

**GENERAL PAPER ESSAY QUESTIONS
SORTED BY TOPICS (1999 to 2011)**

Aged / Young / Gender	
1999	Consider the criticism levelled at young people that their only values are self-centred ones.
2000	Is it true that the old must now learn from the young?
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2004	To what extent are the young in Singapore favoured at the expense of the elderly?
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2006	“Women will never enjoy the same rights as men.” Do you agree?
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The Arts / Recreation	
1999	In a world without books or music, what would be missing? Discuss with reference to specific examples.
2000	“Public money should not be wasted on supporting the arts; they should support themselves.” Discuss.
2001	“A film has one purpose - to entertain.” Using examples, consider this view.
2002	“A work of art can never be valued in financial terms.” Discuss.
2003	Does the book still have a future?
2004	Discuss the appeal and value of fantasy stories and films.
2005	Do the arts, such as music and literature, really play a significant part in Singaporean society?
2006	Do myths and legends still have a role to play in Singapore?
2007	“The arts cannot change the world, but they make it more beautiful.” Discuss this view with reference to one of the following: painting, sculpture or music.
2008	‘Contemporary music has no artistic value.’ Is this a fait comment?
2009	
2010	Consider the views that most work these days could, and should be done from home.
2010	Would it matter if all the performing arts venues in your society, such as concert halls and theatres were closed down?
2011	

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Careers	
1999	
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2001	“The most worthwhile jobs are those with the least financial gain.” Do you agree?
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Communication	
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2001	“Computers and mobile phones have made us all worse at talking to one another, not better!” What do you think?
2002	“Air travel creates more problems than benefits.” Is this a fair comment?
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2006	A picture is always more powerful than mere words.' What is your view? . "The world would be a better place if everyone spoke the same language.' Discuss
2007	The pen is mightier than the sword.' Can written language really be so powerful?
2008	'Air travel should be discouraged, not promoted.' To what extent do you agree?
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2011	

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Conflicts	
1999	Do arguments settle anything?
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2002	Is friendly rivalry ever possible?
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Contemporary Society	
1999	Does pride in one's country still have a place in the modern world?
2000	"I am a Millionaire. That is my religion." To what extent has the pursuit of wealth become the modern goal?
	"In the modern world, image is everything." Discuss
2001	Do you think that life today offers us too many choices?
2002	
2003	Was life for young people in Singapore better in the past than it is today?
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2006	Is there still a place for charity in today's world?
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Education	
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2002	“Conformity should be the main aim of all schools.” How far is this true?
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2005	Consider the view that the study of mathematics is intellectually satisfying, but of little practical use.
2006	
2007	The word failure should never be used in education.’ Discuss.
2008	Nowadays the pleasure of reading can never compete with the pleasure of visual entertainment.’ To what extent do you agree? (partly education Q)
2009	‘Only educated people should have the right to vote in elections.” “What is your view”?
	Are certain types of writing superior to others? (partly education Q)
2010	To what extent has technology had a negative impact on the skill levels of people? (partly education Q)
	‘The book has no place in modern society’ Discuss. (partly education Q)
	Can mathematics be seen as anything more than a useful tool in everyday life?
2011	

Environment	
1999	Evaluate the problems, and benefits, of the various ways in which society deals with waste materials.
2000	
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2004	How far is recycling the answer to the problem of waste?
2005	
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2007	Is it possible to protect the environment when many countries require increasing amounts of energy to progress?
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2011	‘Environmental concerns and economic growth cannot co-exist.’ Do you agree?

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Family	
1999	
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2001	Is the idea of having one partner for life still a realistic one?
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2003	The family has suffered at the expense of career in Singapore society.' Is this a fair comment?
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The Future	
1999	“The world of the future will be a woman’s world.” What are your views?
2000	Is a preoccupation with past merely an escape from the present?
2001	Discuss the appeal, and the dangers, of attempting to predict the future.
2002	“The prospect of a 3rd world war is now unthinkable.” Do you agree?
2003	
2004	Do the past and present offer any guidance for the future?
2005	
2006	How far is your country prepared for future crises?
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2011	

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Geography	
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2001	In what ways does a country both benefit and suffer from where it is situated?
2002	
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2005	“The tourist does not see the country the inhabitants know.” How far is this true of Singapore?
2006	
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2008	To what extent does the migration of people have a positive effect?
2008	How far do physical features such as size and location determine a country’s progress?
2009	
2010	
2011	

Health	
1999	“A preoccupation with physical fitness is the curse of modern life.” Do you agree?
2000	How far do you agree that health is the responsibility of the State, not of the individual?
2001	
2002	”If people become ill, it is largely their own fault.” How far do you agree?
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2010	‘The key to good health is lifestyle rather than medicine.’ How far do you agree?
2011	How far should medical resources be used to extend life expectancy?

