

GP Essay For Week 1

1. **'Cities have never been better for living.'** Discuss.
2. Should people in your society be fearful of the future?
3. **'More so now than ever, we need to live a life of simplicity.'** Discuss.
4. Consider the view that we do not take enough responsibility for our own well-being.
5. Can one be optimistic given the bleak realities of today's world?
6. 'We are a privileged yet discontented lot.' How far is this true of your society?
7. To what extent is it necessary for young people to plan for their future?

GP Essay for Week 1

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1. 'Cities have never been better for living.' Discuss.

Category for discussion -

Zhitong:

Positive:

- Increased academic and employment opportunities
- Increased personal freedom to consume/entertainment vs living in the countryside (technological)
- Increased social opportunities to bond with other people (communication platform)
- Increased safety living in the cities, lower risk of natural disaster and better medical services
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Negative

- : Increased pollution such as noise, smoke due to heavy industries /
- Traffic congestion and overcrowding in shopping malls etc
- Over-reliance on public infrastructure, less self-sufficient (Cannot farm)
- More stress due to longer working hours, less exposure to nature
- Presence of highly competitive and stressful working culture (salarymen)
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Introduction

In this modern era, many advancements and progresses have been achieved and they have affected the lives of the people especially the city dwellers. The sophistication and modernization in these cities have attracted more rural peasants to **find more opportunities in the city as they believe that cities have never been better for living.** However, the truth of this notion is subjected to questioning. While the simple rural peasants would agree to this notion, the city dwellers who are in the city may not agree as they understand the subtle, hidden detriments that dispute the notion. **In view of these controversial opinions,** this essay takes the stand that the view that cities have never been better for living is not right in this era.

Main body

### **1. Opposing view**

Many modernists would believe ardently that the technological advancement that improves the living environment would give individuals a more convenient and conducive, shaping the view that cities have never been better for living.

- Elaboration (two folds)
- Example
- Linked sentence

### **2. Rebuttal**

However, such a level of comfort and conduciveness comes at a price which refutes the idea that living in a city now may not be the best to live in.

Alexis

Many modernists would believe ardently that the technological advancement that improves the living environment would give individuals a more convenient and conducive, shaping the view that cities have never been better for living. With the advancements in transportation, it makes travelling more convenient and accessible. It makes it less time consuming to travel from one place to another, allowing individuals to spend more time on hobbies, their families and work, making better use of their time. Many public parks and libraries are being utilized to improve their quality of life. Another observation that can be observed is the rising number of shopping malls and Grab services. These services help make people's lives more convenient as they can get their services near their homes. Thus we can observe that city life offers more benefits that make life better.

However, such a level of comfort and conduciveness comes at a price which refutes the idea that living in a city now may not be the best to live in. The high prices of the goods may cause the cost of living to be higher and increase the financial burden on people. Individuals would have to spend more on the necessities and would have less to save, spend on leisure and invest. This would mainly reduce the standard of living for individuals who have middle to lower income. It would be difficult for people to survive in high cost cities.

### Krystal

#### Opposing view

Many modernists would believe ardently that the technological advancement that improves the living environment would give individuals a more convenient and conducive, shaping the view that cities have never been better for living. Improvements in infrastructure would increase the accessibility of transportation services to those who do not own private transportation, allowing for greater convenience and mobility. This greater connectivity would increase their time for social and leisure activities, helping their mental state of mind as stressed is reduced, increasing their productivity in work-related matters. For instance, in 2025, Forbes has reported that 95% of employees maintain or exceed their office productivity levels when working at home. Hence, city life enables greater productivity and convenience through the usage of technology.

However, such a level of comfort and conduciveness comes at a price which refutes the idea that living in a city now may not be the best to live in. Cities produce an enormous amount of waste daily due to their significant carbon footprint to sustain the urban population, and this would result in long-lasting environmental damage if waste disposal techniques are not up to par, affecting the resources available to future generations of city dwellers. For example, New York City in America generated 3.6 million tons of residential waste in 2019. As New York City does not have efficient waste management techniques, the landfills used to store these residential waste has the potential to cause pollution and contamination of groundwater and soil through leachate, harming the environment. Thus, as cities has the highest cost of living, it may not be the best place to live as it is a hard place to survive.

