue that the poor international ranking was due to the lack of freedom of press, speech and assembly.</p> <p>L: In this instance, some of civic liberties such expressing their political opinions freely and wherever people may want are sacrificed in the name of promoting safety and social cohesion – so in this aspect the way the local governance addresses these issues may be questioned.</p>
<p>P: It ensures the rule of the law as safety and social stability is one of the trademarks of the country.</p> <p>Expl: In a small country like Singapore which has limited natural resources, the fact that the citizens are law abiding and the police can enforce the law effective</p>	<p>P: It may be too time consuming to encourage the participation of many segments of the society in the decision making process.</p> <p>Expl: Ideally in a democratic state the views of many segments of the society are sought after and included in</p>

<p>becomes a key ingredient in creating the necessary conditions for businesses and enterprises to prosper. Eg Even though ironically labelled as a 'fine city', the country's reputation of having robust law reinforcement system (starting with a ban on littering and smoking in public spaces or selling of chewing gum and ending with death penalty given to drug offenders) show how effective law enforcement is as a deterrent factor and how effective is the government in using its executive arm to reinforce order in society.</p> <p>L: This ability of the government to guarantee that the law is applied to all fairly is one of the main pull factors for business that may want to set up their headquarters here- especially in the finance and R&D sectors. Should the local government be unable to ensure this pre-requisite, the country's economy will be badly affected as many will prefer safer places for their enterprises.</p>	<p>various policies that the gov intends to implement, but such approaches are often flawed as the depth and quality of the responses gathered and the time invested through this method may not always be the right way of coming up with better/best policies.</p> <p>Eg: In the local context the gov and the Members of Parliament discuss and expedite matters without necessarily encouraging extensive participation from the population. Special mentioned should be made about the existence of 9 Nominated Member of Parliament in 2012. These are people with outstanding contribution to the society that are directly appointed by the President and not affiliated with any constituency or political party and their function is to bring independent voices in the parliament so as to add to the vibrancy of the debate and ensure sufficient room is given to other voices, but political parties agendas.</p> <p>L: Thus even though the participation of the masses is not regular in the gov discussion there is sufficient provision for independent opinions to be heard.</p>
<p>P: It encourages a long-term orientation by the government in deciding policy options for its society.</p> <p>Expl: This planning for 'rainy days' attitude is crucial for a country with a short history of only 48 years of independence, as the country's leaders are expected to have visions that go beyond bread and butter issues and ensure the continuity and sovereignty of the country for generations to come. Singapore embraced the idea of continued skill upgrading/continued learning and co-payment for various services like healthcare and housing so as to help their people become independent of the state subsidies and not become the burden as some welfare states like the UK and more recently Greece have experienced.</p> <p>Eg the setting up of various institutions such as the Institute for Adult Learning (IAL), The Professional & Adult Continuing Education (PACE) and Continuing Education and Training (CET) Academy- illustrate the government continued emphasis on ensuring that the population is able to upgrade their skills to stay relevant in various industries and therefor avoid being unemployed.</p> <p>L: Thus, with a focus on the future and beyond immediate outcomes the local government ensure that the country is not debt ridden and this quality is key in the future too.</p>	

3. Equality is no longer relevant in today's world.

Question analysis:

Question type: Relational

Keywords: No longer – requires students to **disagree with the absolute meaning of “no longer”** and post some instances of **equality being still relevant**

Relevant: Relevant means useful, valuable, serves a purpose. **Topic sentences that deviates by saying how equality is still present, still around, or still thought of as useful by certain groups of people without highlighting a use or a purpose would be committing the *ad populum* and *ad authoritarium* fallacies and should be penalised.**

Equality: Impartiality, equal treatment,

Yes equality has little relevance in today's world because:	No, equality remains relevant in today's world because:
<p>P: Many have argued that in today's meritocratic world where people are motivated by rewards, an equal distribution of wages and remuneration, as espoused by communist ideologies is rapidly losing relevance as it will cause people to be demotivated and affect productivity.</p> <p>E: With a change in ideology that encourages meritocratic beliefs, an equal system in distributing key resources may lead to a lethargic society because there is little incentive for people to strive and work harder. This is because people who have put in more effort than others receive similar remunerations. This form of pairing resources tends to demotivate more productive workers. Hence, with the change to a more meritocratic world, equality is losing relevance</p> <p>Ex: John Stacey Adams, a psychologist, formulated a theory called “The Equity Theory” where he proved that people tend to compare what they received with what others get in a work place. Equity theory helps explain why highly paid union workers go on strike when no one else but the members understand why and why millionaire athletes feel that they are underpaid and don't feel they make enough money. These examples of demotivation show how equality of outcomes can be harmful.</p> <p>Linkback: Thus equality has little relevance in today's society as compared to the past</p>	<p>P: While the critics may argue that equality can cause a further fragmentation of society, a pursuit of levelling the poorer section of society while maintaining the status quo of the rich can lead to greater social mobility. Hence, the pursuit of equality continues to play a useful role when contextualised to the lower strata of society.</p> <p>E: By removing constraints, be they financial or social, via proper legislation and laws, the poorer segment of society can recover from their disadvantaged position. They can thus achieve equal opportunities in life.</p> <p>EX: Paul Krugman, a Nobel Laureate in Economics, echoed the same reasoning in his New York Times column, “The Great Gatsby Curve”, where he argued that only by implementing social and economic policies for the poor, can these poor then climb out of the vicious poverty cycle they are in.</p> <p>Linkback: Thus, equality remains an important concept to uphold.</p>
<p>P: Critics have further posited that equality, in the form of social equality where equal rights and equal</p>	<p>P: Equality reduces violence between groups in society.</p>

