

General Paper

# Education



**#STUDYEFFICIENTLY**

# Contents

Lazy Sheets.....	3
“A school should not only teach knowledge, but values as well.” Discuss. ....	4
‘Conformity should be the main aim of all schools.’ Discuss. ....	6
Do you agree with the view that educational qualifications are an unreliable measure of a person's true abilities? .....	9
“Education promotes inequality.” Discuss. ....	11
How far do you agree that the arts should be taught as much as the sciences in school? .....	14
In an age where knowledge becomes obsolete so quickly, do schools still have a future? .....	16
Is competition essential for effective education? .....	18
“The main function of formal education should be to enable people to gain employment.” Discuss with reference to your society.....	20
‘University education is no longer necessary in today's world’. How realistic is this position? .....	23
To what extent is education an effective way to combat poverty? .....	25
Questions on Education.....	27
Glossary.....	29
People you should know.....	29
Online education platform you should know .....	30
Education terms you should know .....	31

Simply put is self-education or self-directed learning. An autodidact, also known as an automate, is a mostly self-taught person. It typically describes someone who has an enthusiasm for self-education and a high degree of self-motivation..... 33

It aims educational objectives fulfilment and also promotes consolidation of knowledge in form of facts, phenomena, ideas, formula, laws, etc. Didactic methods help to handle the accumulated knowledge of each person. They arrange the information making it logical and accessible..... 33

Quotes..... 37

Final Note..... 45

## Lazy Sheets



"A school should not only teach knowledge, but values as well." Discuss.

Argument		Evidence
Without a proper 'moral compass' or guide to conducting oneself, knowledge is meaningless.	Should not only	C.S. Lewis famously said, "knowledge without values seems rather to make a man a more clever devil." As seen from the quote above, without any values, we are simply making children more susceptible to forging values that go against what is considered respectable in society. A classroom will comprise students of various backgrounds and beliefs and the onus is on the schools to ensure that their students are able to handle these differences in an appropriate manner. In the midst of World War Two, Nazi scientists experimented on Jews to study the limits of the human body – all in the name of knowledge. Among other brutal experiments, Jewish prisoners were exposed to radiation, drowned and amputated to study their pain tolerance.
		One example is the 'Values In Action' programme implemented in schools across Singapore. The programme requires students to take on a project with the aim of helping a target group in society. Concurrently, it teaches them to be compassionate and empathise with the difficulties faced by others. Studies have shown that teachers can influence a child and inspire him to be a better person in general. Hence, it is important for schools to do their best to ensure that each child ends up with a sound set of values.
A school is not a place only for academics. The school, where most children will spend their lives in, has a duty to develop students holistically.	Should not only	From 2019, to stress the message that learning is not a competition, Singapore student report books called the Holistic Development Profile at both primary and secondary levels will no longer contain information such as class and level position, underlining or colouring of marks for subjects failed.
Knowledge without values is also meaningless for students in the long run as employers now seek workers with better values and higher emotional quotients.		A recent study in the United States has shown that employers are more concerned about the character and personality of a potential candidate as compared to the educational qualifications they have received. For example, 15% of taxi drivers in America now have a

		degree as compared with only 1% about a decade ago. However, it is more important that these drivers possess good communication skills so as to be able to interact with passengers and keep them as regular customers.
		According to a study called 'Win at Work' done by Forbes, employers today seek qualities in employees which are largely unrelated to their academic performance. Among the skills sought after are creativity, negotiation skills and ability to communicate effectively.
In addition, the goals of the education system globally are to meet the emotional needs and aid in the emotional development of the child.	Should not only	This shows that governments and world leaders recognise the vital role that schools play in nurturing a child. Several countries have already put in place measures to help a child develop to his fullest potential by ensuring that the emotional needs are met by conducting programmes to teach children values and develop their character. In 2012, the Singapore government introduced the Edusave Character Award, which rewards students who have demonstrated excellent character and are role models for their peers. This further helps to emphasise the point that schools are not merely places to accrue knowledge, but are also places for holistic development. Some students view their teachers as 'second parents' and do approach them for advice with difficulties they face beyond their academic work.
		Dr Thomas Lickona once said that "character education is the deliberate effort to help people understand, care about, and act upon core ethical values."
However, some point out that the current education system is already over- laden with too many activities and programmes, and schools should not be made to bear the sole responsibility of imparting values to a child as well.	Should only	Many would argue that it is the role of the parents to do so. Parents do hold a great influence over their child and should work together with the schools in order to impart good values to their children. Teachers today already have much on their plate, to cope with not just teaching, but other administrative duties as well. Given they have so many students in one class to manage, it would not be reasonable or realistic to expect a teacher to be responsible for so many students at a time.

Schools today no longer have the imperative nor authority to enforce values on students.

Should only

In 2017, Anglo-Chinese School (Barker Road) was sued by parents for confiscating a student's phone. The role of schools in the eyes of society has morphed – schools have been relegated to an institution that is responsible merely for preparing students for academic examinations.

### P1 Lazy Sheet

**'Conformity should be the main aim of all schools.'**

**Discuss.**

Argument		Evidence
Conformity brings order that is needed for learning.	Should be	A teacher adopting didactic teaching methods can train an army of students to meet social norms, and industry benchmarks, in terms of skills required. Such methods, although archaic, shapes large cadres of students for life, work and citizenship. Wearing a uniform, rising from one's chair to greet a teacher in unison, singing the national anthem and empathetically reciting the nations' pledge are simple tests of conformity that translate into social glue. These eventually become skills that are vital to industry.
		Such rigour is dynamic in shaping young minds to do what is right. Many marvel at the ethos and pathos of Japanese and German societies, disciplined, diligent and productive. This is the product of obedience to rules in school and society. Conformity makes compliance easier.
Schools in most countries, even independent and private schools, do not operate with impunity.	Should be	They enjoy greater autonomy in curricular innovations implementation of school programmes, administration, student admissions and the setting of fee structures, but they have to follow prescribed standards, as in Singapore.