### 3. Supporting view 1

Cities may not have been an attractive place to live now as it has made lives unhealthy and unbearable. It is now congested and populated with a high population growth rate of city dwellers.

#### 4. Supporting view 2

Life is unsafe in the cities which makes it unfavourable and the worst place to live now as high crime rate is a threat to the lives of the city dwellers.

#### 5. Supporting view 3

Many city dwellers are easily succumbed to moral and unethical values and behaviours which make it an unfavorable time to live in a city.

#### Conclusion

In retrospect, the notion that cities have never been better to live in than at any time in the development of cities may not be accurate as there are many negative developments in the cities that shape this view. However, to those who are standing at the other side of the green, the grass is greener on the other side like the rural folks who are not living in the city. It is simply a case of different strokes for different folk.

Rayan

Many modernists would believe ardently that the technological advancement that improves the living environment would give individuals a more convenient and conducive, shaping the view that cities have never been better for living. Things like the MRT and LRT have made life in Singapore more convenient, with the MRT being one of the fastest forms of travelling with a cheap fare. Moreover, apps like GrabFood and Foodpanda have made it so that its possible to get restaurant food or groceries right to our doorstep. For example, let's say the whole family gets sick. This would make it difficult for them to go out to get everyday things that they need or want. However, with the use of GrabFood, they can easily go on their phones and with the click of a few buttons have groceries on their footstep in 30 mins. Therefore, This proves that cities are better to live in.

However, such a comfortable and easy life comes at a big cost literally. The price of these services have gone up significantly over these free years making us wonder if it is even worth the money to save the 30 mins that we ourselves would have taken just to get the groceries. Moreover, usually when the items are not in stock the driver does not pick it up leaving us to have to go out to that ingredient. Also due to the higher cost of living the price of these services have increased singifacsntly with a lot of service charges added along to the total bill.

Zynn

Many modernists would believe ardently that the technological advancement that improves the living environment would give individuals a more convenient and conducive, shaping the view that cities have never been better for living. With a proliferating advancement in technology in the modern world, many aspects of society have grown to become easier to use for the people, taking a significant load off their shoulders. By providing instant access to information and services, this allows people to save time and effort in daily activities, making life more convenient for them. Furthermore, through making processes more efficient, accessible and interactive, technology has revolutionised society into an optimal and supportive environment for productivity, learning and communication. For example, the implementation of bus arrival apps such as SG BusLeh or [MyTransport.SG](https://mytransport.sg) which shows real time bus timing. Such apps improves the standard of living of people in society as it increases the efficiency and reduces wastage of time through the ability to time their trip to avoid waiting at the bus stop for an extended period of time. As such, this improves the living standards for the people in terms of its efficiency and provides an easier life through making society more convenient and conducive, hence shaping cities to be better for living.

However, such a level of comfort and conduciveness comes at a price which refutes the idea that living in a city now may not be the best to live in. Despite how technological advancement provides greater efficiency and convenience, the downside is that the cost of producing such high end technology is greater than traditional forms of resources, and this oftentimes lead to an exorbitant price charged on consumers for using such technology, which stand to decrease standard of living as people have to pay a high price to attain such level of comfort and conduciveness. For example, the use of delivery apps such as FoodPanda and Grab have become increasingly common in modern society as people can have food delivered to them with a single tap on their devices. However, it has been reported that for islandwide or long distance deliveries, delivery fees can escalate significantly at around \$18 or more. Such unfairly high prices for the cost of the convenience and conduciveness provided by technology proves just how modern society is not improving the standard of living, and might even be detrimental to it, hence proving how cities might have become worse for living.

