GP June Intensive Revision

**Paragraphing Development (Introduction)**

### Importance of Introduction

Writing a good introduction serves to provide readers a good impression of your essay. The writer needs to provide a comprehensive understanding of the title of the essay and clearly shows his main perspectives of discussion. Through this depiction, the writer guides the reader on how he is presenting his discussion on the stated title.

**Process**

1. Understanding of the structure of discussion

* DYA structure – observation – perspectives – stand
* EOA structure – observation – derive a proposition – show how you are examining the nature of discussion.

2. Understand the nature of discussion for the question

Focus on the requirements of the question to derive how you can set the observation such as the cause-effect-solution.

3. Provide a comprehensive overview of the title (observation)

In the overview, the writer needs to provide an understanding of the subjects in the title in term of their main characteristics.

**3.1 If the title is too abstract or based a quotation, there is a need to provide a meaningful rephrase, which will give the reader a comprehensive understanding of the subjects**. A parameter of the subjects is developed and the link between the various subjects is also established.

**Qn. The route to a happy life is moderation in everything. Discuss**

3.2 Establish an overview based on the conventional thinking, your observation or the concept of the subject.

Qn. Artificial intelligence can replace the role of humans. Do you agree?

4. How to end the introduction?

For DYA type of question:

For this type of question, the stand must be set as the end of introduction. Students must ensure the thesis or anti-thesis must be set as the stand.

Qn: Artificial intelligence can replace the role of humans. Do you agree?

For EOA type of question:

1. Provide a treatment of analysis

It is essential for the writer to provide the reader a brief approach on how the title will be answered in the introduction. In doing so, the main areas of discussion may be set based on the level of discussion or category of discussion.

* Use it for question type – extent of agreement

In order to assess the extent of agreement that people are judged more by their physical appearance than by their abilities, we will need to examine how people applies this view on the way they work, interact with others and make decision in many issues in life.

Summary of the approach:

1. Observation
2. Derive proposition
3. Set the areas of discussion and how it will be examined

Question for practice:

To what extent can any society claim to be great?

### Part B – Types of Paragraph Development

**‘We are becoming poorer as we are getting richer.’ Do you agree?**

### 1. Opposing View

From an economic angle, we are indeed getting richer and wealthier as seen from the rise in our material level of standard of living as real Gross Domestic Product per capita rises to one of the highest in the world. Our high rate of home ownership and low level of unemployment are also indications that Singaporeans are enjoying fruits of our economic success and this can also be seen from the convenience and comfort we can enjoy from the efficient and modernized infrastructures of transport network, public facilities and amenities. This clearly supports that the general and average economic well-being of the people is indeed better and higher but such an observation falls short in the understanding of our economic condition.

**2. Rebuttal**

However, In the past few years, economic growth may have brought us more wealth but the wealth is often unevenly distributed as evidently stated by the Gini-coefficient ratio noted by economic reports from international agency that we are at a ratio above 0.45. Though our real GDP per capita is considered high, 70% of the working population does not enjoy this level. Furthermore, our high cost of living is a constant reminder that our income and wealth is not capable of proving us a comfortable level of standard of living. Thus, it is too conclusive to state that we are indeed getting richer.

### 3. Supporting view

From a wider perspective, detractors who are critical our development are quick to point out that Singaporeans are ‘becoming poorer’ as we are undermined and deprived in other aspect of our life. One such notable area would be seen from how we have compromised our healthy lifestyle for the sake of an affluent lifestyle. It can be observed that many workers, high or low income, or white or blue-collar works are putting in more hours in their work beyond their legal terms of working hours to fulfill their work commitments. Consequently, many chronic, work-related illnesses arise, undermining the health of the workers. Stress-related symptoms and mental illness are recorded to be on the rise in the institute of Mental Health, indicating that we may not be better while we are earning more.

