

P1A3 questions for reference

1. How justifiable is it for a country to shut its door on refugees? (SRJC 2015 J1 Promo)
2. How important is loyalty in the world today? (AJC 2017 J1 MYCT)
3. Is a longer life expectancy always desirable? (ASRJC 2021 J1 Promo)
4. How effective has your government been in maintaining harmony in your society? (SAJC 2017)
5. Citizenship is nothing but a piece of paper. Is this true of your society? (SRJC 2016 Promo)

Question 1	
1. How justifiable is it for a country to shut its door on refugees? (SRJC 2015 J1 Promo)	
Question Analysis	
<u>Issue:</u> What reasons can a (recipient) country have for not accepting refugees? What moral and pragmatic considerations can we weigh?	<u>Context:</u> Global Situation today: a great surge in number of refugees seeking a safe place in a foreign country (can be either in a developed or developing country)
<u>Conceptual Understanding:</u> • Demonstrate the ability to see connections across topics. e.g. How war and conflict can precipitate refugee crises; how the issue of refugees is as much a politics and governance issue as it is an international relations one; how the environment crisis could trigger a refugee crisis, etc. • Demonstrate the ability to appreciate different contexts. E.g. In the context of wealthier countries, shutting doors on refugees would seem to be much more unjustifiable, as compared to the context of poorer countries.	
<u>Key words:</u> 'a country' : any country – both developed and developing countries, must be across national borders 'shut its door' : not allowing refugees to come in, not allowing <u>cross-border</u> migration of refugees 'refugees' : people who are forced to leave their country in order to escape war, persecution or natural disaster, political and economic refugees 'Justifiable' : based on moral and pragmatic reasons – look at what should and what can be done, weighing consequences accepting refugees would have on the recipient country: moral and pragmatic considerations are to be discussed <u>Moral reasoning:</u>	

- Humanitarian reasons: plight of the refugees – would not taking them in be tantamount to condemning them to death since going back to the country of origin would likely mean a serious threat to life?
- When there is a conflict between the moral duty of a government towards its own people and in ensuring basic human rights of the refugees, how should a government decide?

Pragmatic Reasoning

- The implications of accepting and not accepting refugees, e.g. international fallout/backlash and the sentiments of its citizens; cost to economy, safety, resources.
- Is there a viable alternative of responding to the desperate needs of refugees without hosting them, eg tackling the existing problem which led to refugees fleeing the country?
- Would allowing refugees lead to an even greater, uncontrollable influx of more refugees?

Significant aspects/areas to be discussed (5W1H, Multiple Perspectives, Significant Trends, SPECTRAM):

- Consider economic, social and cultural, internal and external political climate, environment, and humanitarian factors that could contribute to the acceptance or rejection of refugees

Possible Stands

- There is **little justification** for a country to shut its door to refugees.
- It is **largely justifiable** for a country to shut its door to refugees.

Reasons why there is little justification for a country to shut its door to refugees

It is unconscionable for a country, especially developed countries, to shut its door to the millions of desperate refugees fleeing war, persecution and hunger, as it is essentially condemning them to death.

- The Rohingya people have faced decades of systematic discrimination, statelessness and targeted violence in Rakhine State, Myanmar. Such persecution has forced Rohingya women, girls, boys and men into Bangladesh for many years. The events of August 2017 triggered by far the largest and fastest refugee influx into Bangladesh. Since then, an estimated 745,000 Rohingya—including more than 400,000 children—have fled into Cox's Bazar. In Myanmar, entire villages were burned to the ground, families were separated and killed, and women and girls were gang raped. Most of the people who

Reasons why it is largely justifiable for a country to shut its door to refugees

It is justifiable for a country to not accept refugees when she does not have the ability to accommodate them, especially when refugees come in unmanageable numbers, as this may only prove to be detrimental for both refugees and the local society in the long run.

