

# **HUMANITIES (SOCIAL STUDIES)**

## **SYLLABUS**

### **Upper Secondary**

### **Express Course**

### **Normal (Academic) Course**

Implementation starting with  
2023 Secondary Three Cohort



Ministry of Education  
SINGAPORE

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# CONTENTS

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	<b>Page</b>
<b>1. INTRODUCTION</b>	
• Philosophy of the Singapore Social Studies Curriculum	4
• Social Studies Curriculum Aims	5
• Social Studies and the Desired Outcomes of Education	6
• Social Studies and 21 <sup>st</sup> Century Competencies	7
• Social Studies and National Education	8
<b>2. CONTENT</b>	
• Design of the 2023 Social Studies Express/Normal (Academic) Syllabuses	10
• Understanding the Syllabus Document	13
• The 2023 Social Studies Express/Normal (Academic) Syllabuses	15
<b>3. PEDAGOGY</b>	
• The Singapore Teaching Practice	22
• Inquiry-based Learning in the Social Studies Classroom	23
• Discussion-based Inquiry in the Social Studies Classroom	26
<b>4. ASSESSMENT</b>	
• Purpose of Assessment	29
• School-based Assessment: Issue Investigation	29
• National Assessment	30

# **SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION**

Philosophy of the Singapore Social Studies Curriculum  
Social Studies Curriculum Aims  
Social Studies and the Desired Outcomes of Education  
Social Studies and 21<sup>st</sup> Century Competencies  
Social Studies and National Education

# 1. INTRODUCTION

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## Philosophy of the Singapore Social Studies Curriculum

At the heart of the Singapore Social Studies curriculum is the preparation of students to be effective citizens by helping them to better understand the interconnectedness of Singapore and the world they live in, and appreciate the complexities of the human experience.

Drawing on aspects of society that are of meaning and interest to students, Social Studies seeks to ignite students' curiosity to inquire into real-world issues that concern their lives. Through inquiry and authentic learning experiences, Social Studies helps students to attain relevant knowledge and understanding about these issues, develop critical and reflective thinking skills, and appreciate multiple perspectives.

Social Studies seeks to inculcate in students a deeper understanding of the values that define the Singapore society, nurture dispositions that will inspire them to show concern for the society and the world in which they live, and demonstrate empathy in their relationships with others. The curriculum therefore envisions students as informed, concerned and participative citizens, competent in decision-making with an impassioned spirit to contribute responsibly to the society and world they live in.

Figure 1.1 reflects the philosophy underpinning the Singapore Social Studies curriculum.



Figure 1.1: The Singapore Social Studies Curriculum

## Social Studies Curriculum Aims

As **informed** citizens, students would:

- understand the rights and responsibilities of citizens and the role of the government in society;
- understand their identity as Singaporeans, with a regional and global outlook;
- understand the Singapore perspective on key national, regional and global issues;
- analyse and negotiate complex issues through evaluating multiple sources with different perspectives; and
- arrive at well-reasoned, responsible decisions through reflective thought and discernment.

As **concerned** citizens, students would:

- have a sense of belonging to the nation, appreciate and be committed to building social cohesion in a diverse society;
- be motivated to engage in issues of societal concern; and
- reflect on the ethical considerations and consequences of decision making.

As **participative** citizens, students would:

- take responsible personal and collective actions to effect change for the good of society; and
- be resilient in addressing concerns of society in spite of challenges faced.

## Social Studies and the Desired Outcomes of Education

Social Studies education provides many opportunities for the attainment of the Desired Outcomes of Education (DOE), which are attributes that educators aspire for students to have by the completion of their formal education.

The student who embodies the DOE is:

- **a confident person** who has a strong sense of right and wrong, is adaptable and resilient, knows himself/herself, is discerning in judgement, thinks independently and critically, and communicates effectively;
- **a self-directed learner** who takes responsibility for his/her own learning, who questions, reflects and perseveres in the pursuit of learning;
- **an active contributor** who is able to work effectively in teams, exercises initiative, takes calculated risks, is innovative and strives for excellence; and
- **a concerned citizen** who is rooted to Singapore, has a strong civic consciousness, is informed, and takes an active role in bettering the lives of others.

For details on the DOE, please refer to <https://www.moe.gov.sg/education-in-sg/desired-outcomes>

## Social Studies and 21<sup>st</sup> Century Competencies

To help students thrive in a fast-changing world and face challenges of the future, MOE has identified competencies that have become increasingly important in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. **Figure 1.2** shows the framework for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Competencies (21CC) and Student Outcomes. This framework illustrates the holistic education to prepare students for the future.