		Magnet schools in the USA offer a variety of education in a less stringent setting, but do not depart from standards set-out by the state in which they operate.
Police departments and militaries are functional precisely because of conformity.	Should be	<p>In the same light, preparing young minds for life, work and citizenship, requires a standard measure of instruction. Education is more than just excelling in various subjects, it is the shaping of minds. As complexities in socioeconomic areas increase, modern school systems around the world are rediscovering the importance of teaching character attributes, such as performance related traits of adaptability, persistence and resilience. Moral-related traits such as integrity, justice, empathy and ethics are just as essential.</p> <p>Singapore introduced Character and Citizenship Education (CCE) in 2014 to students to ensure that they learn values through three overarching ideas, namely: identity, relationships and choices in six domains, starting with self and extending to the family, school, community, nation and the world. Without introducing such concepts to students, it is doubtful that they would be able to learn it independently.</p>
It is a widely held belief that modern day companies are looking for creative thinkers and workers that can deal with different cultures and tasks as well.	Should not be	Many are vying for that coveted job at Google, Facebook or Apple. But what we fail to realise is that such jobs are not for everyone. There is a rigorous selection process that lets only a few in. These companies seek people with passion, but at the same time, want to determine if they can conform to corporate culture. The contention here is that conformity is even practised by large companies, so why should schools be excluded from inculcating such a vital trait?
In some cases, schools demand conformity to these rules as they can often result in a matter of life and death.	Should be	In war torn regions like Sudan, non-governmental organisations have prioritised health education over lessons in literacy and are educating young children and families in areas of basic hygiene in an attempt to raise their infant mortality rate as well as reduce the spread of disease.

		On the other end of the spectrum, the United States has already instituted in their schools a nation-wide program in educating youth about the risks of obesity and sexual promiscuity.
In nations that benefit from high cultural capital, schools should enforce national interests in classrooms by ensuring that students learn to preserve their unique cultural heritage and develop a similar level of patriotism or loyalty to their nation.	Should be	Countries like France and Japan benefit from unique cultures and consequently enjoy a thriving tourist industry. Cultural protectionism becomes vital in preserving their cultural branding and prestige they possess as nations.
		Schools should ensure that students conform to learning the native language and inculcate within students' pride for the nation through lessons on the nation's history and heritage. Singapore has been dubbed as a country where "East meets West". Students are taught subject-matter curriculum with English as the medium of instruction, while the official mother tongue - Chinese, Malay and Tamil – is taught as a second language. Even with this system, English seems to be becoming the dominant language in most homes as shown in the study of Wee, L. in 2011. If the education system does not enforce the learning of mother tongues, these languages would be lost in no time, losing one uniqueness of Singapore.
Many economies around the world also are thriving because of the continued popularity of the specialist industries that the nation is known for, and schools are often used to prepare these students for entry into these industries.	Should be	Switzerland benefits from a well-established watch and chocolate industry and trains large cohorts of students to enter the job market conforming to industry needed. Likewise, Singapore has not always encouraged truly liberal choices in learning, preferring to structure schools, according to the need of a dynamically changing economy. Schools may not necessarily teach the same thing but they do however conform to the same purpose of serving a nation's economy.
Conformity should not be discouraged in schools especially when it is used as a form of political control.	Should be	Nazi Germany as well as China's Cultural Revolution did this, echoing North Korean's current practices in their own schools. The promotion of Mao's Little Red Book throughout communist China illustrates this point. All detracting points of view were rejected in schools, the students' most impressionable years were capitalised on to have them unquestioningly adopt communist ideology.



#### P1 Lazy Sheet

**Do you agree with the view that educational qualifications are an unreliable measure of a person's true abilities?**

##### Argument

Qualifications availed from top institutes like MIT, Harvard and Oxford are

Unreliable

##### Evidence

Steve Jobs, Bill Gates and Mark Zuckerberg started their billion-dollar businesses without completing their tertiary education.

synonymous with symbols of excellence in academia.		
In fact, one can argue that even academic achievement is not a true indicator of one's ability.	Unreliable	Richard Branson, CEO of Virgin Airlines and Orlando Bloom, an actor famous for his role in Pirates of the Caribbean are dyslexic. They both struggled in school. Yet, both proved to be highly capable in their own rights.
It can be argued that there are a number of people who have the required skill but do not have qualifications.	Unreliable	They can perhaps function better than the qualified individuals but in a diploma crazed world, companies do not offer jobs simply because someone deserves it. Similarly, it would be shallow to say that an educated person can make better decisions for his family or community, if that is what true ability means. Social and community decisions have little bearing on education. It is common sense that rules those domains.
		According to a study called 'Win at Work' done by Forbes, employers today seek qualities in employees which are largely unrelated to their studies. Among the skills sought after are creativity, negotiation skills and ability to communicate effectively.
Even qualifications can be exploited by unscrupulous individuals.		In 2019, the British Department for Education called on payments firms such as PayPal to block transactions for essay writing firms, in a bid to beat university cheats.
Certain professions cannot function without qualifications. Those professions have in place benchmarks and standards without which their profession would suffer greatly, not just in reputation in societal standing but also due to malpractice.	Reliable	Doctors, engineers, lawyers and even teachers, require basic qualifications and specialised instruction to meet the needs of their client and service them at appropriate standards. Emile Durkheim, the father of modern sociology, posited that one function of education is to place individuals at proper positions based on their merit.
We have to acknowledge that merit can be a confusing term and qualifications in terms of merit can be equally confusing.		A person having qualification in science can perform well in skills required for accounting and computing, or an expert in humanities can function as an inspiring literature teacher. There is an interdisciplinary scope involved in skills and makes assessment of abilities on the basis of certificates a difficult task. But, such cases are rare. They are not faults of the academic system. In these instances, the passion of the individual propels him to excel in the field tangential to his academic qualifications.

## “Education promotes inequality.” Discuss.

Argument		Evidence
Educational institutions are often a vessel for the poisonous ideals of oppressive regimes.	Yes	<p>In the America South prior to the Civil Wars Rights Movement, for instance, schools were a target for Jim Crow laws. African-American students were segregated from Caucasian students and allocated fewer resources in an attempt to discriminate against the race. Adolf Hitler’s Germany used schools to similar effect to discriminate against, first removing their rights to participate in communist activities, then outright banning them from schools.</p> <p>Contemporarily, female access to education in countries like Pakistan and Afghanistan is, due to extremist groups like the Taliban, still fraught with difficulty: In 2012, Malala Yousafzal, a schoolgirl and activist for women’s education, was shot through the head by the Taliban for her brave stance on female education.</p>
	No	<p>On a societal level, education is the most common means for members of disadvantaged classes to transcend the circumstances of their birth. As it is no coincidence that the efforts to promote gender equality and female empowerment in countries like Sudan, where female genital mutilation is still practised, is focused on female education, nor that Yousafzal’s temerity in attending school was considered radical enough to provoke such violent retaliation.</p> <p>A UNESCO study of 100 countries in 2006 revealed that educating girls and reducing the gender gap can promote democracy.</p> <p>Outside of the Third World, the two best specialised high schools in New York City, Stuyvesant High School and the Bronx High School of Science, are known for their disproportionately large intake of meritorious Asian students of humble origins (who form over 60% of the cohort in both schools). These students are often first- or second-generations immigrants for whom education is the only way to enter the professional class.</p>