- It is estimated that more than half of the Lebanese population is living below the poverty line, while a shocking 9 out of 10 Syrian refugees require humanitarian assistance to meet their basic needs. Lebanon is hosting about 1.5 million Syrian refugees, the equivalent of the entire population of Canada and most of Mexico flowing into the United States within a short period of time. Lebanon's refugee problem has since caused a deteriorating humanitarian crisis. The [Lebanese blame the strains of their country](#) on the significant

escaped were severely traumatized after witnessing unspeakable atrocities. These people found temporary shelter in refugee camps around Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh, which is now home to the world's largest refugee camp. https://www.unocha.org/myanmar	number of Syrian refugees who remain in the country. • https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/lebanese-are-tired-hosting-syrian-refugees • https://www.unhcr.org/lb/wp-content/uploads/sites/16/2024/03/At-a-glance-2024.pdf
Beyond the moral justifications, countries accepting refugees have much to gain from doing so, such as economic benefits and heightened clout and reputation that could put them at an international advantage, thus giving little justification to anti-refugee policies. • In the United States, a study found that between 1990 and 2014, each refugee resettled cost the government \$15,000, but after refugees have been in the U.S. for 20 years, they've paid an average of \$21,000 more in taxes than they cost the government, pointing to an overall economic gain associated with refugee resettlement. Across the world, countries that have accepted refugees have seen increases in median income and gross domestic product due to refugees' ability to start new businesses and replace aging populations. In Australia, a 2019 report found that each refugee business created adds an additional \$98,200 to the economy per year. When a refugee starts a business in Australia, they save the government over \$33,000 in welfare payments and generate almost \$10,000 in tax revenue. Refugees' entrepreneurial spirit can be an immense benefit to the economies of their new homes. • https://www.icmc.net/2020/07/14/refugees-good-or-bad-for-economy/ • In 2021, UN High Commissioner for Refugees Filippo Grandi commended Lisbon's exemplary refugee policies over the years. Portugal has consistently been a champion of the refugee cause. The country's efforts to uphold refugee	It is justified for countries to be cautious in their refugee policies and adopt a predominantly close-border approach as they are aware that a lenient refugee stance may be exploited and only serve to put their country's national security and citizens at risk. It is justified for countries to be cautious in their refugee policies and adopt a predominantly close-border approach as they are aware that a lenient refugee stance may be exploited and only serve to put their country's national security and citizens at risk. • In 2023, 351,000 asylum-seekers entered Germany, more than the population of Germany's former capital Bonn. In that same year, Germany recorded a 5.5 per cent increase in registered crimes compared to the previous year, according to official statistics. The number of suspects rose by 7.3 per cent, with foreigners accounting for 41 per cent—an increase of 17.8 per cent. Asylum seekers, excluding Ukrainian refugees, made up 18 per cent of offenders, reflecting an 18 per cent rise from 2022. • Additional statistics from North Rhine-Westphalia in 2023 show that foreigners were responsible for 80.1 per cent of pickpocketing cases, 47.6 per cent of shoplifting incidents, 47.3 per cent of burglaries, 41.6 per cent of homicide cases, and 37.1 per cent of violent sex crimes. https://thecritic.co.uk/germany-is-acknowledging-the-unspeakable/

protection principles and processes were particularly remarkable during the challenging time of the coronavirus pandemic. Best practices put in place by Portuguese authorities include exemption of asylum-seekers from border restrictions to ensure access to territory, extending the validity of documents and providing access to healthcare, employment, social benefits and financial services. In addition, Portugal makes available – through a Global Platform – academic assistance to Syrian university students. Since 2013, Syrian students benefited from some 650 scholarships through this scheme. • https://www.unhcr.org/news/press/2021/1/5ffed1554/unhcrs-grandi-concludes-visit-lisbon-commends-portugals-longstanding-commitment.html	
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Related recent examples	
• Overview of the humanitarian response in Myanmar https://www.unocha.org/myanmar	• Germany is acknowledging the unspeakable https://thecritic.co.uk/germany-is-acknowledging-the-unspeakable/

QUESTION 2	
How important is loyalty in the world today? (AJC 2017 MYCT)	
Analysing the Question	
<u>Issue:</u> Considering current world trends, loyalty may or may not be needed anymore.	<u>Context:</u> Global, Now (today)
<u>Definitions (Key words):</u>	

“loyalty” → feelings of support or duty towards someone or something

Are there any stipulated links the question expects us to address?

- What about the world today (Features) makes loyalty something desirable or not.
- Whether the degree to which loyalty is important varies according to the subject of that loyalty
- Whether any aspect of “today” has changed the nature of the importance of loyalty in the world

Significant aspects/areas to be discussed (SPECTRAM, Multiple Perspectives, trends):

- Consider the *impacts/necessity* of loyalty across these factors: Society, politics, economics, culture, technology, the media
- Consider the *why* loyalty may be crucial to these *parties/levels*: Individual, societal, governmental, international

Possible Stands

- Loyalty is **largely** important in the world today.
- Loyalty is **hardly** important in the world today.