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History	
1999	
2000	Is a preoccupation with past merely an escape from the present?
2001	“History can never be anything more than an intelligent guess at what the past was like. The realist is inevitably lost for ever.” Do you agree?
2002	Does a study of history make you optimistic or pessimistic about the future of human race?
2003	Is history anything more than the study of warfare?
2004	
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2007	How important is a sense of history in shaping the future of Singapore's society?
2008	
2009	‘ History records male acts, written by males, and holds little interest for females as a result.’ Is this a fair comment?
2010	How important is it for people in your society to retain a sense of tradition?
2011	

Law & Order / Crime & Punishment	
1999	
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2002	Should the police have unlimited powers when dealing with crime?
2003	
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2005	Too much attention is given to criminals; not enough to their victims.' Is this true?
2006	Should crimes that were committed many years ago simply be forgotten?
2007	
2008	
2009	
2010	How far can an individual be held responsible for crimes against humanity?
2011	

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Lifestyle	
1999	
2000	A life of total luxury – dream or nightmare?
2001	
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2003	
2004	'Far too much attention is given to beauty products and treatments.' Do you agree?
2005	Instead of speeding up the pace of life, we should be slowing down.' What do you think?
2006	
2007	
2008	To what extent is design important in your society?
2008	Many developing countries are placing increasing attention to the needs of the disadvantaged. How far is this true of Singapore?
2009	
2010	How important is it for people in your society to retain a sense of tradition?
2011	

Mass Media	
1999	
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2001	Should advertising be restricted in any way?
2002	
2003	Can the media ever be relied upon to convey the truth?
2004	Advertising encourages a desire for products which people do not actually need. Discuss.
2005	How far do magazines or television programmes aimed at young people in Singapore have positive effect?
2006	To what extent do the newspapers and magazines that you read deal with what is trivial, rather than with what is important?
2007	Advertisements are often entertaining, but they rarely affect consumer choice.' Is this your experience?
2008	Nowadays, the pleasures of reading can never compete with the pleasures of visual entertainment.' To what extent do you agree?
2009	Assess the impact of foreign films or TV programmes on the culture of your society?
2010	
2011	In the digital age do newspapers still have a role in your society?

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Nature	
1999	Can the transplanting of animal organs into human beings ever be justified?
2000	“Pets need us more than we need them.” What do you think?
2001	
2002	Is there a case for keeping animals in zoos?
2003	
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Politics / Poverty	
1999	“Benevolent dictatorship is the most effective form of government.” How far would you agree?
2000	To what extent should richer nations help the poorer ones?
2001	Discuss the extent to which global and national interests can be balanced.
2002	Can the trade in weapons ever be justified?
2003	‘A good leader must always look beyond the needs of his or her country.’ Do you agree?
	How far can the needs of minorities be met in modern Singapore?
2004	‘People, not the government, should decide how to organise their lives.’ Is this a fair comment?
	Are the poor an inevitable feature of any society?
2005	To what extent should the state involve itself in the world of business?
2006	To what extent do young people in your society take an interest in politics?
2007	The view if the majority is always right.’ Do you agree?
	Should poorer countries develop their tourist industry when the basic needs of their own people are not being met?
	How far should a state have a right to monitor the actions of people within its borders?
2008	Does the presence of a foreign power ever help a country with problems?
2009	Is the elimination of global poverty a realistic aim?
2010	‘No politician’s reputation can survive the judgment of time.’ How true is this?
2011	Consider the view that efficient government is more important than democracy.
	How far should countries aim to be self-sufficient?

