

**TAMPINES JUNIOR COLLEGE  
JC2 PRELIMINARY EXAMINATION**



CANDIDATE  
NAME

CIVICS GROUP

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TUTOR

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**GENERAL PAPER**

**8807/01**

Paper 1

**27 August 2018**

**1 hour 30 minutes**

Additional Materials: Writing Paper

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**READ THESE INSTRUCTIONS FIRST**

Write your name and class on all the work you hand in.

Write in dark blue or black pen on both sides of the paper.

Do not use staples, paper clips, glue or correction fluid.

Answer **one** question.

Note that up to **20** marks out of **50** will be awarded for your use of language.

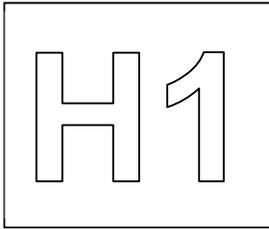
At the end of the examination, fasten all your work securely together.

All questions in this paper carry equal marks.

Answer **one** question.

Answers should be between 500 and 800 words in length.

- 1 In your society, how important is the study of Literature?
- 2 Assess the view that society has become too politically correct.
- 3 Should there be limitations on the development of artificial intelligence?
- 4 'Regulation is the only way to combat fake news.' How far do you agree?
- 5 Recycling all waste is a desirable but unrealistic goal. How far is this true in your society?
- 6 Fame is a double-edged sword. Comment.
- 7 Consider the claim that the world today is characterised by disintegration rather than integration.
- 8 In a society marked by a widening income gap, can education really be the social leveller?
- 9 'The war on terror is an attack on our liberties.' To what extent do you agree?
- 10 Is having an ambition always desirable?
- 11 'Modern living necessitates a dose of humour.' Discuss.
- 12 Does life in today's society offer us too many choices?



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**JC 2 PRELIMINARY EXAMINATION**



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TUTOR

**GENERAL PAPER**

**8807/02**

Paper 2

**27 August 2018**

**1 hour 30 minutes**

Candidates answer on the Question Paper

Additional Materials: 1 Insert

**READ THESE INSTRUCTIONS FIRST**

Write your name and class on all the work you hand in.  
 Write in dark blue or black pen.  
 Do not use staples, paper clips, glue or correction fluid.

**TOTAL:**

**/50**

Answer **all** questions.

The Insert contains the passage for comprehension.

Note that up to **15** marks out of **50** will be awarded for your use of language.

The number of marks is given in brackets [ ] at the end of each question or part question.

**For Examiner's Use**

Qn 1		Qn 7		MARKER 1	
Qn 2		Qn 8		MARKER 2	
Qn 3		Qn 9		MARKER 3	
Qn 4		Qn 10		MARKER 4	
Qn 5		Qn 11		MARKER 5	
Qn 6		Qn 12			
Sub-total		..... / 35		AVE LANG MARK	..... / 15

Read the passage in the Insert and then answer **all** the questions. Note that up to fifteen marks will be given for the quality and accuracy of your use of English throughout this Paper.

For  
Examiner's  
Use

NOTE: When a question asks for an answer **IN YOUR OWN WORDS AS FAR AS POSSIBLE** and you select the appropriate material from the passage for your answer, you must still use your own words to express it. Little credit can be given to answers which only copy words and phrases from the passage.

1 Explain why the author uses the words “almost unanimously” in line 1.

.....  
..... [1]

2 Why is freedom “linked to goodness and moral responsibility” (lines 6-7)? **Use your own words as far as possible.**

.....  
.....  
.....  
..... [2]

3 a) Explain what the author means by the phrase ‘gaining popular currency’ (line 10)?

.....  
..... [1]

b) Identify another phrase in paragraph 2 that best captures this meaning.

.....  
..... [1]

4 What is the author's purpose in asking the last two questions in paragraph 2?

.....  
..... [1]

5 From Smilansky's illustration in paragraph 5, explain why "we cannot afford for people to internalise the truth about free will" (lines 42-43).

.....  
.....  
.....  
..... [2]

6 From paragraph 8, explain why the author repeats the phrase, "they did not".

.....  
.....  
.....  
..... [2]

7 How does being "dispassionate" (line 70) help us to manage offenders? **Use your own words as far as possible.**

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
..... [3]

8 What does the word 'airy-fairy' (line 73) suggest about the author's belief and attitude towards the notion of free will?

.....  
..... [2]

9 Explain the author's use of the metaphor "cornerstone" (line 75).

.....

.....

.....