Reasons why loyalty may be important in the world today

In a world with more conflicting and divisive views, loyalty can provide people with a sense of rootedness that may play a crucial role in maintaining harmony.

- In Singapore, people of various races and religions (and by extension different cultural beliefs and practices) live in close proximity with each other. One would expect constant, and maybe even violent clashes but this is not the case as the Singapore government has put in place measures like the ethnic housing policy (EIP) and have conducted regular national level conversations or engagements on the topic of national identity to foster a sense of belonging to the country, thus ensuring harmony through loyalty in the country.

<https://www.sg101.gov.sg/social-national-identity/sharedidentity/>

Reasons why loyalty may not be important in the world today

In a society marked by diversity and pluralism, an overemphasis on loyalty risks promoting tribalism and exclusionary attitudes, undermining efforts towards inclusivity and social harmony. Obstinate attitudes towards our own loyalties may easily lead to tensions as no compromises or reconciliation can be met amidst the clashes in our fundamental principles and beliefs.

- Blind loyalty in a globalised world today may cause countries to breed xenophobic notions amongst its citizens, resulting in tensions amongst the diverse population many countries in the world have to contend with today. When Trump took over in 2017, he put in place a travel ban on which eventually saw Muslims from 13 countries including Syria, Libya and Yemen being barred from entering the US. He did this believing that Muslims from these states posed a terrorist threat and that banning them from entering the US would reduce the threat of terrorism. Trump’s act spurred on a strong sense of xenophobia amongst his supporters which also led to a rise in hate crimes towards Muslims throughout the country. Although Biden has since taken over office, many Muslims still continue to face the stigma of the ban, and thus continue to face difficulties truly

	integrating into the country ironically known as “the land of the free”. https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/2/4/empty-promises-the-us-muslim-ban-still-reverberates
Loyalty may well enhance stability, which can help ensure sustainable progress in an increasingly unpredictable world of fluctuations and change. Historically, being loyal to one’s country has been a key factor in the success of many of today’s economic powerhouses. Take for example Germany, South Korea or Japan, who all went through tumultuous times of war and/or civil unrest to now being amongst the most powerful nations in the world. Although these countries have arguably only succeeded in part due to the competent governance during recovery years, one cannot simply discount the role that the loyal citizens played in putting in the hard work to support the government’s initiatives and build the country from scratch.	Contrary to popular belief, the emphasis on loyalty in today's world can inadvertently foster closed-mindedness, stifling progress in our modernizing world. Today, many countries, whether conservative or liberal, have come to embrace the modern idea of universal rights to varying degrees. Loyalty to certain cultural practices that appear to contravene these rights may thus be perceived as a resistance to change, which may result in that country being labelled as backward or stagnant. Yet, despite a general movement to advance the rights of women in many countries, honour killings are still practiced (albeit illegally) in some countries in the world. Most recently in 2023, an 18-year-old woman was shot dead by her uncle and father after her supposedly inappropriate doctored photos went viral on Pakistani social media. The father and uncle were apparently ordered by elders of a tribal jirga (council) to end the woman’s life. This alleged case of honour killing put the issue back in the spotlight, with many human rights groups putting pressure on the Pakistani government to put an end to the practice so that women’s rights are better protected. https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-67551554

Question 3	
Is a longer life expectancy always desirable? (AJC 2017 MYCT)	
Question Analysis	
<u>Issue:</u> Longevity is usually something sought after, but	<u>Context:</u>