<p>opportunities are extended to all in society, may lead to a further differentiation between those in the higher echelons of society and those who are mired in the lower rungs.</p> <p>E: While the idea of equal rights and equal treatment may sound noble, it assumes that there exists a level playing field. With a rapid widening income gap between the rich and the poor due to the advent of capitalism, such an assumption is not necessarily true, especially in developing nations where the rich and poor divide may be immense. Thus, by placing the poor and the rich on an equal platform, the rich accrue even more social and economic capital. This generally means a widening rift in society and a marked decline in social mobility. Thus, equality in this sense stops being useful.</p> <p>Ex: In fact, the Muslim Syariah Law in Singapore legislates that Muslims “bequeath one third of their assets to charities”. Such laws help to create a more level playing field for the Muslim community.</p> <p>Linkback: Thus, equality, in this sense, has little relevance today.</p>	<p>E: If one believes that humans deserve to be treated equally and fairly, that we be accorded rights regardless of race or religion, then such an ideology may potentially spur the creation of a more tolerant and understanding society. Given this scenario, intergroup conflicts may become less common as a result. In addition, the hatred and anger towards groups that are perceived to be oppressing others may dissipate.</p> <p>EX: The racism that exists up till today, with blacks suffering and enduring racial profiling, with President Obama himself speaking out against the irrational disgust towards blacks still held by a small section of the American population, may finally be wiped off humanity’s slate if equality is achieved.</p> <p>Linkback: Thus, equality is still very much useful and serves an essential social function in today’s world.</p>
	<p>P: Equality allows humans to achieve their full potential and develop their talents fully.</p> <p>E: In pragmatic societies such where academic knowledge remains skewed towards the acquisition of grades and where less economically viable fields such as sports and arts are neglected, a financial commitment by the governments to treat non-traditional fields of studies as equal remains useful as this would allow people who are talented in such fields to develop their latent abilities.</p> <p>EX: Both Britain and South Africa are placing more emphasis on their arts and cultural industries, which are traditionally not prioritised by pragmatic parents eager in ensuring that their children follow a more academically inclined path. For example, equipment for painting and sculpturing were distributed by the Department of Cultural Affairs and Sport (DCAS) and the Western Cape Education Department in South Africa to various schools. Such initiatives can help the country to develop its people holistically.</p> <p>LB: Thus, equality is still very much useful and serves an essential social function in today’s world.</p>

4. “It is unwise for the intelligent to attend school.” How far do you agree?

Question analysis:

Question type: Simple polarity

Keywords: Unwise – Contextually, this means that attending school is not a useful decision for smart students. The assumption thus is that attending school actually lowers the intelligence of the young today.

In order to meet the requirements, students must explore the various programmes and initiatives, the characteristics of schools and come to a conclusion whether these add value to a student.

If students answer the question by paraphrasing “school” with “education”, they are high-jacking the question. For points that argue that it is unwise, if students digress by discussing a non-school system such as home-schooling, they are also high jacking the question.

Yes, it is unwise for the intelligent to attend school because:	No, it is still a wise choice for the intelligent to attend school because:
<p>P: In non-elite schools, students may not be able to focus in classes due to the disruptive nature of the students there. Thus, smarter students who wish to advance in their studies should not attend such schools.</p> <p>EX: This is because in these schools, the students may come from families which are generally dysfunctional or too busy to monitor their children. This caused the students to be less interested in their studies, due to the various socio-psychological problems they possess. As a result, in such schools, classes are often chaotic and teachers are constantly disrupted while teaching. Therefore, learning in these schools becomes an almost impossible task.</p> <p>EX: In a March report on BBC News, the Association of Teachers and Lecturers said that disruptive classroom behaviour was worsening, with 53% of 844 member schools reporting deterioration over the past 5 years. The British government’s education advisor, Charlie Taylor, told a committee of Members of Parliaments that some students in England were too disruptive to fit into regular school life.</p> <p>LB: Thus it is true that schools are ineffective and it is not a wise choice to attend public schools.</p>	<p>P: Schools offer a more holistic form of education that equips students, even those that are already intelligent, with more skills than if they were to be home-schooled or privately educated.</p> <p>E: With more funding funnelled into schools, especially in rich developed nations, schools now possess better facilities and programmes to develop the talents of the students within their care. Thus, such a schooling system is generally more holistic and beneficial for a student.</p> <p>EX: Russia has increased its spending on education by about 2.5% of its national expenditure while Bolivia has increased its expenditure on public education by more than 1 percent per year from 2008 to 2011 from 20.5 to 24.6% of its national budget. Such an increase in spending, according to the data from the WorldBank, helps to improve the facilities of the schools by providing schools with new laboratories and sports infrastructure such as stadiums and swimming pools.</p> <p>Linkback: Thus it is not true that schools are ineffective for smarter students.</p>
<p>P: The class sizes in most schools are too big for teachers to teach effectively and, hence, smart students may not be able to maximise their potential in such an environment.</p>	<p>P: Schools, with their mix of high abilities and low abilities students, do offer the weaker students a chance to learn from the ideas offered by the stronger ones. This may allow stronger students too chances to re-examine and strengthen their own knowledge and skills.</p>

<p>E: Given the fact that there are limited schools around and that schools are funded by the government, financial constraints do exist as governments, especially those in poorer nations, struggle to provide sufficient schools and teachers for the entire student population. As a result, class sizes in most schools tend to be less than optimal for learning to occur and for smarter students to develop their potential effectively.</p> <p>Ex: Schools from Panama to Nigeria suffer from overcrowding. The situation is so bad that some schools have to erect portable buildings to accommodate the students in the schools. The Panama-Buena Vista school district in Panama currently has 400 portable buildings across 23 schools. Sing Lum Elementary itself has 37 portable buildings. These portable structures are not cheap, with one costing up to \$150,000 dollars. Thus, the overcrowding in schools in these poorer countries is set to continue.</p> <p>Linkback: Thus it is true that schools are ineffective and it is not a wise choice to attend public schools.</p>	<p>E: While it can be argued that a stratification of students may cause more damage to the system than otherwise, the presence of stronger students offer weaker students a chance to learn new ideas and insights. Ideally, this helps weaker students to improve their own skills and ideas and also allows the smarter students to express their own ideas and further strengthen their knowledge as a result.</p> <p>EX: According to the European Commission led by Jens Henrik Haahr, the key reason why weaker students improve in public education systems across Europe was that these students were able to test their own ideas against that of stronger students in their study groups. The inter-exchange of ideas between these two classes of students aided the weaker ones in formulating, testing and clarifying their concepts more effectively. Crucially, it helped the stronger ones test their own ideas and clarified their own knowledge as well.</p> <p>Linkback: Thus it is not true that schools are ineffective for smarter students.</p>
	<p>P: In today's competitive society where schools are ranked in terms of the number of top students they produce, teachers often sacrifice academically less able students in favour of the smarter ones. Thus, it makes sense for smarter students to continue attending school as they would be able to receive more attention from the teachers.</p> <p>E: In order for schools to be ranked higher each year, quality results matter as they represent a school's ability in churning out bright students. While extremely weak students may still receive some attention, in most cases, teachers may prioritise those who have a chance of passing and attaining good grades. Thus, the learning needs of the smarter students may be met.</p> <p>Ex: In Singapore and Australia, schools are ranked and branded elites and non-elites according to their academic results. Australian media channel SBS Insight highlighted the dis-concordance between these schools and reported that 40% more teachers over the past decade have admitted to focusing on stronger students than the weaker ones as a result of the need to push their school up the rankings.</p> <p>Linkback: Thus it is not true that schools are ineffective and it continues to be a wise choice to choose a formal education in schools for the smarter students.</p>

