

Anderson Serangoon Junior College
General Paper
Paper 1 Assignment 8
Suggested Essay Outlines

Question 1	
Can advertising ever be trusted? (2021 ASRJC Promo)	
Question Analysis	
<u>Issue:</u> The purpose of advertising is generally to persuade people to buy products/services, or subscribe to certain perspectives and values. This casts doubts on the reliability and honesty of the message.	<u>Context:</u> Global
<u>Conceptual Understanding:</u> - Advertising is subject to the interests of the entities commissioning it. - Such entities would want to present narratives that align with their interests. This makes the advertisement unlikely to be objective/neutral and therefore untrustworthy.	
<u>Key words:</u> - Can: to be able to - Advertising: the business of trying to persuade people to buy products or services - Ever: at any time - Be trusted: deserving of the belief that someone is good and honest and will not harm you, or that something is safe and reliable	
<u>Significant aspects/areas to be discussed (5W1H, Multiple Perspectives, Significant Trends, SPECTRAM):</u> - Who advertises and what might be their agenda? - How are businesses using advertising today, and how does that affect its reliability? - How have recent trends (e.g. use of social media) affected advertising? - How do consumers respond to advertising today?	
Possible Stands	
- Advertising can be trusted most of the time. - Advertising cannot be trusted most of the time.	
Reasons why...	Reasons why... <u>not</u> ...
Due to greater competition and the ease with which consumers can share their experiences, businesses are beginning to understand the need to be truthful in advertising so as to maintain a good reputation and gain the continual support of customers. It is increasingly easy for customers to share their opinions and experiences of products and services today. E-commerce websites like Amazon feature review sections where customers can rate products. Consumer Reports, a non-profit consumer organisation, publishes information about products they test.	Due to a desire for greater sales and profits, it is in the interest of businesses to exaggerate the merits of their products, undermining the trustworthiness of advertising. Brands and influencers have been accused of using filters to promote beauty products, leading consumers to think that the products are more capable than they actually are. This led to the Advertising Standards Authority of the United Kingdom ruling in 2021 that filters should not be

The easy availability of product information means that consumers can verify the advertising published by businesses, and it is in the interest of businesses to be truthful in their advertising.	applied to social media advertisements if they exaggerate the effect of the product.
Advertisements do not always have to come from businesses with a profit motive; advertising can also come from governments and organisations to advocate socially desirable behaviours or to educate the public, thereby benefiting the society. Such advertisements aim to persuade people by convincing them of the true merits of such socially desirable behaviours and thus they can be trusted. The Singapore government rolled out advertisements to promote vaccination against Covid-19. One of the advertisements featured comedian Gurmit Singh – as his much-loved character Phua Chu Kang, an eccentric contractor – warning the public not to be complacent. The advertisement seeks to dispel concerns that vaccines might not be safe for people with certain health conditions, or for older people. While the intention of the advertising campaign is to persuade people, similar to those run by businesses, the success of the campaign hinges on the trustworthiness of the message and so can be trusted.	With the advent of the internet and social media, the ease of advertising and the ability of advertisements to cross borders make it difficult to regulate the contents of advertising. In 2020, South Korea revised its advertising guidelines to require influencers on social media platforms, such as YouTube or Instagram, to state clearly whether their product endorsements are “financially rewarded or intended for promotion”. With the global nature of social media and e-commerce, however, people in South Korea will still be exposed to advertisements from influencers from other countries which are not subjected to South Korean advertising guidelines and are thus free to employ shady promotional practices.
Regulations and consumer laws ensure that advertisers do not mislead people. Businesses are motivated to keep their advertisements honest or they would face penalties. - The European Union has strict laws in place to ensure that the nutrition claims and health claims of food products are clear, accurate and based on scientific evidence. Food bearing claims that could mislead consumers are prohibited in the European Union market. - Dannon was asked to pay consumers up to \$45 million in damages under the terms of a class action settlement for touting its yoghurt products as “clinically” and “scientifically” proven to regulate digestion and boost immune systems after it was accused of making claims it had not proven. Dannon was also asked to change its health claims.	
Related recent examples	
- WhatsApp to start showing more adverts in messaging app https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cn5y07yqg5do - Singapore: Advertising restrictions for healthcare professionals to be reviewed https://www.channelnewsasia.com/singapore/advertising-restrictions-healthcare-professionals-be-reviewed-4984896	

- CBC investigation finds some big grocers promoting imported food with Canadian branding
<https://www.cbc.ca/news/business/label-grocer-canadian-1.7590956>

Question 2	
To what extent is meritocracy in your society desirable? (2015 SRJC Promo)	
Question Analysis	
<u>Issue:</u> Meritocracy is a social system in which individuals are rewarded and provided with opportunities based on their capabilities, and achievements rather than on factors such as wealth, family background, or social connections. The underlying issue is whether meritocracy truly promotes fairness, efficiency, and social mobility, or whether it can also lead to inequality, elitism, and neglect of less measurable human qualities.	<u>Context:</u> Singapore
<u>Conceptual Understanding:</u> • While intended to promote fairness and efficiency, meritocracy operates within societies where starting points are unequal. This can unintentionally reinforce social privilege and widen disparities. • The desirability of meritocracy depends on whether it is implemented in ways that balance recognising achievement with ensuring inclusivity, equal opportunity, and social cohesion.	
<u>Key words:</u> • Meritocracy: advancement in the system based on merits/hardword • Your society: Singapore • Desirable: preferable/useful/necessary	
<u>Significant aspects/areas to be discussed (5W1H, Multiple Perspectives, Significant Trends, SPECTRAM):</u> • Who: Individuals, government, NGOs, • What: effects on society? (positive-efficiency, social mobility vs negative-elitism) • When: is meritocracy desirable? • Where: does meritocracy prove to be useful and desirable? Education? • Why: does meritocracy matter? Why is it relevant and desirable?	
Possible Stands	
• Meritocracy in Singapore is desirable to a small extent. • Meritocracy in Singapore is desirable to a large extent.	
Reasons why...	Reasons why... <u>not</u> ...
Admittedly, meritocracy, which was the cornerstone of multi-cultural Singapore society to uplift the lives of the poor, could have brought about disparities of income and social class among Singaporeans. • Using the academic route, many Singaporeans have climbed up the social ladder and left those who are not similarly-inclined far behind, unable to catch up.	•
Providing all citizens with a fair and equal opportunity to be recognized and advanced in proportion to their abilities and accomplishments had enabled the lives of all races in	However society is now highly-stratified and it appears that going forward, the stratification will worsen as those who have benefited through their academic