there may be problems associated with a longer life expectancy that affect the individual and society.	Global
<u>Key words:</u> - Longer life expectancy: an increase in the length of time that a living thing, especially a human being, is likely to live - Always: every time or all the time - Desirable: worth having and wanted by most people	
<u>Significant aspects/areas to be discussed (5W1H, Multiple Perspectives, Significant Trends, SPECTRAM):</u> - How does a longer life expectancy <i>impact</i> the individual, businesses, countries and the world? - What are the social, political and economic <i>impacts</i> of a longer life expectancy?	
Possible Stands	
- A longer life expectancy is not always desirable, though it is desirable in most cases. - A longer life expectancy is not always desirable, though it is desirable in a minority of cases.	
Reasons why a longer life expectancy is desirable	Reasons why a longer life expectancy is <u>not</u> desirable
For individuals, a longer life expectancy allows people to have more time to fulfil their goals and do what they want. According to a study published in the Journal of Economic Behaviour and Organisation in 2020 , people report the lowest levels of well-being in their 50s. That's the age at which most folks begin seriously thinking about retirement plans, figuring out how to pay for their kids' college tuition, making plans for their aging parents, and maybe even running into health issues. However, happiness increases after their 50s and people report their highest levels of happiness in their 80s. A longer life expectancy will give people more time to enjoy their senior years, after they have dealt with the pressing issues in their 50s. https://www.psychologytoday.com/sg/blog/the-asymmetric-brain/202009/is-the-age-when-we-are-most-unhappy	A longer life expectancy may translate to higher healthcare costs for the individual and for society. People may be more prone to illnesses in their later years, and an extension of one's life expectancy may also lengthen the period during which people are more likely to fall ill. The healthcare sector accounted for the lion's share of social spending over the last decade, ballooning from S\$7 billion in 2014 to nearly S\$17 billion in 2023. It replaced education as the largest component with most of the expenditure going to supporting the Aging population. While a portion of this sum goes to preventative measures (i.e. measures to ensure the population remains healthy), a good portion still goes to supporting those who are ill through subsidies and Medisave. In 2022, patients aged 65 and above took up about 43% of bed occupancy rates, and stayed an average of 7 days due to them having more complex conditions which require longer stays.

	https://www.channelnewsasia.com/singapore/social-spending-healthcare-ageing-population-education-lifelong-learning-singapore-budget-4126201 https://www.straitstimes.com/singapore/longer-hospital-stays-for-older-patients-a-major-reason-for-high-bed-occupancy-moh
A longer life expectancy extends the period for which people would be consumers, driving greater consumption and profits for businesses. Older people tend to have higher incomes compared to younger cohorts and high needs (on account of medical and specialised care). As such, they are major consumers. A European Commission study conducted by Technopolis and Oxford Economics estimated a baseline value of €3.7 trillion for Europe's Silver Economy in 2015, measured primarily as private expenditure by older people (50 plus) on various goods and services. That same report predicted that this market would will expand by approximately 5% per year up to 2025, reaching €5.7 trillion. To put these numbers in perspective, if ranked among sovereign nations, the European Silver Economy would currently be the third largest economy in the world, behind only the USA and China. A longer life expectancy would provide add years to this spending, increasing consumption and profits for businesses. https://www.brookings.edu/blog/future-development/2021/01/14/the-silver-economy-is-coming-of-age-a-look-at-the-growing-spending-power-of-seniors/	A longer life expectancy may be disruptive to society and the economy which has to be restructured to accommodate larger numbers of older people. - With countries worldwide experiencing population ageing, government-sponsored retirement programmes incur increased costs in response to growing proportions of retired older persons. In turn, those demographic changes challenge the long-term sustainability of retirement programmes. Some countries, such as China, Germany, Japan, Iran, Italy and South Korea, are projected to have people aged 65 years and older account for about a third of their populations. Governments have to address the problem of underfunded retirement programmes, but attempts to do so by increasing statutory retirement ages or taxes are met with opposition. - Japan serves as a poignant case study illustrating the disruptive effects of a rapidly aging population. With one of the world's highest life expectancies, Japan faces significant challenges in restructuring its economy and social systems to accommodate a large elderly population. The country grapples with a shrinking workforce, and as cited by Japan Times, Japan may face a shortage of more than 11 million workers by 2040. This demographic shift has compelled Prime Minister Fumio Kishida to make reversing Japan's declining birthrate a priority for his government, pledging about ¥1 trillion (\$7.6 billion) to training workers for more high-skilled jobs in the next five years.

	https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2023/09/elderly-oldest-population-world-japan/ https://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2023/03/30/business/economy-business/japan-worker-shortfall-study/
A longer life expectancy translates to more years of productivity for society. This is especially important for countries with a low birth rate and for countries which are in need of workers. One in four OECD countries now link retirement ages to life expectancy. Some of these countries include Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Greece, Italy, the Netherlands and Portugal. Additionally, in France, the minimum retire age of the main mandatory scheme was increased from 62 to 64 and some special pension scheme will gradually be eliminated. This keeps people in the labour force for more years, supplementing the shortfall of workers that many countries are experiencing as birth rates fall. https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/sites/ed6f08dc-en/index.html?itemId=/content/component/ed6f08dc-en#:~:text=One%20in%20four%20OECD%20countries%20now%20link%20retirement%20ages%20to,schemes%20will%20be%20gradually%20eliminated.	

