

SEPTEMBER MOCK PAPER (SS)

SBQ

- a) In Source B, Minister Dr Balakrishnan made this speech to assure Singaporeans of the necessity of the government's use of TraceTogether in order to secure greater compliance from Singaporeans. Dr Balakrishnan states, "Quick and accurate contact tracing is necessary and all the more essential now that we are emerging from circuit breaker". This tells Singaporeans of the importance of using TraceTogether, in order for us to protect ourselves from the fast-spreading Covid-19 through the use of contact tracing. Furthermore, he states, "The more of us who are on the system, the better it is for everyone". Clearly, Dr Balakrishnan is informing Singaporeans of the importance of using the TraceTogether application, by appealing to the need for communal safeguards against Covid-19. From his speech, it is evident that Dr Balakrishnan wants to persuade more Singaporeans to adopt the system, in order to enhance the communal effectiveness of contact tracing via TraceTogether. Therefore, the purpose of the source is to convince Singaporeans of the importance of TraceTogether, and persuade more Singaporeans to use the application.
- b) Both sources are similar in highlighting how the trend of digitalization has the negative consequence of potentially leaving many Singaporeans behind. In source C, Minister Chan Chun Sing states, with regard to digitalization, "If Singapore doesn't care, Singapore will be left behind". This tells us that should digitalization not be adopted, there is a very high risk that many Singaporeans will be unable to keep up while the rest of the world continues to embrace technology. Similarly, source D writes, "Singapore's workforce will face a major disruption and a decline is inevitable. By 2028, around 85,000 jobs will completely disappear from the workforce, leaving employees in those disappearing jobs with little to no transferable skills that they can use". This clearly highlights the potential fallout of not embracing digitalization, such that it might lead to massive job losses and unemployment in Singapore.

However, the sources differ in highlighting the extent to which the Singaporean government is effective in helping Singaporeans cope with this new wave of digitalization. Source C states, "We will work with industries to develop

programmes to help companies invest in skills. It will help workers not only upgrade their present careers but also train retrenched workers to transition into new jobs.” This implies that the Singaporean government will extend significant help to workers and companies in industries affected by digitalization and that this help will be beneficial to the extent that no worker will be left behind. On the contrary, source D questions, “The government says they will help workers upgrade their skills but will it be enough especially at the rate it is happening in Singapore?”. Clearly, the source is skeptical that government help will be effective in Singapore, as it makes the point that the government is not currently doing enough to help workers transition into a digital economy fast enough. Therefore, both sources are different in highlighting the extent of effectiveness of the government’s current policies to helping workers affected by the trend of digitalization.

- c) I am not surprised by what source D writes about the impact of technological advancements on workers in Singapore. Source D makes the point that many Singaporeans will be adversely affected by the trend of digitalization, specifically “production workers and labourers in Singapore”.

This is not surprising, because this information is corroborated by the source C, which is an excerpt from the Minister of Trade and Industry, Mr Chan Chun Sing. Source C states, “With digital technologies becoming increasingly prevalent in economies, businesses and people’s everyday lives, embracing it is crucial.” Given that source C highlights that technology will become increasingly prevalent in our daily lives, it is unsurprising that source D would emphasise the negative consequences of digitalization particularly on blue-collar workers, who would likely face the brunt of redundancies in the light of digitalization and the embracing of technology.

- d) Source E is useful in highlighting the benefits of digital technology, especially in the context of Singapore. Source E states, “Singapore also has an ageing population and restraints on inwards migration, so robots may be particularly helpful in keeping the market alive”. This tells us that in the context of Singapore, embracing technology will be a particularly good thing, as it can help us ensure economic growth despite the perennial problems of an ageing population and shrinking annual workforce. Furthermore, source E is useful, because it is an expert opinion

coming from Mr James Lambert, who is the “Director of Economic Consulting for Asia at Oxford Economics”. Mr Lambert’s occupational expertise enhances the usefulness of the information in source E, since it is likely to be credible and deliberate in thought.

- e) Source A does not show that technology has been beneficial, by highlighting the negative impacts of technology on peoples’ ability to focus. In Source A, the character is constantly being harassed by multiple social media applications that are distracting the character from accomplishing his work, which is already late. This highlights how technology has the negative consequence of distracting people, resulting in workers becoming more economically unproductive. Therefore, source A highlights that technology has not been beneficial, given that it distracts workers and reduces their ability to be efficient in their work.