5. Can work ever be fun?

Question Type: Absolute

Core Term" Work, Ever, Fun

Students should be able to identify the **absolute term 'ever'**. They should be able to define the difference in attitudes and notion between work and fun. Students should not confuse 'meaningful' with fun. The underlying notion of meaningful work seems to be that it is work whose performance is satisfying or enjoyable in itself. So, meaningful work may not be fun when the end product is not desirable but a passion. (e.g. soldiers having to kill at war, firemen fighting fire).

Yes, work can be fun because	Work may not be fun because
<p>Work can be enjoyable and one can enjoy while at work</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 'Meaningful work' is not only an achievable goal for all, a socialised mutual economy is beginning to emerge that may be one step towards this ideal. There are jobs today where people can have fun while they work. Wildlife photographers, sportsmen and scientists/inventors belong to a group of workforce who are paid to do what they enjoy. Oprah Winfrey often states in interviews how she considers her work a gift as she gets to fulfil her innate desire to reach out to the world. She claims how work has become enjoyable as it allows her to engage in her passion. Likewise, Bill Shankly, the legendary football manager claimed how he could not get out of his job as he was having too much fun in what he was doing. <p>Employers today are looking at making work and workplace fun in order to motivate workers and enhance efficiency.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mindset in the modern economy has shifted to employers believing in making the workplace fun as they now co-relate fun to productivity. One of the most famous places spurring a frenzy of fun at work is Pike Place Fish Market. Working with stinky fish all-day and ornery customers, the owner, John Yokoyama decided to make it FUN by implementing a set of E.C.P.'s (Essential Creative Principles). The four principals of FISH! Are Play, Make Their Day, Be There and Choose Your Attitude Word of the philosophy has soared and large companies such as IBM, Marriot, 	<p>Work can be detrimental to health and well-being.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Workaholics are prone to health issues and in worst case scenarios, work can kill the individual. Britain's Medical Research Council said a long-term study showed that working more than 11 hours a day increased the risk of heart disease by 67 per cent, compared with working a standard 7 to 8 hours a day. "Working long days is associated with a remarkable increase in risk of heart disease," said Mika Kivimaki of Britain's University College London, who led the research. Co-incidentally, Singapore and other Asian countries which do not regulate working hours do see high rates of heart diseases as opposed to European countries that impose maximum working hours. Moreover, countries infamous for stressful work conditions like Japan, Korea and Singapore do see high levels of stress in their societies and poor work-life balance. <p>Work can be dangerous and put lives at risk.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Many people work in occupations that are life threatening or work conditions may pose serious risks to workers' lives. "Work kills an Indian every five minutes, the equivalent of a Bhopal every month," according to a 2001 paper written by Stirling Smith, a UK-based occupational safety expert. Work acts as a killer of 100,000 people every year. Occupational diseases, according to Smith, affect roughly 2 million new workers each year. Even the International Labour Organisation (ILO) estimates that at

<p>Spring and Intel have gone FISH! Crazy by employing similar strategies to infuse fun at work.</p>	<p>least 40,000 workers lose their lives at work each year in India alone.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Many workers across the world die in the course of their work be it a policeman or soldier who dies in the line of duty or workers who dies in industrial accidents (e.g. Fukushima). There are people who undertake great risk to work. <p>Work can be boring and mundane</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work becomes meaningless when its sole existence is to provide for bread and butter. Jobs like production operation, data analysis and many more often require workers to go through monotonous shifts with lack of variety of job scopes. Dennis Bakke is the author of Joy at Work: A Revolutionary Approach to Fun on the Job. He is a former president and CEO of AES Corporation, an international energy corporation and he claims that it's just torture in workplaces where over 70 percent of people say they don't like their job or it's miserable at work.
--	---

6. 'A man's value is still determined by his ability as a breadwinner.' How true is this?

Content area: - a specific gender role within the family, namely man as breadwinner:

'to be the breadwinner' - entails to be the main source of income for the family/spouse

Qn type: Relational "still" how has the role changed or not changed **now** as compared to **the past**

Context: modern world- with specific types of countries/societies identified,

A man's value is still determined by his <u>ability as a breadwinner</u> because...	A man's value is no longer determined by <u>his ability as a breadwinner</u> because...
<p>P: Men continue to be labelled as the stronger sex as their physical strength is superior to that of women, thus giving them an advantage in certain fields.</p> <p>Expl: Both in the past and now some conservative societies emphasise on patriarchal hierarchies that place men above women in terms of their individual value. In these societies, the ability to provide a basic income for the family is normally associated with the man/husband mainly due to their perceived higher physical strength as compared to women.</p> <p>Eg.: From prehistoric times, men were usually engaged in hunting and other more confrontational and vigorous activities, thus they seemed better physically endowed to assume the role of 'bringing back the bacon' and be the main financial provider for the family. <u>As a reminiscence of our ancestral past, these types of societies seem even today to be dominated by farming or agricultural work and the men seem to possess their ability to work longer hours and be away from home than was normally associated with the female domain. This continues to be the case in many traditional societies even today such as the rural parts of India, Pakistan, Indonesia and even China, where due their main role in toiling of ground through farming many men continue to preserve their status as breadwinners. These patriarchal societies value more men by also rewarding them with key or leadership positions in their communities.</u></p> <p>L: So it seems accurate to say that in traditional societies the value of a man continues to be determined by how well his is able to provide for his family's financial needs as due to his strength and greater freedom he is better able to carve a name for himself and is appreciated in the society than females.</p>	<p>P: In the modern world and developed societies, due to high standards of living, the burden of the family expenses is shared by both men and women.</p> <p>Expl: It is not uncommon for many families living in urban areas to view each other as equal partners or shareholders in dealing with the financial needs of a family. As the housing costs, healthcare expenses and a minimum level of lifestyle demands have greatly increased and diversified in the last decades, it is no longer realistic to expect only the man to be the sole bread winner, thus this label came to be associated with women too. Therefore the man is not expected or valued exclusively in terms of his ability to provide for his family's financial needs, as the norm in today's world is - dual-income families.</p> <p>Eg: According to Singapore statistics, 56% of married women participated in the workforce in 2004, double the numbers registered in 1995. 43% of families in Singapore were dual-income families in 2004 as compared to only 35% in 1989¹. As of June 2003, the participation rate of women in the workforce is 44.7%, compared to 40.2% ten years ago.</p> <p>L: The data above supports the idea that in developed societies there is an increased trend to encounter dual-income family, thus this may show that the role of breadwinner is no longer exclusively associated with men.</p>
<p>P: Men are still the breadwinners and thus perceived as more valuable in certain societies that enforce specific religious rules that discriminate against females.</p> <p>Expl: In certain types of theocracies that interpret</p>	<p>P: Many fathers are expected to be caregivers and offer moral guidance to the young alongside fulfilling their role as financial providers.</p> <p>Expl: Now as opposed to the past, the modern world</p>