Question 4	
How effective has your government been in maintaining harmony in your society? (SAJC 2017)	
Question Analysis	
<u>Issue:</u> The issue being discussed is the efficacy of the government in maintaining harmony in Singapore.	<u>Context:</u> Your Society – Singapore
<u>Conceptual Understanding:</u> Demonstrate understanding that the government plays a crucial role in drafting and enacting policies and laws that promote inclusivity, equality, and social justice. Students should be aware of some of these policies/laws and be able to analyze them with a critical	

and objective lens.

- Demonstrate understanding that “harmony” encompasses more than harmony across racial or religious lines – consider socio-economical harmony, political harmony
- Efficacy of efforts to maintain harmony can also increase or decrease over time due to government action or external world factors that have influenced local circumstances.
- Understand the historical context of cited conflict sources in Singapore. Additionally, understand that citizens’ perceptions of these issues or sources of conflict change over time.

Key words:

- How Effective: An evaluation of how well these solutions / measures are working → consider TIRE+C framework
- Your government: The group of people in authority to govern a city/state
- Your society: Consider relevant characteristics of your society
- Maintaining harmony: Preserving goodwill, agreement, concord, peace, absence of conflict between people

Significant aspects/areas to be discussed (5W1H, Multiple Perspectives, Significant Trends, SPECTRAM):

- Characteristics of Singapore that hinder/ease the maintenance of harmony
- The government’s handling of social and cultural tensions/conflicts
- What are some sources of disharmony/conflict in Singapore?
- When did the conflict arise/How long has the conflict been around for?
- What laws, practices or policies were adopted to maintain harmony?
- From your perspective as a resident, have the measures you cited been effective in maintaining harmony?

Possible Stands

- The government has been largely effective in the maintenance of harmony in Singapore.
- The government has been largely ineffective in the maintenance of harmony in Singapore.

Reasons why the government is effective in the maintenance of harmony in Singapore

- **The Singapore government's pragmatic and proactive approach to multiculturalism, with policies that promote racial and religious harmony, has been instrumental in maintaining social cohesion.**
E.g. The Ethnic Integration Policy (EIP) is a housing policy implemented by the Housing and Development Board (HDB) in Singapore since 1989. The primary objective of the EIP is to prevent the formation of ethnic

Reasons why the government is ineffective in the maintenance of harmony in Singapore

- **Singapore remains an Asian conservative society, and the government continues to take reference from conservative Asian values. As such some groups continue to be marginalized in government policies, which may lead to them continuing to be treated differently, resulting in disharmony.**
E.g. In Singapore, unmarried single mothers not only grapple with the responsibilities of single parenthood but also pervasive social stigma. While recent

enclaves and promote racial integration and harmony in public housing estates. Under the EIP, each housing precinct is subject to a quota system that ensures a balanced racial mix of major ethnic groups in Singapore, namely Chinese, Malay, Indian, and others among residents. The specific racial composition targets are determined based on the overall demographic composition of Singapore's population. By ensuring a diverse mix of residents in each housing estate, the EIP is a clear demonstration of the government's proactive efforts in promoting interaction, integration, and social cohesion among different racial groups. This policy has been instrumental in fostering a sense of shared identity and belonging among Singaporeans, regardless of their ethnic backgrounds.	policy changes signify progress, such as allowing single, unwed parents to purchase 3-room flats, more efforts are needed to address housing accessibility. Existing government policies regarding tax rebates and housing grants continue to make securing stable housing uncertain for many single mothers, with rental housing applications often rejected. The provision of temporary housing for single-mother families underscores the pressing need for systemic changes to ensure housing equality. With the times, Singapore is starting to see more varied forms of family structures. Such strict adherence to archaic and conservative values on what a family nucleus should be results in greater unhappiness amongst those who do not fall neatly into the lines demarcated by these policies. E.g. While the repeal of s 377A of the Penal Code (the section criminalizing consensual sex between men) in 2022 represented a large step forward in the recognition of LGBTQ rights in Singapore, this repeal came with the simultaneous amendment to the Constitution to define marriage as between one man and one woman. This continues to highlight Singapore's strong commitment to its conservative Asian values and strong focus on the "traditional" nuclear family unit when drafting government policy, even in displays of apparent tolerance like the s 377A repeal. This move to amend the Constitution in this manner suggests that Singapore is not willing to entertain the legalization of gay marriage for now, which could be argued to send a chilling effect on the LGBTQ community in Singapore. This presents a stark contrast to countries in the vicinity of Singapore that had recently legalized gay marriage, such as Thailand (Jan 2025).
• Strong leadership and effective governance have enabled the government	• Governmental efforts to maintain harmony in our small nation may be

