GP June Intensive Revision

**Essay Writing Skill – Paragraphing Development (Rebuttal)**

**Meaning of Rebuttal**

The aim of a rebuttal is to provide a counter-argument against another point under the same category of discussion or areas of discussion. It can also be introduced under the consideration of a conditional analysis whereby the opposing argument is put under evaluation and can be proven wrong.

Steps in the development of rebuttal

a) Consider the main idea in your opposing view and the area of discussion

b) Derive the common areas of the discussion to set the ground for the argument to rebut

c) Focus on the nature of rebuttal

* ‘The other perspective under the same ground’
* Tackling the weakness of the opposing view
* Evaluating the condition for the opposing view
* Criticizing the opposing view

**Example Qn: Is wealth always a good measure of success?**

Opposing View:

For those who hold the notion that wealth is a good measure of success, their reasons stem from the fact that people are financially rewarded for their economic contributions, such that they would have higher financial standing with respect to others. Wealth is a reward for the capable, talented and innovative individuals who are able to reap opportunities to thrive and flourish in capitalistic societies. For instance, well-known entrepreneurs like Bill Gates and Warren Buffet have been rewarded for their success in their respective fields. In Singapore, civil servants are awarded on different scale of salary for their level of jobs and areas of work. Thus, in a society defined by economic rules, the reward for success is monetarily-defined and wealth accumulation will be the yardstick for a person to set his sights for success.

Rebuttal:

However, such a view is too avarice and extrinsic as wealth is not always a good measure for success, since it only provides a monetary or quantitative benchmark for success. The success of an entrepreneur is not just measured by the level of wealth they have attained but only in terms of their contribution in the development of the field of their work and area of work. Technopreneurs like Bill Gates and Steve Jobs, Mark Zuckerberg are not just known for their wealth accumulation but for their innovation and vision they have created for their respective fields. The monetary yardstick is a weak indicator of success as it is often calculated on a quantitative basis which has a limited scope for the definition of success. Although Singapore is accredited for being the wealthiest nation on a per capita basis by Citibank’s report, we may fare poorly in other yardsticks in terms of well-being if measured against other indicators like Gross National Happiness developed by Bhutan.

**Class Practice 1**

**Modern technology owes ecology an apology’. Do you agree?**

Advancement in technology has brought about tremendous benefits to mankind but at the same time it has also harmed the environment. The environmentalists strongly believe that the usage of modern technology has led to the degradation of the environment. However, to the technocrats and scientists, such an assertion is absurd as they feel that modern technology is the only viable mean to solve environmental crisis. In view of these two perspectives, I am inclined to believe that modern technologies do owe ecology an apology although it can help solve some of the environment problems.

**Technocrats will not share the view that modern technology owes ecology an apology as they see technology as a solution for environmental degradation rather than as a cause of environmental contamination.** The usage of clean technology over fossil-fuel based technology helps to reduce the level of carbon emission which is often seen as the main culprit of global warming. Clean technology in the form of solar power, nuclear technology and hydro power are not just energy efficient but have also significantly cut down the emission of greenhouse gases from fossil-fuel based productions. It serves as a viable alternative to fossil fuel and hence does not pollute the environment.

**Class Practice 2**

**Essay Question 1**

**Education’s chief purpose is the passing on of human heritage, not mere skills for survival in a prevailing economic climate. Discuss. (DYA type of question)**

**Introduction**

**(Observation of the issue / perspectives / stand)**

Controversy arises when the aim of education is discussed as different schools of thoughts hold diverse opinions on this notion. While the **functional aim** of the school would be to advocate skill development as the aim of education, citing economic pragmatism as their rationality, the **liberal school** will differ in their emphasis, seeing the holistic aim of human heritage as the main aim of our education system. In view of the diverse opinions, this essay would agree with the latter that the development of human heritage is of greater significance a

nd our education system should see it as the chief purpose.