Lucia:

opposing view

Many modernists would believe ardently that the technological advancement that improves the living environment would give individuals a more convenient and conducive, shaping the view that cities have never been better for living. With the adaptation of advanced technology in public transport and healthcare, services are now more accessible and efficient. Since it is less time consuming for individuals to commute from one place to another, individuals would then have more time to enjoy leisure activities which alleviates the quality of their lives. Furthermore, the environment will also be more friendly due to lesser traffic congestion and adoption of green technology. For instance, Singapore has released a green plan 2030 where the country target to raise solar energy deployment and expand electrical vehicle charging infrastructure by 2030. These efforts to improve the environment help to ensure environmental sustainability for future generations. Hence, through the use of digital innovations that assist the implementation of plans to ensure a liveable city, urban living today is more sustainable and convenient.

However, such a level of convenience comes at a price that may refute the idea that cities today are necessarily the best places to live in. The price of adopting advanced technology for transport may come in the form of higher taxes which further widens income gap between households. Lower income households would be more severely impacted and their material comfort would fall. The maintenance of these transport systems may also incur opportunity costs where there are lesser government funds to allocate. Additionally, the use of green technology is not a flawless plan as the disposal of electric vehicles could lead to new pollution issues. For example, the carbon dioxide emissions from material processing can be up to 70% higher for an electrical vehicle as compared to a regular vehicle. As a small country, Singapore's limited land and resources make it difficult to manage the disposal of batteries and could cause pollution issues to arise. The higher cost of living and deterioration of the environment would negatively affect the standard of living and hence cities may become worse for living.

Opposing view (Zhitong)

Proponents of city-dwelling point to the higher standards of living and peace of mind as a major pull factor of cities in light of technological advancement. Cities undoubtedly offer a more diverse range of higher-skilled jobs like manufacturing and finance that rural areas are simply unable to provide, as well as better education facilities such as universities and MNCs that allow for individuals to become highly educated and secure a high-paying job in the future. For instance, the GDP per capita in cities is 5-10 times greater than that of more rural areas, highlighting the significant disparity in income and the overall quality of living in cities, as individuals can afford more luxury housing and consume a wider variety of goods such as restaurant meals and television electronics for instance. In addition, cities offer more advanced amenities such as public transportation (MRT and buses in Singapore) which boosts mobility and increases the range of jobs that a person can take on. As a result, their disposable incomes rise and they can thus enjoy a more comfortable life.

However, the assumption that an average person may be able to achieve these goals may not hold, due to the presence of high income inequality in cities. Becoming highly educated and starting from a young age is pretty much a necessity to break into the high-paying and skill intensive jobs that pay well. These are factors beyond one's control and is an endowment rather than an earnable factor through hard work, as good tertiary education is expensive (upwards of 500000 dollars for a medical degree) and years of hard work, which may not be attainable for a low-income immigrant from rural areas, who may also have to help out with chores at home and work part time to support their

families, thus unable to become highly-educated and secure the high paying jobs. As a result, their incomes may not increase at all, and their standard of living remains low. This exacerbates income inequality in the city and leads to reduced living standards and more stress due to the highly competitive nature of many jobs and in the education system itself.

### **3. 'More so now than ever, we need to live a life of simplicity.' Discuss.**

#### Introduction

As our world becomes more sophisticated and modernises, values and norms are changing that shaping life to be more complicated and difficult. This makes many become entrapped in lives when they succumb to difficulties, complexities and complications. This draws out a need to develop a way on how we can live our lives in this increasingly complex world and it is proposed that we need to have a life of simplicity to handle these changes more now than ever. Those who are optimistic would disagree with this view as they find that one must be forward looking in their approach to life while the less aggressive ones are reserved would see life must be simple. In view of these polarizing perspectives, this essay agrees with the view that a life of simplicity is needed more so now than ever.

#### Main Body

##### 1. Opposing view

Given the complex modern society, we cannot live a life of complexity as we need to simplicity in our lifestyle to adjust to the complicated and fast-paced of life

##### 2. Rebuttal

However, applying a philosophy of complexity of life may not be the correct attitude as there are other ways a person can overcome the challenges now more than ever.