<p>The education system in many countries pander disproportionately to the needs of the wealthy and put in place multiple safety nets for them.</p>	Yes	<p>The median family income for Harvard undergraduates is \$168,800—more than three times the national median, according to a 2017 study.</p>
		<p>The problem is aggravated when policies that favour this accumulation of privilege take hold. In American universities, maintaining school culture is often the flimsy reasoning on which ‘legacies’ or children of alumni are given precedence over their peers in admissions. In a similar and widely-criticised Singaporean policy, the children of alumni from over-performing, over-subscribed primary schools are given precedence over their counterparts who lack such pedigrees.</p>
		<p>Another prominent example is the well-publicised Ivy League policy of admitting students who have the means to make enormous donations to the school.</p>
		<p>William Deresiewicz, a Yale professor and writer, came to Internet prominence in recent years criticising the system of elite education that largely serves the socio-economic elite’s consolidations of their own status.</p>
		<p>Social class differences in educational attainment are also striking in other parts of the world .According to a 2007 Newsweek article titled 'The Death of Social Mobility', a third of professionals in South Korea send their children to university while only 7% of farmers and blue-collar workers do so.</p>
		<p>In Taiwan, more than 60% of freshmen at National Taiwan University in 2004 matriculated from 10 elite high schools.</p>
		<p>In Britain, 7% of the population are privately educated but 75% of judges and 32% of MPs are privately educated.</p>

In the developed world, pro-equality policies can be and are put into place to prevent such cynical abuses of the system.	No	Northern European countries are lauded as paragons of equal education opportunity. In Denmark and Finland, citizens are entitled to free education all the way to tertiary level, with Finland going the extra mile by serving full subsidised meals to all students. The result of these measures is two of the most equal societies in the First World, with both countries boasting relatively low Gini coefficients of around 0.25.
Affirmative action and policies to ensure low income students have conducive environments in which to study are also essential.	No	One such policy is Singapore's provision of low cost schooling for children of all socio-economic backgrounds in order to ensure basic literacy skills before children enter primary schools. In Singapore, as in many countries, primary education is compulsory and practically state-sponsored, with financial assistance schemes like Edusave put in place to ensure that access to basic education will not be jeopardized by financial difficulties.
Education may inadvertently lock people from different backgrounds into social grids they are unable to break out of.	Yes	<p>In Singapore, different institutions specialise in a primarily academic, or else vocational and technical education. Those educated are bred to think of themselves as leaders of the next age while those who may fail academically early on in life are channelled into vocational institutions set up not for teaching and inspiring of minds, but for the building of skilled workforce that could bolster Singapore's economic growth. These students are taught technical skills they can put to practical use, a markedly different kind of education from that in more academic institutions, and most of them would naturally enter the industries as a gear in the production line.</p> <p>A Yale University professor noted a disparity within the higher education institutions in the US, whereby those in state universities tended to be treated and bred to think as though they were bureaucratic administrators, not leaders of the next generation.</p> <p>In Britain, social mobility is extremely low a big part of that is due to education. The grammar school was introduced to improve social mobility, for bright kids with poor backgrounds, who couldn't afford private schools. The fact is actually very few disadvantaged kids get into grammar schools because parents who can afford private tutoring can help their kids pass their exams, do so. From the Institute of</p>

		Education survey, 70% of grammar school entrants had some form of private tutoring. In fact, only 3% of grammar school pupils are entitled to free school meals, which is an indication of deprivation, according to Sutton Trust, 2013.
		A group of students rejected by Harvard University sued the University over affirmative actions policies that allegedly discriminate against Asian-American applicants, using a vague 'personal rating' system.

#### P1 Lazy Sheet

How far do you agree that the arts should be taught as much as the sciences in school?

Argument		Evidence
The development of a sound outlook is a complex process, in which both the sciences and the arts should play a role.	Should	A sound outlook must be based on an accurate knowledge of the world, beyond the sciences, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM). Literary works like 1984 by George Orwell serves as a reminder to us that without wisdom and morality, science and technology can lead us to destruction.
The arts practise and improve students' imagination and creativity, much more than the sciences.	Should	<p>Having these cognitive traits well-developed should not be deemed as useless. Firstly, it constitutes an impetus for further artistic creations. Secondly, it constitutes an impulse also for innovation, as this process requires a lot of imagination and creativity. Innovation is hugely important for progress of human communities.</p> <p>Plutarch famously promulgated that "the mind is not a vessel to be filled but a fire to be kindled." Education that focuses simply on knowledge and facts is not as enriching as educating the young to think.</p> <p>A report published by Americans for the Arts found that students involved in the arts are four times more likely to attend science fairs. They also report higher motivation to study and are much less likely to drop out of school than students who do not take part in the arts.</p>

Many fear that a balanced distribution of the sciences and the arts in the school's curriculum will impede scientific progress, which in turn will cause economic setbacks.	Should not	By studying more of the sciences, pupils can leave school with a greater amount of scientific knowledge, which will make better scientists in the future, and that is going to quicken scientific progress and economic growth. Infusing more art in the school curriculum will only defocus pupils from science, ending in having weaker scientists in the future.
		There are at least two problems with this line of reasoning. Firstly, it overlooks the fact that there will be many pupils who will not become scientists and a science centred curriculum might prove disadvantageous to them. Secondly, it presupposes that the quality of a scientist depends mainly on the amount of his/her scientific knowledge, which is simply not the case.
		In 1968, the late Mr Lee Kuan Yew called poetry "a luxury we cannot afford". Instead, he led the country down the road of scientific and industrial progress.
A heavy emphasis on science is unnecessary because throughout the history of science, the ones who made the greatest discoveries and advances were the young, who did not have the vast knowledge of older scientists.	Should	Newton's so-called <i>annus mirabilis</i> was printed in 1666 when he was only 24. Einstein's was only 26 when he started working on advance theories in physics, and Darwin started developing his theory when he was well under 30. So, there is statistical evidence that the quality of a scientist is not, or, at least, is not always, directly proportional with his/her amount of scientific knowledge.
The arts can in fact stimulate creativity, an equally important skill for scientific progress.	Should	Leonardo Da Vinci, famous for his paintings of The Last Supper and The Mona Lisa, was also renowned for his invention of the armoured vehicle, parachute and helicopter. He contributed greatly to scientific understanding of human anatomy, large using his artistic prowess to draw out human organs precisely.
		Einstein who was known for his scientific discoveries, was actually a violinist too. He famously claimed that if he were not a physicist, he claims he would have probably been a musician
More of arts infused in the school curriculums will arguably lead to improvement in the wellbeing of the	Should	More of arts infused in the school curriculums will arguably lead to improvement in the wellbeing of the individual and of the society and will develop creative, wise and moral

individual and of the society and will develop creative, wise and moral individuals.

individuals. Today, many countries are following the way paved by the big players in education, like the U.S. or the U.K., and become more STEM-oriented. However, many still see a lot of benefit in studying the arts and are advocating for a change from STEM to STEAM, where the A stands for arts. Bringing the arts to the same level of social importance as the sciences is an invite to moderation, and this process should be started as soon as possible.

