



## Question Analysis

- This is the first most important skill involved in every essay question; proper analysis and understanding of the question is what determines whether your essay answers the question. Before you can craft your argument, you must first know what is required of you. It's like knowing where your destination is before you start travelling or driving!
- Pick the right question, know exactly what the question is asking and think about whether you have the content required to attempt the question. If you don't understand or are unsure of what a question is asking during exams, it might be best to skip it!
- Understand that there are modifiers found in a question that affects what a question requires →
  - Context (whether the question is set in Singapore, whether it asks about the past)
  - Absolutes (e.g. most, never, ever, only etc.)
  - Variables (e.g. is the question only asking about one topic like environment or does it cross-topic and also involves science?)
  - Extent (to what extent, how far do you agree). All of these tweak how you are going to frame your response so be sure to spot them!
- The most powerful tool to analysing a question is to know 2 things → 1) TOPIC, 2) ARGUMENT.

**TOPIC:** What is the theme being tested, you must be aware so you can draw upon the relevant content knowledge and example case studies that you have prepared

**ARGUMENT:** Where does the argument lie? Which word holds it? How do you address it? Take a look at this 2017 question ("Is regulation of the press desirable?"), take a moment to decide where the argument lies. The word desirable is what you have to address, i.e. is it or is it not desirable? This is when the next technique comes in. We have to define the keyword, what does your essay consider to be desirable? Do not just use a synonym, it needs to make sense to you. You could define it as something that has benefits/ necessary to address a problem/ if absent would result in complications/ possesses clear purpose and reasoning etc. These are all valid ways of interpreting the argumentative word.

- Also, have an idea of what content points you know while you are analysing the question. It's important to run through the points in your mind before you even start writing. Knowing the big picture of what your essay is about matters more than just writing instinctively.