#### Zhithong

Modernists may argue that a life of simplicity is inappropriate since life is complicated and should not be taken easily. There are many issues in the real world, from war to cybersecurity that have to be taken seriously and should not be sailed through thoughtlessly. It is necessary to do so as these factors can affect one's life savings and personal security, and therefore such precautions have to be made carefully and thoughtfully in order to protect oneself.

lucia

### **'More so now than ever, we need to live a life of simplicity.' Discuss.**

#### Introduction

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In today's modern society, people often find themselves caught in an endless cycle of activity, constantly seeking new tasks to complete to prove their efficiency. The fast pace of life pressures them to keep up with those around them, leaving no time for rest and this often causes them to feel burnt out. This has led to the debate over a certain question. Do people actually need a life of simplicity, more so now than ever? On one hand, some believe that it is due to the complexities in life that help us to grow as individuals which contribute to an overall better future. On the other hand, others argue that by living a simple life, one can truly embrace the freedom of living and live a fulfilling life. In view of these polarising opinions, this essay shall take the stand that a life of simplicity is more necessary than ever in today's world.

### Opposing view

Modernists may argue that a life of simplicity is not appropriate today due to the complex and fast paced nature of the world. The navigation of such a complicated world requires individuals to be equipped with critical thinking and problem solving skills. These skills are naturally developed as an individual encounters challenges and discovers ways to overcome them. The complex nature of society serves as a training ground for individuals to grow and hence helps them reach heights that a life of simplicity cannot provide. According to data provided by the Ministry of Manpower, the number of knowledge based jobs has increased by around 18%. This suggests that employers are now actively seeking people who possess higher cognitive skills along with technological adaptability. The adaptation to the complex world allows people to thrive unlike the life of simplicity hence adopting a life of simplicity would not be appropriate.

### Rebuttal

However, constant adaptation to complex scenarios in life may come at the price of an individual's well being and this raises the need for a life of simplicity. The highly competitive and fast paced world introduces high levels of stress which will make individuals less optimistic and eventually become depressed. They may make less rational decisions and impulsively take out their negative emotions on others. This is contributed by the alienation of social media where individuals are constantly exposed to carefully curated lifestyles and unrealistic standards. For example, a study by the Samaritan of Singapore indicated an increase in suicide rate by 34.8% from 2023 to 2024. This highlights the need for a life of simplicity to mitigate stress and maintain a healthy lifestyle. Therefore, a life of simplicity is needed now more so than ever as to counter being surrounded by social media and the flow of constant information.

### Supporting view 1

A simple lifestyle allows individuals to resist the temptations brought forth by the materialistic pursuits in modern society. The growing influence of consumerism has led to people measuring their worth by the amount of possessions they own rather than the values and beliefs that they stand by. This obsession to consume goods would result in individuals feeling unfulfilled regardless of how much they have already purchased. Their greed would become a cause for overworking to have the

financial resources to afford their constant spending. However, if individuals turn to living a simplistic life, they are less likely to be tempted by materialistic pursuits and would instead have more time to focus on other activities that contribute to a healthy lifestyle. They would also feel more fulfilled as they focus on forming meaningful relationships. For instance, a 2024 survey reported by the Institute of Policy Studies found that 62% of Singaporeans felt pressured to match the spending habits of their peers, which contributed to higher levels of financial stress. These statistics show that a simple lifestyle is less stress inducing and helps to mitigate the impact of the rising influence of consumerism on individuals. Hence, adapting a life of simplicity is now more necessary than ever to stay away from the temptations that would lead to one constantly being unsatisfied and feeling hollow.