**Figure 1.2: Framework for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Competencies and Student Outcomes**

The outer ring of the framework represents the 21CC necessary in the globalised world we live in. These are:

- Civic Literacy, Global Awareness and Cross-cultural Skills;
- Critical and Inventive Thinking; and
- Communication, Collaboration and Information Skills.

The *middle ring* signifies the Social and Emotional Competencies – skills necessary for students to recognise and manage their emotions, develop care and concern for others, make responsible decisions, establish positive relationships, as well as handle challenging situations effectively.

Knowledge and skills must be underpinned by values of resilience, responsibility, respect, integrity, care and harmony. Values define a person’s character. They shape the beliefs, attitudes and actions of a person, and therefore form the *core* of the framework of 21CC. For details on the competencies, please refer to <https://www.moe.gov.sg/education-in-sg/21st-century-competencies>

## Social Studies and National Education

The design of the Social Studies curriculum takes into consideration the recommendations of the National Education 2017 Review. Based on the review, National Education (NE) has been reframed to anchor on the dispositions for citizenship. The dispositions are:

- a sense of belonging;
- a sense of reality;
- a sense of hope; and
- the will to act.

The philosophy and aims of the Social Studies curriculum are aligned to these dispositions in the following ways:

- Informed citizens have **a sense of reality**. Through the study of societal issues, the Social Studies curriculum imbues in students the awareness and understanding of the constraints, vulnerabilities and contemporary realities that confront Singapore as a country existing in a volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous world.
- Concerned citizens have **a sense of belonging** and **a sense of hope**. As students inquire into societal issues, they will be more aware that Singapore's social fabric is continually evolving and thus develop a deeper awareness of who they are as Singaporeans. This can help students appreciate the importance of engaging in societal issues, build the trust and belief that there is a place for each and every one of them here in Singapore. This will help build their confidence and optimism in the future of the nation, and be resilient to face the challenges ahead.
- Participative citizens have **the will to act**. The Social Studies curriculum strengthens students' knowledge of and concern for the nation as students inquire, reflect and respond to societal issues. In doing so, students will develop a collective resolve and a sense of shared mission to build a caring and inclusive Singapore for everyone.



# **SECTION 2: CONTENT**

Design of the 2023 Social Studies Express/Normal (Academic) Syllabuses  
Understanding the Syllabus Document  
The 2023 Social Studies Express/Normal (Academic) Syllabuses

## 2. CONTENT

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### Design of the 2023 Social Studies Express/Normal (Academic) Syllabuses

In designing the revised syllabuses, the following principles were considered:

- updated knowledge, skills and values so that the revised syllabuses remain current and relevant;
- progression from the Primary Social Studies syllabus; and
- alignment with Desired Outcomes of Education, 21<sup>st</sup> Century Competencies and National Education citizenship dispositions.

The syllabus content is organised around three Issues and is anchored in a set of knowledge, skills and values outcomes. The three Issues correspond to societal issues that have been shaping Singapore, the region and the world. The knowledge, skills and values acquired through examining these Issues will develop students' competencies to be informed, concerned and participative citizens. The following table shows an overview of the three Issues in the 2023 Social Studies Express / Normal (Academic) Syllabuses and other related issues.

<b>The Issues in the 2023 Social Studies Express/ Normal (Academic) Syllabuses</b>
<p><b>Issue 1: Exploring Citizenship and Governance</b> <i>Inquiry Focus</i> – Working for the good of society: Whose responsibility is it?</p> <p><i>Guiding Questions:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. What does citizenship mean to me?</li><li>2. What are the functions and roles of government in working for the good of society?</li><li>3. How do we decide what is good for society?</li><li>4. How can we work together for the good of society?</li></ol>
<p><b>Issue 2: Living in a Diverse Society</b> <i>Inquiry Focus</i> – Living in a diverse society: Is harmony achievable?</p> <p><i>Guiding Questions:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. What are the factors that shape the identities of people and contribute to a diverse society?</li><li>2. What are the experiences and effects of living in a diverse society?</li><li>3. How can we respond to diversity in society?</li></ol>
<p><b>Issue 3: Being Part of a Globalised World</b> <i>Inquiry Focus</i> – Being part of a globalised world: How can we respond to globalisation?</p> <p><i>Guiding Questions:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. What are the factors that contribute to globalisation?</li><li>2. How can we respond to the economic impacts of globalisation?</li><li>3. How can we respond to the cultural impacts of globalisation?</li><li>4. How can we respond to the security impacts of globalisation?</li></ol>

**Figure 2.1: A Summary of the Issues in the Syllabuses**

The 2023 Social Studies Express/Normal (Academic) Syllabuses aim to **develop students into informed, concerned and participative citizens**. This is done through examining issues that are of concern to our society and the world we live in. To encourage students to develop critical and reflective thinking skills as well as to appreciate multiple perspectives, an inquiry approach, including discussions, is encouraged in the learning of Social Studies. Students will also be assessed meaningfully in order to guide them through their Social Studies journey.