At the same time, this hectic working schedule we have adopted has also tarnished and weakened our family and social relationship with our loved ones. Our concern over affluence and career status demands us to work longer hours, ignoring the need to spend times with our loved ones. DINK (double income, no kid), high divorce rates, rising number of juvenile delinquency and rise dysfunctional families are the opportunity costs that we incur in the pursuit of richness and wealth. Realizing the significance of the detriments, Singapore government, through the Ministry of Community Development, Youth and Sports, has introduced various community programmes and campaigns to promote a healthy, balanced lifestyle which will enable to enjoy the fruit of our economic prosperity while preventing us from undermining ourselves and the family members. Campaigns like ‘Family Day’ and ‘Eat with Family’ and sport promotional activities are introduced to relieve the stress from our work and cultivate the family relationship that we may be deprived of, given our demanding working schedule.

### Qn 2 – DYA Type of question

**Is the World today really an unhappy place to live in?**

Supporting view

Our world is indeed an unhappy place to live in when **there is higher degree of competition created by growing population, greater global connectedness and depleting scare resources that will demand individuals to strive to win in this economic competition for resources and benefits**. Students now have to compete for limited spaces in education institutions from kindergarten to tertiary places on merit or economic capacity while workers compete for employment and business opportunities for advancement and economic gains. Consequently, people will now have less time, energy and resource to devote to intrinsic development in their lives like social interaction, hobbies and leisure to cultivate a holistic lifestyle with meaningful purposes and amiable relationships. Instead, life has become tensed, trivialized and confrontational as we need to combative and aggressive to survive in a highly competitive environment. This is evidently seen in mega cities like Singapore, New York, Hong Kong and Shanghai where many are seen to be unhappy souls in social surveys about their life. Under such competitive ethos, we can never live a happy life.

**‘Live as if you were to die tomorrow.’ Is this good advice?**

Question Analysis

* DYA question
* In fact, the full quote by Mahatma Gandhi is as follows:
  + ‘Live as if you were to die tomorrow. Learn as if you were to live forever.’
* This statement means that you should live everyday as if it were your last.
* ‘Good advice’ - to consider whether such a view is valuable and meaningful to individuals, in terms of their personal development, the way we conduct our lives and how the society will work

Introduction

**Overview:** In modern societies, individuals have set their sights on various goals to find meaning in their lives. The probability of success hinges on the motivation level and capabilities of the individuals.

* Relate it to the notion on how time is utilized

**Given View:** Some support the advice to ‘live as if you were to die tomorrow’, which implies that everyone should live their lives to the fullest all the time.

**Contrasting View:** On the other hand, some challenge this view as they argue that such a perception may encourage reckless behaviour that compromises on their own and others’ lives.

**Stand:** In view of these differing perspectives, this essay is more inclined to the view that the statement is good advice for all, given that many people lack the will and determination to persevere.

Main Body

**Opposing View: Explain why the given statement is not good advice - Personal Development**

**TS:** For those who believe that the statement is not good advice, their rationale stems from the perception that the heightened awareness of the limited time we have encourages reckless behaviour that results in negative social implications.

**EL**: Should an individual be presented with such a worrying thought, he or she may be pressured to think that there is little time left to achieve personal aims and pursuits in life. As such, the individual will lose focus on the pertinent aspects of life, particularly the intrinsic benefits.

**EG:** Social issues that emerged due to this negative mentality

* ‘You only live once’ (YOLO) mentality
* Drug-related offences committed by youths who are curious but misled social vices

**LS:** As such, this advice is not appropriate for some people as the reckless behaviours adopted in relation to this advice may lead to degradation of the individual.

**Rebuttal: Explain why the given statement is good advice - with respect to the given view in the preceding paragraph - Personal Development**

**TS:** However, such a view is myopic as the social behaviour of individuals is shaped by their own mindsets, which can promote a sense of optimism or pessimism towards life.

**EL:** If the individual holds a negative view towards life’s challenges, the given statement is likely to be interpreted as a harsh realization that our time on Earth is limited, such that it is pointless to have meaningful pursuits. In contrast, an optimistic individual will interpret the statement in the sense that our finite lifespan stresses the importance of giving our best for every waking moment. Therefore, it can be observed that the ‘goodness’ in the advice depends on the mindsets of individuals.

