

1. Academics

1) How far do you agree with the view that science is the most important subject for students to study?

Science alone is not the most important: I do not concur/ agree with the view that science is the most important subject for students to study. While science is an important subject, there are other subjects which are of equal importance. Ultimately, it all boils down to which career trajectory= path one chooses to pursue that will determine which subjects combination should hold greater weight in their studies. (Academic trajectory= 6 yrs MBBS, 3 yrs Geriatric studies)

Singapore's future economy is one that is dynamic and knowledge-based. Nurturing the right skill sets and studying Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) will definitely be beneficial for the little red dot. For the future economy, innovation will not come from geniuses brooding in laboratories. Instead, it will be derived by combining technologies that already exist and evolving them. For instance, the Google self-driving car did not happen by some startling breakthrough in artificial intelligence, but by integrating massive processing power with machine-learning software, detailed mapping and new sensor technology.

Singapore's Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong also noted that while many students opt to venture into certain fields, namely real estate, finance, law and medicine, Singapore will need strong STEM capabilities as it moves into the next 50 years. As Singapore embarks on more complex projects like the High-Speed Rail link to Malaysia, expanding the public transport system and integrating the waterways and parks, combinatorial innovation will be essential, hence rendering Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) as some of the more important subjects, and not science alone, for students to study.

CONTRARIAN VIEW Academics is not the most important:

I do not concur with the view that science is the most important subject for students to study. It is undeniable that schools should educate children on the current work trends in the world around us (science and maths), for the role of education should also be to prepare children for adult life in future. We are not training robots and computers, rather we need real people with a human touch. While the preponderance=majority of schools places great emphasis on core subjects like mathematics, science and language, information-based jobs are at risk of being automated = (replaced but this word cannot be used) by computers. Skills such as creativity, critical thinking and emotional intelligence (otherwise known as emotional quotient (EQ) are vital to one's survival in the 21st century.

2. Animals

1) There are no drawbacks to having a large number of visitors at places of attractions. What are your views?

When there are a large influx of visitors at places of attractions, naturally the revenue generated would be a substantial amount. This will also provide the funds to upgrade and maintain the facade of the place. In 2016, the tourism sector in Singapore generated 24.8 billion. The

significance of tourism to a country's economy can be further epitomised by the case study of Bali where its economy is predominantly/ mainly tourism based. If tourist numbers start dwindling, the locals will be taking a hard hit due to the decrease in tourist receipts.

However, there are banes to it as well. Large number of visitors can erode the charm and beauty of the original attraction. For instance, before the building of a cable car to get to the summit of Mt Fansipan in Vietnam, also known as the roof of Indochina, the summit was only accessible to climbers who were willing to brave the treacherous 2D1N climb up the mountain. The tranquility and nature in its purest form was preserved and protected. However, ever since the building of the cable car, the summit had become a breeding ground for litter and vandalism. Despite the local government building two replicas of the summit stone to avoid overcrowding at the original stone, it has proved to be no match for the large influx of Chinese tourists (the Chinese border is nearby). The original beauty of Mt. Fansipan is no longer intact due to the large number of visitors. Thus it is specious to say that there are no drawbacks.

2) Should animals be kept in captivity for our pleasure and entertainment? Why?

No. For starters, I would not want to be kept in a restricted space, what more for an elephant that is probably 10 times larger than me. Zoos have birds who cannot fly, and tigers who cannot hunt. Thus it would be more beneficial to learn about the animals' innate instincts and behaviours by watching them in their natural habitat. It is hard to see how looking at caged animals can teach us anything about their lives in the wild. They may be docile in the zoos, but wild counterparts who had not been trained to listen to commands may behave in an exact opposite manner. An earlier study found that only 2% of the world's 6,000-plus threatened or endangered species were registered in zoo breeding programs. It is clear from these statistics that zoos actually do very little to help save the world's endangered animals.

Some people say that animals in zoos are well looked after and are happy and contented. But wild animals need their freedom. No matter how well their keepers care for them, many suffer because they are not suited to living in a cage, tank or enclosure. Thus animals should not be subjected to captivity.

3. Art

Yayoi Kusama - 2017 showcase at the National Gallery Singapore

1) Some people believe that studying art at school is a waste of time. What do you think?

I do not believe that studying art at school is a waste of time. To comprehend the benefits of studying art better, we should look beyond the tangible benefits, the intangible yet invaluable benefits. An arts education can broaden one's cultural knowledge, and perhaps, you may even discover your talent for art. It can also help students develop critical thought and creative expression, and also enrich their study of other subjects. The creative thinking skills developed when you are exposed to art enable you to be original and innovative which are key attributes for individual success and social prosperity. A reasonable sound art knowledge that is acquired whilst studying in school can help students who want to

become a Private Banker because SG is renowned as a personal Wealth Management Centre for attracting High Net Worth Clients in this region and from the world too to park their money

here an Art is an Investment Asset Class. Some students may avoid learning art because of the stigma that art is for the unintelligent, or less academically inclined. Some may even attach a pessimistic label to an artistic career as risky, difficult, unappreciated, unrewarding, and not remunerated well. However, nothing is further from the truth that we need art. Imagine a world without art - a place with no pictures in children's books, no poetry, no music etc., it would be very lacklustre/ dull and boring. If we take a look around us, you will realise that art is ubiquitous and it takes on all forms. The garments we clothe ourselves in are designed by fashion designers. The various objects that we have, from our phones to our furniture at home, are designed by product designers. The homes and buildings that we inhabit are designed by architects and interior designers. Even the green landscape that Singapore enjoys is designed by landscape architects. These things do not just happen by chance, but are conceived through the creative mind which studying art brings about creative thinking.

2) Do you think that our society today places sufficient emphasis on art?

It is universally acknowledged that a country in possession of a First World reputation must also have a thriving arts scene. Singapore is no exception. The Singapore government recognises art's importance to our society and their deliberate efforts to emphasize it do not go unnoticed. Singapore's art scene is relatively young or in a nascent stage, but over the years, it has seen much dynamic growth. In the early 2000s, Singapore launched the Renaissance (a new growth of activity or interest in something, especially art, literature, or music) City Plans I, II and III to realise the vision of Singapore as a world-class city of arts and culture in the 21st century. The most recent plan, 'Our SG Arts Plan', was unveiled in 2018 which will help guide the National Arts Council (NAC) to champion for the arts in Singapore in the coming years. Government's spending on the arts has also increased exponentially. When the NAC was established in 1991, it only had a \$3.7 million annual operating budget, a meagre sum, compared to the current \$131 million which was announced in the latest budget for FY 2020. These efforts are a testament to the Singapore government's emphasis on the arts.

Art events such as the Singapore Art Week (SAW) also place some weight on the local arts scene. SAW is an annual event that takes place over the course of nine days with over 100 art events taking place across Singapore. It showcases art fairs and galleries, workshops, art trails, and talks and discussions. Some of these events are also conducted in the heartland neighbourhoods, widening its reach. Singapore has seen the inauguration (formal opening of a place) of specialist art school like School of the Arts (SOTA) and more government funding has been channeled to LASALLE College of the Arts and Nanyang Academy of Fine Arts (NAFA), which were previously private institutions. These schools help to promote the arts education amongst our young. It also inspires our young to pursue an artistic career, and not shy away from such an idea. This act of embracing the arts is a reflection of our society's emphasis on the arts.

3) Do you agree with the view that we no longer need museums because we can find out everything we need to know from the internet? Why, or why not?

SKILLS: FOR ARGUMENTATIVE QUESTION, YOU HAVE TO TAKE A “STAND”

I do not agree with the view that we no longer need museums because of the internet. The internet has given us unrestricted access to a plethora of information. With the greater ease of retrieval and random contribution of information from the web, it is getting increasingly difficult to ascertain the credibility of what we read online. On the contrary, museums are meticulously curated by professional curators, which gives us the sense of certainty that the information presented is accurate and credible. Apart from just information, a museum also holds physical objects like relics, paintings and sculptures etc. We are all familiar with the saying “a picture speaks a thousand words.” But when one views something physically, it speaks more than just words. It translates into an experience for the viewer which even the highest quality digital images are not able to offer.

In this digital age, we are awashed with all things virtual with claims of it being the next big thing. The advent of Virtual Reality, Augmented Reality and even Mixed Reality has blurred the definition of reality. Many museums around the world, such as the Vatican Museum in Rome and Guggenheim Museum Bilbao in Spain, now offer virtual tours where we can view the exhibits on our mobile devices. However, as human beings, we crave for authenticity and nothing beats the opportunity to physically travel to the bricks-and-mortar Vatican or Guggenheim museums. This makes the argument that “we no longer need museums” an unconvincing/ unpalatable (difficult to put up with or accept) argument. In Singapore, it is reported in the Singapore Cultural Statistics that visitorship to national museums and heritage institutions hit 5.4 million in 2017, as compared to only 3.7 million visitors in 2015. In the United States, cultural and heritage tourism contributes more than \$192 billion annually to the US economy. This highlights the importance of museums as guardians/ bastions (an institution, place, or person strongly maintaining particular principles, attitudes, or activities) of authenticity - the keepers, protectors, interpreters and exhibitors of heritages and history.

4. CCA

1) Some students concentrate on their studies to the exclusion of any other activities. How would you encourage them to lead a more balanced life?