..... [2]

*For  
Examiner's  
Use*









*Stephen Cave believes that there is no such thing as free will.*

- 1 For centuries, philosophers and theologians have almost unanimously held that civilisation as we know it depends on a widespread belief in free will and that losing this belief could be calamitous. Our codes of ethics assume that we can freely choose between right and wrong, that we possess “moral liberty”, which refers to the capacity to discern and pursue the good, instead of merely being compelled by appetites and desires. If we are not free to choose, then it would make no sense to say we ought to choose the path of righteousness. Freedom is therefore linked to goodness and moral responsibility. 5
- 2 Yet increasingly, we see that faith in the freedom to choose is eroding. Free-will scepticism, or determinism (to one degree or another), is gaining popular currency. The sciences have grown steadily bolder in their claim that all human behaviour can be explained through cause and effect. Chiefly, it has championed the view that our ability to choose our fate is not free, but instead depends on our biological inheritance. From court cases premised on neuroscientific explanations of criminal actions, to the flurry of books and articles purporting to explain “your brain” on everything from music to magic—free-will scepticism is without a doubt, permeating the present-day belief. Why is this of any concern, one may ask? Such a development raises uncomfortable questions, with increasingly real implications: If moral responsibility depends on faith in our own agency, then as belief in determinism spreads, will we become morally irresponsible? If we increasingly see belief in free will as a delusion, what will happen to all those institutions that are based on it? 10 15 20
- 3 Analysis of various experiments show that when people stop believing they are free agents, they stop seeing themselves as blameworthy for their actions. Consequently, they act less responsibly and give in to their baser instincts. This result is not limited to the contrived conditions of a lab experiment. The same effects can be seen in people who naturally believe more or less in free will. In a study, for instance, the extent to which a group of day labourers believed in free will was measured, then their performance on the job was examined by looking at their supervisor’s ratings. Those who believed more strongly that they were in control of their own actions showed up on time for work more frequently and were rated by supervisors as more capable. In fact, belief in free will turned out to be a better predictor of job performance than established measures such as self-professed work ethic. 25 30
- 4 Further studies have linked a diminished belief in free will to stress, unhappiness and a lesser commitment to relationships. They found that when subjects were induced to believe that all human actions follow from prior events and can ultimately be understood in terms of the movement of molecules, those subjects came away with a lower sense of life’s meaningfulness. The list goes on: believing that free will is an illusion has been shown to make people less creative, more likely to conform, less willing to learn from their mistakes, and less grateful toward one another. In every regard, it seems, when we embrace determinism, we indulge our dark side. 35 40
- 5 Saul Smilansky, a philosophy professor at the University of Haifa, in Israel, has therefore come to a painful conclusion: “We cannot afford for people to internalise the truth” about free will. He is convinced that free will does not exist in the traditional sense, that it would be very bad if most people realised this. To illustrate this, Smilansky says, “Imagine that I am deliberating whether to do my duty, such as to parachute into enemy territory, or 45

- something more mundane like to risk my job by reporting on some wrongdoing. If everyone accepts that there is no free will, then I will know that people will say, 'Whatever he did, he had no choice, we cannot blame him.' So I know I am not going to be condemned for taking the selfish option." This, he believes, is very dangerous for society, and "the more people accept the determinist picture, the worse things will get." 50
- 6 Determinism not only undermines blame, Smilansky argues; it also undermines praise. Imagine I risk my life by jumping into enemy territory to perform a daring mission. Afterward, people will say that I had no choice, that my feats were merely, in Smilansky's phrase, "an unfolding of the given," and therefore hardly praiseworthy. Just as undermining blame would remove an obstacle to acting wickedly, so undermining praise would remove any incentive to do good. Our heroes would seem less inspiring, he argues, our achievements less noteworthy, and soon we would sink into moral bankruptcy and desperation. 55
- 7 Smilansky therefore advocates a view he calls illusionism—the belief that free will is indeed an illusion, but one that society must defend. Yet there is something drastic, even terrible, about this idea. An added dilemma is raised by illusionism: if the choice is between the true and the good, then for the sake of society, the true must go. 60
- 8 Yet not all scholars agree with Smilansky. It is presumptuous to believe that our lack of free will would lead to the collapse of civilisation. Indeed, there is no such thing as free will. In fact, we are better off without the whole notion of it. We should acknowledge that even the worst criminals, murderous psychopaths, for example, are in a sense unlucky. They did not pick their genes. They did not pick their parents. They did not make their brains, yet their brains are the source of their intentions and actions. In a deep sense, their crimes are not their fault. 65
- 9 Recognising this, we can be dispassionate in considering how to manage offenders in order to rehabilitate them, protect society, and reduce future offending. In time, it might even be possible to cure something like psychopathy, but only if we accept that the brain, and not some airy-fairy free will, is the source of the deviancy. Accepting this would also free us from hatred. Holding people responsible for their actions might sound like a cornerstone of civilised life, but we pay a high price for it: Blaming people makes us angry and vengeful, and that clouds our judgement. 75
- 10 While social problems may arise from seeing our own actions as determined by forces beyond our control—weakening our morals, our motivation, and our sense of the meaningfulness of life, social benefits will result from seeing other people's behaviour in the very same light. From that vantage point, the implications of determinism are a lot better. 80