These Syllabuses focus on **education for citizenship rather than about citizenship**. Students are empowered to develop their responses as citizens to societal issues. In order to keep students engaged in learning for citizenship, the choice for content representation takes into account what societal issues affect the lives of the students as young citizens, and prepares them for the responsibilities they need to exercise judiciously as adults in future.

In the Syllabuses, **content is framed as knowledge that enables students to examine societal issues as well as knowledge gained from the examination of these societal issues**. Content is made up of core content and examples. Core content refers to knowledge that is needed for students to achieve the Knowledge Outcomes and Key Understandings, which include understanding the concepts and ideas exemplified in the Syllabuses and coursebooks. The Knowledge Outcomes and Key Understandings help students to respond to the Inquiry Focus. The examples refer to knowledge needed for students to amplify and deepen their understanding of the core content. These examples can be found in the Coursebooks, or can be examples derived from discussions and explorations students undertake in school and outside of school. Thus, content should no longer be viewed simply as a fixed set of facts to be memorised and regurgitated.

The Syllabuses and instructional materials incorporate **perspectives from the government, community and citizens**. While different perspectives are presented in the issues students will be exploring, there is the need to ensure that students are able to **interpret and evaluate the credibility and reliability of all perspectives based on sound reasoning and judgement**. This is particularly important as students are developing their own perspectives and responses towards societal issues, supporting the development of civic literacy.

As Social Studies provides a platform for citizenship education, the **Issues-based approach** is adopted to engage students in reflective inquiry on areas of public concern. An Issues-based curriculum implemented through an inquiry approach will develop critical thinking skills and multiple perspectives and reinforce shifts in teaching practices towards a more student-centric focus. In an Issues-based curriculum, students are engaged in learning through issues that challenge and concern citizens today and tomorrow. This prepares them to take ownership over their impact on societal outcomes as constructive citizens in Singapore.

Through **Issue Investigation**, for example, students are introduced to relevant and authentic issues drawn from students' experiences and society's concerns. The classroom is transformed into an interactive learning community where there are well-facilitated discussions on relevant societal issues. The thinking processes that students will go through in inquiry are reflected within the context of carrying out the Issue Investigation on an issue that holds meaning for them. Students experience some degree of influence in the inquiry

process through Issue Investigation as they can identify an issue of concern, craft an Issue Investigation question and consider different perspectives (by gathering data and exercising reasoning). Through this process, they would be able to develop informed and well-reasoned and substantiated conclusions (through reflective thinking on the validity of their own and other people’s perspectives) to their Issue Investigation question.

The following pages show details of the **2023 Social Studies Express/Normal (Academic) Syllabuses**. There are explanations on how components of the Syllabuses, such as Issues, Inquiry Focus, Key Understandings, Knowledge Outcomes, Key Concepts and detailed syllabus content, are meant to support inquiry-based learning in Social Studies.

**Understanding the Syllabus Document**

**Inquiry Focus**  
Each Issue is framed by an Inquiry Focus that anchors the study of the Issue and is central in directing students to respond to the Issue.

**Why this Issue matters**  
This section highlights the relevance of the Issue. It makes explicit connections for students by outlining what they will be able to do after studying the Issue.

**Knowledge Outcomes**  
The Knowledge Outcomes help students achieve the Key Understandings and respond to the Inquiry Focus.

**Skills Outcomes**  
The Skills Outcomes promote inquiry and critical-thinking skills necessary for students to arrive at reasoned conclusions based on analysing multiple perspectives. These skills are taught throughout the coursebooks and are assessed through a combination of formative and summative assessments.