In a debate on Straits Times, two Singapore-based professors argued that students should not be made to read texts related to contemporary issues. For instance, they should read *Boy in the Striped Pyjamas* to ponder about the horrors of war.

### P1 Lazy Sheet

**In an age where knowledge becomes obsolete so quickly, do schools still have a future?**

Argument		Evidence
The very existence of schools may be threatened in our present society. New discoveries are made every day and what was accepted as common knowledge may no longer be true tomorrow.	No longer	Our ancestors believed that there was a sun god controlling the motion of the sun, that earth was at the centre of the universe and that all other celestial bodies orbited around us. Modern science however has proved these beliefs wrong. We know that the sun moves across the sky due to the earth's rotation as well as the fact that the sun is at the centre of our solar system. In this sense, do we say that schools in the past have failed their function? If we applied the same principle to our modern society, how can we ascertain that what is taught now may still hold true in the next decade?
Schools can no longer keep up with information that is constantly updated and accessible to the masses.	No longer	With rapid advancements in science, discoveries are going down to the molecular level. We know that nanoparticles exhibit different properties as compared to the macro structure of elements.
		With information being more accessible through other media such as the Internet, television and newspapers, what is in the textbooks may not be sufficient. One may argue that the education

		ministries of many countries constantly revise the syllabus for each subject. This, however, is done only every five to ten years and not annually. Furthermore, with such information being easily accessible on the Internet, students may find that their pool of knowledge may in fact be broadened outside of the classroom.
However, schools are still needed in the future for the many other purposes that they serve.	Still	Teachers make learning fun. They interact with students and create a conducive environment for studying. The Internet is inanimate. Facts are plainly written on the screen and one has to read to obtain the knowledge. Studies suggest that students learn better when their visual, oral and aural sense are all activated. The brain stores the information better and can also retrieve it more easily in the future.  Furthermore, a teacher also serves as a role model and guides students as should school they learn. They explain key concepts and make understanding them easier.
The reason that many nations make the first ten years of education compulsory is that they teach us the facts of life that cannot be changed.	Still	Primary and Secondary schools teach us topics on a general level where the knowledge that we acquire are all true. For instance, we cannot deny the fact that an apple drops because of gravity nor the fact that living things need oxygen to respire.
		Schools also teach morals and values through civil and moral education, as well as to be loyal to the country through national education.
		Most people also do not exercise on their own accord hence the need for physical education to teach us the importance of maintain a healthy diet as well as keep fit.
Moreover, schools do more than just teach.	Still	We have heard of the saying, "Give a man a fish and he eats for a day. Teach him to fish and he eats for life." In a similar sense, schools also teach us how to learn. It might sound complex but this is what most schools are gearing their students towards in this fast-paced and ever-changing world. Schools are now teaching students how to apply what they have learnt and not just regurgitate them to pass the examinations. In other words, the education system is moving away from the path of rote learning.

		Furthermore, schools are equipping students with information and technology (IT) skills at an even younger age than before. Students as young as eight years old may already know how to surf the Internet while their parents might not even have seen a computer when they were that age.
		At Nullspace Robotics in Singapore, a private school that focuses on computing, children as young as 8 years old are learning how to code and programme robots.
In addition, tertiary institutes are also adapting this system of independent learning not just for the students to broaden their own horizons but also to make independent learning a compulsory part of the curriculum	Still	Knowledge and Inquiry (KI) is a subject offered by the Ministry of Education (MOE) in Singapore. It allows students to research on any topic of their choice. They are required to come up with a research essay that will be graded as part of their "A" level examination. Schools understand that the textbooks may eventually be redundant but that are not making themselves redundant. It is evident that they are changing with time by incorporating this aspect of independent learning.

#### P1 Lazy Sheet

## Is competition essential for effective education?

Argument		Evidence
One of the key reasons is that it offers a very clear goal and motivation for students to do better at their studies.	Yes	Take the Chinese education system, for example. Though certain parties would term it as 'extreme', it is undeniable that China has managed to produce many bright talents especially in the areas of science and mathematics due to the competition in schools. With 15 such a large student population and a relatively tiny number of spaces in the most prestigious local universities like Beijing University, competition is a motivator for students as it pushes them to secure a bright future on their own. This is loosely based on the Darwinian idea that only the fittest survive, which encourages students to strive to be classified as the 'fittest', and reap the rewards of being so.

Moreover, one cannot forget that competition does not always mean competition with one's peers in school. It also includes competition against oneself.	Yes	This is the reason why schools often have awards for 'Best Progress' or 'Most Improved' student. such awards allow students to compete with themselves and prevent them from becoming complacent. It also pushes students, even weaker ones, to strive for improvement in all areas of their studies, which will ultimately help promote a sense of perseverance in them - an important character trait today.
However, the idea of competition in schools has met with growing opposition in recent years, and for good reasons too. Excessive competition can definitely be unhealthy and there is proof of this.	No	<p>In Singapore, one of the most scandalous cases was a 'Sex for grades' case in 2014 where a university student gave sexual favours to a professor in order to score good grades. Many blamed the intensely competitive education system, where so much emphasis is placed on doing well in one's studies, that it is almost as if one's entire life depends on grades in Singapore.</p> <p>Placing high stakes in examinations not only results in excessive competition, it also leads to stress. Sometimes, the pressure may be too much to handle. Singapore had a wake-up call when a ten-year-old girl committed suicide in 2009. In her suicide letter, she explained that she did what she did because she could not handle the fact that her grades were not good enough for her parents, and not good enough to enter the best class in school.</p>
Some might say that not all systems require competition to function well.	No	<p>In Finland, high-stakes standardised tests are literally a completely foreign concept. The students take few tests, and when they are mostly low-stakes. However, the quality of teaching has made Finnish students score consistently near the top when it comes to international education rankings including the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA).</p> <p>From 2019, Singapore student report books called the Holistic Development Profile at both primary and secondary levels will no longer contain information such as class and level position, underlining or colouring of marks for subjects failed. This is to stress the message that learning is not a competition.</p>