to respond swiftly to social issues and prevent conflicts before they escalate, allowing us to *contain and limit the spread of disharmony (extent)*.

E.g. In October 2019, the Singapore government made significant amendments to the Maintenance of Religious Harmony Act (MRHA), a legislative framework aimed at safeguarding religious harmony in Singapore by addressing actions or speech that could potentially incite religious discord or hostility.

The amendment introduced a new section to the MRHA, addressing the offense of urging or using violence against a target group based on religion. In addition to religious groups, the legislation explicitly mentions atheists and individuals from specific racial communities or with similar sexual orientations as potential targets. This legislative change came after LGBTQ individuals conveyed feelings of being targeted as a community. While affirming that the law applies equally to all, Shanmugam clarified that it would also be an offense if the LGBTQ community targeted a religious group in the same manner.

This move signifies the government's acknowledgment of concerns raised by the LGBTQ community and its commitment to addressing religiously motivated violence comprehensively, contributing to harmony in the country.

ineffective when these efforts are easily disrupted by larger external pressures such as geopolitical tensions, external interference, or international conflicts. (context)

E.g. Just earlier in Feb 2024, a 70-strong group assembled in Orchard Road and marched towards the Istana despite the Public Order Act that prohibits such assemblies by law. The protest abhorred Israel's conduct in the recent Israel-Hamas conflict. In response to this matter, the police urged people to engage in responsible and respectful discussions on the topic and avoid offensive remarks or the use of illegal assemblies that advocate the political causes of other countries or foreign entities.

Tensions ran higher when the Ministry of Education ran school lessons related to the conflict which generated buzz and controversy online as netizens debated heatedly as to what Singapore's stance ought to be.

Foreign wars can and often do place people of different communities at loggerheads with one another, with many developing and sharing strong, sometimes visceral opinions on the matter. It is thus almost unavoidable for our government to struggle to balance domestic priorities with external pressures that could easily lead to instability and discord.

- **The government's emphasis on meritocracy and equal opportunities across these years has helped to reduce social inequalities and foster a sense of unity among citizens over time, which would otherwise not have been possible in a country as diverse as ours (long-term).**

E.g. In 2024, workers in Singapore will receive broader protections against discrimination, assurance for reporting

- **While the government's emphasis on meritocracy as a basis for social mobility has been largely successful, the success of this policy has actually spawned some systemic unfairness targeted at lower-income families.**

E.g. In 2018, Education Minister Ong Ye Kung explained that the more families are uplifted through meritocracy, the more difficult it becomes to help the families that remain poor. Families that

