

# APPLICATION QUESTION

2011

## *Marking Criteria*

### **REQUIREMENTS (R)**

Answer the question:

- (i) Assess applicability / relevance of the author's ideas
- (ii) Take a stand - how far you agree with one author
- (iii) Assess your society in relation to the author's ideas

### **EXPLANATION (EX)**

Refer to the writers' perspectives and arguments.

Elaborate on your stand

Elaborate on how your examples prove your point.

### **EVALUATION (EV)**

Provide ample, detailed examples to support your stand

Assess your society: its attitudes, its beliefs, its conditions, its challenges...

Assess the author's arguments, identifying strengths / weaknesses or applicability

### **COHERENCE (C)**

Provide a concise thesis (focus statement) that delivers a stand and a reason

Provide at least three distinct points in your response

Show clear organisation of paragraphs

Show clear introduction and conclusion

## *Band Descriptors*

### **A (7-8)**

Apt citation of ideas from the passage (Ex)

Strong evaluation (Ev) of both the passage and 'you and your society'

Breadth and depth in examples (Ev) presented

Clear introduction, organisation of paragraphs and conclusion (C)

Balanced and cohesive argument (C)

### **B (4-6)**

Appropriate ideas from the passage selected (Ex)

Sufficient examples (Ev) presented

Some evaluation (Ev) of the passage or 'you and your society'

Clear introduction, organisation of paragraphs and conclusion (C)

### **C (1-3)**

Largely restates the passage (Ex)

Evaluation (Ev) not observed

Poor coherence (C)

## Generic Structure

### Introduction

**EX** Briefly highlight the concerns / observations you wish to discuss.

**R1** Answer the 1st question by taking a stand (How far do you agree, how relevant, how applicable)

**R2** Answer the 2nd question (How free do you want to be? What can your society do to promote altruism?)

**EV** Reasons for R1 and R2 (General assessment of your society: e.g. Singaporeans are largely pragmatic)

### Body

**EX** Cite one of the author's ideas

**R** Address one of the requirements or both in relation to this idea

**EV** Evaluate the situation or conditions in your society (*Singapore has been labelled a 'pseudo-democracy'*)

**EV** Assess your society's beliefs, values and attitudes (*Young Singaporeans are generally apathetic as..*)

**EV** Provide specific, detailed examples in your society (

**EV** Provide specific, detailed examples of you and your peers (if applicable)

**R** Restate your answer to one or both of the requirements

*Try to cite **2-4 EXAMPLES** from a range of levels (individual, community, society) to prove your point.*

*The richer the detail or its 'Singaporeanness', the better. There is little point in copying the passage word for word without your own knowledge or awareness of your society.*

*It is perfectly acceptable to address only one of the two requirements in each paragraph. Obviously, you will need to answer both to score 3 marks and above.*

*Also, remember to keep your response **BALANCED**. For a single passage, provide a **COUNTER-ARGUMENT** - a point that is basically different from whatever your stand is. For two passages, just make sure you cover **BOTH** passages.*

### Conclusion

**R** Assess your society's views again

**EV** Make final evaluation of your society

**EV** Make recommendations or comment on the road ahead

## 2010 APPLICATION QUESTION

In this article, Patricia O'Sullivan describes some current issues around the subject of food. How applicable do you find her observations to yourself and your own society?

### *Introduction*

- EX** Summary of uses of food
- EX** Summary of concerns regarding food
- R** Stand directly relevant to the question
- EV** Reason for stand / Assess your society

**EX** Patricia O'Sullivan makes a case for the role of food in family and society on the basis that it promotes identity, interaction and cohesion. **EX** She effectively highlights the change in perception of food in the frenetic modern world, wherein food is increasingly neglected but has also become more complicated. **R** I find that her observations are largely applicable to Singapore, perhaps due to the **EV** growing affluence and Westernisation of the Singaporean lifestyle.

*Note that the reasons stated here do not present themselves later in this answer because this is a compilation.*

### *Body*

- EX** Refer to one of author's ideas
- R** Address applicability of idea
- EV** Assess yourself and your society in relation to idea
- EV** Provide detailed examples of your society to prove R
- EV** Provide detailed examples of yourself and peers to prove R
- R** Reiterate applicability of idea

**EX/R** Very much like the author mentions, food in Singapore was seen as an opportunity for every family to get together and bond over a meal traditionally cooked by women in the household. **EV** In Chinese-majority Singapore, it is common for families like mine to only start eating when every family member is present at the table. Moreover, different types of food are used to commemorate or celebrate different events. **EV** For example, rice vermicelli, also known as *mee sua* was a compulsory dish during birthday celebrations for Chinese Singaporeans as a symbol of longevity and the 'flow of wealth and prosperity' embodied by the long noodles, accompanied by longevity buns signifying a life that always blossoms. In addition, pig trotters were seen as a delicacy for every member of the family to enjoy, as again a symbol of strength and wealth. **EV** My extended family has maintained these 'culinary traditions' in its own way: a large pot of green bean soup and my grandfather's favourite *ngo hiang* is an ever-present whenever we gather, be it for Chinese New Year or my grandparents' birthdays, and have become a family hallmark of sorts. **R** While Singapore may not practice these traditions as much as before, Singaporeans - especially those of an older generation - still value food as a 'means' to community and celebration.