Singapore, and not just one or two groups deemed vulnerable, to be uplifted. Rather than follow Malaysia which emphasised race politics through affirmative action for the majority bumiputera, Singapore chose to reward merit, regardless of race, language and religion. Meritocracy provided equal opportunities for all, and anyone who proved himself to be hard working and talented, rightly deserved the success he achieved. This worked well for multicultural Singapore as meritocracy was a non-discrimination principle and focused on impartiality. When Singapore gained independence in 1965, a large proportion of its population were first generation locally-born Singaporeans, the descendants of immigrants. They were a homogenous group in terms of income and social class.	achievements are raising a second generation of Singaporeans who are climbing ahead academically as well. Using the academic route, many Singaporeans have climbed up the social ladder and left those who are not similarly-inclined far behind, unable to catch up. A Key Household Income Trends survey (2015) found that if one's father was university-educated, he was more likely to be as well. The finding was based on information that respondents aged 25 and older gave about their education level and that of their fathers. Out of the university-educated fathers, 63 per cent had children with degrees. But out of the fathers with secondary-school qualifications, only 37 per cent had children who made it to university. And of the dads with primary or lower education, just 12 per cent had children with degrees.
Meritocracy is desirable for Singapore as the government now recognises the need to broaden the definition of merit. Instead of merely emphasising academic excellence, it is now rewarding Singaporeans who have talent and abilities in non-academic areas. The overemphasis on paper chase has caused widening rifts and left some people behind, the solution is not affirmative action for the vulnerable group, but a broadening of the idea of merit to non-academic areas. There are schools to nurture talent in sports and the arts, and diploma and degree courses in such fields as digital media and technology, and the creative fields such as design and fashion. Millions of dollars are also being spent on the polytechnics and the Institute of Technical Education.	Excessive emphasis on academic achievements may stigmatise the less academically-inclined, causing meritocracy to become less desirable. And the income gap widens when rewards favour the academically strong over the rest. Elitism among those who have succeeded in the system is also probable and is likely to be accompanied by stratification according to educational achievement and class. Where 80 per cent of people live in HDB flats, only some 47 per cent of Public Service Commission scholarship recipients this year do. Some 27 per cent are in private, non-landed property, and the other 26 per cent live in landed property.
Related recent examples	
- Meritocracy needs to be managed to ensure a level playing field https://www.straitstimes.com/opinion/forum/letter-of-the-week-meritocracy-needs-to-be-managed-to-ensure-a-level-playing-field - Revisiting meritocracy https://www.forwardsingapore.gov.sg/stories/revisiting-meritocracy - Singapore concept of meritocracy too narrow, need to refresh mindset on schools and grades: DPM Wong https://www.channelnewsasia.com/singapore/new-social-compact-key-shifts-education-meritocracy-seniors-lawrence-wong-3422931 - Higher taxes for the rich, mandatory preschool attendance among MPs' proposals to close gaps in society https://www.todayonline.com/singapore/higher-taxes-rich-mandatory-preschool-parliament-narrow-gap-meritocracy-2152761	

Question 3	
How effectively can migration solve population problems? (2023 ASRJC Promo)	
Question Analysis	
<u>Issue:</u> Whether or not migration can effectively solve population problems	<u>Context:</u> Global
<u>Conceptual Understanding:</u> • Connections between migration and other issues like inequality and politics and government • How different countries may view migration differently depending on the context of the country • How migration may affect the individual, society and country differently	
<u>Key words:</u> • Effectively: successful or achieving desired results • Can: to be able to • Migration: the process of people travelling to a new place to live, usually in order to find work and live there temporarily or permanently • Population problems: problems associated with the people living in a particular country or place (e.g. ageing population, underpopulation, overpopulation)	
<u>Significant aspects/areas to be discussed (5W1H, Multiple Perspectives, Significant Trends, SPECTRAM):</u> • 5W1H: ○ Who: Sending countries, receiving countries, migrants, locals, workers ○ What: ▪ Growing population problems: • Environmental: Increased demand for and strain on resources, deforestation and habitat loss, waste generation, climate change • Economic: Job creation, strain on infrastructure (healthcare, education, transportation), poverty & inequality • Social instability: Resource scarcity and competition can lead to conflicts, increased migration and displacement can cause social tensions ▪ Ageing population problems: • Economic: Future workforce size can shrink and limit economic growth, more resources required for social support and healthcare, shifts in social norms and family values ○ How: Attractive immigrant schemes, asylum seekers • Significant Trends: Record-high global displacement, rise of climate-induced migration, labour migration to ageing economies, migration as an economic stabiliser for origin countries (remittances), tightening of border controls amidst selective openness, diaspora-driven policy and investment, humanitarian corridors and mobility partnerships between countries	
Possible Stands	
• Migration can largely solve population problems effectively. • Migration can only slightly solve population problems effectively.	
Reasons why migration can effectively solve population problems	Reasons why migration cannot effectively solve population problems
Migration stabilises ageing and shrinking populations by boosting the working-age base. More working-age residents today support pension systems, fill	If inflows outpace planning, it can overload housing, infrastructure and social cohesion. Migration can relieve demographic stress, but it is contingent on intentional and comprehensive