¹ Rosy Nakhooda, Work-Life Balance for Women, SCWO IWD Forum, March 8, 2003

<p>religious prescripts in a myopic manner, inequality between genders continues to exist even in today's highly emancipated society. This way of viewing the different roles divinely assigned to both genders, predestines women to slavery, as they are perceived to be property of men and are not allowed to be seen in public and earning an independent living from their spouses is practically impossible.</p> <p>Eg: This situation is evident in strict Islamic country of Afghanistan, where, under the Taliban rule, women regularly receive death threats if seen in public or refuse to conform to the 'divinely ordained rules' that link their value to that of the men thus opening the doors to constant abuse and pressure of females at the hand of their male relatives. One recent example that encapsulated this situation- is that of Afghan pop star Aryana Sayeed who receives death threats and is afraid of being kidnapped by religious extremists on a daily basis mainly because of her choice of career that many think goes directly against some extreme Islamic beliefs that prescribe that women should remain at home and never earn a living of their own. Another example is Pakistani girl, Malala Yousafzai that spoke on behalf of women's access to education and was shot in the head by Talibans in an attempt to silence her as her actions were seen as a threat to the perceived status quo.</p> <p>L: In these societies, it is an uphill task for women to participate to the public life and attempt to earn a living and their subjugation to men continues as they remain the breadwinners and thus more valuable than females.</p>	<p>demands so much more from men besides being breadwinner or disciplinarians for their families. Due to the diverse roles that the men are expected to fulfil, their overall value for their families and the society is no longer determined by their ability to ace only one function.</p> <p>Eg: Many scientific studies and research done in various early education institutions have established a direct link between reduced delinquency and increased motivation levels in teens and youth when the fathers are more involved in the child's early education.</p> <p>Local initiatives: - 'Dads for life' which is a national fathers movement aimed to inspire and get fathers involved in activities that help them inspire the next generation. These two examples acknowledge the central role father play in the education of children and thus reinforce the need for them to go beyond their roles as breadwinners.</p> <p>There are a few men that choose to go the unbeaten path and take paternity leave or be stay home dads in order to take care of their young.</p> <p>L: In Singapore – these cases are an exception, not the rule – but the society seems to start to appreciate the central role that fathers are playing in child rearing – which will mean that many have departed from the traditionalist view of seeing the father only through the lens of the financial provider and expect him to fulfil the function of a caregiver, motivator at the same time.</p>
<p>P: A man's value is still determined by his ability to be a breadwinner as specific sectors of the economy seem to continue to favour men compared to women.</p> <p>Expl: In the pragmatic <u>world of today</u> the value of an individual is strictly tied with the ability to perform certain tasks and even their gender. It is no surprise that some companies favour men in terms of employment and that insurance companies <u>continue to use</u> factors like gender and age in determining premium rates. Some argue that this is a necessary evil, as often <u>statistics</u> show that these factors accurately portray risk and in the cut throat business world of today, the workers need to be able to commit fully and, in this aspect, women are perceived as a liability due to their tendency to forgo career at the expense to caring for their families.</p> <p>Eg: Some companies may have unspoken rules of employment <u>that used to and continue to favour men</u> in key positions in army, politics and as CEOs (chief executive officers) of big corporations. But even for the average worker in Singapore society, a man earns at least \$200 more than a women in a similar position and with</p>	

the same qualification, and this is not atypical as according to a report by the US Bureau of Labour Statistics published last year in 'Forbes' magazine, full-time working women earned 81 percent of what full-time working men earned in 2010 leaving a "gap" of 19 percent between the sexes.

L: Thus, the evidence provided shows that many men continue to be rewarded better financially in the society and this reinforces the perception that they are better able provide for their families now as they used to do in the past.

7. Examine the claim that the world is overly concerned with physical beauty.

Key words: physical beauty, the world, overly – excessively/ more than usual/ too much,

concerned – anxious/ troubled/ bothered

To pass: Evaluate if the statement or assertion is valid or non-valid. Students should show the negative consequences when people are obsessed / too concerned with physical beauty, or it is not a cause for concern as there are no bad consequences or these consequences can be mitigated. Min 3 simple yet well-structured arguments

Quality pass: Students have >3 logically well-structured and well-evaluated arguments, essay must be balanced

True that the world is overly concerned with beauty because....	Not true the world is overly concerned with beauty because....
<p>Fuelled by the media and fashion industry, females who are so concerned with their looks that they rather starve and affect their physical health in order to look good.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ These image conscious people are so anxious about their looks that they would do things that are detrimental to their health. Eating disorders like bulimia, anorexia not only affected models, even adolescents and males are afflicted with it. ❖ Example: Eating disorder is the third most common chronic illness in adolescent girls. Even Princess Diana and former British Deputy PM struggled with bulimia. Although food is the most basic concern of the Maslow Hierarchy, many figure-conscious people will skip a meal or go on fad diets to shed a few pounds. 	<p>Usually it is only the rich and famous who are obsessed with physical appearance whereas the poor are more concerned about survival.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ To say that the world is overly concerned with physical beauty is an overstatement as there are more people who are struggling just to meet their basic needs in order to survive rather than on inconsequential items to beautify themselves. ❖ Example: Only 20% of the world is rich as opposed to half of the world, 3 billion people (mostly in Asia and Africa) who are living in poverty and are undernourished. So they are more concerned about food than looks.