**Issue 1: Exploring Citizenship and Governance**

Descriptor		Key Understandings	
<p>Inquiry Focus – Working for the good of society: Whose responsibility is it?</p> <p>Why this Issue matters This Issue invites students to begin exploring what it means to be an informed, concerned and participative citizen. Students will deepen their understanding of citizenship and governance, and learn how citizens and government play complementary roles in working for the good of society. In a complex society and world, understanding their roles as citizens will influence how they respond to various situations and issues in Singapore and the world. This will serve to develop a stronger sense of civic consciousness, enhancing the roles they play as citizens who are rooted in Singapore with a global outlook.</p>		<p>Citizenship is varied and complex.</p> <p>Government is a political institution with important functions and roles to govern.</p> <p>Different groups of people in society have differing needs, interests and priorities, and experience unequal sharing of costs. Managing these differences often requires trade-offs to be made.</p> <p>Both citizens and government can play complementary roles in working for the good of society.</p>	
Knowledge Outcomes	Skills Outcomes	Values Outcomes	Key Concepts
<p>Students will be able to understand:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>different attributes can shape one’s understanding of citizenship;</li> <li>the functions and roles of government in working for the good of society;</li> <li>the challenges of determining what is good for a society, with decisions guided by the principles of governance; and</li> <li>how citizens and government can work together for the good of society.</li> </ul>	<p>Students will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>examine societal issues critically by gathering, interpreting, analysing and evaluating information from different sources to make well-reasoned and substantiated arguments, recommendations and conclusions on societal issues;</li> <li>demonstrate sound reasoning and responsible decision-making that considers                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Singapore’s unique contexts, constraints and vulnerabilities</li> <li>the consequences of one’s actions on those around them;</li> </ul> </li> <li>demonstrate perspective-taking when encountering differing views;</li> <li>deliberate with others to address issues by                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>listening with an open mind and being receptive to new and opposing views</li> <li>clarifying and taking turns to communicate clearly with evidence; and</li> </ul> </li> <li>demonstrate reflective thinking when reviewing their understanding of societal issues and examining personal assumptions and beliefs about others.</li> </ul>	<p>Students will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>empathise with and care for others;</li> <li>respect differing views and appreciate the importance of harmony when working or in dialogue with others;</li> <li>demonstrate civic responsibility and integrity in speech and action in public and online spaces; and</li> <li>appreciate the importance of resilience in the face of challenges.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Citizenship</li> <li>Governance</li> <li>Trade-offs</li> </ul>

**Key Understandings**  
The Key Understandings reflect the main insights that students would gain through the study of each Issue.

**Key Concepts**  
The Key Concepts are the concepts that are fundamental in attaining the Key Understandings and responding to the Inquiry Focus.

**Values Outcomes**  
The Values Outcomes emphasise nurturing the dispositions of a concerned and participative citizen, and are aligned with the core values of resilience, responsibility, respect, integrity, care and harmony.

Guiding Questions	Content
1. What does citizenship mean to me?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attributes can shape one’s understanding of citizenship               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Legal status                   <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Rights and obligations of citizens</li> </ul> </li> <li>– A sense of identity</li> <li>– Share values</li> <li>– Civic participation                   <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Participation in public affairs as individuals and community groups</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> </ul>
2. What are the functions and roles of government in working for the good of society?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Functions and roles of government in a representative democracy               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Functions of government                   <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Makes and passes laws</li> <li>○ Implements and enforces laws</li> <li>○ Interprets and applies laws</li> </ul> </li> <li>– Roles of government                   <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Maintains law and order</li> <li>○ Ensures economic and social well-being of citizens</li> <li>○ Promotes and protects a country’s national interests</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> </ul>
3. How do we decide what is good for society?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Deciding what is good for society               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Challenges in deciding what is good for society                   <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Differing needs and interests</li> <li>○ Differing priorities</li> <li>○ Unequal sharing of costs</li> </ul> </li> <li>– Managing trade-offs</li> <li>– Principles shaping governance                   <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Having good leadership</li> <li>○ Anticipating change and staying relevant</li> <li>○ A stake for everyone, opportunities for all</li> <li>○ Practising meritocracy</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> </ul>
4. How can we work together for the good of society?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Citizens and government working together for the good of society               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Addressing the needs of society</li> <li>– Influencing decision-making in public affairs</li> <li>– Strengthening citizens’ sense of belonging</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

**Guiding Questions**

The Guiding Questions guide students’ inquiry and develop progressive understanding of the Issue. Placing these questions alongside the content shows teachers how to facilitate student learning using the Inquiry approach. The Guiding Questions also help to provide focus to facilitate the attainment of the Key Understandings and Knowledge Outcomes.