vacancies and lift GDP capacity long before pro-natalist policies can change birth patterns. • In 2023, population grew by about 3.2%, with international migration driving nearly all net growth. Statistics Canada repeatedly notes that without high immigration, deaths would exceed births. Canada’s immigration plan now targets about 0.5 million permanent residents a year to keep the workforce and tax base viable. • In 2022, Germany’s population increased by 1.12 million (a 1.3% increase), a rise the Federal Statistical Office of Germany attributes to net immigration of about 1.46 million (births were below deaths). Even in 2023, net migration (+663,000) remained historically high by German standards, cushioning a low-fertility, ageing society. • Facing one of the world’s fastest-ageing populations, Japan has eased work visa rules and introduced new residence categories under its “Specified Skilled Worker” programme. By 2023, foreign residents reached a record 3.2 million. This nett inflow helped slow total population decline for the first time in over a decade. • Net overseas migration to Australia surged to about 518,000 in 2022–23, with migrants overwhelmingly in the 18 to 35 age bracket. Treasury projections show this will support GDP growth and slow the increase in the old-age dependency ratio over the next two decades.	planning for synchronised housing, schooling and integration investment. • The housing stock has not kept pace with record population growth. The Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation estimates Canada needs about 3.5 million additional homes by 2030 (above baseline) to restore affordability. Ottawa has had to move to temporarily cap certain temporary-resident and international-student numbers to relieve this pressure. • Record inward migration in 2022–23 (including Ukrainian refugees) worsened an already acute housing shortage in Ireland; average rents hit all-time highs and local councils struggled to place asylum seekers in permanent accommodation. • In the 2000s, rapid intake of foreign workers helped boost GDP, but infrastructure, especially public transport, faced overcrowding until capacity expansions caught up. Public perception of congestion and competition for resources led to tighter entry rules in the 2010s.
There are fears that as a population ages, the falling number of educated young workers entering the labour market will reduce innovation, sapping economic growth across the board. Migrants, with their different perspectives and foreign connections, provide significant impacts on their host country’s society and economy by driving innovation. • A National Bureau of Economic Research study by economists found that immigrants produce a significant percentage of innovations in America and make U.S.-born individuals more inventive. According to the researchers, “Immigrant inventors are more likely to rely on foreign technologies, to collaborate with foreign inventors, and to be cited in foreign markets, thus contributing to the importation and diffusion of ideas across borders”.	Migration can worsen origin-country problems via brain drain and depopulation in the long run. The short-term gains for receiving countries can deepen demographic and economic challenges for sending countries. • While overseas remittances (about 9.4% of GDP in 2023) are a vital economic lifeline, the outflow of nurses, engineers, and teachers has left domestic sectors short-staffed, with rural hospitals especially affected. • Since the 1990s, sustained emigration, especially of educated youth, has reduced the population by over 14%, with knock-on effects including ageing, depopulated rural areas, and labour shortages in construction and agriculture. • The Lithuanian population fell by roughly a quarter between 1989 and 2021, with emigration a key driver; the loss disproportionately involves younger, working-age people, amplifying ageing and regional decline.

	In September 2024, Germany signed a deal to admit up to 250,000 skilled and semi-skilled workers from Kenya, addressing German labour needs while raising concerns about brain-drain in Kenya.
Migration fills acute skill and sectoral shortages that would otherwise impair essential services. It maintains essential public services and critical industries that would otherwise face severe disruptions with severe consequences. - In 2023, the New Zealand government fast-tracked residency for skilled workers in sectors like healthcare, engineering, and IT. This brought in thousands of nurses, midwives, and secondary teachers, filling vacancies that local training pipelines could not meet in time. - With only about 11% of residents being Emirati citizens, the UAE relies heavily on foreign labour, especially in construction, healthcare, and service sectors. In healthcare, foreign-trained doctors and nurses make up over 80% of the workforce, ensuring hospitals can function despite a small citizen labour pool.	While migrants may provide a boost in population numbers which may seem to address population problems related to ageing and the lack of workers, these migrants may face difficulties in the labour market, undermining their contribution to the host country. Foreign-born workers in the OECD area are concentrated in low-skilled occupations, despite their relatively high educational level. On average one-in-three tertiary-educated migrant is over-qualified. This is about 12 percentage points greater than for natives. The development of assessment and recognition systems of migrants' qualifications remains a priority in many OECD countries.
Related recent examples	
'Like the cold war': border checks and guards return in German-Polish dispute https://www.ft.com/content/b9a840f5-492c-40f3-925d-92b8fbc3ca0a - Highly Skilled Immigrants Drive U.S. Innovation, Report Shows https://www.forbes.com/sites/stuartanderson/2023/01/12/highly-inventive-immigrants-also-make-natives-more-innovative/ - Biggest foreign worker exodus since World War II adds to Britain's woes https://www.straitstimes.com/world/europe/biggest-foreign-worker-exodus-since-world-war-ii-adds-to-britains-woes - Commentary: Falling fertility rates will turn the immigration debate upside down https://www.channelnewsasia.com/commentary/declining-birth-rate-ageing-population-immigration-policy-3481296	