<p>People are spending too much money on beauty products.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Many people are so concerned about looking young and beautiful that they are willing to part with their hard-earned money to buy and apply all kinds of beauty products to remain youthful-looking. This group of people, mostly from developed countries, is becoming younger. Concerned sociologists argue that this trend inculcates superficiality; focus on just physical beauty and devalue the importance of money to the young. Furthermore, departing from the traditional notion that only women are part of this trend, increasing number of man are beginning to participate in this trend, increasing the annual sales numbers of sophisticated grooming products. Higher purchasing power help to fuel demand for such products too. However, this money can be used for charity or other more meaningful endeavors. ❖ Analysts at Goldman Sachs, in a 2006 report, estimated that the global beauty industry is worth \$95 billion with skin care being the top product (\$24 billion). It is growing at up to 7% a year, more than twice the rate of the developed world's GDP. 	<p>As one becomes more civilised and spiritual, one is more concerned about inner beauty rather than excessively troubled by physical beauty.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Looks are superficial whereas one's personality and habits are traits that more people are concerned with nowadays. Realistically, members of a team prefer to have team members who are responsible and possess the right attitude to compete tasks rather than someone who is simply good looking. ❖ Example: Despite acknowledgment by recruitment experts that the first impression of a candidate is made within the first 7 seconds of meeting the person, they still emphasise the importance of a person's character and attitude as those are the qualities that will eventually shine through in the job in the long run. ❖ Though schools conduct grooming courses for students, they are merely enrichment modules that do not last more than a day, whereas, values are taught throughout a student's stay in school.
<p>People abuse medical procedures to improve their looks for vanity reasons, not for health's sake.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ More and more people are resorting to reconstructive surgeries which are initially meant for patients who have severe physical deformations since birth or due to mishaps, for cosmetic purposes just to beautify themselves. Nowadays, people who want to improve their looks usually resort to quick fixes such as cosmetic surgeries instead of long-term, healthier ways like exercise. ❖ Seoul has become the capital of cosmetic surgeries in Asia in recent years, catering mainly to the locals and medical tourists. ❖ Over 14.7m tucks, peels, jabs and lifts were performed by licensed plastic surgeons in 2011, according to a new study from the International Society of Aesthetic Plastic Surgeons. 	

8. 'The arts dances to the tune of money rather than the depths of the soul.' Discuss

Question analysis:

- Topic area: **The arts** is defined as a vast subdivision of culture, composed of many creative endeavors and disciplines. It is a broader term than "art," which is a description of a field usually means only the visual arts. The arts encompasses visual arts, literary arts and the performing arts - music, theatre, dance and film, among others. This list is by no means exhaustive. (according to Free Online Dictionary)
- **Focus:** specific reference to a conflict between the economic function and the other 'intellectual' functions of the arts must be made.
- Assumption: the arts are mainly concerned with 'money/ profit making/enterprise' and they function according to a business criteria, but this is done at the expense of other expected functions such as: self-expression, identity, commentary of social issues, aesthetic, entertainment, psychological and healing purposes

Question type:

- Relational – a comparison between the identified functions in the statement is needed in every paragraph

The arts does dance to the tune of money rather than the depths of the soul because...	The arts does not dance to the tune of money, but it talks to the depths of the soul because...
<p>P: Young or aspiring artists are prioritising financial gain at the expense of more noble intellectual pursuits as a natural stage in their development.</p> <p>Expl: Indeed many have fallen prey to the temptation of prioritising earnings over originality and creativity in the initial stages of their careers and borrowed from other trend and artists, but this process as inevitable stepping stone in their growth as artists.</p> <p>Eg. The young Spanish painters, Pablo Picasso and Salvatore Dali were influenced by their predecessors Velasquez and Raphael in terms of their early technique of painting, before they went on to develop their own original painting styles. In the literature, Bob Dylan, famous American poet, was influenced by W. Shakespeare's sonnets and love poems, but even Shakespeare himself, in his youth, wrote under the influence of his contemporary writers Chaucer, Spenser and Sidney.</p> <p>L: These examples show that even famous writers in the beginning of their career were influenced by their predecessors as they might have been concern with earning a living and this did not stop them from achieving fame afterwards, as this is just a natural stage in the development of an artist.</p>	<p>P: Challenging the status quo or providing a direct commentary on social mores cannot be achieved if an artist prioritises profits.</p> <p>Expl: Some of the topics of the day way not have the public/appeal to larger audiences and artists therefore cannot count on financial returns when engaging with such topics.</p> <p>Eg: A local example, Alfian Sa'ad play 'Cook a Pot of Curry' aims to a collection of different voices on some of the most pressing social and political issues of tensions between locals and foreigners in Singapore that is intensively debating immigration policies, identity crisis and populations concerns.</p> <p>If the artistic expression is freed from financial constraints, the population will have access to alternative voices through the artist's point of view, which, in turn, could spark off healthy debates within society and eventually lead to the rectification of certain flaws in society. For instance, the film "The Laramie Project" by Moises Kaufman dramatises the events surrounding Matthew Shepard hate murder due to his homosexuality. The reactions covered in the film vary from humanitarian to homophobic.</p> <p>L: Thus the views are presented in a complex manner which will benefit the society more than commissioned</p>