**TPJC 2018 Prelim P2 Answers**

1. Explain why the author uses the words “almost unanimously” in line 1. [1]

For centuries, philosophers and theologians have almost unanimously held that civilization as we know it depends on a widespread belief in free will and that losing this belief could be calamitous.	Not all scholars agree that society will fall apart without the belief in free will. [1] OR The notion that the belief in a lack of free will may lead to the disintegration of society is debatable / questionable. [1]
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2. Why is freedom “linked to goodness and moral responsibility” (lines 6-7)? **Use your own words as far as possible.** [2]

Our codes of ethics assume that we can <b>make moral judgements freely, which means having</b> the capacity to discern and pursue the good, <b>instead of merely being compelled by our instinctive desires.</b> (lines 3 to 6)	<b>Either</b>  a) <b>As our morality is based on our ability to choose between right and wrong independently,</b> [1] <b>OR</b> b) rather than <b>being motivated by our inherent/innate cravings/wants/yearning/appetites,</b> [1]
If we are not free to choose, then it would <b>make no sense</b> to say <b>we ought to choose the path of righteousness.</b> (lines 6 and 7)	c) ... not having free will makes it <b>illogical for one to have / feel compelled to do good / uphold morals.</b> [1]  <b>*students have to convey the meaning of ‘ought to’ in their answer</b>

- 3 a) Explain what the author means by the phrase ‘gaining popular currency’ (line 10)? [1]

Determinism is becoming more widespread in current times / more valuable. [1]

- b) Identify another phrase in paragraph 2 that best captures this meaning. [1]

The phrase is “permeating the present-day belief”. [1]

4. What is the author's purpose in asking the last two questions in paragraph 2? [1]

<p>Why is this of <b>any concern</b>, one may ask? Such a development raises <b>uncomfortable questions</b>, ... (lines 16 &amp; 17) ... with <b>increasingly real implications</b> ... (line 18)</p>	<p>The author's purpose is to <b>emphasise / highlight the far-reaching / significant / extensive / tangible consequences of believing in determinism / free-will scepticism</b>. [1]</p> <p>*Student must have both the generic purpose of the questions and the contextual meaning conveyed for full credit.</p>
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5. From Smilansky's illustration in paragraph 5, explain why "we cannot afford for people to internalise the truth about free will" (lines 42-43). [2]

<p>If everyone accepts that there is no free will, then I'll know that people will say, <b>'Whatever he did, he had no choice, we can't blame him.'</b> ... (lines 47 &amp; 48) ... <b>So I know I'm not going to be condemned for taking the selfish option.</b> (line 48).</p>	<p>We cannot afford to do so because internalising the truth about free will tends to <b>encourage people to shirk responsibility or absolve them from blame</b>. [1]</p> <p>This can lead to <b>self-centred and egocentric behaviour which is detrimental to society</b>. [1]</p>
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6. From paragraph 8, explain why the author repeats the phrase, "they did not". [2]

<p><b>They did not</b> pick their genes. <b>They did not</b> pick their parents. <b>They did not</b> make their brains... (lines 67 and 68) ... in a sense unlucky... (line 66)</p>	<p>The author repeats to <b>highlight / emphasize that criminals are not in control of their situation</b>, [1]</p>
<p>In a deep sense, their crimes are <b>not their fault</b>. (lines 68 and 69)</p>	<p>and <b>cannot be blamed</b>. [1]</p>

7. How does being "dispassionate" (line 70) help us to manage offenders? **Use your own words as far as possible.** [3]

<p>we can be dispassionate in considering how to manage offenders in order to <b>rehabilitate them, protect society, and reduce future offending.</b></p>	<p>By being 'dispassionate', we are putting aside emotions [1]</p>
	<p>in order to <b>reform criminals, safeguard the community, and minimise repeated / recalcitrant crimes / recidivism</b></p> <p>1-2 points 1m 3 points 2m</p>

8. What does the word 'airy-fairy' (line 73) suggest about the author's belief and attitude towards the notion of free will? [2]

<p>'airy-fairy' (line 73)</p>	<p>The author believes that the idea is rather impractical and foolishly idealistic. [1]</p> <p>Therefore, he is dismissive of / disdainful towards the notion of free will. [1]</p>
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9. Explain the author's use of the metaphor "cornerstone" (line 75). [2]

<p>'cornerstone' (line 75)</p>	<p>Literal meaning: Just as cornerstone is the most important quality or feature on which a particular thing depends on or is based, [1]</p>
<p>Holding people responsible for their actions might sound like the cornerstone of civilised life... (lines 74 and 75)</p>	<p>Contextual meaning: similarly, the author is saying that individual accountability is fundamental to the functioning of society [1]</p>

10. Using material from paragraphs 3,4 and 6, summarise why the lack of belief in free will is problematic.

Write your summary in **no more than 120 words**, not counting the opening words which are printed below. **Use your own words as far as possible.** [8]

The lack of belief in free will is problematic as...