errant employers without fear of retaliation, and fair access to job opportunities, under a new legislation framework. The Ministry of Manpower (MOM) said the government accepted 22 recommendations from the Tripartite Committee on Workplace Fairness (TCWF) for Singapore's eventual anti-discrimination laws. Of these recommendations, it was proposed that new legislation be passed prohibiting workplace discrimination in respect of the age, nationality, sex, marital, pregnancy status, caregiving responsibilities, race, religion, language disability, and mental health conditions. Recommendations also call for more appropriate redress for victims of workplace discrimination and more appropriate enforcement action against errant employers. The provision of equal access to employment opportunities and environments lessens unhappiness and feelings distrust towards individuals of other groups, allowing for greater peace and harmony where various groups do not feel targeted and discriminated against.	are doing well because of meritocracy re-invest into their children's education, resulting in children from different backgrounds having different starting baselines in terms of their resources and opportunities. In other words, as the proportion of lower-income families falls, the families that do remain poor face even more pronounced difficulty. Minister Ong is most concerned about the entrenchment and stratification of this income gap, rather than its mere existence. He proposes that this entrenchment is circumvented by expanding our scope of meritocracy to include talents and skills beyond academic success, which will in turn have a positive effect on the opportunities offered to students to express and develop themselves.
The Singapore government's fair and transparent approach to democracy allows for a plurality of political views to be aired in a public forum. This allows even individuals who may have different views on policy from the ruling party to have their views heard or even represented by an opposition party. By validating these alternative voices, Singapore avoids performing a tyranny of the majority and building resentment among a potential political minority. E.g. Every political candidate running for a seat in Singapore's Parliament abides by the same rules of admission when running for office during a General Election. There are no advantages or special treatment given to former or prospective members of the ruling party. The fairness and transparency of this system serves to bolster Singaporeans' faith in the rule of law and the legitimacy of their vote. Major political upsets have taken place in recent General	

Elections, such as the Worker's Party winning Sengkang GRC in 2020. These instances serve to not only highlight the power of citizens' right to vote, but to also affirm that voting is the proper channel for citizens to enact political change (as opposed to violent insurrections, protests and the like).

Members of Parliament are given the opportunity to ask each other questions regarding policy in public formalized Question Sessions or parliamentary debates. The open and televised nature of these sessions allow for political officeholders, regardless of their alignment or party allegiance, to address citizens' burning questions in the open. These may include broad questions on public policy such as the cost of living or wages, or responses to recent world events or controversies. This allows citizens to feel reassured and affirmed that their problems are being heard and actively addressed by competent politicians.

Related recent examples

- Managing Security Threats: <https://www.mha.gov.sg/what-we-do/managing-security-threats>
- New initiative to train youth to be champions of racial and religious harmony: <https://www.straitstimes.com/singapore/religious-groups-should-celebrate-differences-to-maintain-harmony-in-singapore-president-halimah>
- NDR 2021: New law to deal with racial offences, promote harmony through softer approach: <https://www.straitstimes.com/singapore/politics/national-day-rally-2021-new-law-on-racial-harmony-to-encourage-moderation-send>
- Concerns of groups such as women, minorities, LGBTQ are important, cannot be dismissed as 'illegitimate or exaggerated': Lawrence Wong: <https://www.todayonline.com/singapore/concerns-groups-such-women-minorities-lgbtq-are-important-cannot-be-dismissed-illegitimate>

Question 5

Citizenship is nothing but a piece of paper. Is this true of your society? (SRJC 2016 Promo)

Question Analysis

Issue:

Does citizenship only serve to identify the sovereign state one is a legal member of? Or does it serve a far greater purpose?

Context:

Specific society; mostly current

Key words:

- Citizenship - either the legal right to belong to a particular country or the state of being a

citizen and accepting the responsibilities of it • Nothing but a piece of paper – merely one that serves to identify the sovereign state one is a legal member of; is a mere formality	
<u>Significant aspects/areas to be discussed (5W1H, Multiple Perspectives, Significant Trends, SPECTRAM):</u> • Consider how citizenship serves a practical <i>function/role/purpose</i> i.e. to identify the country an individual legally belongs to. • Consider how in light of certain circumstances, the <i>impacts</i> of citizenship as a means to gain rights and exercise responsibilities peculiar to a particular country.	
Possible Stands	
• Citizenship is little more than a piece of paper. • Citizenship is far more than a piece of paper.	
Reasons why citizenship is little more than a piece of paper (not as valuable).	Reasons why citizenship is far more than a piece of paper (highly valuable).
For some people in Singapore, citizenship is a mere convenience and is without much meaning as they seek it not for any cultural, emotional, or historical connections to the country, but for the benefits that it would bring them. • Singapore citizenship is highly coveted by foreign nationals from nearby countries. For many who do not qualify for citizenship status or work permits, a common but illegal way to continue staying in Singapore is through a sham marriage. A sham marriage, otherwise known as a marriage of convenience, is a marriage between two people for the sole intention of acquiring a benefit or advantage. Many people who enter into sham marriages are in financial distress and are easy prey for the syndicates. Some foreign nationals, particularly those from neighbouring countries such as Thailand and Vietnam, may be desperate for employment in Singapore. Hence, they may resort to such schemes to prolong their stay. Local Singaporeans who face financial difficulties may also fall for such “fast money” schemes. Sham marriages are nothing more than monetary transactions conducted between different parties for immigration	In Singapore, citizenship offers one privileges of belonging to a particular sovereign state, which puts citizens at an advantage over non-citizen residents. • Only Singapore citizens (over 21 years of age) are eligible to buy and rent apartments from the Housing & Development Board (HDB). These include subsidised 2-room (i.e 1 bdrm + living room), 3-room (2 bdrm + 1 living room), 4-room (3 bdrm + living room), 5-room (4 bdrm + living room) and executive flats. Singapore citizens are also eligible to buy subsidised executive condos and studio apartments developed by the HDB. Citizens can also enjoy the unique benefit of obtaining loans, at a concessionary interest rate, from the HDB to fund their housing. In addition, Singapore citizens who are first-time buyers of government-built flats can enjoy housing subsidies such as the housing grant. The CPF Housing Grant is a subsidy (up to SGD 40,000) provided by the Government to assist households who have met the eligibility criteria to buy a HDB flat. While citizens can buy any type of private residential property, Permanent Residents must