	pieces that illustrate one preferred point of view.
<p>P: In today's consumerist society, many art activities are not promoting originality, but seem mainly focused on the profit margin.</p> <p>Expl: The average taste buds seem to be easily satisfied with less strenuous mental activities and imitations of famous works of art as many are content with the common ground and do not venture into new avenues of expressions. In this climate artists are left with limited room to attempt creating innovative approaches or create new trends.</p> <p>Eg: The wholesales of oil painting reproductions in China that makes available masterpieces of impressionists and modern painters (mainly illustrating scenery and seascapes – pieces that ironically go well in the “modern living room”) is an adaptation to the taste requirements of the consumerist society. One such institution is Dafen based Art Association in Shenzhen, which exports its replicas of famous painters mainly to the US. For a replica of Van Gogh's “Sunflowers,”, one needs to fork out only 250 yuan (\$37) and they are producing an astounding 5 million paintings per year, out of which 75 per cent are replicas mainly produced by struggling young artists. It is said that these factories resemble ‘assembly lines’ but they are employing less than 800 designers, painters and assistant painters which makes their turnover enormous. This situation is not characteristic only to the world of painting, but a common denominator in the literary and performing arts as well.</p> <p>Remakes of popular shows/ performances- such as “the Phantom of the Opera”, ‘The Cats’ or ‘Wicked’ to gather profit and ensure that actors are earning an income, without attempts to improve or refine the quality of the performances</p> <p>Sandra Brown - romance novels – predictable setting and stereotypical characters – seem to be a marketing gimmick aimed at housewives task and thus limited originality is expected in such writing.</p> <p>The movie industry – with its endless stream of blockbusters that churns out movie after movie for profit, but their apocalyptic or sci fi visions are highly repetitive and not original</p> <p>L: Thus these examples show that the consumerist society does not encourage creativity or innovation, but imitation and struggling young artists in painting and in literary arts and entertainment industry may be falling prey to the ‘money god’.</p>	<p>P: The monetary benefits resulting from the arts are temporary compared to the long term rewards resulting from creating and preserving original works that reinforce one's cultural identity.</p> <p>Expl: Many cultural traditions and practices are done in the spirit of community building and they are encoded representations of specific communities that ran deeply in the psyche of certain countries and therefore their value cannot be quantified in dollars and cents.</p> <p>Eg.: the Maya pyramids, the Maori haka dance and the Chinese Opera are symbols of various countries glorious past and variety of cultural practices that are highly regarded as distinctive trademarks in the modern world where commercialisation has reduced significantly their diversity. Other recent initiatives aimed at conserving various minority languages are support the value these artistic forms of expression have in building up cultural the capital of a country that is threatened by globalisation.</p>

	<p>P: In developed countries where one's basic needs are generally met, the arts related activities are preferred as a means of self-actualisation or of achieving a cosmopolitan status that is more important in attracting long term benefits than immediate financial returns.</p> <p>Expl: In such societies necessary luxuries of life seem to include various artistic pursuits like attending performances regularly, or having free displays of performance arts or even free admission to various museums and art galleries. In this perspective the arts is not a privilege of the few, but available to all to enjoy thus no immediate financial gains are expected.</p> <p>Eg: In London majority of the museum and art galleries are free for the public and the city boast (along with New York and Paris) the reputation of one of the cultural capitals of the world that in itself more priceless in the long run.</p>
	<p>P: The arts can be used for its emotionally and spiritually healing effects that no amount of money can buy especially into today's hectic world.</p> <p>Expl: The therapeutic effects of painting, music, clay sculpture, drama and poetry are some of the recent research areas that are explored by scientists' recently.</p> <p>Eg: art therapy is used as a means to alleviating distress and coping with mental illnesses</p> <p>In local hospitals like SGH and NUH expose their patients to these alternative means of treatment in an effort to deal with the patients' needs holistically.</p> <p>L: Thus, since similar effects may not be obtained through financial means, it is fair to conclude that the arts does more than just "dance to the tune of money".</p>

9. Is it possible for social entrepreneurs to succeed if their main aim is to benefit society?

- Key words:** Is it possible – likely, high chance of happening
- Social entrepreneurs - someone who sets up a business to solve social problems; often a Non-Profit Organization (NPO) or a Voluntary Welfare Organisation (VWO)
- Succeed - assessed based on impact / benefits on society and has the ability to sustain the business/break even.
- To pass:** Students should show the relation between the two purposes and evaluate if they can go hand-in-hand, achieved at the same time. They should demonstrate the functions of social entrepreneurs. Min 3 simple yet well-structured arguments
- Quality pass:** Students have >3 logically well-structured and well-evaluated arguments, essay must be balanced

Yes, it is possible for social entrepreneurs to succeed if their main aim is to benefit society because....	No, realistically it is not possible for social entrepreneurs to succeed if their main aim is to benefit society because...
<p>Social enterprises are most of the time NPOs, VWOs and private organisations whose main aim is not profit maximisation. Making more profits each year is not a main concern as long as their businesses are sustainable.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Without the burden of having to account for their profit margins or increase in profit every year to their stakeholders, social entrepreneurs can focus more time and energy to service the community. As long as they can break even from their operations and continue to do good for society, they are successful. ❖ Example: Social enterprise like School of Thoughts conducts tuition classes and publishes General Paper related magazines to share their knowledge in tackling the General Paper rather than to earn money. 	<p>The sectors that they provide services are usually not profitable or reap very thin profit margins, making the sustainability of these organisations very challenging in the long term.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ In a practical world like ours, daily bread and butter are issues that modern man grapples with. It is unrealistic for an organisation to continue operating when it cannot pay its bills and workers. ❖ Example: The Environmental Trust which is a non-profit organisation in San Diego was entrusted to preserve dozens of nature reserve around San Diego and Riverside counties. But due to poor management, the trust was laden with debts rendering it non-operational.
<p>Ideally, social entrepreneurs can succeed as they are able run the operation full-time and thus, get the support of like-minded people who believe in the same cause but are unable to commit all their time.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ People who are unable to commit full he time and effort to such services may support them 	<p>It is difficult for social entrepreneurs to succeed when some black sheep among them are getting undesirable publicity due to the poor management of their finances.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Many of these institutions operate with some form of public donations where the public entrust them to utilise the funds appropriately

<p>by providing the manpower needed to run programmes and organize activities. Furthermore, some may provide financial assistance to encourage their work. Some of these organisations are also funded by private trust funds and the government.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Example: ComCare Enterprise Fund provides up to S\$300,000 for budding social enterprises that help disadvantaged Singaporeans to be self-reliant. 	<p>to serve the less fortunate in society. But once the trust is broken, due to diversion from their initial objectives / not fulfilling their mission, donors become weary and skeptical of future funding activities. They may stop donations all together thus even when the social enterprise's main aim is to benefit society, they may face the challenging task of raising funds.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Example: The National Kidney Foundation and Ren Chi Hospital saga where both organisations misused funds meant for patients. Subsequently, it took a long time to regain the confidence of the public.
<p>Ideally, social entrepreneurs can succeed as the work they are involved in are niche areas where most businesses would not want to invest in. It is in such exclusive settings that these enterprises keep out competition.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ The services provided by social entrepreneurs are usually areas that most private corporations do not want to venture into. These areas of work usually entail low profit margins and involve non-commercial work, like arts performance which has low returns and slow growth; they deter companies that want to progress quickly to catch up with the globalization freight train. ❖ Example: International non-profit organisation, VSA Arts, set up in United States of America aims to create a society where all people with disabilities learn through, participate in and enjoy the arts. They showcase works of disabled artists and encourage people with disabilities to engage in arts. This is an area which is rarely popular with private companies. 	