While academics are indubitably/ undeniably/ unmistakably/ undoubtedly a core focus of our lives and it is increasingly important in today's society where that paper (Degree) serves as a stepping stone to get people in the right places. The benefits of partaking in other activities are also huge/stupendous and arguably in some cases better than what studies can give. It is through other activities that youths are able to discover their passions and may even lead them to fulfilling their dreams that may be unconventional and deviate from the traditional academic pathways but no doubt equally fulfilling if not better. For instance, Joseph Schooling would not be the successful olympic Gold Medalist with tons of advertisements tie ups had he totally excluded all other activities and concentrated on studying only. Other activities such as exercising can help students reduce stress. It pumps up your endorphins. Physical activity helps bump up the production of your brain's feel-good neurotransmitters, called endorphins. Although this function is often referred to as a runner's high, a rousing game of tennis or a nature hike also can contribute to this same feeling. Exercise also improves your mood. Regular exercise

can increase self-confidence, it can relax you, and it can lower the symptoms associated with mild depression and anxiety. Exercise can also improve your sleep, which is often disrupted by stress, depression and anxiety. All of these exercise benefits can ease your stress levels. It also provides opportunities to get away from it all and to either enjoy some solitude or to make friends and build networks. When we meet up with our interest groups, for instance chess, it serves as an opportunity to interact with each other and catch up over a game of chess.

Students will also be happier with the inclusion of other activities as life does not always revolve around studies. There is more to life than constantly trying to attain that piece of a prized results slip. With proper time management, I believe that students can live a fruitful life doing all the activities that they enjoy as well as doing well in their academics. Self-discipline is the key to success.

2) There is an overemphasis on achievements, students strive to excel in their CCAs for the sake of the CCA grade and bonus points. DYA. Why? If yes, what can be done to mitigate this issue?

AGREE

Yes. Students are expected to conform to societal norms that is to be the perfect book worm with straight As and an impeccable cca records. The government led shift towards less emphasis on academics and giving more credit to students non-academic capabilities are starting to backfire as students and parents alike start to make use of this impetus shift. CCAs are no longer simply a passion, but a stepping stone to a prestigious tertiary institute. The true spirit of CCAs has been replaced by the pursuit of glory. Outstanding CCAs achievements can help students gain Direct admission into good schools with cut off points that are way lower than theirs. Moreover, if one is truly outstanding to the extent of representing the country on an International level, they can even get discretionary admission to local universities and this includes NUS and NTU. It would be prudent for the government to do away with the DSA schemes. While I agree with the idea that CCAs are important in providing students with a holistic education, the obsession with CCAs defeats the purpose of having CCAs in the first place. Passion being replaced by a fiery drive to perform for the sake of having to and not because students enjoy it.

DISAGREE

No. I do not agree with the statement wholeheartedly. While I agree that CCA grades and bonus points play a part, there are many who strive to excel in their CCAs because they want to. Schools allow students to pick and choose the CCAs that interest them so as to develop their passions. Students can even join another CCA at any point in time with teacher's approval. Co-curricular activities (CCAs) are an integral part of every student's school life. They aim to give students a holistic education and the opportunity to excel in a non-academic aspect.

3) How far do you agree with the view that students should focus on their main school subjects and should not take courses outside of school?

The main responsibility of a student is to study and excel in their exams. After all, it is the grades that will have a determinant impact/ significant influence on their next phase of education. Therefore, I agree that students should focus on their main school subjects. However, I am of the view that to have a holistic education, students should also take courses where their interest gravitates to outside of their school curriculum. These courses should be co-curricular and not extra-curricular, which may weigh down on the students' main role and responsibility of doing well academically. Participating in courses outside school can provide an education with a divergent perspective experience for the student. Depending on one's interest, you can pick up a new knowledge or skill that is not taught in school such as a third language (afterall, we live in a globalised world and the ability to speak a third language can look good in their prospective job application), cooking, coding, graphic designing and etc. In today's day and age, employers are not only looking for strong academic results but engagement with non-academic pursuits as well. A co-curricular course/ activity can enable you to enjoy a shared connection with people of similar interests and widen your network. It also helps to strike a balance across different aspects of your life. By participating in such courses, it also enables you to develop soft skills and disciplines such as time management, attitude, teamwork, problem-solving etc. and learning/ honing these crucial soft skills will stand you in good stead when you enter the workforce and advance in your career. Therefore, while academic performance is important and should be a key priority for all students, they should pursue other courses of interest outside the regular school curriculum to add value to his/ her own learning journey.

4) CCAs are a waste of time. DYA.

I do not agree with the view that CCAs are a waste of time. Personally, CCAs help me to destress and pursue my passions outside the academic sphere. It breaks off from the mundane routine of studying, allowing me to mingle with people with similar passions. Moreover, CCAs have been proven to help students concentrate better in class. It was reported in the Straits Times that CCAs help improve students' academics. For example, a 2005 study on overweight children at the Medical College of Georgia in the United States found that 40 minutes a day of aerobic exercise improved "executive function" - the aspect of intelligence that helps us pay attention, plan and resist distractions.

Sports CCAs can help students develop precious values such as determination and self-discipline which are difficult to pick up from academic class. They can help keep the student population healthy and lower obesity rates. Such sporting events can inculcate the habit to exercise in children from a young age, preventing obesity in adulthood. Furthermore, many studies link sports activity with higher academic achievement. It has been noted that young athletes' school performance markedly improves during the sporting season, and falls away during off season.

The leadership opportunities provided by CCAs are vital in helping them to grow and picking up management skills.

CCAs also foster social integration. We will get to learn social skills which are of paramount

importance and relevant when we go out to the working world where social dynamics are no longer as simplistic as in secondary schools.

Thus, as the benefits of CCAS are numerous, CCAs are not a waste of time. It is important for students to be allowed to pursue their passions and have an outlet to destress.

Some activities also develop academic skills, or the skills related to motivation or engagement. For example, getting involved in the school newsletter helps develop planning, time-management, thinking and decision-making skills and also reading and writing proficiency. The robotics club teaches teamwork and math skills. Challenging CCAs such as maths clubs can encourage a child to stretch and improve himself. When challenges are met, the child's confidence surges.

5. Children

1) Why do you think fewer people are having children in Singapore?

I think that there are various reasons as to why fewer people are having children in Singapore. Firstly, there is a change in the message being driven across to the younger generation. In the early adolescence, young people are guided by a clear consensus from parents, schools and the larger society to study hard and secure the best possible future career prospects, romance can wait. However, come the turn of mid-twenties when formal schooling is completed, and one is about to kick start his/ her career, they are suddenly expected to have an active dating life, with an eye towards marriage in the not-so-distant future. This abrupt switch in messaging can be jarring and difficult to reconcile.

Secondly, young people are more obsessed with building a career first as it is during this period of time where companies and organisations pick out the most promising candidates to groom. Not wanting to miss the boat, many young people have placed marriage and childbearing in the back seat. Professor Jean Yeung, director of the Centre for Family and Population Research said that "Singleness rate is the most important reason fertility rate in Singapore is low, because among those who get married, only 10 per cent do not have any children." Many Singaporeans, both men and women, are also overly sanguine when it comes to risks associated with postponing marriage and childbearing, and seeing assistive reproductive technologies as a panacea for fertility issues. The truth is that these technologies are highly age-dependent and the success rate is less than 50%. Dr Peter Chew, a gynaecologist for more than 40 years, said he often sees "women focusing on establishing their careers and waited until it was too late to try to conceive. As a woman passes her prime childbearing years of 25 to 29, the chances of her getting pregnant decline." Hence, in order to secure a good career, many young people relegate marriage and childbearing which affects their fertility and thus resulting in lower birth rate.

Lastly, raising a child in Singapore comes at a high price. When a couple expects a child, they will want to provide him/ her with the best and fulfilling childhood. However, raising a child is more than just giving birth to one. Factor in the other expenses as he/ she grows up such as milk powder, diapers, healthcare, education, etc. it is an exorbitant cost. Furthermore, it is not uncommon that both parents are working, so a domestic helper may be needed which is an

additional financial burden. Additionally, there are little preschools in Singapore and to send a child to one, it may cost a huge sum of money, even going up to \$2000 per month. With an already high cost of living in Singapore, many people think twice before having a child.

6. Competition

1) Do you agree with the view that it is good for students to compete against one another? Why, or why not?

I feel that it is beneficial for students to have some friendly competitions amongst themselves. Competition can incentivise one to put in their best level effort and strive towards their goal such as surpassing their peers in their studies or outperforming their rivals at competitive events. If there is no competition, one will lose the motivation to pursue an end goal and become complacent. It will be worse if the progress attained up till then is reversed. Hence, competition is needed to ensure there is progression and improvement.

However, competition can be undesirable when one starts becoming overly competitive/ obsessed with the results or outcome. This may rebound and encourage one to start tearing their rivals down, instead of building oneself up. The goal of a good and healthy competition is not to put others down, but to motivate one to scale/ climb to new heights. In a competition, there are both winners and losers. Similarly, in life, we will not be winning all the time. There will be times where we lose and we must know how to handle it. Competition in this aspect can teach us how to do so - failure is not the end, it is just an opportunity to learn from one's mistakes. Additionally, competition will undeniably bring about much undue stress and we must learn how to manage them, not avoid them. Excelling in life is not just about achieving success after success, but also knowing to handle failures and manage stress, as life will not always be smooth sailing.

7. Culture and Heritage

1) How important do you think it is to keep in touch with our own culture & heritage?

I think it is very important for us to keep in touch with our own culture and heritage as it is the anchor for our self-identity. Singapore's culture is built on a multiracial and multicultural tenet (a principle or belief, especially one of the main principles of a religion or philosophy). Our Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong explicitly (in a clear and detailed manner, leaving no room for confusion or doubt) said that "This diversity is a fundamental aspect of our respective identities. Our aim is integration, not assimilation. No race or culture in Singapore is forced into conforming with other cultures or identities". The key to understanding one's role in society begins with one understanding his/ her own culture. Understanding our own culture also means knowing our mother tongue. Although English is the nation's lingua franca (A language that is adopted as a common language between speakers whose native languages are different), many of the older generations have a very limited understanding or rather do not speak English with some speaking other dialects. Thus it is important to keep in touch with our culture and heritage to maintain connections with the older generations.