#### P1 Lazy Sheet



**“The main function of formal education should be to enable people to gain employment.” Discuss with reference to your society.**

Argument		Evidence
One of the most empowering and truly inevitable assets that education freely provides for all us the passion for lifelong learning.	Should not be	The curriculum of our formal education includes both the Sciences and Humanities. When students develop an inclination towards a particular subject, they will realise that the more they learn, the more they realise they don't know.
		Lee Kuan Yew famously said, “my definition of an educated man is a man who never stops learning and wants to learn.”
Education imparts to us a lifelong attitude and perspective that not only pushes and challenges our boundaries; it is also our fuel to achieving success in the continuing pursuit of our interests and passions.	Should not be	At the recent SEA games that concluded in Singapore, there were more than 50 participating athletes who were students juggling school work and intensive training regimes. Taekwondo champion Chelsea Sim from Singapore revealed that for many young athletes, the balancing act between schoolwork and training is extremely challenging but their passion and love for the sport are sufficient to keep them going.
Formal education is also chiefly responsible for the moral landscape of Singapore. It is capable of moulding and shaping the desirable moral values in our students.	Should not be	Singapore's Ministry of Education has pivoted the country's education system towards a more holistic, moral education and value-centric course heading into the future. It recognises that in the 21 <sup>st</sup> century, while knowledge and skill will continue to be highly valued in our knowledge-based economy and will continue to gear Singapore strategically into the global economy, the increasing prominence of an anchored set of values is being acknowledged. The Ministry has introduced several overhauls in its system and has centred moral education as one of the core goal and purpose for every student.
The most encouraging and truly heartening value that education provides for Singapore is the building of a more gracious and civilised society.	Should not	Over the past 5 years, the rising number of community projects, in particular youth-initiated ones, is a reassuring sign that our society is beginning to view education as a powerful and influential agent of change. PinkDot organised their second annual rally at Hong Lim Park, advocating the rights of the sexual minority group in Singapore. Education has provided us

		with the skills, be it knowledge, communication skills or even emotional development such as empathy and compassion.
We cannot refute the truth that education does play a significant role in propelling us towards our future career paths and choices.	Should	With a tight labour force and limited leadership positions, it is no wonder why many view education as a means of survival. In fact, it can also be said that employment is a source of contribution to not only the workplace, but to the familial unit as well. A working adult is an active and contributing member of society simply because he is part of the workplace and is working to support his family.
We must recognise that education, ultimately, serves the society.	Should not	Education should never be a self-serving deed and students need to align their attitude towards education with the community-centric focus of it, beyond the mindless pursuit of career advancements that gratifies only one's selfish soul.
		In Jan 2013, the Ministry of Education of Singapore conceived the 21 <sup>st</sup> Century Competencies Framework to be incorporated into the mainstream curriculum as it recognises the importance of moulding students into responsible, civic-conscious global citizens.
The main function of formal education should be to enable people to gain employment as it is through jobs that people are able to make contributions to society.	Should	Singapore provides a well-structured education system of high standards to Singaporeans, Singaporeans are obliged to give back to the society through their jobs which help further economic progress, especially in this small nation where the labour force is more vital due to the lack of natural resources.
		After the O-Level Examinations, students would receive booklets that include roadmaps which illustrate the different paths that they can take. Those range from tertiary education institutions such as Junior Colleges (JC) and Institute of Technical Education (ITE) and even to specialised arts schools such as the School of the Arts (SOTA) and Nanyang Academy of Fine Arts (NAFA), so that students can pick up the necessary skills to gain employment depending on the field they intend to pursue in the future and their unique aptitudes.

The nation-wide examination that provide academic qualifications is crucial for people to attain their desired jobs. Hence, gaining employment is often regarded as the main function of formal education.	Should	The Primary School Leaving Examinations (PSLE), O-level and A-level examinations that students have to take in the final year of each level of schooling are the main source of motivation for students to study, as achieving satisfactory grades and paper qualifications proves their academic strengths and skills, making them more attractive for employment. Furthermore, as education also expands student's knowledge and intellectual abilities, those who are educated have better access to wider array of jobs which the less educated are denied due to their lack of special vocational training. Such occupations include doctors, lawyers and researchers in specialised areas who are highly sought after in this competitive society of Singapore.
Gaining employment does not necessarily mean that people are able to stay employed. The main function of education should not be to enable people to gain employment but rather, hold on to the jobs, which is more crucial and difficult.	Should not	The Singapore education system helps to develop student's critical thinking skills through examination question as well as inter-personal skills through social interaction with classmates, group work and class discussion and Project Work (PW), an A-level subject compulsory for all JC students. In addition, teachers also nurture students attitude towards lifelong learning, having to face challenges in schools and learning to overcome problems would help them develop important qualities which allow them to constantly upgrade their skills, remain adaptable and relevant, therefore be ensured of job security.
There are other areas of concern such as character development, although career is an important part of a person's life.	Should not	Schools provide additional workshops in post-examination curriculum periods and are not the main focus of education. In reality, the school curriculum is targeted on increasing student's knowledge and global minded ness so that they can develop into mature citizens, capable of making a difference to the world. Civic education inculcates in students moral values underscoring the importance of ethics, and Values-In-Actions (VIA) activities which imbue students with empathy and allow them to experience the joy of serving other and helping the minority and disadvantaged.

