**GP Essays – Modern Society**

**Question 1**

In the digital age do newspaper still have a role in your society?

**Question 2**

To what extent does the modern society undermine the elderly?

**Question 3**

Given the growing demands of modern society, has raising children become more of a burden?

Introduction – paragraph

Main body – opposing view

Rebuttal

3 supporting view

Conclusion

**Question 4**

**Has your society sacrificed too much for progress?**

**Question 1: In the digital age do newspaper still have a role in your society?**

Thinking perspective

1. **Type of question** – Do you agree?
* It will determine the structure of the question
* Introduction, MB (opposing view(1), rebuttal (1), supporting view (3), conclusion
1. **Requirement of the question**
* To assess whether the newspaper still plays a role in this digital age
* Set perspectives
1. Newspaper plays a role in this digital age
2. It does not play a role
* What are the roles played by the newspaper in our society at this digital age? (
1. **Content of argument**
2. Must have a good understanding of the roles the newspaper can play in the interests of the society
* informative, educational, political, cultural function, entertainment
1. Must know how to use the features of the newspaper to assess whether they can or cannot play the roles in the society – In doing so, we need to know how to depict why these features of the newspaper can help them to play or why the features will be the source of limitations in playing the roles.
2. Must know how to compare the features of the social media to the features of newspaper and assess whether the newspaper is still significant in playing this role when compared to the mass media.

**Question 1**

**In the digital age do newspaper still have a role in your society?**

Introduction

(observation / perspectives / stand) – DYA structure

With the advent of digital technology, the media industry has been dramatically altered and transformed from a traditional informative format based on a one-way interaction to a user-based, multiple interactive and community format. As a result, savvy technocrats are quick to challenge the functionality of the newspaper’s role in this digital age, disputing their capacity to perform the various functions of the mass media in the modern society such as its role as the fourth estate of a country. However, there are traditionalists who still see newspaper as a significant institution that will promote the interests of the society. **In view of these controversial opinions**, this essay is more inclined to the view that the newspaper has no role to play in this digital age as it is not functional as social media platforms.

Main body

**1. Opposing view – newspaper still have a role in your society**

**(starting sentence – set perspective / topic sentence / elaboration / example, linking sentence)**

For those who still share a nostalgia attachment with newspaper, they view it as a source of information to help them understand more about the world. The newspaper has been an orderly and organized source of information which appeals to them as they are familiar with the structure and approach on how news is transmitted to them. In Singapore, some of local Chinese newspaper like Shinmin Daily News and Lianhe WanPao are appealing to readers as they report local incidents and domestic issues that are close to the hearts of the older and heartland readers. Likewise, Financial Times and Wall Street Journal appeal to professionals for their informative insights to the financial, economic and political issues. The newspapers are informative to the readers as they are comfortable with a structural way on how they receive information and has become part of their way of life that helped these readers to stay informed about the world.

**2. Rebuttal – rebuttal starting sentence, conceptualized idea, elaboration, examples, linking sentence**

However, Luddites who are skeptical about the functional roles of the newspaper are quick to show the limitations of newspaper in the digital age in fulfilling their informative role, given their limited space of information which it can provide based on its format of presentation. In a paper format, the information given by the newspaper is limited by the space listed in the paper. Compared to digital format, the information provided by the digital media is immense and extensive. Readers can access the information through a video and attain a variety source of information through many collaborative platforms like Wikipedia and Wikis projects and content community news media platforms like Flickr, SlideShare and YouTube. The newspaper’s role as a source of information is limited when compared to these new social media platforms which are able to provide information in vast quantity and interlinked approach, through lively audio and visual presentation and at great convenience with instant and real-time updating, asserting the view that there is no longer an informative role for the newspaper to play in this digital age.

**3. Supporting View – starting sentence, conceptualized idea, elaboration**

When we further examine the other roles of this traditional medium, we will agree with the view that the newspaper plays a diminished or insignificant role in many aspects. One role that it has failed to perform is its educational role in our modern society. It is undeniable that the mass media perform this function in educating the public on how to conduct their lives socially, economically and politically as they highlight the social norms, economics opportunities, legal regulation and political development which will affect the lives of the people. The functionality of the newspaper is no longer as effective as the social media as it is not as demonstrative and illustrative in effects, given that the education process is done only through description and narration while social media present a more stimulating education process in terms of visual and audio impact on the audience. Furthermore, the social media encourage participation and interaction which will engage the individuals to participate actively. One can also search more information online through Wikipedia and on-line learning platforms like Udemy, Khan Academy and Codecademy. Some of the YouTube videos made by social portals like The School of Life also seeks to educate the society on how to conduct their lives in this complexed world. More lively way of presentation and vast information provided by social media will make the newspaper archaic and obsolete in playing the educational role in this digital age.