Source D also shows that technology has not been beneficial, as it has the negative consequence of resulting in major job losses and disruptions. Source D writes, “Singapore’s workforce will face a major disruption and a decline is inevitable”. This tells me that embracing technology in the workforce has the potential to result in significant industry changes and will result in job redundancies, which in turn will contribute to widescale job losses. Technology is therefore not beneficial, because it will result in structural economic issues and contribute to job losses in Singapore.

However, source B highlights the positive impacts of technology, especially in the light of the pandemic. In source B, Dr Balakrishnan writes, “TraceTogether, as a digital tool, has provided data that speeds up the isolation of close contacts and reduces the spread of Covid-19”. Evidently, technology has been positive, as it has enabled Singapore to operate more effectively in managing large-scale health crises like the Covid-19 pandemic. This was done through the widespread adoption of technology which was previously not available. Thus, the impacts of technology have been beneficial, particularly from a public health standpoint.

Lastly, source E highlights the positive economic impacts of technology in the context of Singapore. Source E states, “Singapore also has an ageing population and restraints on inwards migration, so robots may be particularly helpful in keeping the market alive”. This tells us that technology can help combat the structural economic issues in Singapore, such as a shrinking workforce and an

ageing population, both of which would have significantly contributed to Singapore's economic decline. Thus, in the context of Singapore, technology has had a positive impact in countering the negative impacts of the population trends in Singapore and their impact on the workforce.

Overall, I would argue that while technology has its negative consequences, the positive impacts of embracing technology outweigh the negative. While individuals are indeed more distracted by technology, this can be countered by using other technological developments, such as focus applications that can limit one's usage of distracting social media applications. On the issue of displacement, the widespread positive impacts of embracing technology outlined in source E far outweighs the negative, especially given the fact that actions can be taken to mitigate the negative consequences. Thus, the sources conclude that technology has overall had a positive impact on society.

Question 1

- a) One reason for Singapore's racial harmony today is our business-friendly environment, which attracts many foreigners to arrive on our shores for their careers. Singapore effectively prides herself in being a major global financial hub, and encourages many businesses to set up in Singapore. As a result of our low tax-rates, effective system of governance and strong industry support by the government, many foreign multinational firms arrive to Singapore to set up shop. As more businesses come to Singapore, the number of business opportunities increase, which in turn incentivizes foreigners to travel to Singapore to pursue their careers here. One example of this would be the arrival of many professionals in the technology industry, who uproot their lives and migrate to Singapore to work on the thriving e-commerce scene in Singapore. This contributes to racial diversity in Singapore, as foreigners from all nationalities seek to work in Singapore for better career prospects.

One way of promoting greater racial harmony amongst Singaporeans is through educating the young early on about the importance of racial harmony. Through education, Singaporeans can learn from an early age the importance of racial diversity. For example, schools in Singapore dedicate an entire day to Racial Harmony Day in Singapore, where students can learn about the cultural practices of different racial groups in Singapore. This will help foster a stronger bond between students of different races, who will begin to learn and appreciate each other's cultures and differences. In turn, when these students grow up and become active members of society, they will know the importance of racial harmony in Singapore. This will effectively help promote greater racial harmony in Singapore.

- b) Nationality is important to one's identity because nationality construes a large part of an individual's identity. In the context of Singapore, our nationality includes many things that we take for granted and only realize the importance of in its absence. The most obvious marker of our national identity is in our common language, Singlish. While the base language is English, Singlish incorporates slang and colloquialisms from different ethnic languages in Singapore, such as Malay, Chinese and Tamil. For many Singaporeans, Singlish is their default lingua franca and is the language that they are most comfortable with. Given the prevalence of

our everyday Singlish language, it is evident that nationality construes a very large part of an individual's identity.

Socio-economic status also plays a significant role in shaping one's identity, since it shapes one's immediate lived reality. People from very different socio-economic statuses tend to have vastly different outlooks on life, attributed to the different activities that one can pursue due to different economic ability. For example, a person of a higher socio-economic status would be able to afford trips to exotic locations overseas and pursue expensive hobbies such as horse-riding. On the contrary, a person from a lower socio-economic status would not be able to afford such holidays and might only be able to afford hobbies like basketball, where public courts can be found anywhere. Thus, socio-economic status plays a significant role in shaping one's identity, given the pervasiveness it has over one's life.

In conclusion, I would argue that nationality is more important in shaping an individual's identity. While there are disparities in lived realities of people from different socio-economic classes, in the context of Singapore, many people from different socio-economic classes share the same spaces, such as public schools. The differentiation is therefore not overly pronounced, since in their day-to-day lives, many Singaporeans of different socio-economic classes all end up in the same space.