## ‘University education is no longer necessary in today's world’. How realistic is this position?

Argument		Evidence
On the basis of employability itself, it is realistic to claim that university is no longer necessary in today's world.	No longer	<p>A university degree is no longer the social mobiliser it was once exalted as. The world has a surplus of graduates – China universities produce five million graduates per year and in Singapore, almost 23% of the existing workforce have a degree.</p> <p>In many parts of Southeast Asia, Hong Kong and South Korea, all countries and regions with high education and graduate rates – youth unemployment are in double digits. South Korean president said that such ‘reckless university enrolment’ is the cause of a surplus of educated labour that has depressed average wages by about right percent.</p> <p>In America, forty-six percent of university graduates are currently underemployed and in Singapore, the figure stands at about 10%.</p>
It would be realistic to argue that higher education is no longer relevant today as high education levels are no longer the only quality that employers look for.	No longer	<p>Employers have shifted towards a more skills-based approach. Hence a university degree is no longer sufficient to differentiate between a graduate and non-graduate.</p> <p>One survey of around 40,000 programmers found that 69% of people claiming to be either partly or fully self-taught when asked where did they learn their IT skills. 44% of the programmers learn their IT skills through on-the-job training, and three fifths of the programmers didn't have an IT degree.</p> <p>In Germany, the Dual Vocational Training System combines apprenticeships in a company and vocational education to ensure students learn to apply the skills they learn in school in a real-world context, as well as supplementary skills like critical thinking and teamwork, boosting attractiveness to employers.</p>
University education is no longer necessary as there is increasing recognition from government to retrain those without tertiary education.		While less skilled workers are unable to join the labour force due to its large dependence on technology in developed countries like Singapore, the government spends large amounts of money on retraining programmes

		such as the SkillsFuture programme, recently introduced in Singapore, to enable workers to quickly move up the value chain. In 2016, the SkillsFuture programme is reported to offer \$400 million worth of subsidies and provision of modular courses a year to Singaporeans aged 25 and above to undertake
Some insist that university education is indispensable in today's world because it confers unique knowledge and skill sets that are necessary in certain fields.	Still	<p>Doctors have to spend up to a decade in university studying the complexities of human anatomy before specialising in their final years. Only then can they practice as a medical practitioner.</p> <p>Knowledge that they gain from university education makes them irreplaceable by those who do not share similar education qualifications.</p>
In today's technologically advanced world, technology will seek to replace jobs that require even the highest level of intellectual capabilities.	No longer	<p>Ray Kurzweil asserted that by 2025, a thousand-dollar laptop will have the equivalent capacity of a human brain, another supporting statistic claim that by the same time – jobs that can differentiate university degree holders and non-holders are becoming more obsolete as machinery proves to be a viable, if not better, substitute for their intelligence.</p> <p>Statisticians and mathematicians have their mental processing abilities undermined by supercomputers and quantum computers that can calculate up to thousand times faster than the human brain.</p>
University education is still useful if one seeks secured employment that pays.	Still	Pew Research Centre shows that people who have a bachelor's degree earn 60% more than high school finishers. That's an extra \$700,000 over the course of a lifetime. The unemployment rate for people with bachelor degree is only 3.8% while for high school finishers, it's 12.2%, which means people with bachelor degree is three times less likely to be unemployed. People who are more educated also tend to be more satisfied with their jobs.
		According to the latest graduate employment survey by the three local universities, fresh graduates from Nanyang Technological University's business and computing science double degree programme commanded a median starting salary of S\$5000, a level that many non-degree holders can only dream of.

University Education is still highly regarded by employers as a measure of one's ability and motivation.

It's due to signalling theory, a theory which won the 2001 Nobel Prize for economics. It states that while a degree itself isn't worth a lot, it is a quick way for employers to separate a good employee from a bad one. People who go to university tend to be smarter in the first place. They are also more motivated for their career more custom to deadline, less likely to do drug, harder worker and so on.

### P1 Lazy Sheet

## To what extent is education an effective way to combat poverty?

Argument		Evidence
Education empowers individuals to pull themselves out of economic destitution.	effective	<p>So, in rural agricultural communities in India and Nepal, going to school enables the younger generations to learn modern farming techniques and skills – for example, knowing how to implement regular crop rotation such that the land remains arable, or even attain basic technological proficiencies to operate agricultural machinery like tractors or harvesters.</p> <p>Getting an education in science and maths can enable the children of illiterate farmers to become technicians, electricians, or even professors and doctors, because they now have the necessary skills and knowledge, as well as the qualifications, to gain employment.</p>
In poverty-stricken parts of the world, education provides the poor with health education.	effective	This could translate to proper sanitary practices in places like rural India and Sudan, where open defecation causes high rates of cholera, and where women have very little access to sanitary napkins because they are told periods are sinful, and are forced to use sand, ashes or leaves as substitutes, eventually amounting to high incidences of cervical cancer.

		Education is important for basic family planning in countries like Kenya and Uganda – teaching girls about the consequences of unregulated marital sex and the different avenues of contraception, which empowers women with informed agency to reject childbearing at too young an age.
education also means more wealth creation within underdeveloped economies	effective	International studies indicate that sustainable economic growth in a country is predicated on a minimum 40% literacy rate, because poor countries must industrialise in order to get richer.
		Only with proper education can a workforce participate in knowledge-intensive and value-creating industries such as computer science.
		this was most evident in China, where booming education rates enabled the creation of an “Eastern Silicon Valley” of researchers and manufacturers creating new technology
However, education is not wholly effective in combatting poverty; in fact, it can sometimes entrench rich-poor divides.	ineffective	Affluent families often enrol their children in elite schools which put other children at a disadvantage. Examples abound – the Grammar Schools in the UK, international schools in China for celebrities and politicians’ children, elite schools in Singapore and private schools in the US.
Poor students often do not get access to quality education.	ineffective	Underperforming schools in America exist overwhelmingly in challenging and poor neighbourhoods, where many students belong to ethnic minority groups.

# Questions on Education

## **The Purpose of Education**

Is it always important to succeed?

Should conformity be the main aim of all schools?

‘Education should only be concerned with what is useful in life.’  
Discuss.

Discuss the claim that education guarantees progress.

‘Qualified but not enlightened.’ is it a fair description of educated people today?

‘The main function of education is to gain employment.’ Discuss with relevant to your own society.

## **Controversies Surrounding Education**

‘Education promotes inequality.’ Discuss.

Conformity should be the main aim of all schools.’ How far is this true?

## **Focus of Education**

How far do you agree that the arts should be taught as much as the sciences in school?

Is a sound knowledge of science and technology essential for a well-educated person in today's world?

Is competition essential for effective education?



'The arts and the humanities are luxuries modern education cannot afford – it needs to focus on the sciences and mathematics to prepare young people for the future.' Discuss.

### **Modern Education**

Do you agree with the view that educational qualifications are an unreliable measure of a person's true abilities?

Technology has taken over from teachers. Is this a fair assessment of education today?

'University education is no longer necessary in today's world.' How realistic is this position?

### **Others**

Discuss the advantages and disadvantages of being educated abroad.

'The word failure should never be used in education.' Discuss.

# Glossary

## People you should know

### **Malala Yousafzai**

Pakistani activist for female education and the youngest Nobel Prize laureate. She survived being shot by the Taliban.