Question 4	
'If people become ill, it is solely their own fault.' How far do you agree? (2020 J1 Promo)	
Question Analysis	
<u>Issue:</u> The issue being discussed is whether the individual is responsible for their own health, or if other factors affect the degree of agency that individuals have over their health.	<u>Context:</u> Global
<u>Conceptual Understanding:</u> • Demonstrates an ability to analyse the role of individuals as agents with control and a moral obligation to take care of themselves through preventative measures and reactionary measures. • Demonstrates an ability to understand the multi-stakeholder nature of the global health system, including the influence of private corporations, governments, international organisations, citizen behaviours. • Demonstrates an ability to evaluate what constitutes "fault" in political and ethical terms, whether responsibility lies in intent, capacity, implementation failure, or structural constraints.	
<u>Key words:</u> • If – signifies a condition/eventuality • people – human beings; may be viewed collectively, or as many separate individuals • become – begin to be in a certain state • ill – to suffer from a disease; to be unwell, ailing, sick • solely – not involving anyone or anything else • their own – emphasizing that someone or something belongs or relates to the person • fault – justifying blame, guilt, liability	
<u>Significant aspects/areas to be discussed (5W1H, Multiple Perspectives, Significant Trends, SPECTRAM):</u> • Who: Individuals, government, healthcare organisations, society, family • Multiple Perspectives: Governments want citizens to be self-reliant and not take health for granted; Individuals want better healthcare systems with affordable healthcare; certain events are beyond any party's control; global healthcare groups should play a larger role to improve standards of healthcare • Significant Trends: Pandemics are becoming more frequent; Ageing Population; Increase in quality of healthcare; growing numbers of self-inflicted conditions like diabetes • SPECTRAM: Governance (policies that make healthcare accessible or otherwise), society (trends, norms, expectations), culture (cultural indicators and predictors of disease), science and tech (advancements in biomedical science and preventative health), environment (control over the environmental factors that enable or disable spread of diseases)	
Possible Stands	
• It is not the sole fault of the individual as other factors are at play. • However, people still have a responsibility to take care of themselves.	
Reasons why...	Reasons why... <u>not</u> ...
Especially in developed societies where technology has seen radical advancements, modern health science has progressed to such an extent that allows for the prevention of previously incurable diseases, and individuals who fall ill have only their own negligence to blame.	Despite the readiness of individuals to want to be healthy and mitigate health risks early, systemic limitations may restrict them from gaining access to do so. Governments play a larger role in availing such infrastructure to individuals because they have the funding and authority to do so.

• Hepatitis A is a serious disease of the liver caused by the hepatitis A virus. The hepatitis A vaccine is the best way to prevent hepatitis A infection. Hepatitis A is usually spread by contact with people who are infected with the virus, or from contact with objects, food, water or drinks contaminated by the feces of an infected person, which can easily happen if someone doesn't properly wash his or her hands after using the toilet. According to the CDC, there are widespread outbreaks of hepatitis A across the U.S. – mostly among people who use drugs. • The National Population Health Survey (Singapore) in 2022 reported that the prevalence of obesity among Singapore residents steadily increased over the past decade, from 8.6 per cent in 2013 to 11.6 per cent in 2022. As such, the government moved to promote regular exercise, healthy dietary habits, early disease detection and better disease treatment. Even before the war on diabetes began, the Health Promotion Board (HPB) launched its Healthier Choice Symbol (HCS) in 2001. Since declaring the war on diabetes in 2016, overall rate of diabetes dipped from 8.8 per cent in 2017 to 8.5 per cent in 2022.	• In the US, funding for health promotion and disease prevention programs such as obesity, cancer, and substance misuse prevention is so low that proven, evidence-based programs are not in place in many states and communities due to lack of funding. • Trump's tightening of the budget for Medicaid in 2025 reduces the affordability of healthcare for many American citizens. Many Medicaid enrollees can expect to pay more out-of-pocket for appointments. Trump's legislation requires states that have expanded Medicaid to charge enrollees up to \$35 for some services if their incomes are between the federal poverty level (this year, \$15,650 for an individual) and 138% of that amount (\$21,597). It will also cause at least hundreds of thousands of immigrants who are lawfully present — including asylum-seekers, victims of trafficking, and refugees — to lose their healthcare coverage by cutting off the subsidies that make premiums affordable.
With widespread health campaigns and health education programme especially in developed nations, individuals who contract preventable diseases can only blame their own choice to follow an unhealthy lifestyle. • In 2013, a ten-point action plan, including a 20% tax on soft drinks, to act against obesity before it becomes “unresolvable” has been presented to government bodies by the UK Academy of Medical Royal Colleges. In Australia, Western Australia's graphic, hard-hitting obesity prevention campaign against “toxic fat” was launched in Queensland in the same year. And the Heart Foundation, Cancer Council Australia and Diabetes Australia launched a mass media campaign called “Rethink sugary drink” in January 2013.	Modern health issues are largely influenced by the environment in which we live and as it is shaped by society collectively, individuals cannot be faulted for suffering the consequences of living in an environment in which certain illnesses thrive. • e.g. The health effects of air pollution remain a public health concern worldwide. Exposure to air pollution has many substantial adverse effects on human health. Globally, seven million deaths were attributable to the joint effects of household and ambient air pollution. Subjects with chronic respiratory diseases such as chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) and asthma are especially vulnerable to the detrimental effects of air pollutants. Air pollution can induce the acute exacerbation of COPD and onset of asthma, increase the respiratory morbidity and mortality.
•	Regardless of how prepared we are, acute illnesses and transmissible viruses can catch us off guard. It is idealistic to expect individuals to always be prepared for ever-evolving variants of viruses.

	Realistically, these viruses mutate and evolve faster than mankind can adapt. • Covid-19 virus mutated rapidly into multiple variants with different characteristics. For instance, since the initial outbreak, the virus has developed numerous variants such as Gamma, which was shown to be 1.4–2.2 times more transmissible than earlier strains and capable of partially evading immunity from previous infections, leading to reinfections • Over the past two decades, the world has faced several significant pandemics: Sars in 2003, HINI in 2009, Mers in 2012, Ebola in 2013, Zika in 2015, and Covid-19 in 2020. Scientists have long warned that a confluence of factors is accelerating the emergence of novel infectious diseases.
Related recent examples	
• 8 years ago, Singapore declared war on diabetes. Is it winning? - https://www.channelnewsasia.com/today/big-read/eight-years-war-diabetes-winning-4698451 • How viruses stay one step ahead of our efforts to kill them - https://www.vox.com/2014/6/27/5846900/how-viruses-stay-one-step-ahead-of-our-efforts-to-kill-them • The Impact of Chronic Underfunding on America’s Public Health System 2024: Trends, Risks, and Recommendations - https://www.tfah.org/report-details/funding-2024/#:~:text=Another%20area%20of%20chronic%20underfunding,health%20and%20bolster%20its%20resilience. • Trump voters wanted lower medical bills. But for millions, bills are about to go up https://www.npr.org/sections/shots-health-news/2025/07/25/nx-s1-5479075/trump-medical-debt-bbb-health-insurance	

Question 5

‘The media only serves to worsen the problem of inequality.’ Do you agree?