Passage		Paraphrase
<b>Paragraph 3</b>		
1	... they stop seeing themselves as blameworthy for their actions. (line 23) OR ... they act less responsibly... (line 24)	People are no longer answerable/ accept responsibility/ownership for their deeds/ conduct Behave with less accountability
2	... and give in to their baser instincts. (line 24)	And submit to/primal / immoral/ corrupt / bestial / animalistic impulses
<b>Paragraph 4</b>		
3	Further studies have linked a diminished belief in free will to stress... (line 33)	Lack of free will may lead to anxiety / pent-up tensions
4	... unhappiness... (line 33)	misery/ sadness/ gloom/ joylessness / dissatisfaction
5	... a lesser commitment to relationships (line 34)	Reduce the belief in/ pledge to alliances/ connections/ kinship / loyalty become more fickle
6	... those subjects came away with a lower sense of life's meaningfulness (line 36 & 37)	And reduced significance of life / lack of purpose in life
7	... believing that free will is an illusion has been shown to make people less creative... (line 38)	Be less inventive/ innovative / groundbreaking
8	... more likely to conform... (line 38)	Be more compliant / subservient / abide by
9	... less willing to learn from their mistakes... (line 38 & 39)	Resistant to being taught / corrected Unteachable

10	... less grateful toward one another. (line 39)	Not be as thankful to others / less appreciative of others
11	... when we embrace determinism, we indulge our dark side. (line 39 & 40)	We satisfy/ pander / give in to immoral / evil / wayward / deviant desires
<b>Paragraph 6</b>		
12	Determinism not only undermines blame... (line 51)	Erodes / weakens culpability/ reduces responsibility
13	... it also undermines praise. (line 51)	And commendation/ acknowledgement / recognition / approval / endorsement / compliment
14	... so undermining praise would remove an incentive to do good. (line 55 & 56)	Which would also take away any motivation / enticement / impetus / reason to do what is right/ positive
15	Our heroes would seem less inspiring (line 56)...	Notable persons / Our role models / exemplars are no longer seen as motivational/ stirring/ encouraging
16	... our achievements less noteworthy... (line 57)	Accomplishments seem commonplace/ ordinary / insignificant/ less exceptional / outstanding
17	... and soon we would sink into moral bankruptcy... (line 57 & 58)	Leading us down the path of decadence
18	... and desperation. (line 58)	And anxiety/ despair / panic

<b>No. of points</b>	1-2	3-4	5-6	7-8	9-10	11-12	13	14 +
<b>Marks</b>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8

11. Stephen Cave establishes that there is no such thing as free will and that ‘the implications of determinism are a lot better.’

How far do you agree with this view? Support your answer with examples drawn from your own experience and that of your society. [10]

**References from Passage:**

**Author’s points which address ‘there is no such thing as free will’:**

Reference	Possible Evaluation Approach
<b>[A] Para 1: “If we are not free to choose, then it would make no sense to say we ought to choose the path of righteousness.”</b>	Students can use this point to further assess the implications of determinism proposed by the author
<b>[B] Para 2: “[The sciences have] championed the view that our ability to choose our fate is not free, but instead depends on our biological inheritance.”</b>	Students need to be able to infer the concept of determinism for a country like Singapore, which may be limited by geographical conditions, but strives to make the best out of it. Students may also bring in elitism, the problem with meritocracy for individuals who are born with cultural capital vs. those who come from less financially advantageous backgrounds.
<b>[C] Para 2: “free-will scepticism is, without a doubt, permeating the present-day belief.”</b>	Students may challenge the view that determinism is widely embraced by Singaporeans, suggest reasons why and how this is evident, based on our societal characteristics.

**Author’s points which address the ‘implications of determinism are a lot better’:**

**Important Note:** It is important to note that points D to L are **negative** implications of determinism (i.e. of not believing in free will). This implies that if one is to ‘agree’ with these statements/references, they are in fact **disagreeing** with the author’s view of ‘implications of determinism **are a lot better**’. Therefore, if students are agreeing with the author, they should be disagreeing with these statements/references. For the sample paragraphs, ‘agree’ and ‘disagree’ labels refer to the agreement with the statement/reference, not the author.

On a different note, as the points below are about implications of a belief in free will (or the lack thereof), so the main way to evaluate is to determine whether the causal relationship between the belief and the implication is true or not.