**EX** Indeed, O'Sullivan goes on to argue that families of today are no longer gathering for meals. **R** Although I do not identify with this observation, it is arguably applicable to a majority of Singaporeans who are caught in the hectic, fast-paced lifestyle that has left many less time to prepare meals or even eat dinner at home. **EV** According to reports, there has been an increasing number of dual-income families where both parents work. This evident rise in income has partly contributed to the phenomenon of many families eating out or purchasing takeaways and less staying home to cook meals as Singaporeans in the past more frequently did. **EV** The rise in 24-hour outlets, from fast food to *prata* stalls to *kopitiam*s, and services such as *tingkat* caterers who deliver 'home cooked food' in tin cans and CuisineXpress which delivers Thai food also suggest that more are eating 'out'. **EV** Since no one prepares meals at home, children in Singapore too have a tendency to settle their own lunch or dinner, often with friends at one of 110 McDonald's restaurants or teen-friendly cafes. With more adults working later hours (ironically as a result of the government's 'pro-family' 5-day work week recommendation), less families practise the need to eat together. **EV** In the long term, this decreasing emphasis on 'communal eating' may lead to a growing divide within families and across generations in Singapore. **R** The author's arguments in this light may prove to be uncomfortably relevant.

**EX** Another relevant observation made by the author is how food has become an increasingly complex and 'fraught with issues'. **R** In a modern society like Singapore, it is difficult for us not to be affected by global concerns like the carbon footprint of our food and not do anything about it. The issue of shark's fin is particularly pertinent, as it is usually expected to be served at all traditional Chinese wedding banquets. **EV** However, due to Singaporeans' increased awareness of biodiversity and the endangered shark species, many couples have begun to take it away from their menu. **EV** This was also true for my cousin's recent wedding held at a well-known hotel that itself took a stand against consuming shark's fin, perhaps as a way to maintain its image. Cases like these would have been rare in the past, when one could simply 'eat and enjoy' without much thought. **R/EX** We have as a society begun, as O'Sullivan notes, to consider a lot more about our dietary habits and that we have the 'final say' in this regard. **EV** As much as this is true, I personally feel that we should do our part for the world, contributing less to environmental damage. **EV** Given that most of our food is imported from nearby Malaysia, the issue of carbon footprint is not as significant here but we should try to purchase local produce as much as possible. **EV** Food has yet to become a moral battleground in Singapore but we must start to make decisions based on principles, rather than preserve traditions that are harmful to our collective well-being. **R** As a growing player in the global economy, Singapore and Singaporeans must be more concerned about where our food comes from as the article implies.

**EX** On the other hand, O'Sullivan's claim that globalisation has led to a reduction in culinary diversity **R** is found to be untrue in the Singaporean context. **EV** One might even argue that multi-national brands in Singapore have not threatened the variety of food but actually increased it, with each offering a new 'take' on traditional cuisine or even fusing two cuisines. **EV** Kentucky Fried Chicken here has incorporated the use of Japanese ingredients for use in its promotional meals such as miso and sakura and even offered its own interpretations of Thai Green Curry chicken and Portuguese egg tarts. Also a participant in this 'glocalisation' of food, McDonald's often introduces 'Chinese' herbs and spices into its burgers, with the 'Prosperity Burger' a common addition during Chinese New Year. **EV/R** Thus, it can be said that the author is being myopic and unfair in concluding that fast food outlets like KFC and McDonald's are threatening the larger culinary landscape simply by opening their doors in more countries. **EV** Instead, the 'spread of multi-national brands' and globalisation have increased culinary diversity here in Singapore, bringing in Thai, Japanese, Korean, French, Brazilian and Spanish influences in our food culture. **EV** We now get to enjoy Japanese 'fast food' at Yoshinoya and Pepper Lunch, French cuisine at less than ten Singapore dollars at a hawker centre and even Spanish tapas at family-friendly outlets in neighbourhood shopping malls. **R** Thus, it would be premature or even wrong to say that globalisation is a threat to cultural variety in our food, especially in a multi-cultural society like Singapore that is growing even *more* multi-cultural.

### *Conclusion*

**EV** Final assessment of 'you and your society'

**R** Restate applicability of idea

With food blogs numbering easily in the thousands, Singapore is a nation that is definitely obsessed with food, whether in the form of ChubbyHubby's wonderful recipes to ieatishootipost's food 'conquests'. **R** To a large extent, O'Sullivan's concerns and observations are reflective of a global Singapore but at the same time, one must assert that Singapore occupies a unique place that differs from the writer's Western-centric view.

With thanks to the following student writers:

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