(2020 ASRJC Promo)

Question Analysis

Issue:

The issue being discussed is whether the media primarily serves to worsen inequality, merely maintains the status quo, or instead plays a constructive role in narrowing existing gaps within society.

Context:

Global

Conceptual Understanding:

- Demonstrate understanding of the media as a powerful institution and platform that shapes narratives, influences perceptions, and distributes information across societies. Its impact on inequality can be understood by examining trends in media ownership, algorithm-driven content, and the digital divide.
- Demonstrate ability to consider how these effects vary over time (e.g. before and after social media) and across contexts (e.g. between developed and developing countries).
- Demonstrate ability to analyse and evaluate the implications of media-driven inequality at multiple levels: locally (such as in Singapore’s context of high internet penetration but income disparities), regionally (e.g. digital gaps within ASEAN), and globally (e.g. the concentration of global media power in a few tech giants). Shows appreciation of whether the media predominantly deepens divides, maintains them, or can be harnessed to reduce inequality.

Key words:

- “The media” – traditional media platforms (TV, radio, advertisements, print media, newspapers, billboards etc.) and new media (social media, streaming services, websites, blogs, virtual/augmented reality etc.)
 - To consider characteristics of each type of media and how these characteristics may perpetuate or alleviate the problem of inequality. The concept of power and who wields the power in the use of media is also essential in the understanding of this issue.
- “only serves” – an absolute proposition implying that the media has only one effect on the problem of inequality; students recommended to disagree with absolute first before offering measured stand
 - To consider the possible effects that the media has on the problem of inequality and determine if this assumption is true or not.
- “worsen” – to deteriorate the situation by complicating the matter or causing new/more/different problems related to inequality.
 - To explain how the media may do this or alleviate the problem by being a solution to the problem, or keep the status quo. Students may choose to evaluate the extent of the effect the media has on the issue of inequality.
- “the problem of inequality” – marginalised groups not being able to attain equality of opportunity or gain representation in various aspects of life.

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

- 5W1H - Who controls media? (e.g. wealthy corporations, states, grassroots creators) Who consumes it? Why might the media depict situations or peoples in a certain frame? Where is the problem of inequality most affected by media representations? What kind of content most significantly worsens or reduces gaps given various contexts? How do the media depictions significantly affect inequality; what mechanism are used?
- SPECTRAM – What are the various social, political, economic, and cultural dimensions of inequality we can consider? What are the various negative/positive impacts from inequality improving or worsening because of the media?
- Trends: rise of influencer marketing, algorithm-driven feeds, digital divide, public service

broadcasting etc.

Possible Stands

- I disagree that the media only serves to worsen the problem of inequality. However, I believe that the media mostly serves to worsen the problem.
- I disagree that the media only serves to worsen the problem of inequality and argue that the media, in fact, helps to improve the problem of inequality.

Reasons why the media mostly serves to worsen the problem of inequality

Powerful conglomerates run by mostly white, male Caucasians still have a monopoly on some of television's most influential TV networks and cinema's most popular movie production companies, further reinforcing specific representations and possibly unequal power relations in society.

- Ever since The Walt Disney Company was founded in 1923, it has [steadily been adding other companies and brands to its roster](#). Today, Disney is worth an estimated \$130 billion and retains a staggering media empire as well as other businesses. Marvel, 21st Century (Fox), National Geographic, Hulu, Lucasfilm are some of many media companies under the Disney brand name.
- At face value, Disney cartoons may seem harmless entertainment, but some researchers have raised concerns about the subliminal lessons Disney's films contain. Perhaps the most common criticism is the way [these have portrayed gender, racial and cultural stereotypes in the past](#). The opening song Arabian Nights in Aladdin, for example, contained the line "where they cut off your ear if they don't like your face" when it was released in 1993. Disney later changed the lyric.
- Major global conglomerates like Disney and News Corp influence public narratives; for example, in 2020 Fox News (part of News Corp) arguably favoured [powerful political and commercial interests](#): the Trump campaign, the Republican Party, and its own corporate profit motives. This played a role in suppressing the broader public interest in factual reporting, as well as the interests of political opponents and groups harmed by misinformation.

Reasons why media does not worsen the problem of inequality, and may help to improve it instead.

The democratising power of social media allows any individual the freedom and the space on the Internet to represent themselves in whatever capacity they want, giving voice to those who were previously denied an opportunity to participate in public discourse.

- The #MeToo movement [began with a tweet](#), later amplified by mainstream outlets, leading to real policy changes and conversations about workplace harassment.
- [Rise of the Black Lives Matter movement](#) illustrates how social media can empower historically marginalised voices to challenge dominant narratives and participate meaningfully in public discourse.
- In Singapore, ground-up media initiatives like Wake Up Singapore highlight stories of migrant workers and low-income families, drawing public sympathy and donations.

Social media, with its algorithms for surfacing posts that numerous others have 'liked', serves to lend