Reference	Possible Evaluation Approach
<b>[D] Para 3: “when people stop believing they are free agents, they stop seeing themselves as blameworthy for their actions...they act less responsibly and give in to their baser instincts”</b>	Students may examine youth delinquency in Singapore, consider if these crimes are a result of the young seeing themselves as a victim of social conditions (i.e. not having or not believing in ‘free will’). Alternatively, students can argue by way of the converse, i.e. they may also examine whether having a sense of agency (i.e. having control and believing in free will) necessarily leads to a greater sense of responsibility.
<b>[E] Para 3: “Those who believed more strongly that they were in control of their own actions showed up on time for work more frequently and were rated by supervisors as more capable.”</b>	Not accepted if students take this as a point literally/directly. They must infer the point from this example – that those who believe that they have free will not only acted more responsibly but were also perceived as being more responsible and capable. This is essentially the converse of point D.
<b>[F] Para 4: “Further studies have linked a diminished belief in free will to stress, unhappiness and a</b>	Students may examine whether or not stress, unhappiness, lesser commitment in relationships and/or lower sense of life’s meaningfulness is a result of a diminished belief in free

<p><b><i>lesser commitment to relationships.” / “came away with a lower sense of life’s meaningfulness”</i></b></p>	<p>will. They should also consider the converse, whether believing in free will can eliminate these negative implications of determinism. Students should evaluate in the context of Singapore being a highly competitive society where Singaporeans struggle with their work-life balance despite the government’s effort to cultivate greater quality of life.</p>
<p><b><i>[G] Para 4: “believing that free will is an illusion has been shown to make people less creative”</i></b></p>	<p>Students can examine the state of creativity in Singapore. It is possible for them to discuss the government’s efforts to rewire society to be less booksmart, more entrepreneurial and less risk-averse and hence conclude to what extent Singapore / Singaporeans believe in free will as an illusion.</p>
<p><b><i>[H] Para 4: “more likely to conform”</i></b></p>	<p>Students can examine to what extent Singaporeans conform or and restricted / constrained and therefore reflect how much Singaporeans believe in free will or to what extent they believe in their own agency. Students can discuss restricted LGBT rights, strict legislations, or societal expectations contributing to a sense that there is no free will which encourages herd mentality – conformity as a societal level.</p>
<p><b><i>[I] Para 4: “less willing to learn from their mistakes”</i></b></p>	<p>Students can examine the extent Singaporeans learn from past mistakes and have the desire to improve and progress. This analysis should be linked to the extent of how such an attitude reflects (or does not reflect) Singaporeans’ belief in free will. For example, students can discuss how Singapore as a nation repeatedly looks back at its past mistakes to ensure history does not repeat itself such as current racial harmony policies that were a response to historical racial tensions and riots. Such an example illustrates that Singapore does believe in free will and it is beneficial as opposed to determinism where one is less willing to learn from their mistakes.</p>
<p><b><i>[J] Para 4: “less grateful toward one another” / Para 6: “undermines praise...remove any incentive to do good”</i></b></p>	<p>Students can examine the state of altruism and gratefulness in Singapore and therefore conclude how this reflects the extent of which they believe in free will. For example, students can argue that there is rising youth volunteerism overseas by young Singaporeans and more people are taking initiative to show consideration for others (e.g. during the haze situation, several youth took the initiative to give out free masks especially to the needy such as the elderly). These examples show that Singaporeans do believe they have control over their lives and have the choice to (positively) influence others and hence reflects that Singaporeans do believe in free will and implies that determinism is not desirable.</p>
<p><b><i>[K] Para 5: “Imagine that I am deliberating whether to do my duty, such as to parachute into enemy territory, or something more mundane like to risk my job by reporting on some wrongdoing. If everyone accepts that there is no free will, then I will know that people will say, ‘Whatever he did, he had no choice, we cannot blame him.’ So I know I am not going to be</i></b></p>	<p>This point is essentially the converse of the previous point [L] – that determinism encourages selfish or self-centred behaviour that would be accepted in a world that believes in determinism. Students can therefore examine the state of selfish or self-centred behaviour in Singapore and to what extent it is condoned or accepted. If there is selfish and self-centred behaviour does exist and is accepted, then this would imply that there is a sense of determinism in Singapore. However, there seems to be more evidence to argue against this conclusion. Students can draw from the backlash several social media personalities face (such as</p>