**EG:** Accepting ‘YOLO’ mentality is correct/acceptable → defines a sense of impetus to seek for achievements and experiences

**LS: However, such an advice would be beneficial if the person knows how to react and conduct himself in an ethical and proper way.**

**B. Extent of Agreement**

**‘Values are no longer prescriptive but a matter of choice.’ To what extent is this true? (RI Prelim)**

Introduction

* Definition of values – set of beliefs that form the basis of our behaviours and attitudes, that we use as a moral compass allowing us to make moral judgments
* Notion of the quote – it suggests that our values are no longer inherited, inculcated, indoctrinated but developed according to the prerogative of the individuals.
* To examine the extent of the agreement, we need to assess whether our values are still inherited, inculcated or indoctrinated by our family, society and political institutions and whether the individuals possess the capacity to develop their values independently.

Body

The focus of the discussion is to show how the individuals are influenced and shaped in the development of their values from the various aspects and deduce from it the extent of agreement to the proposition.

1) Individual development

Advocates of individualism believe that values are not prescribed as the education received by the individuals and opportunities for empowerment imbued in them the capacity to cultivate their values – manifest in the development of sub-cultures – with unorthodox and unique behaviours and values which differ from the traditional ethnic and cultural environment – individuals have the intelligence and rational capacity to think for themselves – as stated by Locke , individuals ‘have the perfect freedom to order their actions according the law of nature’. Furthermore, the presence of new media technology like Youtube and Facebook which will provide them venues to prescribe their own development- opportunities for expression

However, detractors do not share the view – as individuals are easily manipulated by the influence of institutions as in the way, they are manipulated by the omnipresence of the mass media. Secondly, individuals are product of the culture as they are social beings who are constantly in need to interact in the society and it is inevitable for them to be indoctrinated and inculcated by the society and the political institutions and naturally inherited with traditional values.

2) Family heritage

Family heritage is one source of influence that will prescribe our values – our traditional cultural and ethnic values are instilled in us since young through our interaction with our parents and the extended family – we share the beliefs of our family as they are first stage of reference in our lives.

However, the diminishing functional roles of family in the modern era undermine the influence of the family – minimizing the influence of the inherited values – family interaction is trivialized and has become less interactive –reduces the understanding and undermining the acceptance of the values – In this way, the values of the individuals are not prescribed by the family as very few will adhere to traditional family values

3) Social and religious inculcation

But the influence from the social and religious institutions are more significant – religion is the source of moral guidance – an inspiration for our development – the divine power play a very extensive influence on our values – the moral compass that will influence our ethical values – shape the content of lives. Our needs for social acceptance as a social being explains the importance of the social superstructures in prescribing our values – we conform to the values of the society we live in to gain social acceptance - the sense of belonging is significant – peer beliefs and social norm is significance to the individuals – individuals need the social and emotional acceptance – to achieve this, individuals will accept the prescribed values of the society to gain community acceptance.

4) Political Indoctrination

The influence of the political institutions is difficult to ignore as individuals need the political framework for his development and assurance of his rights in the society. According to John Jacque Rousseau, individuals need to adhere to the ‘will of all’ which are the core values of the entity if they choose to live in this society and in doing so, the values of the individuals in the society are prescribed. In Singapore, our core values of meritocracy, racial tolerance and secular status are constantly indoctrinated in our National Education programmes and other social and political campaigns. Although such programmes are not enforced, they are implemented through social activities and promotional campaigns to educate the masses. By virtue of these intentions, we seek to create a Singapore identity with our unique social values

**What are the factors undermining the influence of the social and political institutions in shaping the values of the individuals?**

**C. Conclusion**

In the contemporary world where individualism is constantly emphasized, it gives a false illusion that the individuals can no longer prescribe to social and political values. Although individuals are given more opportunities more interact and are highly education, the influences of the respective social institutions are still immense and would never cease to prescribe the values of the individuals.