A growing group of enlightened studio producers has led to fairer and more equal representation of

even greater voice to those who are already powerful, trapping users in a filter bubble where alternate and unequal realities are often left unseen. • Social media, once seen as a profoundly democratic technology, is increasingly serving the needs of authoritarians and their allies. Many observers have noted that entrenched authoritarian states, like Russia and China, have gotten very good at manipulating these platforms to marginalize domestic dissidents and destabilize democracies abroad e.g. Twitter bots spreading pro-China propaganda to show support for China's treatment of Uighurs in Xinjiang. • In 2021, Haugen leaked internal documents showing Facebook's algorithm changes in 2018 intentionally boosted posts that provoked "anger" and high engagement. The effect was that inflammatory posts — often from already prominent politicians or big media pages — spread much further, deepening polarisation and leaving smaller community pages, local activists or minority journalists with less reach.	various people groups in blockbuster productions, steering the narrative towards a more inclusive society and providing a platform by which the issue of inequality can be discussed more actively. E.g. • Black Panther's all black cast and how it represents a win for the African American community. • An article that highlights how Crazy Rich Asians was a win for the Asian American community and wealthy Singaporeans but not the rest of Asia. • Lion King (the live action) rewriting and removing problematic racist tropes in the live action remake of the show.
The digital divide leaves poorer and rural communities unable to access educational or economic opportunities the media can offer. • During Covid-19, students in low-income Singapore households without laptops or stable Wi-Fi struggled with home-based learning, missing classes or relying on smartphones, widening educational inequality. • In sub-Saharan Africa, less than 30% have reliable internet access, preventing them from benefiting from free online learning or job platforms.	Free or affordable educational content helps reduce knowledge gaps, directly empowering disadvantaged learners with skills or knowledge they might otherwise be unable to access. • YouTube channels like Crash Course and Khan Academy offer lessons from primary science to advanced economics to anyone with internet. • Singapore's National Library Board's (NLB) free e-learning portals and online courses. They offer free access to coding courses, digital literacy workshops, language learning and professional skills training, which would otherwise cost hundreds of dollars.
Related recent examples	
Digital erasure: How social media platforms are silencing Palestinians in 2024 https://advox.globalvoices.org/2025/05/12/digital-erasure-how-social-media-platforms-are-silencing-palestinians-in-2024/ Black Americans' mistrust of the U.S. news media https://www.pewresearch.org/race-and-ethnicity/2024/06/15/black-americans-mistrust-of-the-u-s-news-media/ Why digital poverty deserves greater attention	

<https://fass.nus.edu.sg/srn/2021/10/21/why-digital-poverty-deserves-greater-attention/>

Podcasts give a voice to marginalized communities

<https://akademie.dw.com/en/podcasts-and-marginalized-communities-raising-voices-and-reclaiming-histories/a-70112428>

BBC Increases Representation Target On All Shows To 25% After Revealing \$318M Diversity Content Spend

<https://deadline.com/2024/09/bbc-diversity-content-targets-upped-spend-dreaming-whilst-black-1236077405/>

Question 6	
‘Environmental conservation, not economic growth, should be a country's first priority.’ Discuss. (2017 SRJC JC2 MYCT)	
Question Analysis	
<u>Issue</u>: The issue being discussed is whether environmental conservation should serve as a country’s primary concern, as opposed to economic growth.	<u>Context</u>: Global
<u>Conceptual Understanding</u>: • Demonstrates an ability to understand that the goals of environmental conservation and economic growth are not a binary choice but competing policy objectives. Prioritization of one is often at the compromise of the other. • Demonstrates an ability to provide a range of relevant examples where world leaders and governments have chosen to prioritize one objective over the other, and the long and short-term consequences of that choice. • Demonstrates an ability to understand that the choice to prioritize environmental conservation over economic growth or vice versa is a moral/ethical choice in addition to a practical one. • Demonstrate an ability to understand that different countries have different contexts, needs and styles of governance, and therefore the question of what a country should prioritize is highly reliant on their unique circumstances.	
<u>Key words</u>: • ‘Environmental Conservation’ – Actions taken to save or reduce harm to the environment • ‘Not’ – negative • ‘Economic Growth’ – Increase in the quantity and quality of goods or services produced by a society • ‘Should’ – Indicator of obligation, duty, or correctness • ‘First Priority’ – A consideration or goal that should be addressed above all others	
<u>Significant aspects/areas to be discussed (5W1H, Multiple Perspectives, Significant Trends, SPECTRAM)</u>: • 5W1H – Who are the stakeholders in the issue? What are the benefits and detriments of prioritizing environmental conservation over economic growth, and vice versa? How • TIRE+C – Timeframe: Short-term vs Long-term consequences, permanent VS temporal. Idealism (VS Realism): Contrasting the best-case scenario VS the likely outcome, Context: Circumstances of each country and how that might affect their government’s decision making • SPECTRAM – Society, Politics & Governance, Economics, Environment, Morality	
Possible Stands	
• I largely agree that environmental conservation, not economic growth, should be a country’s first priority. • I largely disagree that environmental conservation, as opposed to economic growth, should be a country’s first priority.	
Reasons why environmental conservation, not economic growth, should be a country’s first priority	Reasons why environmental conservation rather than economic growth, should <u>not</u> be a country’s first priority
The long-term sustainability and public health benefits of environmental conservation outstrip short-term economic gains from environmental exploitation.	Countries that are economically underdeveloped or vulnerable may need short-term economic gain to alleviate poverty. Environmental conservation at the cost of economic gain will slow growth.