Apart from our self-identity, keeping in touch with our own culture and heritage is also an anchor for our national identity. One facet (a particular aspect or feature of something) of our national

identity where our multicultural quality is manifested is in our food. Singapore's reputation as a food paradise is the result of the diversity of cultures. If we start to lose touch with our culture, it could potentially lead to cultural homogenisation (Cultural homogenization is an aspect of cultural globalization, and loss of diversity and ultimately, the loss of the local flavours, recipes and dishes. The Singapore government also recognises our hawker culture as national identity and has submitted a bid to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) for it to be inscribed on the Representative List of Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH). Therefore, I think that it is important for us to keep in touch with our culture and heritage.

2) How important is it to hold events like the one shown in the picture? Why?

Heritage conservation is crucial/ important for identifying, recording, analysing and protecting heritage and cultural resources. ... Conservation of heritage buildings is very important because it provides a sense of identity and continuity in a fast changing world for future generations. Educating the young on their heritage and roots reminds them of how far they have come and reminds them of their beginnings. From a small Malay fishing village to a thriving entrepot today. Their roots can extend to countries thousands of miles away from Singapore, such as France and China. The melting pot of cultures in Singapore, means that in order for citizens and residents to get along harmoniously, they would need to understand each other's culture and traditions. This is to prevent conflicts involving each other's traditions such as the curry dispute between a Chinese migrant family and a Singaporean Indian family. Such events can help increase understanding of one another's culture and help them understand the underlying reasons behind their actions.

3) What has been done to preserve Singapore's heritage?

Places of heritage value have been gazetted to be conserved and protected. Such a defunct bottling factory that formerly produced soft drinks like Kickapoo Joy Juice and Sinalco. The Urban Redevelopment Authority (URA) announced that the main building of the former National Aerated Water Co in Serangoon Road will be conserved. The factory's two-storey L-shaped building will be retained, while the shed at the back of the site will make way for residential development. The conserved building will be integrated into a new residential development and kept fenceless along the main road and river, to give the public a chance to "get up close and personal". Key features of the main building will be kept, including its signage tower, balcony with brick parapets, art deco timber transom panels and concrete sun-shading ledge that spirals out of a circular window. Buildings earmarked for conservation have to follow URA's principles of maximum retention, sensitive restoration and careful repair, among other things. The government helps to protect these precious archaic treasures.

- Former high court preserved now as National Gallery Singapore
- Victoria Concert Hall still preserved to this day

Buildings are not the only way we can preserve Singapore's heritage. The Singapore heritage board that organises heritage tours as well as non-profit organisations such as the brownie

tours that organise weekly Bukit Brown tours to raise awareness of the historical significance of the Bukit Brown Cemetery. These walking tours are informational and educational. There are also funds set aside/earmarked to maintain the facet of the heritage buildings and sites. There is also a website to document Singapore's historical documents and Singaporean memories such as roots.sg. Documentaries such as the 'Blast From The Past Series' transport viewers back to the 1960s through archival film footage/ videos donated by Mr Mun Chor Seng. Festivals such as the Singapore Heritage Festival have programmes such as tours around rustic estates that are rich in heritage values such as Toa Payoh and Dakota with the iconic dragon mosaic tiled playgrounds and tyre swings.

4) The presence of new and different cultures in Singapore today will eventually lead to a loss of Singapore's traditional culture and heritage. *DYA?* Why or Why not?

<u>AGREE</u> I agree with the view that the presence of new and different cultures in Singapore will eventually lead to a loss of Singapore's traditional culture and heritage. Being the economic hub of Asia, Singapore is inevitably caught in the wave of globalisation. Globalisation refers to the acceleration and intensification of interactions across geographical space. Globalisation has led to an increase of Multi-National Corporations (MNCs) and foreign owned companies to set up businesses of all kinds in Singapore. These foreign owned businesses introduce new ideologies resulting in a dilution of culture and ultimately affect the identity of Singaporeans. This impact has been felt most in our food culture, coffee shop culture and traditional culture. The different terms and significance of traditional local foods are unique to the food culture of Singapore that has evolved from the days of our ancestors with no similar food in any part of the world. When younger generations begin to move away from these foods, they will begin to lose sight of the significance of these food and traditions and concurrently/ simultaneously, lose their identity as a Singaporean and their ethnicity. With globalisation, there has been corporatisation of locally owned coffee shops and introduction of foreign owned coffee shops. While English is used as the medium of communication in these chains, lingos (a type of language that	<u>DISAGREE</u> I do not agree with the notion/ idea that the presence of new cultures will erode and eventually cause a loss of Singapore's traditional culture and heritage. As an up and coming arbitration and IP hub, the number of foreign expats flocking to Singapore is proliferating/ increasing. With them comes their unique cultures and traditions as well that threaten to permeate into our local rojak culture. For instance, the Golden Mile complex is widely known as 'Little Thailand' due to the numerous shops catered to Thais being set up to cater to such demands. One can find many authentic thai sweets, dishes and even a fully stocked thai supermarket. Rather than the idea of the erosion of Singapore's culture, I feel that such foreign cultures have seamlessly fused into the local culture. Afterall, we cannot explicitly define the Singapore culture for we are a fusion of the various cultures contributed by the flood of immigrants when Singapore was still a nascent state back in the 1950s and 60s. Moreover, Singapore traditional culture is firmly embedded/ rooted in society. Even our education system stresses this as seen from the celebration of our ethnic festivals such as Chinese New Year and Hari Raya. — some places in singapore that hold traditional significance are also undergoing gentrification (kampong glam, having more and more modern cafes instead of traditional malay taste, lost the original "malay feeling")
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contains a lot of unusual or technical expressions)/ terms we used to use in coffee shops are forgotten. This is amplified when old coffee shops closed down due to the high rents and being unable to compete with large chain corporations. These old coffee shops lose out as these chain corporations appeal more to the younger generation due to its wide range of food, ambience and an indication of a higher status. Terms we use in coffee shops are now used less frequently and ultimately will be forgotten. These terms, solely used in Singapore, have been an integral part of the coffee shop culture and consist of a mixture of languages, dialects and symbols which are largely connected to the identity of Singapore. Examples are Kopi Kosong: coffee with no sugar (kosong is zero in Malay, kopi is coffee in Malay) These terms largely connected to the fact that Singapore is a multiracial country where the locals are able to speak languages of other races. As old coffee shops close down and younger generation prefer coffeehouse chains, these terms will be less likely to be passed down. When these terms are no longer used, we will lose sight of our identity as Singaporeans. <i>Choose one to elaborate one (Clothes, food, etc) - refer to traditions notes</i> <i>Go for quality as opposed to quantity</i>	— can also use SS case examples Korean Hallyu Wave, more Korean food stocked in supermarkets in just a few years (200 types in 2008 to 400 types in 2013) show the extent of globalisation and the demand of foreign food in Singapore, indicating the dilution of culture
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2) Do you think the proliferation of popular media and culture from other countries has resulted in you losing touch with your own culture? Why or why not?

8. E-commerce

1) Would you shop in a place like this?

The shops in the picture depict a flea market with many individual stalls selling unique items like trinkets and accessories. Personally, while I do enjoy browsing at these flea markets, I do not always buy from them unless I find something interesting/ intriguing at affordable prices. Such places are perfect for thrift shopping which seems to be a trend now, where people look for sustainable shopping practices. Flea markets are also a great place to find original and handcrafted items from artisans who are just starting out in their craft and cannot yet afford to

rent brick-and-mortar stores. However, I am also aware that some shops may not be honest and sell counterfeit products at inflated prices. Hence, one should always be careful when making purchases at such places. Overall, shopping at flea markets is not only a good way for me to save a few bucks, it also supports our local artisan community.

2) How has technology changed the way we shop?

With the advent (arrival) of the internet, the world has become more interconnected than ever before and the number of online shops has burgeoned. Especially during this pandemic period when physical retail stores are unable to attract customers physically, we have witnessed the boom of the e-commerce space. One of the benefits of online shopping is the access to a wider range of products and cheaper prices. With a simple search online, we can easily compare prices and view more products than what was previously limited to shelves in a physical store. The convenience online shopping brings also allows us to buy items from different shops without having to travel from one mall to another and even have everything delivered to our doorstep the next day without additional charges. Products sold online can also be offered at slashed prices as the sellers do not incur expenses such as rental and overhead costs and such savings are passed on to us consumers. Of course, we will be more than happy to enjoy such savings.

Eg: Karma (will scout the entire world for discount coupons for registered shopping platforms), buyers will enjoy further discounts.

3) Some people feel that expensive items are always of better value than cheap items. Do you agree?

Whether the price tag of an item determines its intrinsic value depends on the item that we are referring to. For instance, fashionable items like clothes, bags and shoes might not always be the case. It is possible to find a good quality bag that is practical yet inexpensive as compared to luxury designer brands. Conversely, sometimes forking out the additional money for a coveted designer bag could be seen as an investment piece as its value will appreciate over time, unlike the cheaper mass-marketed bags, such bags could potentially hold greater value.

Ex: The highly coveted Hermes Birkin and Kelly Handbags are sought after for their craftsmanship and long waiting list. Buyers who hold on to these bags can see it appreciate (increase) in value. Rolex or Patek Philippe watches

Another example would be technology gadgets. In recent years, the prices of smartphones have seen a tremendous increase with certain brands and models costing upwards of over a thousand dollars. In such instances, expensive may not always be better as we may end up paying for the brand. There are certainly more affordable smartphones that can have the same performance, if not better than the expensive ones. Ultimately, different people perceive value differently and sometimes certain things may be defined more than just its price tag or quality. When that is the case, some people might view an ordinary product as valuable while others might beg to differ.

4) With the option of online shopping, will supermarkets still be able to survive?

The internet has brought us many benefits and one of them is the convenience of online shopping. Customers can shop on their smartphones and with a few taps, you are done. All that is left to do is wait for the items to arrive at your doorstep. No more hassle of going down to the supermarket and carrying everything back. No more unceasing (continuing and unlikely to stop or become less) queues to checkout your purchases. The on-line shopping has proved to be particularly helpful during the COVID-19 pandemic and mitigates/ reduces the chances of getting infected when one physically shops at the supermarkets. While online shopping seems to make our grocery shopping easier, supermarkets are still very relevant.