### **Salman Khan**

TIME magazine named Salman Khan one of its “100 Most Influential People in the World” in 2012. He founded Khan Academy, the free online learning tool that is showing up in classrooms and in homes all around the world.

### **Bill Gates**

In 2010, the Editorial Projects in Education Research Centre names Gates the most influential person in education policy over the preceding decade. Over that period of time, Gates has contributed over US\$1.2 billion to high school reform efforts, helped bring technology into schools that needed it.

### **William Deresiewicz**

Deresiewicz, a Yale professor and writer, is a contributing writer for The Nation and a contributing editor for The New Republic. His writings span such topics as books, higher education, culture, and politics. His article "The Disadvantages of an Elite Education," along with his speech "Solitude and Leadership," have gone viral on the internet. In 2014, he published Excellent Sheep: The Miseducation of the American Elite and the Way to a Meaningful Life, a book-length expansion of his argument in "The Disadvantages of an Elite Education."

## Online education platform you should know

### **The Concord Consortium**

A non-profit organisation that develops free open source software for math, science and engineering education. One of the most extensive projects is the Molecular Workbench, which provides science teachers with simulations on topics like gas laws, fluid mechanics and chemical bonding.

### **Glovico.org**

Allows students to set up language lessons with a native speaker who lives in another country and attends lessons via video conferencing.

### **edX**

Draws upon a consortium of institutional partners to create resources for learners worldwide. In addition to being a leading provider of Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs), edX also conducts and publishes research on learners and learning.

### **Khan Academy**

Today, Khan Academy is home to more than 3,000 lessons that allow students to learn, practice, and get help at their own pace.

### **Barefoot College**

Started when several graduates from Delhi University sought to apply the wisdom of traditional knowledge to contemporary problems through knowledge-sharing between skilled, highly educated professionals and the poorest of the poor in rural India. Today, the organisation helps train local community members as teachers, solar power engineers, and specialists in other fields. The organisation also seeks to demystify and decentralise technology use, promote female empowerment, and develop villages from inside out – rather than vice-versa.

**Blackboard Inc.**

An educational technology company with corporate headquarters in Washington, D.C. known for its Blackboard Learn learning management system. As of January 2014, its software and services are used by approximately 17,000 schools and organisations in 100 countries.

**Coursera**

A for-profit educational technology company founded by computer science professor Andrew Ng and Daphne Koller from Stanford University. Coursera offers massive MOOCs and works with universities to make some of their courses available online. As of January 2016, Coursera had 22 million users from 184 countries enrolled. It offers 839 courses from 114 institutions.

**Academia**

A collective term for the scientific and cultural community engaged in higher education and research.

**Education terms you should know****Millennium Development Goals (MDG)**

Ran from 2000-2015, which encompassed 8 goals, goal #2 is to achieve universal primary education.

**Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) aka Global Goals**

To expand and continue the legacy of MDG from 2015-2030, it seeks inclusive and equitable quality education and hopes to promote lifelong learning opportunities for all. SGD has 17 goals and goal number 4 (SDG #4) focuses on education.

SDG#4 aims

1. to ensure by 2030, that all girls and boys complete free, equitable and quality primary and secondary education.

2. to ensure equal access for all women and men to affordable and quality technical, vocational and tertiary education, including university.
3. to substantially increase the number of youth and adults who have relevant skills, including technical and vocational skills, for employment, decent jobs and entrepreneurship.
4. eliminate gender disparities in education.
5. ensure equal access to all levels of education and vocational training for the vulnerable, including persons with disabilities, indigenous people and children in vulnerable situations.

### **Incheon Declaration**

Initiated in May 2015 during World Education Forum, it is the logical continuation of the Education For All (EFA) movement and the Millennium Development Goals on Education, and many of its goals were based on a review of progress made since the 2000 World Education Forum in Dakar. It sought to create lifelong learning for all, and ensuring that education is inclusive and equitable.

### **Education For All (EFA)**

The Education for All (EFA) movement is a global commitment to provide quality basic education for all children, youth and adults.

### **Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs)**

An online course aimed at unlimited participation and open access via the web.

### **United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO)**

To contribute to peace and security by promoting international collaboration through education, science and culture in order to further universal respect for justice, the rule of law, and human

rights. Other priorities of the organisation include attaining quality Education For All and lifelong learning.

### **Active learning**

A process whereby learners are actively engaged in the learning process, rather than passively absorbing lectures. Active learning involves writing, discussion, and engagement in solving problems, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation.

### **Andragogy**

The method of teaching adults, as opposed to the method of teaching children, which is called pedagogy.

### **Pedagogy**

The method and practice of teaching, especially as an academic subject, to children.

### **Asynchronous learning**

An approach to providing technology-based training that incorporates learner-centric models of instruction.

### **Autodidacticism**

Simply put is self-education or self-directed learning. An autodidact, also known as an automate, is a mostly self-taught person. It typically describes someone who has an enthusiasm for self-education and a high degree of self-motivation.

### **Didactic Method**

It aims educational objectives fulfilment and also promotes consolidation of knowledge in form of facts, phenomena, ideas, formula, laws, etc. Didactic methods help to handle the

accumulated knowledge of each person. They arrange the information making it logical and accessible.

### **Blended learning**

Learning in a combination of modes. Often used more specifically to refer to courses which use a combination of traditional face-to-face teaching and distance learning techniques on-line.

### **Collaborative learning**

An umbrella term for a variety of approaches in education that involve joint intellectual effort by students or students and teachers. Groups of students work together in searching for understanding meaning or solutions or in creating a product.

### **Educational perennialism**

Perennialists believe that one should teach the things that they believe are of everlasting importance to all people everywhere.

### **Experiential Education**

Learning by doing. The process of actively engaging students in an authentic experience that will have benefits and consequences. Students make discoveries and experiment with knowledge themselves instead of hearing or reading about the experiences of others.

### **Functional illiteracy**

Refers to the inability of an individual to use reading, speaking, writing, and computational skills efficiently in everyday life situations. Unlike an illiterate, a functionally illiterate adult could be able to read and write text in his native language, but is unable to perform such fundamental tasks as filling out an application for employment, following written instructions, reading a newspaper,

reading traffic signs, consulting a dictionary, or understanding a bus schedule.

### **Problem-based learning**

Learning driven by messy, open-ended problems; students work in small collaborative groups and teachers are not entirely required. The process uses "facilitators" to guide students, ensuring they are on task with their project. Accordingly, students are encouraged to take responsibility for their group and organize and direct the learning process with support from a tutor or instructor. Advocates of PBL claim it can be used to enhance content knowledge and foster the development of communication, problem-solving, and self-directed learning skill.