• A ScienceDirect paper notes that 7.1% of all global deaths in 2010 can be attributed to inhalation of particulate matter 2.5mm or less (PM2.5). PM pollution in China and India is the highest environment-related health concern and statistics suggest over 1.2 million mortalities occurred in 2010 alone. China responded by launching objectives to curb these pollutants. This objective succeeded, reducing concentrations of PM2.5 by over 30%, and is estimated to have reduced mortalities by over 40 thousand, with an estimated 710 thousand years of human life saved.	Additionally, the transition to greener energy or environmentally friendly infrastructure is costly and technologically challenging, and smaller countries may lack the resources to absorb these costs. • A 2021 article from the United Nations Trade and Development website states that countries with significant fossil fuel reserves classified as the “least developed” stand to lose the most from the adoption of renewable energies. They have limited abilities to diversify their economies and exports, exacerbated by the fact that there is often little domestic incentive or even reluctance to participate in climate change mitigation.
There exists a moral impetus to preserve the ecosystem for future generations. Additionally, indigenous or vulnerable communities are disproportionately affected by damage done to the environment. The government should take special care to ensure that these disproportionately vulnerable people are not left to be ravaged by the effects of environmental degradation. • A 2025 EuroNews article states that Indigenous people tend to be particularly vulnerable to environmental damage (and lax laws regulating environmental conservation). These issues can include water scarcity, pollution, desertification, coastal erosion and deforestation, among others.	Sudden shifts in conservation objectives have the potential to displace existing industries in a country, such as mining, large-scale agriculture and fossil fuels. This displacement potentially results in unemployment and social unrest in communities built around these sectors. • A IndustriAll Global Union article from 2024 describes that 100 coal miners a day face job losses as the global industry winds down on coal. This transition has had a severe impact on not just the miners’ livelihoods, but their local communities and economies heavily dependent on coal production. The article cites difficulties of transitioning into other careers within the energy sector, and the difficulty of finding like-for-like jobs.
Countries that lead by example can spearhead global leadership through their credibility and achievements. This allows for opportunities for countries to uplift and guide each other’s conservation efforts and shape global policy. • Over 100 countries have agreed to the goal of protecting 30% of land and marine spaces by the year 2030 as part of the United Nations’ “Decade on Restoration”. Columbia has gone above and beyond to achieve this goal by 2022. Denmark has been praised for its steady and comprehensive climate policy, and has managed to reduce its emissions by 60% since 1990.	
Related recent examples	
• Coal mine workers demand a just energy transition https://www.industriall-union.org/close-to-1-million-coal-industry-job-losses-from-global-energy-transition-0 • Indigenous survival in the face of environmental damage https://www.humanrightsresearch.org/post/indigenous-survival-in-the-face-of-environmental-damage • Least developed countries cannot afford to strand their assets, given their development challenges https://unctad.org/news/least-developed-countries-cannot-afford-strand-their-assets-given-their-development-challenges	

Question 7	
‘Too much emphasis is placed on image in the modern world.’ What is your view? (2016 AJC Promo)	
Question Analysis	
<u>Issue:</u> The issue being discussed is whether an over-emphasis on image is prevalent in the world today. Modern technology and trends have resulted in a world where personal branding and the perceptions of others have become powerful and desirable status symbols by individuals and organizations alike.	<u>Context:</u> Global, Today
<u>Conceptual Understanding:</u> • Demonstrates an ability to identify and explain the increase in perceived value or importance of image in the modern world, contrasting the past. Likewise, the student should be able to elaborate on the trends and consequences caused by this shift in priorities. • Demonstrates an ability to understand that the concept of image encompasses more than just physical appearance – this includes personal branding, public perception, social media presence and visual communication • Understand how increasing the importance of image might come at the expense of other qualities, such as competence, integrity, or critical thinking. Likewise, the student should be able to argue that to an extent, image and substance can co-exist as opposed to being a binary choice.	
<u>Key words:</u> • ‘Too much’ – Excessive, to the point of detriment • ‘Emphasis’ – indicating importance, value, prominence given to something • ‘image’ – The impression that a person, organization or product presents to the public • ‘modern world’ – contemporary times; society today	
<u>Significant aspects/areas to be discussed (5W1H, Multiple Perspectives, Significant Trends, SPECTRAM):</u> • 5W1H – Why has image become more valuable and important in modern times, as compared to the past? What reasons might an individual or organization have to place emphasis on preserving a good image? Where is this phenomenon taking place? Who are the stakeholders that hold image in high importance? • Multiple Perspectives – Individuals, consumers, companies • Significant Trends – The shift towards the Internet as the de-facto platform for communication, socialization, advertising and seeking employment • SPECTRAM – Society, Science and Technology, Economics, Culture, Prejudice and Discrimination, Media, Morality.	
Possible Stands	
• I mostly agree that too much emphasis is placed on image in the modern world. • I largely disagree that too much emphasis is placed on image in the modern world. The amount of emphasis placed on image is mostly appropriate.	
Reasons why too much emphasis is placed on image in the modern world	Reasons why it is not the case that too much emphasis is placed on image in the modern world
• Social media obsession prioritizes image - style, perceptions of wealth, glamour or flashiness over substance. People live vicariously through	• Given the competitive and highly connected nature of the modern world, effective personal branding and maintaining a well-curated image

these influencers and become image-obsessed, chasing unrealistic lifestyles to emulate these individuals. This can create mental health issues based on perceived inadequacy when compared to these unrealistic standards (body image, wealth, success). A 2023 article from the US National Library of Medicine explains that through an experiment with a sample size of approximately 200 young people aged 16 through 18, there was a significant positive relation between image-based social media use and body dysmorphic symptoms.	is an effective professional advantage for both individuals and organizations. Conversely, news that causes a hit to one's image or reputation spreads rapidly and can directly lead to financial harm. The concept of 'cancel culture' and online activism has allowed people to publicly voice their displeasure against people or organizations deemed immoral or problematic. While not all reasons for 'cancellation' are equally objective, it is undeniable that through the Internet, news that tarnishes one's image can rapidly spread and translate to pecuniary harm. For example, Amazon was once lambasted for a 2022 ad that depicted their warehouse workers as happy and content, which drew much vitriol, as the company is known to treat their labourers poorly.
An increase in visual communication through internet platforms leads society to increasingly evaluate individuals based on appearance and first impressions (branding, fame, social media presence etc) instead of character, intelligence or skill. Cryptocurrency scams have been the latest mode of fleecing fans based on established goodwill – prominent celebrities such as YouTuber Logan Paul and rapper Snoop Dogg have been accused of rug-pulling millions of dollars from fans through such projects. These people bought into these schemes purely based being endorsed by their favourite celebrity as opposed to the merit of the projects in question.	Visual communication (through Internet-connected platforms) such as social media services or LinkedIn has become the de-facto form of advertisement and a practical necessity in the digital age. A 2018 article from the World Economic Forum notes the importance of both ensuring that your social media history is clean and unobjectionable, and to leverage a positive social media image as a powerful networking tool.
Related recent examples	
- The association between social media use and body dysmorphic symptoms in young people https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC10471190/ - Digital first impressions – why social media matters in your job search https://steadfastemployment.com/2024/04/02/digital-first-impressions-why-social-media-matters-in-your-job-search/ - Entities related to celebrity rug-pulls https://www.web3isgoinggreat.com/?collection=celebrity-rugpull	