Judging from the crowd at supermarkets, it is apparent that they will survive. For some, they crave that sensory experience whilst dabbling in grocery shopping. They like to pick a myriad of vegetables and fruits by feeling and touching them to ascertain that their freshness is not compromised for their family. Not forgetting the free samples that allows one to make a more informed buying decision. There is also a group of people who will reach their hands deep into the shelf to choose an item with a later expiration date than the others or one with a better looking packaging. With online shopping, you do not have the freedom to do so. Furthermore, there may be certain discounts and promotions that are only available at the physical stores but not online. Those who are on the lookout for good discounts may have better luck at the physical stores. Some online platforms even inflate the prices, citing platform fees to justify the higher price. Hence as online shopping continues to morph and provide an alternative to customers, I believe that supermarkets will still be able to survive.

9. Environment

1) How can students or the public be encouraged to recycle?

Students and the public may find recycling troublesome especially when they have to sort out and clean their rubbish. By incentivising households to recycle, it can help spur recycling rates. This proved successful in the South West District, which has a weekly "Trash-for-Cash" programme, where residents could exchange unwanted items for necessities such as rice. The scheme contributed to the 2,350 tonnes of recyclables collected in 2013. By introducing a charity element to recycling can also help increase recycling rates. In Marine Parade GRC, an electronic waste recycling pilot with a charity element yielded positive results too. Panasonic Asia Pacific donated energy-saving light bulbs to needy households based on the amount of e-waste collected. A total of 10,204kg of recyclables were collected in seven months. Schools can also organise interclass recycling competitions. A case in point/ For instance, as part of the Love Cedar Project, classes are encouraged to recycle their unwanted newspapers so as to obtain points for their class which can play a part in whether they will win prizes at the end of the year which includes GV movie tickets and ntuc vouchers.

2) There is no need to recycle. HFDYA.

I disagree with this view as natural resources are limited and are bound to run out one day if we continue to use them mindlessly. Harmful chemicals and greenhouse gases are released from rubbish in landfill sites.

- Recycling helps to reduce the pollution caused by waste. Habitat destruction and global

warming are some the effects caused by deforestation.

- Recycling reduces the need for raw materials so that the rainforests can be preserved.
- Recycling reduces the need for extracting, refining and processing raw materials all of which create air and water pollution. As recycling saves energy it also reduces greenhouse gas emissions, which helps to tackle climate change.
- A county environmental services department in New York projects a huge savings in the number of trees that would not need to be cut down if newspapers and junk mail were recycled: Over 40,000 trees could be saved if all morning newspapers in the United States were recycled for one day.
- Manufacturing products from recycled materials often generate less air and water pollution than what would have been generated when the product was made from the original materials. For example, making recycled paper creates 74 percent less air pollution and 35 percent less water pollution than making paper directly from trees.
- Using products made from recycled materials can also generate less pollution. An automobile made from recycled aluminum is lighter than an automobile made from steel. This results in the need for less gasoline to power the car and a resulting decrease in air pollution.

10. Family

1) How family friendly are the places in Singapore?

Singapore has many family friendly places. There are plenty of things to do with children, as well as the elderly. The number of ramps around our small island is stupendous. This makes it convenient for families travelling with strollers, wheelchairs and easier on the knees for the elderly who would undeniably prefer walking up the gentle slopes, as opposed/ compared to climbing the stairs. Moreover the ramps come with handle bars/ banisters for them to lean on for support. Even our MRTs and Buses are family friendly. MRTs have lifts, escalators and stairs for easy access to the train platforms and the main roads. Buses are wheelchair accessible. There are even plans to install anti-slip flooring at bus interchanges and MRT stations to make the place more elderly friendly. Virtually/ almost all shopping malls have nursing rooms for newborns and their mothers to use as well making them family friendly places. Families with newborns do not need to worry about having to find a private place to change nappies. Mega malls such as VivoCity and Serangoon Nex are also equipped with a children's playground and a pets K9 playground. The trend of inclusivity is proliferating with the new malls being up for tender. Mall designers are more considerate of the needs of our ageing population and the need to be kids friendly, as malls are usually places where families congregate/ get together.

2) Would you enjoy doing what the people in the picture are doing? Why or Why not?

I would enjoy attending cooking classes with my mother. Personally, I am a fan of cooking and baking. I love to concoct unique dishes that are unconventional, mouthwatering and tantalising/ delectable. I believe that a rainbow of dishes will send your taste buds into an overdrive by their profusion of colors, textures and flavors. Such recipes and techniques are best learnt in a hands on session with a skilled chef. Attending the cooking classes with my mother would allow us both to replicate such dishes or pastries that please both the palate and the eyes. Complex techniques such as piping roses on a cake or to descale a fish before cooking curry fish head

are tricky and difficult, especially for an amateur. The instructor would play a paramount role in whether the dish will make or break.

3) What is your passion?

Baking. That is my passion. My grandmother was my biggest influence when it came to baking. As a child, I loved watching my grandmother sit down and work her magic with her hands and a few ingredients. As I got older, I wanted to be more involved and started helping around in the kitchen. I started making more types of food. They varied from chocolate chip cookies to apple pies to lasagna. I have learned many tips and tricks while baking. For instance, "If the toothpick comes out clean, it's ready to be taken out." These tips and tricks make the end product what they should be. I think baking brings out the arty side of me. Aside from everything, baking teaches me to be patient. Baking is a long and arduous process. It can be tedious at times but the joy of seeing it to fruition is absolutely worth it. Likewise/ Similarly, in life we have to be patient and work hard to achieve our goals. Baking is not just an entertainment or a hobby to me but my passion.

11. Leisure activities

1) Why is it important to have time for leisure activities?

Leisure activities are essential if one wants to have a balanced life. Professor Matthew Zawadzki from the University of California Merced conducted a research on the benefits of leisure activities. His study demonstrates that leisure activities have numerous lasting benefits, namely, it reduced stress levels and better mood and a lower heart rate. These factors are crucial for our physical and mental well-being. If one does not find time to relax, especially for those who are working, they may experience burn-out. In May last year (2019), the World Health Organisation (WHO) included burn-out as an occupational phenomenon/ work hazard in its 11th Revision of the International Classification of Diseases. This will not only affect one's health and well-being, it will also decrease one's productivity. In order not to live a sedentary lifestyle, one should partake in more leisure activities. Leisure activities are multifarious/ wide-ranging. It could be simple exercises like jogging and swimming, or more relaxed activities like playing games or assembling a jigsaw puzzle. It could even be short intermittent breaks between your work. This will indubitably help your brain to relax and thereafter your brain can assimilate new information. Thus, it is important to make time for leisure activities.

12. Lifelong learning

What are your opinions on lifelong learning?

1. Tech automating jobs at unprecedented speed
2. Dementia — The move comes amid a growing incidence of dementia in Singapore. A 2015 study by the Institute of Mental Health found that one in 10 of those aged 60 and above here has dementia. And, according to the Alzheimer's Disease Association (ADA), there were almost 82,000 people with dementia in Singapore last year. This number is expected to hit 103,000 in 2030.

13. Lifestyle

Camping

1) Is it important for teenagers to experience camping? Why or why not?

Camping indoctrinates the value of independence in teens. At camps, participants have to be responsible for their daily needs. There is no one to get them a drink or clean up after them. Teenagers will learn not to rely too much on their parents and it also shows them how difficult it is to carry out certain tasks on their own. The woods can do wonders for teenagers be it mentally or physically.

Camping also helps teenagers sleep better. According to a 2013 study by the University of Colorado Boulder, the more you abide by the sun's schedule the more likely you are to go to bed and wake up at a reasonable time. Researchers examined campers for a week and found that sleeping away from artificial light helped reset their circadian rhythms and made them less groggy.

Moreover, camping can make people happier. Researchers at the University of Michigan found that just a few minutes walking in nature can reduce depressive symptoms, which is common in people who live in urban spaces. In a corroborating study, research out of Stanford University found that spending time outdoors can help reduce rumination — the obsessive, negative thinking that could potentially lead to mental health issues.

Outdoors/Indoors

2) Outdoor activities are dangerous and should be banned. HFDYA.

While I concur/ agree with the view that outdoor activities are dangerous, they should not be prohibited. Yes it is true that far more danger is lurking in the outdoors as opposed to the safety of the four walls, however with sufficient safety precautions these dangers can be mitigated.

While MOE has made the application process for mountain climbing more onerous after the mount Kinabalu incident, long treks in relatively flat trails with little elevation are still allowed such as the 100km Maclehose trail and the lantau trail in Hong

Kong. Even camps organised locally, for instance, OBS and school camps, usually involve some components of high elements. While certain outdoor activities may be very dangerous, there are less dangerous ones such as pioneering, cycling and orienteering. Such outdoor activities can help students develop values such as perseverance and determination.

Outdoor education in PE will allow students to understand more about the environment as they learn to navigate, assess risks and make decisions about their own safety, while savoring all that the outdoors have to offer and bond better with their peers. Being in close proximity for so many days and having to rely on one another, forces people to get to know each other better. Firm friendships are forged/ cemented. Roughing out in the outdoors will help build upon the holistic and broad based education which best prepares us to be better global citizens. Thus as outdoor activities are far from having pernicious ramification, it should not be banned.

3) Some people say that young people should be encouraged to do activities outside rather than stay indoors playing computer games or watching television. What is your opinion?

I opine that young people should indulge in more activities outside rather than staying indoors. Many young people today live a sedentary lifestyles. Many choose to spend their free time playing computer games or watching television shows. With the rising popularity of handheld gaming gadgets like Nintendo Switch, and the convenience of our smartphones and applications like Netflix to stream movies and drama series, a greater number of young people are spending copious amount of time on their devices, being glued to the screen for hours on end. Physical activity has been researched to be of paramount importance to the development of bone and muscular strength and heart and lung health. It also helps to prevent the onset of metabolic syndrome and mitigates the risk of contracting heart diseases, cancer, obesity and diabetes. Young people prefer to amuse themselves with their gadgets and devices, which puts that at higher risk of developing the aforementioned diseases. Hence, young people should be encouraged to do more activities rather than staying indoors playing games.