From the moral and behavioural aspect, the traditional mass media often act as the moral compass for the society as it is able to uphold the moral code of the society by influencing the perception and instilling the values to guide their moral values and behaviours, especially for the youth who are most vulnerable to succumb to moral degradation. It is more difficult for the newspaper to function in this digital age as the readership for paper form of news is dwindling, implying the influential impact of the newspaper will diminish too. This is pre-eminently observed on how the newspaper has affected the youth, where its effect is futile and minimum. Furthermore, any social campaign runs through the social media will definitely be able get the attention of the youths due it omnipresence and interactive form of influence, thus raising their influence on moral values of the youths. For example, we can observe how the social media campaigns used by those who pro LGBT stance and those who are against this stance as in the Pink dot and the white dot movement. Such intra-civic conflict is unlikely to be debated extensively in traditional newspaper due to its sensitivity and controversy and limited instant participation from the masses.

Politically, the newspaper is often criticized for being used a political tool by the state to set out propaganda against the democratization of the society, failing to uphold itself as the fourth estate that regulate the society. The nature of the newspaper as an institution make it easy for the state to use it to control the masses in the interest of the politicians and the business owners. Very often, the freedom of speech that our society upholds dearly is distorted and upheld in the interest of the press owners, rather not in the interest of the people. On the other hand, social media platform allows the masses the platform to voice out political injustice and suppression by dictatorship against the people, proving that the newspaper will not uphold the interests of the society. This is greatly observed in the Arab Spring in 2011 where the social media platform like Instagram and Twitter play vital roles in the upstage against the dictatorship of the regime of the nations in the Arab league, proving that the social media are more effective than newspaper as an institution in performing its political role in promoting democracy.

Conclusion – Retrospective summary / opinionated suggestion

In conclusion, the advent of technology in revolutionizing the mass media has profound impact on how the mass media will affect the society and her people. The traditional paper format of newspaper will definitely lose its influential status and cease to play a role in the society. It is important for us to understand this change as we still have to use the mass media or social media to perform their crucial functional roles to uphold the interests of the society and her people.

**Question 3**

**Given the growing demands of modern society, has raising children become more of a burden?**

Question Requirements

* Analyse ‘the growing demands of modern society’ in countries beyond their own, in order to broaden the scope of their arguments to consider a range of concerns that parents face in raising children
* Possible ways of presenting opposing arguments could be to posit that the task of raising children has always been burdensome or challenging, and is not significantly increased despite the growing demands of modern society.
* Subject matter:
	+ Understanding of the challenges of raising children in today’s world, for all levels of society.
	+ This is primarily focused on parents as the key figures responsible for the raising of their children (from infancy to their school-going ages), but could potentially include other members of the family involved in the process of raising children, or even the role of institutions in shaping the formative years of children in the education system as well (although this latter point should not form the main or only focus of the essay).
* Key Terms:
	+ Growing demands – Consider how modern society places increasing demands on parents to raise their children in an increasingly complex world.
	+ More of a burden – the term ‘more of a burden’ requires comparison on whether the challenges and costs of raising children in today’s world have increased as compared to the past.
* Context: modern societies, worldwide; modern societies, in general
* Category of discussion:
* Issues:
	+ The raising of children is inextricably connected to the environment in which they grow up. Parents take on the main responsibility of ensuring that their children are raised in a physically, mentally and emotionally healthy manner.
	+ However, given the higher expectations that modern society exerts on parents as compared to the past, this task of raising children has become much more demanding, and therefore a heavier burden on the shoulders of parents, who have to navigate these challenges alongside their children.
* Assumptions: Because of the more complex and challenging demands that modern society creates for families with children, it has indeed become more burdensome to have children and to raise them based on good moral standards together with a good standard of living.

Main Body:

Supporting View:

Point 1 – Social Complexity

Raising children has indeed become more of a burden in modern society because of the greater need to guard them against challenges of an increasingly volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous (VUCA) world.

What are the complex areas that will challenge the tasks of family upbringings?

Point 2 – Cultural Complexity

Raising children is also more of a burden because societal expectations of children as well as parenthood have become simultaneously higher and more diverse.

* There are various perspectives on what constitutes good parenting principles, based on sources ranging from books and online forums to professional advice or word-of-mouth. Parents have the task of navigating this deluge of differing viewpoints in order to decide what is best for their children.
* Parents are also now facing a bigger problem of meeting higher expectations with regards to ensuring that their children are not disadvantaged in comparison with other children, especially those in families with more resources.

Point 3 – Economic challenges

Opposing View

Point 1 – Government Support

Raising children might not be a burden, since they, as adults, eventually help shoulder the burden of family expenditure, and contribute to the taxpayer pool to aid an ageing population in modern society in the long term.