Question 8	
Assess the view that people in your society are not concerned about local politics. (2024 ASRJC Promo)	
Question Analysis	
<u>Issue:</u> The issue is whether Singaporeans are genuinely apathetic toward local politics or whether they engage in different, less visible ways. While low levels of public protest and political contestation may suggest disengagement, alternative forms of participation (such as online discourse, volunteering, and feedback channels) may reflect a more nuanced reality.	<u>Context:</u> Singapore
<u>Conceptual Understanding:</u> Public concern for local politics is influenced by political culture, historical context, and socio-economic stability. In Singapore, strong governance, high trust in institutions, and political stability may reduce the urgency for active political engagement. However, rising education levels, digital connectivity, and generational change can increase awareness and participation. Political concern should not be measured solely by activism or protest, but also by informed voting, community engagement, and policy discourse.	
<u>Key words:</u> - Concerned: having interest in, paying attention to, actively participating in - Local politics: political processes, issues, and decisions within Singapore, including elections, policymaking, and community governance	
Significant aspects/areas to be discussed (5W1H, Multiple Perspectives, Significant Trends, SPECTRAM): - Who: Citizens (different demographics: youth, elderly, working adults), Government leaders and policymakers, Civil society groups and NGOs, Media and online influencers - What: elections, petitions, political stability, satisfaction with government, perceived lack of influence, increased interest in issues like housing - When: Election periods vs non-election periods/During times of political controversy or crisis - Where: Parliamentary elections, local constituency events, online spaces, public forums. Specific local political issues: housing policies, transport fares, cost of living - Why: high trust in government, lack of contentious politics, perception of limited impact of individual voices vs desire for policy change, sense of civic responsibility, influence of social media - How: Through surveys, voting statistics, political event attendance/grassroots organisations and volunteers/online petitions and digital activism	
Possible Stands	
- People in Singapore are not concerned about local politics to a large extent. - People in Singapore are not concerned about local politics to a small extent.	
Reasons why...	Reasons why... not...
Owing to the political stability and efficient governance in Singapore, many citizens generally trust the government to perform its duties effectively, with few paying close attention to the finer details of local politics.	As more Singaporeans receive higher education, they are becoming better informed and more aware of the complexities of policymaking and their rights and responsibilities as citizens. This heightened awareness has led to an increased engagement in political discourse, with more individuals actively

• The People's Action Party (PAP) has been the dominant ruling party since independence, currently holding 83 out of 93 elected seats in Parliament. • The country consistently ranks very high in political stability metrics. This year, Singapore topped the Chandler Good Government Index for the second consecutive year, surpassing countries like Denmark, Finland, Switzerland, and Norway. This reflects its consistent excellence in governance compared to over 100 other governments worldwide. • A 2021 study by the Institute of Policy Studies (IPS) think-tank has found that only 7.1 per cent of Singaporeans frequently discussed politics with their friends.	seeking to understand how government decisions impact their lives and the future of their country. • Several student activist groups have formed within local universities: NTU Divest is primarily concerned with climate justice. The Yale-NUS students and the inter-student coalition 'Sgacadboyccott' care deeply for the humanitarian crisis in Gaza. There's also NTU Financial Aid Friends and SUTD's Somapah Hostelites who want universities to be accessible regardless of financial situation. • For some student activists, their campaigning is a natural extension of their education, where they are encouraged to ask critical questions and engage in civil discourse. These activists want their education to amount to tangible change in the world.
Singapore's stringent laws on managing subversion and dissent have made many Singaporeans feel accustomed to a limited degree of freedom of expression. As such, many may feel that it is pointless to be overly concerned with politics. They perceive their views as being muted and believe they have little influence on political outcomes. • Singapore's Public Order Act (POA) is a significant piece of legislation that regulates assemblies, processions, and public events in the country. While the intention of this law is to preserve public order and safety, critics have expressed concerns about the law's chilling effect on public discourse and activism. • In 2024, three women who allegedly organised a group of about 70 people that delivered letters to the Istana in support of the Palestinian cause were charged in court under the Public Order Act for organising an assembly or procession without a permit on Feb 2 along the perimeter of the Istana, a prohibited area. Such legal consequences only serve to deter Singaporeans from participating in political activities in Singapore, especially in more sensitive areas.	With increasing connectivity to the world through the internet and social media platforms, the young in Singapore have grown to be more politically conscious. The democratisation of media has also allowed Singaporeans to more vocally express their views, allowing them to be more politically engaged. • The Dover Forest petition emerged in response to the Singapore government's plans to develop the 33-hectare Dover Forest into residential housing, as indicated in the Urban Redevelopment Authority's Master Plan. The Nature Society Singapore posted on its Facebook page a 13-page proposal to the Housing Board (HDB). In the proposal, NSS argued for the Dover Forest to be designated as a "public-cum-nature park" instead. This allowed more citizens to express their concerns collectively and to successfully influence the government's plans for the forest, with half of the forest ultimately being left untouched as a result.
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Related recent examples

- Singapore's ruling party pulls out all stops online to woo youth
<https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/c5yldprdg3o>
- GE2025: PAP politicians creating content with influencers – win-win or no-no?
<https://www.channelnewsasia.com/singapore/ge2025-influencers-candidates-online-content-5078351>
- GE2025: Singapore voters can't afford to ignore harsh new global realities
<https://www.straitstimes.com/singapore/politics/ge2025-singapore-voters-cant-afford-to-ignore-harsh-new-global-realities>

- Commentary: Addressing gaps in representation and expectations of Singapore political leadership <https://www.channelnewsasia.com/commentary/singapore-pap-wp-general-election-cpib-affair-grc-representation-minority-3636461>
- Singapore No. 1 again in world ranking on government effectiveness <https://www.straitstimes.com/singapore/singapore-no-1-again-in-world-ranking-on-government-effectiveness>