<p><b><i>condemned for taking the selfish option.” [It is acceptable for individuals to be selfish and others will not hold them accountable for their actions.]</i></b></p>	<p>Amos Yee) as well as the presence of many online vigilantes on STOMP and other similar platforms. These examples illustrate that Singaporeans do have a sense of right and wrong and are against selfish or self-centred behaviour. In other words, Singaporeans by and large do not condone undesirable behaviour and implicitly believe that people who behave in such a way have the freedom of choice and free will to determine their own behaviour and are thus accountable for their actions.</p>
<p><b><i>[L] Para 6: “Our heroes would seem less inspiring, he argues, our achievements less noteworthy, and soon we would sink into moral bankruptcy and desperation.” [Losing a sense of who / what represents our core values / exemplars]</i></b></p>	<p>This point is an extension of point [J]. As determinism undermines praise as well as blame, achievements would be perceived as a ‘given’ since people had ‘no choice’ in process – it is the situation or innate abilities or being blessed with the resources that has led to one’s success, not his or her own will and determination. Students can thus examine cases of where local ‘heroes’ and Singaporeans’ achievements are perceived as not as significant because of the belief that these are ‘given’. For example, students can discuss how Singaporeans’ doubt the current 4th generation of political leaders as demonstrating promising calibre as much as their predecessors because the achievement by their political party can be argued to be not of their own.</p>
<p><b><i>[M] Para 9: “we can be dispassionate in considering how to manage offenders in order to rehabilitate them, protect society, and reduce future offending. In time, it might even be possible to cure something like psychopathy, but only if we accept that the brain, and not some airy-fairy free will, is the source of the deviancy.”</i></b></p>	<p>Students can examine the current state of crime and rehabilitation in Singapore and whether or not the approach to crime and rehabilitation has an underlying belief that offenders are to be blamed for their actions (in support of free will) or if it is because of their situation, circumstances or even biology/psychology that has caused them to commit a crime (in support of determinism). Students can discuss areas such as rehabilitation, youth crimes, drug and human trafficking or religious radicalisation and how society and government have responded to manage these issues.</p>
<p><b><i>[N] Para 9: “Accepting this would also free us from hatred. Holding people responsible for their actions might sound like a cornerstone of civilized life, but we pay a high price for it: Blaming people makes us angry and vengeful, and that clouds our judgement.”</i></b></p>	<p>Students can examine to what extent people in Singapore are held accountable for their actions and whether there is a ‘blame culture’ in Singapore; or whether Singaporeans are more accepting of people’s situation and circumstances and do not entirely blame people for errors they commit. Students can provide illustrations from social media spheres, political-legal spheres and even examples from the work and place schools.</p>

## Samples of Evaluation with Examples

<b>Sample 1 [Point B] Para 2:</b> “[The sciences have] championed the view that our ability to choose our fate is not free, but instead depends on our biological inheritance.”	
<b>Reference &amp; Explanation</b>	
In paragraph 2, the author explains that the sciences argue that our ability to choose depends on our biological inheritance and therefore we do not truly have free will.	
<b>Evaluation, Example &amp; Link Back to Question</b>	
<p><b>Agree:</b> Indeed, some people may argue with the support of scientific evidence that certain abilities and talents are innate or predispose people to be successful in certain areas. In this way, it can then be argued that people do not have the ability to choose their fate in terms of achieving success in their future because of these ‘inherited’ characteristics. This is especially significant in a meritocratic society like Singapore where certain talents or abilities that can be largely attributed to genetic factors are good determinants of future success. For example, several studies have suggested that about 50% of a person’s intelligence is influenced by genetic factors [1]. If this is indeed true, then success in a heavily academic meritocratic system is already significantly determined rather than having a true freedom to choose our fate. This not only applies to intelligence but even physical or physiological characteristics. For example, Michael Phelps’s body specifications has been well-analysed by science to explain why he is such a good swimmer – it is because of unique body structure such as having an unusually wide wingspan amongst other characteristics [2]. Likewise, the converse also holds. Some people may be genetically, biologically and psychologically predisposed for criminal and anti-social behaviour [3]. Therefore, from these examples, we can see how one’s fate and success (or lack thereof) can be determined by biological inheritance. Hence, I would tend to agree with the author that there is no such thing as free will.</p> <p><i>References:</i> [1] <a href="https://ghr.nlm.nih.gov/primer/traits/intelligence">https://ghr.nlm.nih.gov/primer/traits/intelligence</a> [2] <a href="https://www.scienceabc.com/sports/michael-phelps-height-arms-torso-arm-span-feet-swimming.html">https://www.scienceabc.com/sports/michael-phelps-height-arms-torso-arm-span-feet-swimming.html</a> [3] <a href="https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC1050752/pdf/medgene00263-0087c.pdf">https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC1050752/pdf/medgene00263-0087c.pdf</a></p>	<p><b>Disagree:</b> Granted that there may be scientific evidence that one’s ability depends on genetics and biology, I would argue that people still do have choice and hence free will in how to make use and respond to these inherited or innate characteristics. Even if one may be predisposed to be intelligent or physically superior, it is still up to the individual to decide whether to fully utilise these abilities that they have been naturally blessed with or otherwise. To illustrate, one can use their intelligence for criminal or unlawful activity. In fact, in Singapore, a recent report has claimed that there has been an increase in white-collar crimes in Singapore [4]. If we presume that white-jobs are correlated with more intelligent people, then indeed such people who have committed such crimes have made immoral or unethical choices despite their capacity for intelligence and make positive contributions to society. In this way, they have had the ability to choose their fate even if they had beneficial innate resources to begin with. Likewise, we can see many examples of people who have been biologically disadvantaged but have overcome such challenges and become successful in their own right. One textbook example is Nick Vujicic who was born with tetra-amelia syndrome that had left him with no arms or legs from birth. Despite this, he is now a very successful and well-known motivational speaker [5]. An example closer to home would be Yip Pin Xiu, born with muscular dystrophy, who is a three-time Paralympic Gold medallist [6]. Evidently, these examples illustrate that despite biological determinants, people still have a choice and free will to influence their fates. Therefore, I would argue against the notion that there is no free will.</p> <p><i>References:</i> [4] <a href="https://www.msn.com/en-sg/money/topstories/reported-white-collar-crime-hits-record-high-in-singapore/ar-AAxoH3z">https://www.msn.com/en-sg/money/topstories/reported-white-collar-crime-hits-record-high-in-singapore/ar-AAxoH3z</a> [5] <a href="https://www.lifewithoutlimbs.org/about-nick/bio/">https://www.lifewithoutlimbs.org/about-nick/bio/</a> [6] <a href="https://www.todayonline.com/singapore/yip-pin-xiu-sets-two-world-records-gold-medal-swim-paralympics">https://www.todayonline.com/singapore/yip-pin-xiu-sets-two-world-records-gold-medal-swim-paralympics</a></p>
<b>Note:</b> The sample response interpreted the passage directly and literally, i.e. biological inheritance. However, as suggested in the approach, students can make a parallel argument of geographical circumstances of Singapore and despite the natural geographical constraints, Singapore has been	