Utilising one's time to go out and participate in physical activities also benefits one's cognitive development, as well as honing one's social skills. Cognitive skills are crucial in the information-rich world today as it enables us to learn and process information. Additionally, when we engage in physical activities outdoors, we are bound to meet people of similar interest, this provides a good platform for one to network and socialise. But to do so efficiently, one must have good social skills which can be honed with regular practice.

4) Some say that the younger generation is not as well versed in activities in the outdoors as compared to the older generation. How far do you agree?

When one mentions young people today, there is a stereotype that young people are always fixated on their phones, gaming, cooped up at home and conjured up (to make something appear by magic or as if by magic) an image of being lazy. Hence people cast an aspersion (criticize somebody or somebody's character) on the younger generation is not as well versed in activities outdoors, as compared to the older generation.

I do not believe this to be the case. This statement overgeneralises the younger generation, neglecting the group of young people who are actually well versed in outdoor activities. In schools, there are Uniformed Groups Co-Curricular Activities (CCA) such as Scouts, Girl Guides etc. These CCAs impart outdoor skills to its members. As a Scout member myself, I was taught how to cook outdoors in mess tins, start a campfire and pioneer (the art of creating a structure using ropes and wooden spars joined by lashings and knots). Last year, as a student leader, I participated in an inter-school Outward Bound Singapore (OBS) expedition where as a team, we completed both land and sea expeditions on Pulau Ubin. We trekked through and camped in the forest of the island and explored the sea and coasts on a kayak. With the recent move from the Ministry of Education (MOE) to make OBS Outdoor Education compulsory for Secondary School students, I believe more of the younger generation will be well versed in the outdoors. Therefore, though young people have many distractions indoors, it does not necessarily mean that they are unfamiliar with the outdoors.

On the other hand, according to a Health Ministry survey carried out by Singhealth, more than half of these folk aged 60 and older confess they do not exercise. Outdoor activities that used to be very popular like Tai Chi or bird watching (especially in the 80s and 90s) are now practically in their demise. If I may argue, I may even find that young people are better at outdoor activities than the older generation, as they have the time and energy to pursue these interests.

Working from home

5) How far do you think that work will be done from home instead of offices in the future?

I agree that increasingly, people will start working from home instead of offices in the future. Even currently, we have access to email, chat, video conferences, cloud collaboration software, and dozens of other technologies that now make it possible for almost any office job to be done completely and remotely. One of the most helpful technologies for seamless remote work is video conferencing. Live video feeds help out-of-office workers see and speak to one another in real time, eliminating the requirement for physical contact. Furthermore, more people are starting their online businesses which do not require them to work in a physical office as they can conduct their business on the computer without leaving the house.

However, working from home is not an option for every job, but there is clear evidence that it can have major advantages in the right applications. Physical offices still have to exist. There will still be a skeletal staff whose presence is necessary for the office to continue running and to maintain a coherent whole. Yet, I do feel that there are people who will not be willing to work from home. Many people would prefer to keep their private lives and working lives apart and hence prefer to go into the office to work. Some people might simply not be able to work from home. There might be too many distractions such as the television set and having children at home. Working in an office will compel them to be more serious, to carry themselves well and to complete their tasks on time.

With rising commercial rental, some SMEs owners have rented or purchased a SOHO (Small Office Home Office) to meet their business needs and hedge against the increase in future rental price. I do agree that many of us will work from home one day, but this does not mean that everyone will be willing to do so, or have the opportunity to do so in the first place.

— Can also bring COVID-19 as elaboration, as it is mandatory for more people to start working from home to curb the spread of the virus

— A case in point, it is almost 10 years since our first MRT train broke down. With the constant breakdowns, it can be frustrating to commute to work. Therefore it is tenable (able to be defended successfully or held for a particular period of time) for people to prefer working from home in the coming future.

14. Sports

1) Leading a healthy lifestyle is not important for many people today. What are your

views on this?

Leading a healthy lifestyle is important. It is even more pressing in today's context because top killer diseases like cancer and heart attacks are afflicting more young people. However, more people today are living sedentary lifestyles. This is evident in a WHO study that indicates 1 in 3 Singaporeans are not getting the recommended amount of physical activity of at least 150 minutes of moderate activity or 75 minutes of vigorous activity a week. The figures are much more disconcerting/ worrying amongst our youths with 76% of them not hitting the recommended target of physical activities.

I feel that many people today do not lead and see the importance of leading a healthy lifestyle. According to many surveys, respondents said Self-motivation and time were among the top reasons for not choosing to lead a healthier lifestyle. With people spending most of their time and energy being occupied at work/ school, it is no wonder that people lack the motivation and time to partake in other activities, such as sports. Why people are not adopting a healthy lifestyle is partly because we assume that we have good health perpetually and do not see the need/ importance of it.

Dr Lim Wee Shiong, a senior consultant at the Institute of Geriatrics and Active Ageing at Tan Tock Seng Hospital said that many people, especially the young, today "seldom think of the ramifications. Young Singaporeans are not very active in disease prevention because the idea of being disabled or ill seems far-fetched."

However, nothing is further from the truth that although Singaporeans' life expectancy has increased over the years, so has our years spent in ill health, averaging about 8 years out of 82 years. When one is in ill health, it can potentially lead to further health complications. Despite the importance of a healthy lifestyle, many people neglect the fact that how we manage our health today is vital for a healthy future when we reach old age.

2) The sports scene in Singapore is growing. HFDYA.

While it is undeniable that support for Singapore's sporting scene has grown, these supportive measures do not equate to a growing sport scene. The amount of sports funding, medical support and public support have increased steadily over the years with new platforms like ActiveSG and One Team Singapore Fund offering greater financial support. Many state-of-the-art facilities, like the \$1.33 billion Sports Hub and Singapore Sports School, have also been erected. And with our national athletes bringing back Olympic medals, with the most recent Gold Medal by Joseph Schooling in the 2016 Rio Olympic Games, Singapore now has 5 Olympic medals. This seems to portray an erroneous/ fallacious image that Singapore is a sporting nation.

However, behind these facades, our local sports scene is unfortunately not what it seems to be. When our athletes bring home medals, they are celebrated, but it is also no more than just hype which fades after time. Sports careers are also frowned upon by many as one without a good future and the people's views are not invalid. For instance, our Singapore National Football team slipped to its lowest ever FIFA ranking of 173 from 162 in 2016.

Furthermore, despite increased funding from the government, many of our athletes still find themselves turning to different sources, including crowdfunding and even their parents, for financial aid. For instance, Joseph Schooling had to struggle when the Singapore Swimming

Association Centre of Excellence (COE) closed. He then went overseas for training and the flights, accommodation, living expenses and school fees burgeoned to more than \$1 million. His mother practically exhausted her savings and even sold an overseas property just to finance Joseph's dreams. Apart from the supportive measures, Singapore's small population size also plays a role in the lack of growth in the local sports scene. Our smaller population and the country's lack of scale has placed a cap on the number of mega sporting events that can be brought in and unlike China or India, the local sports industry does not have a huge domestic population to fall back on. This in turn limits the sponsorships and commercial viability which hampers the growth of the local sports industry.

The local sports scene may have increased support now, but it is still struggling. Many Singaporeans place academic results over sports and still hold the view that a sports career does not yield good monetary returns. The high costs and sacrifice also deter many from pursuing a sports career. This is further exacerbated by the small fan base which does not help in driving the sports industry.

3) Some people say that going to a gym is an expensive waste of time. What do you think?

Gym memberships have both its pros and cons. To determine whether it is an expensive waste of time depends on each individual's fitness goals, budget and schedule. Personally, I feel that gyms can provide many/ a myriad of benefits if one utilises their membership well.

Firstly, gym memberships are definitely more expensive, as compared to public facilities like stadiums and swimming complexes. However, not everyone wants to jog or swim. This is where gym memberships step in. Gyms are equipped with various weight training equipment, such as cables and pulleys, bench presses and treadmills etc., - the aim is to train and tone different parts of the body. Depending on one's fitness goals, one may prefer to go to a gym to get targeted exercise and training, especially if one wants to bulk up to become a bodybuilder.

Going to stadiums and swimming incessantly around the pool is unlikely to achieve that goal.

Secondly, there are various gym memberships catered to all kinds of budget, without breaking one's bank account. In Singapore, we are very fortunate to have ActiveSG, a government initiative to encourage healthy living, with 25 gym centres islandwide. Its membership fees are priced as low as \$25 a month, and students and senior citizens can enjoy further discounts to as low as \$6 a month. Furthermore, there is the nationwide ActiveSG \$100 credit bonus sponsored by the government. At the other end of the spectrum, for those who can afford it, there are private gym memberships available that offer more with prices as between \$75 to \$250 a month. For instance, at Virgin Active gym, they offer Reformer Pilates - an exercise that aims to rehabilitate any bad body postures and Pure Fitness offers indoor running track and indoor pool. Such gyms typically/usually offer personal trainers and fitness classes ranging from Zumba to Yoga and many more. Hence, one is able to find a gym membership to fit his/ her budget.

Lastly, gyms that offer personal trainers and classes may be a boon for some. Personal trainers can help one to identify specific areas to work on and ensure that one exercises in a correct manner without injuring oneself. Additionally, people who find that they lack the self-motivation and discipline to exercise will find fitness classes helpful. They can find a class to suit their own schedules and convenience. In these classes, they will also find camaraderie as trainers and

participants can spur each other on to achieve their fitness goals. Hence, their gym membership will be well utilised and is not an expensive waste of time.

4) 'Playing team sports is a better way to get exercise than doing individual sports like running.' Do you agree?

Individual Sports is better:

Whether playing team sports or individual sports is better is dependent on one's personal preference, and hence it is very subjective. Personally, as an introvert, I prefer engaging in individual sports as a better way to exercise.