### Supporting view 2

In this increasingly fragmented society, a simple lifestyle allows us to nurture stronger bonds. The fast paced urban lifestyle does not allow individuals to take their time and form connections with those around them. With people shifting their priorities to their career and personal success, other relationships are neglected. As individuals prioritise a simplistic lifestyle, individuals can allocate time to focus on authentic interactions rather than superficial relationships. These human connections contribute to a stronger sense of belonging to the society. A study reported by the National Population in 2023 mentioned that nearly 40% of respondents stated “lack of time” as the main reason for weakening relationships. The study indicates that a life of simplicity is highly necessary to establish emotional connections and live a fulfilling life despite rapid urbanisation. Therefore, as countries continue to progress, a simplistic lifestyle is needed, now more so than ever.

### Supporting view 3

A simplistic life also promotes environmental sustainability in today's consumerism driven society. A prominent characteristic of modern society would be overconsumption as people consume goods beyond what is necessary. The constant pursuit of material satisfaction accelerates the degradation of the environment. In a world that is already suffering from the consequences of climate change, such consuming habits only worsen the state of the environment. Meanwhile, a simple lifestyle largely involves being a minimalist, conserving resources and adapting a more environmentally conscious mindset. As their environmental awareness increases, they can pay more attention to their wastage and actively participate in improving the environment. According to the National Environment Agency, Singapore generated over 7.3 million tonnes of waste in 2023, with only 52% being recycled. The data indicates the need for people to become more environmentally aware and prioritise sustainable growth for the society to create a livable environment for future generations. Hence, a life of simplicity is more needed now than ever.

### Conclusion

As the world becomes increasingly complex, the need for a simplistic lifestyle arises. Through embracing a life of simplicity, we can explore other aspects of our lives and discover balance in this busy world. The holistic development of an individual would



allow them to remain clear headed and live a fulfilling lifestyle.

Alexis

Given the complexity of modern society, a life of simplicity is becoming increasingly necessary to handle our complex and fast paced lives. In modern society, individuals face constant competition, academic and workplace pressure and continuous comparison on social media. These factors create stress and make our lives harder to keep up with. By simplifying our lives, we can maintain a clear head space to manage challenges better and make more carefully considered decisions. This would allow people to have peace and balance in their lives instead of stressing over everything.

Krystal

Modernists may argue that we cannot live a life of complexity due to the existing stressful challenges present in our fast paced life. There are many complicated aspects of our life in which a person needs to juggle with, such as relationships, friendships, personal health, and by taking on more responsibilities, the individual has more components they need to divide his time for. This increases the possibility of the individual failing to sufficiently care for their responsibilities, resulting in stress and a poor mental state from the large depletion of energy. Through the simplification of our lives, we reduce unnecessary activities which drain our energy, allowing for a clearer state of mind due to reduced stress, and subsequently a healthier mental state. For instance, (social media addiction to followers)

### 3. Supporting view 1

A simple lifestyle is good for the modern society as it helps one to overcome the allure of the vices which is one of the rising complicated challenges in modern lifestyle.

### 4. Supporting view 2

A simple lifestyle is also helpful to fend up individuals against financial complexities and challenges in our modern society as the rising affluence makes many spend beyond their means.

### 5. Supporting view 3

When one is simple in their attitudes towards the increasingly confusing modern world, it would be easier for individuals to live life in a positive and meaningful way.

It is not easy for a person to live well, purposefully and correctly in life, especially when the world has become more complex and complicated in this day and age. More so than ever, a right mindset is needed and a life of simplicity is this mindset we need to apply as it offers an easy and direct way to handle difficulties

that surface from modern culture.

#### 4. Marriage is not relevant in modern society. Do you agree?

Perspectives:

Requirements of the question:

- Arguments – does marriage perform the functions that support the development of modern society
- Does modern society provide the development for marriage

Rayan

zynn

Traditionally, marriages are seen as an exclusive union between a man and woman, intending to be a lifelong and monogamous commitment. Traditional marriage is viewed as the core of the family and a fundamental institution for a stable society. However, with the proliferating change in mindset in the modern world, the significance of marriage has been brought to question. As people start to focus more on their personal development in terms of education and achievements, marriage has become more meaningless as it is now seen as a mere outdated societal milestone that hinders them from achieving their goals. Despite this, marriage is still relevant in view of conventional wisdom.