able to determine its own fate. Likewise, a further extension of this line of argument would making parallels with one's social-economic situation that he or she has been born into. One can argue that social and economic status does not determine one's future and that one has the autonomy to influence their 'fate'. However, it can also be equally and validly argued that one's socio-economic situation of which one is born into has a significant influence on future outcomes.

**Sample 2 [Point C] Para 2:**

*"free-will scepticism is, without a doubt, permeating the present-day belief."*

**Reference & Explanation**

In paragraph 2, the author claims that many people in today's world hold scepticism about free will.

**Evaluation, Example & Link Back to Question**

**Agree:** One can argue that many Singaporeans hold the belief that the government or 'system' has the final say in many aspects of one's life. It is not uncommon to hear defeatist sentiment and even resentment towards many government policies that restrict choice and freedom for people living in Singapore in areas such as freedom of speech, retirement savings (i.e. CPF) and even in decisions regarding housing, marriage and having children. This is evident from the criticisms from both local and foreign political analysts and journalists as well as from human rights watchdogs such as Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch that one's freedom is rather restricted in Singapore. Given these trends and observations, one can reasonably conclude that it is possible for Singaporeans to hold beliefs similar to free-will scepticism because of the lack of autonomy they feel over their lives.

*References:*

- [1] <https://www.sos.org.sg/learn-about-suicide/quick-sin>
- [2] <https://www.straitstimes.com/singapore/more-than-1-in-3-suicides-committed-by-elderly-as-singapore-population-ages>

**Disagree:** By and large, I think Singaporeans have a strong sense of agency and locus of control. This is already obvious in the pragmatic and 'kiasu' or competitive culture in Singapore. The behaviour of Singaporeans tend to be action-oriented and goal-oriented and hence in many ways is a manifestation of their belief that their actions have influence over outcomes rather than a disbelief in existence of free will. For example, it is not unheard of for parents to make significant effort in ensuring that their child gets into a good primary school – from volunteering as part of the Parents' Support Group or to moving residence nearer the desired school to increase the chances of getting admitted. The same logic can be extended to those parents who send their children for tuition or students who invest a lot of time in their studies. All these are indicative of the belief that people have control over their lives and their outcomes. Moreover, despite the shortcomings of a meritocratic system, many Singaporeans still have confidence that it allows for social mobility – as long as one works hard and has the results to show, he or she will be rewarded accordingly. Having such confidence in such a system assumes that one believes in free will and that one has control over one's life, rather than letting 'fate' or the 'system' decide for them. Therefore, in the context of my society, Singapore, I would argue that free-will scepticism does not significantly permeate Singaporean's present-day beliefs.

**Sample 3 [Point F] Para 4:**

*"Further studies have linked a diminished belief in free will to stress, unhappiness and a lesser commitment to relationships." / "came away with a lower sense of life's meaningfulness"*

**Reference & Explanation**

In paragraph 4, the author argues that studies have suggested that those who have a diminished belief in free will would also experience stress, unhappiness and a lesser commitment to relationships. Such people also may find less meaning in their lives.