In an individual sport, there is a different set of dynamics that govern success, as compared to team sports. You are your fiercest competitor and critic, your goal is to improve and beat your personal best. In doing so, you foster the virtues self-reliance, resilience and discipline which help to set you up for prospective/ future success. These virtues will enable one to be able to tackle life's challenges that they may face in future. While team sports has its benefits like companionship, there is a proverb/an adage that says that a chain is as strong as the weakest link. Team sports can diminish/reduce the impact of the best players and also mask the mediocre= average contribution from the worst players. It does not truly reflect one's true potential. Hence, participating in individual sports is better as compared to team sports.

Team Sports is better:

Whether playing team sports or individual sports is better is dependent on one's personal preference, and hence it is very subjective. Personally, as an extrovert, I prefer engaging in team sports as a better way to exercise.

Team sports is indubitably/ undeniably/ unmistakably/ undoubtedly (use of adverbs) a good opportunity to socialise/ spend time with my friends. The camaraderie/ team spirit amongst us will be manifested as we motivate one another to stay disciplined during the training.

Additionally, when participating in competitive sports, the final result hinges on the entire team. This teaches us the virtue of teamwork, to learn to rely on one another and work towards the same goal. Without teamwork, the team's performance will falter. But when a team is united, it enables us to scale new heights which would not have been possible on individual effort. Whilst (While) individual sports can cultivate self-discipline and reduce one's reliance on others, this act of self-accountability may make one struggle more during the low times in training/ when the training gets tough. When you don't feel like pushing yourself to achieve just a little more, and there is no external motivation to give you the extra push, it becomes very easy for one to give up/ go off course but playing in team sports will allow you to receive motivation and encouragement. Thus, it is more beneficial to engage in team sports.

15. National

1) How should National Day be celebrated in order for it to be meaningful for teenagers like yourself?

National Day is partially about celebrating all of our nation's achievements and how much we love our home, it's also partially about looking back at our past and reflecting on the progress we've made.

A time capsule can be made for teens to inculcate a sense of belonging to the nation.

Teenagers can take a photo of somewhere in Singapore that has held special meaning for them this past year. It could be the garden at Grandma's, or even the kopitiam auntie who knows your order by heart. Then, pen a story – journal style – about what this place means to. The time capsule journal can then be taken out and read anytime over the years to come.

Teenagers can also take on the role of a tourist for a day. By visiting iconic attractions such as the Fullerton hotel building and the clifford pier to more modern places such as Marina Bay Sands. Teenagers will be able to understand how far Singapore has progressed from a british colony and cherish the Singapore we have today. Moreover as they walk down our heritage trails such as the Fort canning trails, teens will be more grateful for the security we have today. We should not take the peace we have today for granted as war and chaos can come anytime. National Day will be more meaningful when teenagers realise that the glitz and glamour we have today was not easy to come by and that we should not take it for granted as it was only made possible with the blood sweat and tears of our founding fathers.

2) What do you think are the reasons for the decorations shown in the picture above?

The HDB is adorned with dozens of Singapore flags. These decorations have probably been put up in preparation for Singapore's National Day. There are several reasons for putting up these decorations. These decorations help create the national day atmosphere among the community and pump up the excitement among residents. This creates a sense of attachment and belonging to a particular estate and country as the national flag is a national symbol. In addition, the process of putting up these decorations helps residents to foster stronger bonds as they work into the wee hours of the night to prepare the decorations. For the barely five-year-old Punggol Coast estate popular with young families, parents have been taking their children to the Punggol Damai Residents' Committee (RC) to help paint decorations every Saturday for the past four weeks. These include cute styrofoam pigs, chickens and a kampung house, as well as hundreds of kites, on which they scrawled their wishes for Singapore. One of the grassroots leaders had pointed out that these children would often play catch with each other when they were done with the decorations for the day. These activities have indubitably helped the families bond.

3) Singaporeans are well prepared against terror threats. HFDYA.

I disagree that Singaporeans are well prepared against terror threats. Terrorists are increasingly resourceful and tech savvy. Their networks are spreading worldwide with lone wolf attacks proliferating and trucks being driven to knock down pedestrians in crowded areas in cities like London and Paris. The face of terror threats is ever changing and thus there is no fixed set of rules that can prepare us against the terrorist activities. They come and go in the blink of an eye, before you know it, the damage is perpetrated/ committed. Despite being indoctrinated (told repeatedly, emphasised) from a young age to be alert of our surroundings, for instance, to inform mrt staff if we see any suspicious looking person or articles, many have chosen to take

the safety they have today for granted. A Sunday Times poll in 2017 found that about four in five Singaporeans feel unprepared if a terror attack were to hit home. And more than 70 per cent admitted that they have not acquired life-saving skills, including cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) and first aid. In 2017, the authorities have organised a number of community Emergency Preparedness Days, talks and exhibitions. Home Team officers visited 220,000 households and more than 160 schools. A mobile application, which allows the public to receive important alerts or send information to the authorities via text, pictures or videos, was also launched in conjunction with the campaign. However, a Sunday Times survey of 250 Singaporeans, aged 13 to 81, found that just 14 per cent have downloaded the SGSecure app - consistent with the Ministry of Home Affairs' (MHA) update that the app has been downloaded onto 843,000 devices.

16. Racial Harmony

1) Do you feel that the picture depicts a common event in our society today?

The picture depicts a scene during the Lunar New year. A Malay family visited the home of a Chinese family. The Malay lady has given two oranges to the Chinese man which shows that she is culturally aware of the Chinese tradition. The Chinese man has also given them red packets and this shows that he treats them the same way he treats other Chinese who visit him. This is certainly a common event in society today because there is great interaction among people of different races. On festive occasions that are specific to a particular race, those from different races will visit their friends and share their joy. For instance, many Malays invite their Chinese colleagues over to their house to celebrate Hari Raya. It shows the close relationships between different races. It also shows clearly that the different races work well together and continue to have good relations even outside work. The different races treat each other with utmost respect, yet their own traditions are not forgotten and they exhort (encourage) other races to take part in them.

2) How different are the major ethnic groups in Singapore?

In my own opinion, the major ethnic groups in Singapore are starkly (very obviously and clearly) different from each other, however they do have certain similarities. In terms of difference, the major ethnic groups in Singapore celebrate occasions differently. One event that major ethnic groups in Singapore celebrate differently is weddings. One difference would be the exchange of betrothal gifts. Much like the exchanging of gifts during Chinese wedding tradition of Guo Da Li, couples present gift and money to each other. However, there is no restriction on what they can gift each other, unlike the Chinese Guo Da Li.

Another obvious difference between the major ethnic groups would be their mother tongue. However, the government has recognised the importance of communication amongst Singaporeans and hence the similarity between major ethnic group is the main language used for communication which is English (LINGUA FRANCA). With the focus on national values, all the different races believe in the same set of core values. They also work towards similar goals that have been deeply entrenched in society. One of these goals would be to work hard and to earn a decent living. A pertinent (relating directly to the subject being considered) point is that

these races are all treated equally in the eyes of the law and this makes them more similar than different.

3) The government often stresses that ethnic tolerance is very important for a peaceful country. Do you agree?

Content teaching: What can the government do? From policy planning, in order to have racial tolerance, LKY had foresight. HDB Flats. He wanted to prevent ethnic enclave (geographic area with high ethnic concentration). In East London, there is a high concentration of people from the middle east, hence preventing them from integrating/ assimilating into the British society. July 2005 London Bus Bombing.

Indeed, the government's position on ethnic tolerance is very important for a peaceful country. A country economically when all races can work together and deliver GDP growth. This importance is supported by the passing of POFMA (Protection from Online Falsehoods and Manipulation Act (POFMA) . One of the main reasons given by our Law Minister is increasingly more netizens would go online and post xenophobic and racist comments on minority group. Eg: ST migrant dormitories were hit by COVID-19, because of their poor personal hygiene. The recent inauguration of EJC is a case in point that if racial intolerance is not achieved, migrant workers are unlikely to work productively.

Yes, I agree that ethnic tolerance is very important for a peaceful country. There are many countries now that are at war because of ethnic violence. The Holocaust was a horrific example of ethnic conflict (where Hitler massacred 6 million Jewish people). People were captured and killed purely because they belonged to a particular ethnic group. In the Balkans, the animosity (strong dislike, opposition, or anger) among three ethnic groups heightened to such an extent that a war eventually broke out. Racial harmony for a heterogeneous (consisting of parts or things that are very different from each other) society such as Singapore is extremely crucial. An example closer to home would be the 1964 racial riots that happened in Singapore on the 21st of July. It was the day of the largest race riots in Singapore, primarily between Malays and Chinese. Thirty six people were killed, nearly 600 injured and, in the aftermath (the period that follows an unpleasant event or accident, and the effects that it causes), some 3,000 were arrested. The cause for the race riots was a lack of trust between the races. All forms of ethnic conflict are due to a lack of ethnic tolerance and with that have resulted wars and a great number of deaths.

2012 - SBS Mainland Chinese Bus drivers went on an industrial strike, no buses.

2013 - Little India Riot

However, in order to have a truly peaceful country, we must go beyond ethnic tolerance. Tolerance is a condition where different ethnicities or religions may either have a weak understanding of one another, or actively dislike and yet mutually agree to put up with one another. Often, this tolerance is both superficial and limited to public arenas. Tolerance may mask simmering issues and that when tensions erupt, conflict can emerge even amid a climate of "tolerance". Instead, empathy is what we need for a truly peaceful country. Empathy asks that we put ourselves in another's place, to walk in their shoes and see the world through their eyes. Ironically, while tolerance is too low a standard, intolerance can be helpful. As a nation, in our

public deliberations and policies, we can be intolerant of views and personalities which try to divide us, which strive to make places exclusive to certain beliefs and practices. We should be intolerant of those who harbour hate and prejudice. We also must be intolerant of the casual slights, the majority privilege, the easy stereotyping of races. We must never be accepting that some are better than others by measure of their ethnicity, language or religion. Therefore, though I agree that ethnic tolerance is key to a peaceful country, there must also be a good balance of intolerance and empathy.