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Religion / Beliefs	
1999	
2000	
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2002	“Science and religion will always conflict.” Discuss.
2003	
2004	Discuss the importance of religion in society today.
2005	
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2007	Can a belief in the supernatural be sustained in our modern life?
2008	
2009	How far should religion influence political decisions?
2010	
2011	

Science & Technology	
1999	Is a sound knowledge of science and technology essential for a well-educated person in today’s world?
2000	“Science never provides solutions – it only poses more questions.” Is this a fair comment?
2001	Examine the implications of cloning for the human race.
2002	“Science and religion will always conflict.” Discuss.
2003	Should medical science always seek to prolong life?
2004	‘How inventions and discoveries are used is not the concern of the scientist.’ Do you agree?
2005	Is effective farming possible without science?
	‘Medical science has been so successful that people now expect too much of it.’ Discuss.
2006	Does modern technology always improve the quality of people’s lives?
2007	Should research into expensive medical treatments be allowed when only a few can afford them?
2008	‘The more science advances the more, religion will decline’ To what extent do you agree/
2009	To what extent has technology had an impact on both privacy and security in your country?
	Should every country have the right to carry out unlimited scientific research?
2010	To what extent has technology had a negative impact on the skill levels of people? (partly education Q)
2011	To what extent is it acceptable for private companies to be involved in scientific research?
	Can space research be justified nowadays?
	‘Science is unreliable, being based as much on theory as on fact.’ Is this a fair statement?

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	Sport
1999	
2000	
2001	Is sport too closely linked to money these days?
2002	
2003	
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2005	Hosting major sporting events create more problems than benefits.' Do you agree?
2006	
2007	
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2010	Does sport merit the vast sum of, money spent on it?
2011	

	Urbanisation
1999	
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2002	Do you agree that city life is becoming increasingly unattractive?
2003	
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2011	

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Values / Evaluation of Values	
1999	“The secret of a happy life is moderation in all things.” Discuss.
	“Being in fashion makes a person popular; being different makes a person special.” Discuss
2000	“Idealism brings disillusionment; realism brings results.” Discuss.
	Is it always important to succeed?
2001	
2002	
2003	‘The only worthwhile form of discipline is self-discipline.’ Discuss.
2004	
2005	There is no such thing as luck. People determine their own lives.' Do you agree?
2006	Entrepreneurship is just another name for personal greed.' How far do you agree with this statement?
2007	
2008	
2009	As long as people in the public eye do their job well, does it matter what they do in private?
2010	
2011	Can prejudice ever be eliminated?
	‘Taking risks is an essential part of life and should be encouraged.’ Discuss.

World Trends (Globalisation)	
1999	
2000	
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2003	Does the modern world place too much reliance on technology?
2004	Can small countries have a significant voice in world affairs?
2005	Examine the claim that the world is too dependent on oil.
2006	National boundaries make little geographical or economic sense nowadays.' Discuss.
2007	
2008	How far is it true that all producers of food and goods are fairly rewarded?
2009	Can the transport of food over vast distances be justified?
2010	How effective are international efforts to ease the problem of global hunger?
2011	

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General	
1999	
2000	
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2003	To what extent are small businesses preferable to large ones? 'Statistics measure everything but prove nothing.' Discuss.
2004	Have multi-national businesses had a positive or negative impact on your society?(globalization my classification)
2005	
2006	
2007	Mass production inevitable means a loss of craftsmanship and quality.' Is this true of your society?
2008	How important are dreams? Discuss the view that too much faith is placed on statistics.
2009	Should the love for one's country still be encouraged? 'Fashion is as much a good thing as a bad thing.' To what extent do you agree?
2010	'The person who dies rich dies disgraced., Discuss (values my classification)
2011	Do awards and prizes serve any useful purpose?

Arts and Aesthetics	
1999	In a world without books or music, what would be missing? Discuss with reference to specific examples.
2000	"Public money should not be wasted on supporting the arts; they should support themselves." Discuss.
2001	"A film has one purpose - to entertain." Using examples, consider this view.
2002	"A work of art can never be valued in financial terms." Discuss.
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2008	'Contemporary music has no artistic value.' Is this a fait comment? To what extent is design important in your society?
2009	
2010	Consider the views that most work these days could, and should be done from home. Would it matter if all the performing arts venues in your society, such as concert halls and theatres were closed down?
2011	'Only modern architecture and modern art have a place in today's world.' Is this true of your society?