* As children grow up to become moral, productive and responsible members of society, this is a practical consideration that many parents might consider. Especially in societies that prize filial piety, there is a general expectation that children will provide for their parents in retirement.
* In the short term, however, the onus of raising such cherished members of society largely falls upon the parents.
* One may argue that this sense of filial piety is no longer as strong in modern society, where individual liberty is prized above collective well-being. However, it would not be considered too much to expect one’s children to care for their parents, and to see that as one of the factors that may alleviate the financial burden of raising children, in the long run.

Point 2 – Psychological Factor

The supposed emotional benefits that outweigh, alleviate or remove the burden of raising a child amidst the demands of any modern society hinges greatly upon the importance of raising the children right in the first place.

* Some may feel that the joy of raising children makes all sacrifice worthwhile in the end.
* Children become a precious part of the family whom parents are willing to give up anything for, in order to protect, love, and care for them.

Anlaysis

**Question 4**

**Has your society sacrificed too much for progress?**

Question Requirements

* Assess whether various aspects of the price we have paid in order for the country to gain progress in multiple domains has become excessive, or come at the expense of equally or more important concerns.
* Identify areas of development that have been sidelined, overlooked, undermined, or completely sacrificed in the pursuit of progress.
* Assess whether these sacrifices that have been made are justified or worthwhile, based on the effect that has been produced on society – for the better or worse, and for whom (differing perspectives by differing stakeholders).
* Subject matter: society’s progress – whether too much (what specifically?) has been given up in service of the pursuit of progress
* Key Terms:
	+ society … progress – can be considered in terms of various domains: economic, social, or political
	+ too much -- candidates should assess whether the price that one’s society has paid for the sake of progress is excessive, or has resulted in a state of affairs that has become unsatisfactory or undesirable (or even worse off than before), despite the benefits that progress itself has brought about
* Context: Singapore society
* Issues:
	+ Can we justify the price that one’s society has paid for the sake of progress?
	+ If we cannot, does this entail that too much has been sacrificed for progress?
	+ If we can, what are the reasons to reconcile the trade-offs and rationalise that too much has not been compromised in the pursuit of progress?
	+ What does progress look like in one’s society?
	+ What are sacrificed in pursuit of it? How were these sacrifices legitimised? Were they small trade-offs or trade-offs of important national needs?
	+ Would the magnitude of sacrifice be perceived differently by different stakeholders? E.g. would environment conservation groups hold a different view from urban developers?
	+ What have sacrifices in the short-term looked like? And in the long-term? Do the short- and long-term sacrifices bear upon the worthwhileness of these sacrifices?
* Assumptions:
	+ One’s society has sidelined other important concerns in the name of progress to a degree that is too much for society to bear.
	+ Progress is a good in itself and ought to be pursued.
	+ Most in society agree that what is defined as national progress is beneficial are truly a hallmark of national advancement.

Possible Arguments & Examples:

Due to the pragmatic pursuit of progress, my society has indeed sacrificed too much of the more intangible, emotional dimensions of our lives.

* In Singapore, the psyche of pursuing tangible economic growth and progress has resulted in a very competitive, calculative, and individualistic culture.
* The way in which my country has progressed as a society is also reflected in our individual mindsets and ambitions for ourselves: just as Singapore behaves as a country in relation to bigger powers in the region or world, many Singaporeans seek to outperform others around them in pursuit of quicker and greater progress.
* Such a culture has proven to be detrimental to our sense of civic-mindedness and in our social interactions, as we often prioritise our own interests rather than those of others.

Progress, which looks forward towards ever-rising standards and goals, has often come at the cost of cherishing and preserving the things that really matter in the present, and even the parts of our past that have led us to our present stage.

* Our society has progressed to a level that is lauded in the international community, in terms of economic growth, education standards, and social and political stability. However, these improvements have also come at the cost of rising complacency, ruthless competitiveness, and general apathy.
* Our country’s steady economic growth has led us to feel a sense of complacency and dissatisfaction with the state of our individual lives.
* We engage in competition in so many aspects of our lives (education, social status, wealth, careers) that we seldom allow ourselves to slow down to savour daily experiences, and instead relentlessly pursue the next milestone or goal in our lives.
* Many still feel that Singaporeans are not sufficiently aware of, let alone engaged with important issues of politics and civic discourse (for the citizen: economic acumen developed at the expense of political consciousness).
* Our society’s impressive progress has ironically left the current generation rather disengaged and uninterested in taking ownership of the country’s future progress – a price that is too high to pay as a result of the stable progress that we have enjoyed for a large part of our country’s journey towards achieving progress.

What we might have gained in the short-run: political stability and follower-ship as a result of a citizenry that does not often question the decisions political leaders make, we might lose in the long-run, especially in a future world where the political climate might be volatile, and political discernment is necessary.

With that being said, there is truth to the perspective that the sacrifices that my society has made have not been ‘too much’. Hefty has they may seem, these sacrifices have in fact been necessary and worthwhile in order for the country to have progressed.

* As said by Lee Kuan Yew in his book Hard Truths to Keep Singapore Going