4) Why is it important to celebrate the different cultures in Singapore?

Singapore is a melting pot of different cultures and it is crucial that we continue to maintain racial and religious harmony in our multi-ethnic and multicultural society. This is only made possible if we all truly understand each other and learn to accept our differences and appreciate other cultures. More often than not the celebrations will involve dressing up in traditional costumes and sharing of traditional food. The celebration of different cultures through traditional festivals such as the Mid Autumn Festival at Gardens by the Bay last year (2017) displayed thousands of handcrafted lanterns including water lily lanterns perched gracefully atop a lake. Accompanying the lantern displays are nightly music and dance performances by local traditional arts groups across Chinese, Malay and Indian cultures. The exposure to the various traditional art groups helps (exposure in the front is singular) Singaporeans better understand the actions of people of different ethnicities and races and this mitigates/ reduces the chances of misunderstanding their actions as offensive.

The Gardens by the Bay's signature light and sound show "The Garden Rhapsody" will also be taking on a Mid-Autumn flavour with an evocative medley of popular tunes like jazz favourite "Fly me to the moon" and Chinese classic "The moon represents my heart." Famished ones may meander a food street, where they can help themselves to a plethora (myriad) of snacks and beverages such as the traditional malay satay and ketupat, while creative ones can try their hand at lantern decorating and umbrella painting at craft booths. Singapore is renowned as a food paradise and no doubt Singaporeans are all food lovers/ foodies. Without a shadow of doubt, food connects and brings people of all races together. In schools, celebrating racial harmony day like in the picture, shows that people from a myriad of cultures can live and get along with one another. Celebrating and understanding the disparate/diverse cultures in Singapore helps imbue young students with the attitudes that will help them to interact with their peers from different cultures better. Due to the deeper understanding, there will be a lesser chance of race related chaos such as the 2013 Little India Riot or even the Maria Hertogh Riots in the 1960s. In Victoria Junior College, RHD celebrations include skits acted out by students of the various races, as well as free traditional local desserts for students to sample.

17. Technology

E-books

1) Do you think it is better for people to read from books than to read online? Why or why not?

I opine that it is better for people to read from traditional print books than online digital copies. One significant difference is physical touch. When you read a print book, you are able to sense with your fingers that a pile of pages on the left is growing, while it is shrinking on the right. This tactile sense of progress is crucial to the experience of reading. When you read an online book, you will only feel the cold hard screen of the tablet, not knowing how much you have read and how much more is there to read. Some people might prefer online books despite not having the experience of flipping through the pages as tablets are more compact and convenient. However this compact screen is taking a toll on the reader's eyesight, causing eye strain.

Apart from the experience of reading, the effectiveness of reading is also different when reading from print books and online books. When reading online books, one may be encouraged to multitask which causes distraction. People also have the tendency to skim through quickly when reading online, rather than reading slowly and carefully. This lack of deep reading process hinders the development of one's comprehension skills - inferential and deductive reasoning, analogical skills, critical thinking, reflection, and insight.

According to research conducted by The Guardian, it was found that online books readers retain less of what they read and are less able to reconstruct the plot of the story in the correct order as compared to those who read the same text in print.

When examined in a comprehension setting, those who read the text in print fared better than those who read it digitally too. This demonstrates that reading from print books creates a better reading experience and develops one's crucial deep-reading skills and is more beneficial than reading online. Therefore, it is better for people to read from traditional print books than online digital copies.

Smartphones

2) How prevalent have smartphones become in our life?

With increasing affluence and a strong telecommunication network that is moving into 5G, smartphones are becoming ubiquitous with consumers owning at least one of them. Like it or not, these gadgets have become an integral part of our lives. Singaporeans spend most of our waking hours on our digital devices, averaging over 12 hours and 42 minutes a day. Whether it is walking along the street or commuting in public transport or even during meals, it is not uncommon to see people fixated on their screens. In 2019, Singapore's internet penetration rate was reported at 84%, above the global average of 57% and Southeast Asia regional average of 63%. With our smartphones connected to the internet, our gadgets have become indispensable. We use our smartphones to accomplish virtually everything - updating social media, shopping, performing banking transactions, playing games, getting directions, listening to music and etc. Now, with wearable technology gaining traction/ momentum and connected to our smartphones, our smartphones can also monitor our health, from sleep quality to heart rate to activities to calories and step counts. Some local banks like OCBC Bank allow consumers to key in their bank credit card details into their wearable technology to make payments. This is particularly useful when someone goes jogging and does not want to carry a credit card around, in case he misplaces it. You can go straight to the supermarket to buy your groceries and make payment via your wearable technology. Smartphones are so pervasive that some people have become over-reliant/ addicted to them

that they feel insecure/ suffer from anxiety attacks and withdrawal symptoms without it. It is undeniable that smartphones are useful and we have benefited from it. However, we should not depend on it till the point it consumes us and we are helpless without it.

18. Tourism

1) How far do you agree with the view that tourism is always a good thing?

There is an Asian proverb which cautions that “Tourism is like fire, it can cook your soup, it can also burn your house.” While tourism can bring about a myriad/ plethora of benefits, from economic to social benefits, there are cases where tourism has done more damage instead. Hence, I agree that tourism by and large is good, but it does bring negative impacts.

One very prominent benefit of tourism is the socio-economic benefit that it brings. Tourism can create employment opportunities for the locals and thus increasing their standard of living. In 2019, the two major Integrated Resorts in Singapore, Resort World Sentosa and Marina Bay Sands announced that they will undergo a \$9 billion expansion which will create up to 5,000 new jobs and it will also benefit the local businesses as well. Tourism has been vital to the development of Singapore. When the Marina Bay Sands was inaugurated/ opened in 2010, it employed almost 20, 000 people and further supported another 40,000 jobs. In the same year, it also generated about \$5.5 billion for the Singapore economy.

Conversely, there have been some undesirable effects of tourism in other places around the world. For instance, in Peru, while the site of Machu Picchu is one of the world’s most well known sacred places, it has also been brought into the spotlight for the amount of vandalism and damage it has received. Annually, Machu Picchu sees over a million visitors on its ground. As a result, over time, some of the trails and grounds have been eroded by the tourists’ feet. There are also several reports where tourists were caught defecating and urinating on the sacred site or even knocking over the historical artefacts. Such extensive damage is proof that tourism can have undesirable effects on the environment.

Although tourism has damaged some environments, it has also brought about the conservation and preservation of some. Sites like Machu Picchu have been labelled as a World Heritage Site which comes under the protection of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). Locally, the Singapore Botanic Gardens has also been inscribed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site. The Singapore Botanic Gardens with over 150 years of history receives more than 4 million visitors annually, and is home to some of the valuable plant collections and heritage trees in Singapore. This has enabled us to better preserve this delicate environment.

19. Transport

1) How would you feel if you were one of the people wanting to take the bus in the video?

The picture showcases/ depicts a crowded bus stop that is inundated/ overwhelmed with commuters during what seems to be a rush hour. There are lots of people elbowing/ jostling their way to board the bus that just pulled up. If I were one of the people in the image, I would

be easily irritable/ irascible that there is an exodus/ crowd of people wanting to get onto the bus. During those unpalatable situations, I would always ask myself why I would travel during rush hour as the buses and trains would be full of people. However, it is often something that one cannot help because not everyone can avoid/ avert the rush hour all the time, hence the feeling never lasts long. In my opinion, waiting to embark on a crowded bus is arguably worse than trains as the interval/ waiting time between each bus is typically longer than the interval between trains. Furthermore, the number of passengers that a bus can accommodate is undeniably smaller than a train as well. This implies/ means that those people who were left behind had to wait even longer to get to work or school, possibly attributable to those commuters on the bus who did not move to the rear.

2) In what ways can public transport be improved?

In recent years, there is an increasing public furore/ unhappiness in Singapore due to the recent breakdowns and disruptions caused by faulty trains. It is also getting more crowded during peak hours as there is a larger percentage of people using public transport, as well as the influx of foreign workers who more often than not, use public transport to reach their workplace. Yet, trying to improve the train system would prove quite challenging. Up till now, Hitherto, we still couldn't fix our MRT train system, perhaps SG Government should look at Hong Kong's Minibuses as an alternative model. By analogy (by comparison), Hong Kong is a small country and like SG, they face a rapidly ageing population. Yet their minibuses "guarantee" a seat for everyone and this can prove beneficial for the elderly. (max capacity 19 people) Additionally, when the entire Train Line breaks down, at least 10 stations in SG are concurrently affected. In HK, when a mini bus breaks down, the disruption is being kept to the bare minimum.

It would be difficult to expand the train in order to accommodate more people, as the trains have to fit a certain number of carriages due to the train stations themselves having a fixed number of doors. It is also not possible to have a larger carriage as the train tracks have a fixed size, and the same goes for the train tunnels. What can be improved however, could be the number of trains that are operating during peak hours. While the two-minute interval is short and sweet, sometimes it is not short enough especially in areas where there are large amounts of offices such as Tanjong Pagar and City Hall. With more trains, there would be a shorter interval. Hence the stations and trains would not be so crowded. Greater connectivity would also be a good improvement, with an increasing number of residential areas being constructed all over the country. Certain areas are still difficult to get to, even via buses and trains. Those living in the east would usually find getting to the northeast area such as Punggol or Serangoon very difficult as the interchange is nearer to the central area. Hence, a train line that cuts across different train lines would be much more convenient as it gives commuters more options in how to get to their destination. Buses that are able to connect to different train stations would be useful as well. One thing that buses could improve on is the interval between each bus. By having more buses in operation, especially during rush hours, the interval between each bus would be shorter. This would lead to less people pushing their way into buses, which can be seen as impolite to others. Buses are important during the event of a train breakdown, as that is the only option left to most commuters. Shuttle buses would be operating during then to transport people to each train station that is affected, as well as free transportation at the bus interchange or bus

stop, but the interval of the buses are still quite long and can cause huge crowds at the interchanges. By decreasing bus intervals, this would help ease the negative feelings that commuters would already have due to a train breakdown, as well as improve the efficiency of the transport system in Singapore.