***Evaluation, Example & Link Back to Question***

**Agree:** Certainly, if one does not believe he or she has control over their lives, they would feel a sense of helplessness when they are in an undesirable situation. They may feel like they are victims of the situation and lack the agency to do anything about it. In extreme cases, the lack of agency especially in a difficult time in one's life can lead to depression and even suicide. We have definitely heard of several cases of youth suicide in Singapore as well as reports of increasing suicide amongst the elderly. These trends suggest that there are a significant group of people that feel that they do not have control of their lives and lack the free will and agency to overcome the challenges they are facing. Moreover, this phenomenon may be worsened due to the competitiveness of Singapore society which has led to increased stress for these groups of people. So, despite efforts by the government to address these issues, these efforts may be ineffective or even futile because these people feel that they are at the mercy of the system. Therefore, there is certainly a group of people in Singapore who are holding the belief that they do not have free will.

**Disagree:** Although it is reasonable to believe these studies that link a diminished belief in free will to stress and unhappiness, I would argue that a belief in free will also can lead to stress and unhappiness as well. Knowing that one's actions determines one's outcomes can cause stress because one would want not want to make a mistake and lead to undesirable consequences. Moreover, if one does make a mistake, a belief in free will means that he or she can blame themselves for their own poor choices. This is probably the very reason why many Singapore students are stressed – they fully acknowledge that their effort in their studies significantly determine their future results in examinations as well as their future prospects. Therefore, not succeeding academically, many students would blame themselves and be hard on themselves which can also lead to unhappiness and, unfortunately, even depression. This then suggests that Singaporeans do have a belief in free will because of the sense of accountability and responsibility. In Singapore the majority of people do have a sense of responsibility for their own actions. Moreover, at a societal level, the stress and unhappiness levels in Singapore are rather high. Hence, due to this, the government and many agencies have made efforts to reduce stress in the work place and improve work-life balance. Such efforts indicate that there is a belief that we do have control or choice over our lives. Therefore, in Singapore, one can argue that despite the stress and unhappiness levels, people do believe that they have free will and can exercise control over their lives.

**Sample 4 [Point M] Para 9:**

*“we can be dispassionate in considering how to manage offenders in order to rehabilitate them, protect society, and reduce future offending. In time, it might even be possible to cure something like psychopathy, but only if we accept that the brain, and not some airy-fairy free will, is the source of the deviancy.”*

**Reference & Explanation**

In paragraph 9, the authors argues that our efforts in managing offenders can be more effective if we become more rational and accept that the limitations of a belief in free will, thereby accepting that crime and deviant behaviour is caused by uncontrollable factors such as the brain.

**Evaluation, Example & Link Back to Question**

**Agree:** Although there is still a long way to go, there is progress in this area in Singapore, especially with the well-known Yellow Ribbon Project that seeks to integrate former offenders back into society and to lessen the stigma associated with former offenders. Following the author’s argument, this approach can reflect how Singapore society has accepted to some extent that criminal behaviour could be attributed to circumstances and may not have been in the total control of the offender. This is because we are recognising that the environment has a role to play and aim of the Yellow Ribbon Project is to influence that environment – to make society more conducive for these people. Thus, this effectively shifts the focus of responsibility from the individual to other factors and the situation and therefore implying that the crime is not necessarily the offender’s fault – society too plays a part. This conclusion stems from the assumption that there is no true free will as, the author argues in previous paragraph (paragraph 8), that “in a sense [the criminals are] unlucky” because they did not ‘pick their genes’ or ‘their parents’ or neither did they ‘make their brain’ and therefore, we cannot really fully blame the offender. In conclusion, as illustrated by the Yellow Ribbon Project in Singapore, a belief that we do not truly have free will enables us to think more rationally and objectively regarding people’s deviant behaviour and consequently approach these issues more effectively.

e.g. Eighteen Chefs

**Disagree:** Certainly, like other developed nations, Singapore has made improvements in its management of crime and offenders. Advancements in science and research regarding human behaviour as informed many of the policies in dealing criminal behaviour. However, it is difficult to claim that all criminal behaviour can be attributed to factors that are beyond the control of a person. If people do have psychological issues, they can still choose to seek professional help or if they are in a difficult position, they can always seek support from many sources – from family and friends to many professional organisations and even help hotlines available in Singapore such the Samaritans of Singapore (SOS). Although there are efforts such as the Yellow Ribbon Project to remove the stigma associated with offenders as well as help them reintegrate into society, much of the stigma still exists. The fact that this stigma still exists in society shows that people still believe that the offender is still largely to blame. This belief stems from the assumption that people have free will and it was within their choice to commit a crime or not. Also, the fact that there are various rehabilitation and crime prevention programmes suggests that people can choose to the right thing and not engage in any criminal behaviour. This general belief that people have the free will to decide their own actions can be extended to other areas of life – from school to the workplace. It is evident in Singapore society because Singaporeans believe that character, ethics and morality are important and that these shapes one’s decision making. The emphasis on values and integrity permeates through the various institutions in Singapore. Therefore, these examples and observations are reflective that, in general, Singaporeans believe that people have the capacity to choose and are called to choose ethically and morally.