**Content** is framed as knowledge that enables students to examine societal issues as well as knowledge gained from the examination of these societal issues. Content is made up of core content and examples.

The core content refers to the content essential for students to attain the Knowledge Outcomes and Key Understandings, which include understanding the concepts exemplified in the Syllabuses and coursebooks.

The core content is represented as a mind map at the end of each chapter in the coursebooks and in the scope and sequence document for each Issue in the Teaching and Learning Guide.

The examples refer to the knowledge needed for students to amplify and deepen their understanding of the core content. These examples can be found in the coursebooks or derived from discussions and explorations in school and outside school.

## Issue 1: Exploring Citizenship and Governance

<p><b>Descriptor</b></p> <p><b>Inquiry Focus</b> – Working for the good of society: Whose responsibility is it?</p> <p><b>Why this Issue matters</b>                  This Issue invites students to begin exploring what it means to be an informed, concerned and participative citizen. Students will deepen their understanding of citizenship and governance, and learn how citizens and government play complementary roles in working for the good of society. In a complex society and world, understanding their roles as citizens will influence how they respond to various situations and issues in Singapore and the world. This will serve to develop a stronger sense of civic consciousness, enhancing the roles they play as citizens who are rooted in Singapore with a regional and global outlook.</p>	<p><b>Key Understandings</b></p> <p>Citizenship is varied and complex.</p> <p>Government is a political institution with important functions and roles to govern.</p> <p>Different groups of people in society have differing needs, interests and priorities, and experience unequal sharing of costs. Managing these differences often requires trade-offs to be made.</p> <p>Both citizens and government can play complementary roles in working for the good of society.</p>		
<p><b>Knowledge Outcomes</b></p> <p>Students will be able to understand:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• different attributes can shape one’s understanding of citizenship;</li> <li>• the functions and roles of government in working for the good of society;</li> <li>• the challenges of determining what is good for a society, with decisions guided by the principles of governance; and</li> <li>• how citizens and government can work together for the good of society.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Skills Outcomes</b></p> <p>Students will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• examine societal issues critically by gathering, interpreting, analysing and evaluating information from different sources to make well-reasoned and substantiated arguments, recommendations and conclusions on societal issues;</li> <li>• demonstrate sound reasoning and responsible decision-making that considers                         <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Singapore’s unique contexts, constraints and vulnerabilities</li> <li>– the consequences of one’s actions on those around them;</li> </ul> </li> <li>• demonstrate perspective-taking when encountering differing views;</li> <li>• deliberate with others to address issues by                         <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– listening with an open mind and being receptive to new and opposing views</li> <li>– clarifying and taking turns to communicate clearly with evidence; and</li> </ul> </li> <li>• demonstrate reflective thinking when reviewing their understanding of societal issues and examining personal assumptions and beliefs about others.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Values Outcomes</b></p> <p>Students will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• empathise with and care for others;</li> <li>• respect differing views and appreciate the importance of harmony when working or in dialogue with others;</li> <li>• demonstrate civic responsibility and integrity in speech and action in public and online spaces; and</li> <li>• appreciate the importance of resilience in the face of challenges.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Concepts</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Citizenship</li> <li>• Governance</li> <li>• Trade-offs</li> </ul>

## Guiding Questions

- What does citizenship mean to me?
- What are the functions and roles of government in working for the good of society?
- How do we decide what is good for society?
- How can we work together for the good of society?

## Content

- Attributes can shape one's understanding of citizenship
  - Legal status
    - Rights and obligations of citizens
  - A sense of identity
  - Shared values
  - Civic participation
    - Participate in public affairs as individuals and community groups
- Functions and roles of government in a representative democracy
  - Functions of government
    - Makes and passes laws
    - Implements and enforces laws
    - Interprets and applies laws
  - Roles of government
    - Maintains law and order
    - Ensures economic and social well-being of citizens
    - Promotes and protects a country's national interests
- Deciding what is good for society
  - Challenges in deciding what is good for society
    - Differing needs and interests
    - Differing priorities
    - Unequal sharing of costs
  - Managing trade-offs
  - Principles shaping governance
    - Having good leadership
    - Anticipating change and staying relevant
    - A stake for everyone, opportunities for all
    - Practising meritocracy
- Citizens and government working together for the good of society
  - Addressing the needs of society
  - Influencing decision-making in public affairs
  - Strengthening citizens' sense of belonging