Next, the network of trains can be made more extensive to increase the convenience that the MRT provides making commute seamless and fuss free. In order to make public transport more attractive and to combat the door to door ability of motor vehicles, the network of trains and the number of bus routes should be made more extensive.

There should also be more frequent maintenance to prevent train breakdowns and ensure the transport system remains robust. For instance, 3 years ago, the flooding of train tunnels at the Bishan Station was likely due to failure of both the 'stop' and 'alarm' float switches."

The alarm switch also failed to send a warning alarm to the operations control centre. Such mishaps could have been prevented if maintenance and spot checks were carried out more frequently.

The LTA can also learn from countries with efficient public transport systems such as Japan and Seoul to raise the quality of the public transport system in Singapore. Public transport failing on us is an especially pertinent issue that should not be ignored. For starters we should analyse the reasons for its failure. The MRT system was built for a population much less than the current growing population of almost 6 million. It was not built for our burgeoning population, and hence the constant train breakdowns. Moving forward, upgrades on the public transport should be geared towards serving a 7 million population. This could mean more escalators at train stations, longer train carriages, shorter waiting times and even top up facilities through mobile platforms or online. This can significantly cut down the crowds at top up machines and help people leave the mrt carriages and station quicker so as to minimise congestion and delays making it more efficient.

3) Should more people buy cars to ease the demand for public transport?

While people owning more cars mean less stress on the public transport system, it is in general not a good long-term alternative to ease demand for public transport. Firstly, it is very expensive to own a car. Not everyone would be able to own a car, especially now with Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong wanting to turn Singapore into a "green, car-lite city". To achieve this idea, the government would have to discourage the owning of individual cars so as to reduce carbon emissions. The Electronic Road Pricing is getting more expensive as well as increasing in the number of roads that it applies to. The price of owning a car and buying fuel is also increasingly becoming more expensive. Why should one buy a car when public transport is rather affordable? Having a large number of cars on the road certainly does not aid in traffic congestion as well. Buses would still get caught in these traffic jams; hence it does not necessarily help people using public transport during rush hours. The only thing that will help ease the demand for public transport is a convenient and efficient public transport system, much like Curitiba's bus system — buses run on a separate lane, each bus can move up to 250 passengers, tube stations where commuters are on the same level as the bus making it easier

and more efficient to get on and off the bus. Once a public transport system is convenient and cheap, more people would be encouraged to use it rather than getting their own private transportation.

4) How important is public transport for people seeking a higher standard of living?

People seeking a higher standard of living have the tendency to turn to cars as their mode of transport. Cars undeniably provide people with the comfort of a more private, convenient and quicker travelling. However, with the recent advent of carpooling schemes like Grab and Gojek, more people are turning to such schemes to travel from one place to another. This provides an alternative for those who want to travel in the comfort of a car but are unable to afford one. With the choice to ride cars at affordable rates, perhaps more people will avoid taking public transport.

Conversely, this does not mean that public transport is redundant. For instance, in Singapore, the government and the relevant ministries are revising public transport fares to make them more affordable for passengers. A case in point, people with disabilities and lower-wage workers will have lower fares. Additionally, there are also plans for more buses to be put on the roads, new train lines are merging and more trains will be put to service. With added frequency for trains and buses, people will no longer have to wait too long for them. Consequently, each ride will then be less crowded, allowing more people to travel in more comfort. New train lines also make the public transport system more interconnected, which means that people will no longer have to travel longer distances, helping them to save on public transportation fares. This can also help to make the public transportation system more efficacious as less time is spent on the road.

Therefore, as people seek a higher standard of living, the quality of the public transport system should rise in tandem with it, to meet the public's expectations. Public transportation should be one of the government's top priorities to provide the citizens with the higher standard of living that many are desiring for.

5) What is your opinion of the event in the picture? (crowded train station)

There is a large crowd at the train station depicted in this picture. Long queues have formed as the commuters wait for their turn to insert their tickets and enter through the barriers. I would be very annoyed if I were in such a situation. This looks like it is peak hour and the commuters travelling during that time are probably in a rush to get to work or school. If I were at the station at this time, I might be in a hurry to get to school. I will be very annoyed if I have to wait in line and jostle with the other commuters because when I am going to school, I like to walk briskly, go through the barriers and get to the train without having a large crowd slow me down. I would probably also be anxious about being able to get to school on time. As the crowd is so big, it would mean that it would take me a longer time to exit the MRT station and go on with the rest of my journey. It would increase the possibility of me being late for school. However, I would be grateful that there is no stampede and everyone is queueing in an orderly and calm manner. If commuters do not queue in such a manner and instead, try to push their way through the crowd, people might get injured especially if near escalators. Such an event would also be suffocating

especially for commuters who suffer from claustrophobia hence I feel that the officers should better manage the crowds. A

Additionally, my opinion of this is that there could be a “security issue.” Terrorism is still have an existential threat to mankind. When too many commuters congregate at one station, it is easier for radicalised individuals/terrorists to strike. Compared to 9/11, where detailed planning had to be done by Al Qaeda, today ISIS’s twisted way of killing civilians by advising use a knife.

6) To what extent do commuters face problems?

Commuters face a plethora of problems when commuting using public transport. One would be being unable to reach their destination on time due to crowds or maintenance work on the tracks. However, they might not face such a problem if transport officials put in place alternative modes of transport if the train or a bus breaks down. Other than that, commuters might also take the wrong train and end up at the opposite end from their destination. This might be becoming a more frequent problem today as the train network becomes more complicated and commuters might have to stop at certain train stations to change to another train. However, it is not a serious problem now as some train stations have officers to help guide confused commuters or tourists to the trains that they should take.

Another problem commuters sometimes face is having to deal with others around them who exhibit inconsiderate behaviours. For example, placing their bags on empty seats, preventing others from taking a seat. While others might lean on the handrail, preventing others from using the handrail to steady themselves against sudden movements. There are also commuters that do not obey signs in transport nodes. For example, the green and red arrows on the floor in front of each door indicate where those who are waiting to enter should be standing. However, some commuters ignore that and enter as long as the door opens. This will slow down the boarding and alighting process. This could too cause injuries (due to stampedes) and could cause commuters to miss their stop for they might not have been able to alight from the trains. However, other than this, overall I think that commuters do not face many problems.

Share bikes

1) Share bikes should be banned due to the hazards it poses as users park the bicycles indiscriminately. Do you agree? YOU HAVE TO TAKE A STAND

Introduce permanent docks (Paris)

Paris, Amsterdam - introduce a lane or road

I disagree with the view that share bikes should be banned due to the hazards it poses. Since the advent of share bikes in Singapore 2017, we have seen the number of users reporting bike hazards proliferating. Share bikes can be parked almost anywhere so long as it does not obstruct the right of way. However, some selfish individuals have parked these bikes according to their whims and fancy so as to convenient themselves. While it is indubitably/ undoubtedly/ undeniably/ unmistakably (adverb) true that such indiscriminate parking can pose as hazards especially when these bikes are obstructing community spaces and blocking footpaths, the

government have taken measures to curb= control these indiscriminate parking. This includes a proposed licensing framework. The Land Transport Authority (LTA) will have more power to fine or sanction errant operators, such as by revoking their licences or curtailing their fleet size. With the constant tweaking of legislations to better curb errant behaviours and ensure share bikes are not causing an obstruction, share bikes should not be banned. The benefits of using a share bike far outnumber its shortcomings. Not only is it cheaper than the more conventional modes of transport such as the buses, cars and taxis, share bikes are also good for a nation with rising obesity rates. The Straits Times reported in 2017 that Singapore's obesity rates risk hitting 15% within 7 years. Thus, share bikes will help Singaporeans increase their fitness levels and in the long term reduce the country's obesity pandemic. Moreover, despite the potential hazards, when users use these share bikes, the number of commuters using the MRT will dwindle. This can help ease the problems of MRT breakdowns due to the inability of the carriages to cope with the growing population. Not only will share bikes make Singapore's transport system more robust and efficient, it can also help increase fitness levels among citizens. I believe that with the new measures rolled out by the government, the problem of users parking their bikes indiscriminately will diminish over time. Furthermore, as the population becomes more educated and gracious due to the increase in education levels, such worries will be unfounded. Thus, with time, the number of errant bike users will decrease. Share bikes should not be banned.

2) Would you use a share bike as a form of commute? Why?

I would use a share bike to commute for a variety of reasons. Firstly, it is convenient. The door to door convenience is something that is not attainable through other modes of transport other than foot, bike or e-scooters. Though it is true that cars are probably the most convenient mode of transport as it is available 24-7, the stupendous costs to maintain and own a car makes it not feasible for the cash strapped. The services of a share bike are affordable and the door to door convenience is extremely attractive as it is convenient for users. The share bike company OFO charges \$0.50 for each ride and on public holidays or special festivals it might even be free of charge. At an affordable rate of \$0.50 as opposed to taking a taxi or uber which are indubitably far more pricey, I would rather use a share bike as a form of commute especially for short distances. In addition, one of the conspicuous benefits of using a bike would be the health benefits it brings. Not only can I commute to school easily with the share bike, I can also get in my daily dose of exercise. Cycling also improves our subjective mood, reduces anxiety, and allows us to handle stress more effectively. It increases the levels of serotonin and dopamine production in our brains. These are the chemicals that make us feel 'happy' when they are released in our brains. Scientists have confirmed this effect by analyzing serotonin levels in the brains of lab rats as they got more exercise. Riding a bike also helps to build new brain cells, improving our memory. Thus, for the aforementioned reasons, I would use a share bike to commute.