**Main body (DYA – opposing view)**

It is not easy to deny the rationale of the functional school for citing skill development as the main aim of education, as economic pragmatism and skill development remains pivotal to an economy, especially under the current competitive ethos in this economic climate. (**Topic sentence – perspective, category, conceptualized idea)**  In the current highly competitive environment, education holds the key to raise the growth of the economy which is the pivotal area of concern for any country. As flow of fund and investment flows freely and unrestricted, the skills of labour have become the main determinant of this flow as the productivity of the labour influences the profit-oriented international enterprises in deciding the flow of the highly-prized investment which is the main source of prosperity and opportunity for the nation and its people. Rationally, economists and politicians will ardently support the development of the educational institutions to chunk out thousands and millions of productive labours for the need of the economy, and in the process of doing so, shaping our education system. **(example – Singapore – education system focuses extensively on creating productive workers – vocational institute and training board – VITB in the early years and now we have universities like NUS, NTU, SMU)**

**Individual – competitive environment – qualification to attain employment – better for the individuals to graduate well-known institution – skills development / regional competition – quote high youth unemployment in Europe – these developments will be mirrored**

**in Asia.**

(rebuttal sentence – prove why the opposing view is wrong) – limitations of education as a means to attain economic prosperity

Answer For Practice 1

However, it is not easy to develop alternative energy and its use is not without criticism. The high cost of financing such clean technologies makes it an unpopular choice among countries, especially the poorer nations where their priority is on economic development rather than on environmental concerns. Also, the construction of clean technology often damages the environment in the ongoing process as seen from how the building of dam which generates hydro power undermines the ecological system though it benefits the country or city that reaps the hydro-electric power. A pertinent example would be Three Gorges dam in Yangtze River. The dams have not only disrupted the ecological system in the river but have also led to the rise of flooding in low lying rural areas of China. Hence, despite benefiting a group of people with clean energy, the detrimental impacts that it brings about outweighs the positive impacts.

Answer for class Practice 2

The massive removal of middlemen by the Internet is directly linking buyers with providers. Armed with a simple Web browser, a consumer can find the lowest prices for his personalized requirement. Systems are now being developed that will custom-assemble a product. A consumer browsing the Web will be able to select from a broad array of materials, patterns, sizes and styles of clothing and see exactly how each combination looks on her own body – based on her personal body scan – and then have her specific choices manufactured just for her.

The idea in the opposing view

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Rebuttal

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**Class Practice 3**

While we have created every kind of labour- and time-saving device to service our needs, we are beginning to feel like we have less time available to us than any other human in history. That is because the great proliferation of labour- and time-saving services only increases the diversity, pace and flow of commodified activity around us. For example, e-mail is a great convenience.

The idea in the opposing view

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Rebuttal

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**Class Practice 4**

Critics say that the West’s gain has been at the expense of developing countries. The already meager share of the global income of the poorest people in the world has dropped from 2.3% to 1.4% in the last decade. But even in the developed world, not everyone has been a winner. The freedoms granted by globalization are leading to increased insecurity in the workplace. Manual workers in particular are under threat as companies shift their production lines overseas to low-wage economies.

The idea in the opposing view

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**Class Practice 4**

Globalization's effects have been overwhelmingly good. Spurred by unprecedented liberalization, world trade continues to expand faster than overall global economic output, inducing a wave of productivity and efficiency and creating millions of jobs. Even more impressive is the stunning increase in international investment that is building roads, airports and factories in poorer countries. In the 1990s alone, foreign investors poured $1 trillion into developing economies. This trade and investment is raising living standards in some countries faster than many thought possible. Until recently, it took at least two generations for living standards to double, but in China, living standards now double every 10 years.

The idea in the opposing view

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**Class Practice 5**

Unrealisable utopias include Marxism and Thatcherism, Communism and anti-communism, the Enlightenment project and the project of counter-Enlightenment, the project of engineering a western-style market economy in post-communist Russia, the attempt to establish liberal democracy in post-Saddam Iraq... The history of the world contains numerous examples of communities aiming to embody the ideal of perfection but the core feature of all utopian projects is a hope of ultimate harmony. Whether human needs are believed to be unchanging as espoused by Plato, or evolving as what Marx said, the normal conflicts of human life are left behind in a Utopian world. Clashes of interest amongst individuals and social groups, antagonism between and within ideals of the good life - conflicts, which are endemic in every society, are reduced to insignificance in Utopias.

The idea in the opposing view

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**Practice 6**

The only criticism that really lingers in the mind comes from egalitarian critics. They warn that human biotechnology may create a world divided between the rich, with their ‘Genetically Modified Babies’, and the poor, who are lumbered with the random flaws of nature. The idea of human equality will , they say, melt in the biotech labs.

The idea in the opposing view

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Rebuttal

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