### **Rote learning**

A learning technique which avoids grasping the inner complexities and inferences of the subject that are being learned and instead focuses on memorizing the material so that it can be recalled by the learner exactly the way it was read or heard.

### **Socratic method**

It is a method of inquiry, largely applied to the examination of key moral concepts. It is a form of philosophical enquiry. It involves two or more speakers, usually with one as the master and the others as students.

### **Theory of cognitive development**

A developmental psychology theory central to child psychology which posits that there are "critical periods," times when children are particularly susceptible to certain information.



## **Theory of multiple intelligences**

An educational theory espousing that eight kinds of "intelligence" exist in humans, each relating to a different sphere of human life and activity.

## **Equaliser**

A thing which has a levelling effect (levelling the playing field for all children). Education is often seen as an equaliser.

## **Tuition Loans**

In America especially, college and university education is expensive. Many students take out a bank loan to finance their studies. Former President Barack Obama only finished paying his tuition loan at the age of 40.

## **21st Century Competencies**

To help students thrive in a fast-changing world, MOE has identified competencies that have become increasingly important in the 21st Century. These competencies, represented in the following framework, underpin the holistic education that our schools provide to better prepare students for the future.

## Quotes

“Educating the mind without educating the heart is no education at all.” – Aristotle

“Literacy unlocks the capacity of individuals to imagine and create a more fulfilling future. It opens the way to greater justice, equality and progress.” – the UN Secretary-General, Ban Ki-moon

“Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world.” – Nelson Mandela

“Education is what remains after one has forgotten what one has learned in school.” – Albert Einstein

“If you can’t explain it simply, you don’t understand it well enough.” – Albert Einstein

“Education, therefore, is a process of living and not a preparation for future living.” – John Dewey

“Education is not preparation for life; education is life itself.” – John Dewey

“The capacity to learn is a gift; the ability to learn is a skill; the willingness to learn is a choice.” – Brian Herbert

“Education breeds confidence. Confidence breeds hope. Hope breeds peace.” – Confucius

“There are three sorts of people in the world: Those who are immovable, people who are movable, and people who move.” - Benjamin Franklin

“The function of education is to teach one to think intensively and to think critically. Intelligence plus character – that is the goal of true education.” – Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

"By education, I mean an all-round drawing of the best in child and man in body, mind and spirit." – Mahatma Gandhi

"Education is not the learning of facts, but the training of the mind to think." – Albert Einstein

"Intelligence plus character — that is the true goal of education." – Dr. Martin Luther King Jr

"Everyone is a genius. But if you judge a fish on its ability to climb a tree, it will live its whole life believing that it is stupid." – Albert Einstein

"Education costs money. But then so does ignorance." – Sir Claus Moser

"Develop a passion for learning. If you do, you will never cease to grow." – Anthony J. D'Angelo

"Education is not the filling of a pail, but the lighting of a fire." – William Butler Yeats

"Education is the key to unlock the golden door of freedom." – George Washington Carver

"Education is what survives when what has been learned has been forgotten." – B F Skinner

"Education's purpose is to replace an empty mind with an open one." – Malcolm Forbes

"I never let my schooling interfere with my education." – Mark Twain

"It is the mark of an educated mind to be able to entertain a thought without accepting it." – Aristotle

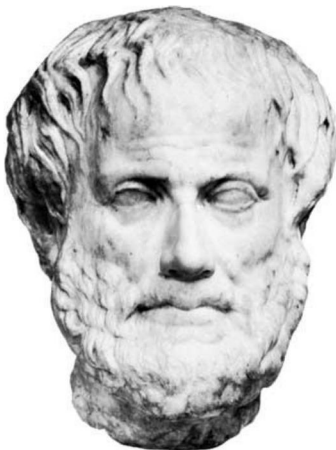
'Education does not end at any point in our lives; it is an ongoing journey to be carried with us every day throughout our lives.' – Thomas Powell

"I think that the greatest education in the world is the education which helps one to be able to do the right things at the time it has to be done." — Charles F. Kettering

"Knowledge without values seems rather to make a man a more clever devil." – C. S. Lewis

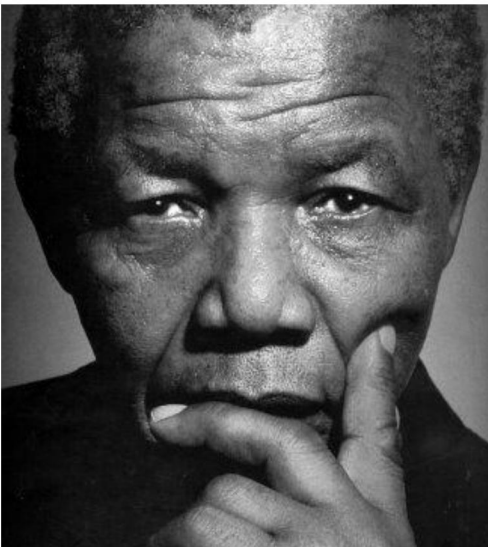
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**Albert Einstein**

**"Intelligence plus character — that  
is the true goal of education."**



# Dr. Martin Luther King Jr

## Final Note

*You keep forgetting what you've read. Your essays are always out of point. There's so much to study for GP that you can't fit it all in your head. You don't even know how to start revising. Honestly, I get your frustrations.*

*We have spent years trying to make GP a painless subject for everyone. It hasn't been an easy journey. We spent weeks refining notes and resources, and we still do it over and over again, to get to knowledge out. I didn't care that much about the financial reward. At one point I was even broke as shit. Success*

sure didn't come overnight. We failed many times. "Cher, there's damn a lot to remember for GP man," one of our past students was reeling from the untouched resources sitting in front of him, right before his mid-year.

But we persevered. We stick to our goals: to inspire curiosity in the younger generation, to illuminate as many minds as possible, to make knowledge fun, to help students save time so they have time for other subjects. We stay up till 3am, reading, distilling and redesigning useful resources for everyone out there. So that now you can enjoy the fruits of our labour.

Beyond useful info, this booklet also contains the hard work of many many people. So use it well. If you'd like to share it, be my guest. Pay it forward!

"Cher" the same student texted me one afternoon. "I got B! First time."

We live for moments like this.

KP

## *First Class*

*PS don't stop here. This booklet is a great introduction, but you will need more to do well for GP and in life :) To find out more useful content and tips about how to write stunning essays, follow us*

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# FIRST CLASS

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