purposes. There was a slight spike in sham marriages in 2017 according to statistics released by the Immigration and Checkpoints Authority (ICA) but this phenomenon continues even till present day when a man who married a Georgian woman who was looking for a way to stay in Singapore was convicted over the marriage of convenience in November 2023, along with the man who instigated the marriage. https://www.todayonline.com/singapore/spike-sham-marriages-contraband-smuggling-cases-2017-ica	first seek approval from the Ministry of Law if they want to buy landed property. https://www.guidemesingapore.com/business-guides/immigration/citizenship/singapore-citizenship---benefits-and-drawbacks
Some may also argue that Singapore is home to a diverse group of people who respond to the evolving demands of the globalised economy, and with whom remaining rooted to a particular country may not necessarily strike a chord. Supposedly, as the processes of globalisation tie economies together, transnational migration weakens the sense of place that has traditionally defined citizenship and so more people have no emotional connectedness to their country of citizenship. Between 2019 and 2022, an average of 1,480 citizens per year renounced their Singapore Citizenship (SC). Of these, 21% were naturalised Singapore citizens. <i>Naturalised citizen – A foreigner over the age of 21 who has become a Singaporean after residing in Singapore for at least 10 – 12 years preceding an application for citizenship.</i> https://www.mha.gov.sg/mediaroom/parliamentary/written-reply-to-pq-on-number-of-singaporeans-who-renounced-their-citizenship-over-the-past-three-years#:~:text=Over%20the%20past%20three%20years%2C%20an%20average%20of%201%2C480%20citizens,0.1%25%20of%20the%20citizen%20population.	Singapore citizenship also confers citizens certain obligations that must be fulfilled and cannot be easily repudiated. With rights comes certain responsibilities, and the fulfilment of these responsibilities as citizens are often crucial to the maintenance of Singapore's stability and systems. - Singapore's compulsory National Service has seen its fair share of defaulters across the country's relatively short history. Of the defaulters, Author Kevin Kwan, whose book <i>Crazy Rich Asians</i> was adapted into a box office hit, is probably one of the more notable ones. Kwan is wanted by Singapore for failing to report for military service, the Ministry of Defence has said. He did not register for national service (NS) in 1990 despite being sent notices, the ministry said. He later applied twice to renounce his citizenship, but was rejected as he had not first served NS. He could face up to three years in jail if he returns to Singapore. All Singaporean men over 18 have to undertake two years of national service (NS) with either the armed forces, the police or the civil defence force. https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-45267437 - With the exception of those who have valid reasons for exemption, under section 43 of the Parliamentary Elections Act, eligible voters (i.e. all Singapore citizens whose names are in the Registers of Electors) have

	to vote at our Singapore elections. It is considered a civic responsibility of all adult Singaporean citizens to cast their vote in contribution to the election of a representative. As clearly articulated by Singapore’s Minister for Law, Mr K. Shanmugam, in a parliamentary speech given in 2009, “Representative Democracy is the very essence of our political system; and voting is the foundation of Representative Democracy”.
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