10. Should we invest time and effort in protecting wild animals?

Question Type: Simple Polarity

Key words: invest time and effort – protecting (context) wild animals (subject)

Question Requirement: Students need to address if there are valid reasons in wanting to invest time and effort in wanting to protect or conserve on animals in the wild.

We should invest time and effort on protecting wild animals because	We should not invest time and effort on protecting wild animals because
<p>It will help to protect our ecosystem.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wild animals have helped the ecosystem in more ways than one. It is thanks to them that we have such a diversity of plants as they will fertilise the areas we may have never reached. There is a symbiotic relationship between species, and they are so dependent on each other that, if one species becomes extinct, another might as well. Sadly, nearly 35 species become extinct every day due to man's destruction of the rainforest. Just as in parts of the U.S where natural predators were forced out (such as Cougars and Wolves) causing deer and other prey items to become so over populated that deer is hunted freely during seasons to reduce their numbers. This will happen in Sumatra to tiger's prey items like wild boar, tapir and deer. Its ecosystem would suffer because the Sumatran tiger stands as the main predator in the area-keeping everything else in check. If the tigers became extinct in the wild then 'lower' predators such as the Bornean Clouded Leopard and Malayan Sun Bear would have to fill the huge gap left by the tigers. <p>It is our moral obligation we have to preserve the biodiversity of our planet.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> We are approaching an era where many species have become extinct and more species are on the verge of extinction. The world is dealing with an unprecedented spike in illegal wildlife trade, threatening to overturn decades of conservation gains. Experts at TRAFFIC, the wildlife trade monitoring network, estimate that this illegal trade runs into hundreds of millions of dollars. Moreover, with pollution, deforestation and overfishing, man has become the biggest reason for the harm to our biodiversity. Some 46-58 million square miles of forest 	<p>The success rate is not worth the effort or money.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Donating money to tiger conservation charities is a waste of time because their success rate is "disastrous", according to Chris Packham, the BBC wildlife presenter. "Tiger conservation is a multi-million pound business that isn't working. If it were in the FTSE 100, it would have gone bankrupt. Who'd buy shares in a business that's failing in its objective?" he asked. Last year, 85 tiger deaths were recorded in India, the highest toll since 2001, many of them a result of poaching, Packham said. The presenter of BBC Two's Springwatch said conservation projects were failing because the demand for dead tigers, mostly from China, is so great. His argument is we are fighting a losing battle when politicians are supposed to champion this cause and the conservationists tend to waste their effort. <p>Some wild animals may prove to be a threat to the human communities that exist within the same region.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is no use in preserving wild animals human lives are in danger. From 1831 to 1904, Singapore saw a sharp decline in the number of tigers in Singapore as they were hunted down as they were a scourge to locals. With the decline and finally extinction of tigers in Singapore, the locals were saved from potential threats from the predators who shared very limited land together and it was not feasible to co-exist. Likewise, from the 80s to late 90s, the Sumatran Tigers greatly declined in numbers as locals hunted and killed tigers to eliminate their threat to the growing number of settlers. Likewise, there were suggestions for wild boars to be culled in Singapore following a wild boar attack on a child at Bishan Park in 2013. As in many developed economies and densely populated countries, animals are destroyed when they pose a threat to humans and human habitats.

are lost each year—equivalent to 36 football fields every minute. Important commercial fish populations (such as Atlantic bluefin tuna) have declined to the point where their survival as a species is threatened.

- When we are responsible for the magnitude of destruction to the wild animals, we need to have the moral obligation to preserve it as well.

It can contribute to aesthetic and recreational importance of a country

- Preserving the wild animals may actually contribute to the economy.
- The Serengeti National Park in Tanzania is home to the largest migration of land animals on the planet: More than two million mammals roam its 11,500 square miles (30,000 square kilometers). The Serengeti park is also important economically as it generates tens of millions of tourist dollars annually and most people have it on their "bucket list" as a place to see at least once in their lifetime. Tourists come to the Serengeti to witness the migration, but also to see the large numbers of predators that the wildebeest and zebra support, including lions, hyenas, cheetahs, and leopards.
- Thus, there are economic gains to receive by investing time and effort on wild animals.

11. Discuss the value of Fashion

Qn analysis:

Question type: Simple Polarity

Fashion refers to popular styles in clothing.

What excites you about fashion? What makes you worried about fashion trends? These questions could be used to guide you in understanding why some sections of society feel that fashion trends and fashion fads are dangerous to our culture, our wallets and our psychology. Others who feel excited and enthusiastic about fashion could see it as a vibrant industry, churning out a myriad of products that beautify our appearances and makes the world a less dull place to stay in.

Yes, fashion is of value today because:	No, fashion has little value today because:
<p>P: Today's world is one that prizes individualism, as western values assimilate others into their fold. In such a society, fashion items help to build a unique identity as it differentiates us from the average person.</p> <p>E: This is because fashionable clothing, being symbols of social status and cultural groups, distinguishes our appearance and allows us to be identified to certain social strata and ethnicities. In addition, the great variety of colors in these items provides us with a way to express ourselves and our individuality.</p> <p>Ex: Ethnic clothes, such as the woman's headdress "kokoshnik", fine linen "rubashka" shirts, beautiful woman's dress "sarafan" with embroidery in brocade and silk were designed to empathize Russian woman's inner dignity and emotional restraint. More contemporary fashion items come in bursts of colors. Fashion designer Slava Zaitsev's designs are often outrageously mixed with daring colors and fashion clothing such as his allow us to express ourselves easily.</p> <p>Linkback: Thus, there is value in clothing.</p>	<p>P: In an intensely competitive society where knowledge is crucial to one's success, an obsessive pursuit of fashion trends can make us waste money which could be used for other more urgent purposes.</p> <p>E: Consumers, in particular shopaholics, who splurge on fashion items can run up enormous amounts of bills. Such reckless spending ignores the fact that fashion remains, pragmatically speaking, just a way to cover the body. Thus, spending huge amounts of money on fashion fads and trends is simply not justifiable especially when it could have been saved up for educational courses and degrees.</p> <p>EX: With shopping becoming increasingly easier due to the increasing number of online retailers, shopping for cloth and shoes has never been easier. According to statistics, almost half of the teenage girls in the United states bought more than 10 pieces of clothings in the past 6 months and a shocking 80% said their savings were meant for buying branded clothes, bags and shoes. For young adults, credit card bills are increasing with shopping for clothing being one of the key drivers.</p> <p>Linkback: Thus, fashion in this case, has little value.</p>
<p>P: Fashion is a huge revenue generator.</p> <p>E: In an affluent consumerist society like ours, hot fashion trends are often sources of great income for businesses. When consumers chase the latest trends, they invariably spend on more</p>	<p>P: Due to an increasingly interconnected world, fashion trends, from Hollywood shows and films especially, have led to traditional costumes dying off. This dilutes our own cultural heritage.</p> <p>E: Due to the growing influence of western fashion, traditional costumes are now seen as</p>

<p>clothing and items than needed. Thus, we can see how fashion can be a crucial part of the country's economic development.</p> <p>Ex: Just the global footwear industry alone reaps in \$195 billion dollars annually. According to Fashionweek, the global industry for fashion takes in 1.2 trillion yearly.</p> <p>Linkback: Thus in this case, fashion is undeniably a valuable source of income that governments and businesses should not ignore.</p>	<p>obsolete and outdated. This is because western clothes are increasingly seen as modern and smart and widely accepted in almost all countries. This show how harmful following fashion trends can be as this threatens the traditional cultures as new generations of youth sacrifice their own cultural costumes in favour of western fashion fads.</p> <p>EX: In 2009, Time ran an article on how traditional costumes such as the sari and the dhoti are abandoned in favour of suits and shirts. Such a loss in culture, driven by the younger generation's preference for fashionable westernised clothing, which appear smarter and more professional, is evident today.</p> <p>Linkback: Thus, fashion can be a form of cultural imperialism and should not be valued.</p>
<p>P: Fashion can also help bond people.</p> <p>E: This is because fashion is linked to group identities and cultural identities. This is because groups often identify themselves using certain styles of clothing and unique ways of wearing these items.</p> <p>EX: From subcultural street movements like hip hop with its own unique caps and baggy jeans, to high end fashion symbolised by haute couture with its custom made suits and gowns, elites and non-mainstream groups alike utilise fashion to show their unique position in society. Fashion here is used to display group allegiances and belonging.</p> <p>Linkback: Thus, in this case, fashion does have a purpose in bonding people within groups together.</p>	

12. A life full of choice presents more problems than benefits. What is your view?

Question type: Relational

Key Words: full of choices – many options to select from; decisions need to be made

To pass: Students show comparison between the problems and benefits, min 3 simple yet well-structured arguments

Quality pass: Students show comparison in each paragraph, Students have >3 logically well-structured and well-evaluated arguments, essay must be balanced

A life full of choice presents more benefits than problems because...	A life full of choice presents more problems than benefits because...
<p>Economically, a wide range of consumer choice drives the economy despite its potential to cause unnecessary consumption.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ In modern societies, demand from consumers for a greater range of goods and services stimulates invention and production, and this, in turn, generates employment and wealth and an increase in the overall standard of living for these societies. (Benefit) ❖ For example in capitalist cities, like New York and Singapore, demand for huge range of consumer products forms a big portion of the cities' economic activity and generates substantial revenue. ❖ However, a greater choice of consumer goods and services can also encourage excessive consumerism. People can become hedonistic and materialistic, judging people based on their material wealth and placing great value on material wealth as an indicator of their level of success and happiness. Excessive consumerism also puts a strain on environmental resources such as fossil fuel that creates problems for waste disposal. (Problem) 	<p>For some individuals, the power of choice can be more confusing and frightening than empowering.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Some people fear choice because they may not be mature enough to make the right decision that will adversely affect their happiness. They may end up making choices that do not benefit themselves such as eating unhealthily, smoking and taking drugs. (Problems) ❖ However, when modern societies become increasingly liberal, individuals also have more options to decide how they want to live their personal lives. They see availability of choice as an indication of improved human rights. For example, they can choose alternate lifestyles such as being gay or divorced. (Benefits)
<p>Politically, people prefer to have more choices of the leaders that they want, even at the expanse of political efficiency.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Democracy allows individuals to enjoy greater freedom to choose from a wider range of candidates. Citizens will be able to exercise their right to vote, to participate in politics, and to ask for more civil liberties. Such political systems of governance are beneficial for individuals because they can select the leader that they deem will 	<p>In an Internet-driven age, increase accessibility also results in higher chances of being addicted or cheated.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ With a wide range of services and products made easily available, those with weak self-control will be easily tempted to visit these sites frequently. Furthermore, people who are gullible or are tempted by easy money may be easily cheated as they are not able to verify the reliability of the websites and information.

<p>take care of their welfare and well-being. (Benefit)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ However, such democratic leadership can also slow down the decision-making process because it listens and debates various perspectives before decisions are finally made. ❖ For Example, President Obama had to pass his Healthcare Reform Bill through Congress and the House of Representatives and it was months before it could come into effect. (Problem) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ For example, the FBI's Internet Crime Complaint Center has said that over 560 million dollars have been lost to internet scams and fraud. In 2009 alone, the number of people who made a complaint about a scam online increased by 20% to a whopping 336,655 complaints. ❖ However, through the Internet, people have increased access to a wider range of goods and services that present people with more options for consumption, entertainment, news and information. (Benefits)
<p>Technologically, our Internet-driven societies enjoy almost unlimited access to different views around the world though people are unable to accurately interpret all information.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ This is beneficial because it allows people to take into account different perspectives and accounts of events that have happened before making their decisions. Such a process usually helps people make better, more considered decisions. (Benefit) ❖ The problem of information overload comes when individuals are not savvy enough to sift out important information from trivial information. Furthermore, they are unable to evaluate the validity and reliability of what they read on the Internet. The consequence of this is that individuals believe in false information and remain ignorant of the truth and important issues. (Problem) ❖ But Increasingly, more young people are taught the skill of being information literate, and over time, people will be more discerning when they process information. 	