## Issue 2: Living in a Diverse Society

<b>Descriptor</b>		<b>Key Understandings</b>	
<p><b>Inquiry Focus</b> – Living in a diverse society: Is harmony achievable?</p> <p><b>Why this Issue matters</b> This Issue helps students appreciate diversity and the importance of harmony. Students will develop an understanding of who they are as individuals and accept, respect and celebrate diversity as well as common practices and values in a diverse society. This will heighten students’ awareness of the need to develop personal and collective responsibility in promoting and maintaining harmony in a diverse society.</p>		<p>Identities are diverse and complex.</p> <p>Living harmoniously in a diverse society means respecting our differences and appreciating what we share in common.</p> <p>People respond to diversity in a variety of ways to achieve harmony.</p>	
<b>Knowledge Outcomes</b>	<b>Skills Outcomes</b>	<b>Values Outcomes</b>	<b>Concepts</b>
<p>Students will be able to understand:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the factors that shape the identities of people and contribute to a diverse society;</li> <li>• the experiences and effects of living in a diverse society; and</li> <li>• the various ways in which individuals, communities and governments can respond to the effects of living in a diverse society.</li> </ul>	<p>Students will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• examine societal issues critically by gathering, interpreting, analysing and evaluating information from different sources to make well-reasoned and substantiated arguments, recommendations and conclusions on societal issues;</li> <li>• demonstrate sound reasoning and responsible decision-making that considers             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Singapore’s unique contexts, constraints and vulnerabilities</li> <li>– the consequences of one’s actions on those around them;</li> </ul> </li> <li>• demonstrate perspective-taking when encountering differing views;</li> <li>• deliberate with others to address issues by             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– listening with an open mind and being receptive to new and opposing views</li> <li>– clarifying and taking turns to communicate clearly with evidence; and</li> </ul> </li> <li>• demonstrate reflective thinking when reviewing their understanding of societal issues and examining personal assumptions and beliefs about others.</li> </ul>	<p>Students will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• empathise with and care for others;</li> <li>• respect differing views and appreciate the importance of harmony when working or in dialogue with others;</li> <li>• demonstrate civic responsibility and integrity in speech and action in public and online spaces; and</li> <li>• appreciate the importance of resilience in the face of challenges.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identity</li> <li>• Diversity</li> <li>• Harmony</li> </ul>

## Guiding Questions

1. What are the factors that shape the identities of people and contribute to a diverse society?
2. What are the experiences and effects of living in a diverse society?
3. How can we respond to diversity in society?

## Content

- Factors that shape the identities of people and contribute to a diverse society
  - Race and ethnicity
  - Religion
  - Socio-economic status
  - Nationality
- Interactions in a diverse society and common space
- Experiences and effects of living in a diverse society
  - Cultural exchange and appreciation
  - Exchange of knowledge and skills
  - Stereotypes, prejudice and discrimination
  - Competition for resources
- Citizens and government responding to socio-cultural diversity
  - Responses of citizens as individuals and community groups
  - Responses of government
    - Assimilationist policy and its tensions
    - Integration policy and its tensions
- Citizens and government responding to socio-economic diversity
  - Responses of citizens as individuals and community groups
  - Responses of government
    - A government-financed approach and its challenges
    - A shared responsibility approach and its challenges

## Issue 3: Being Part of a Globalised World

<b>Descriptor</b>		<b>Key Understandings</b>	
<p><b>Inquiry Focus</b> – Being part of a globalised world: How can we respond to globalisation?</p> <p><b>Why this Issue matters</b> This Issue helps students understand and make meaning of their lives in a globalised world where countries and individuals are interconnected and interdependent. Students will explore the impacts of globalisation in three areas: economy, culture and security. They will understand the complex process of globalisation through examining how the impacts of globalisation in these areas result in trade-offs and different responses from countries and individuals. Students will therefore appreciate the complex decision-making process behind the responses towards the impacts of globalisation. This understanding will help them to make well-reasoned and responsible decisions as informed, concerned and participative citizens in a globalised world.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Globalisation shapes the interconnections and interdependence among countries and people.</li> <li>• Globalisation creates impacts in the economy, culture and security.</li> <li>• The impacts of globalisation result in differing responses from countries and people.</li> </ul>	
<b>Knowledge Outcomes</b>	<b>Skills Outcomes</b>	<b>Values Outcomes</b>	<b>Concepts</b>
<p>Students will be able to understand:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the key driving forces of globalisation; and</li> <li>• different responses of countries and individuals to economic, cultural and security impacts of globalisation.</li> </ul>	<p>Students will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• examine societal issues critically by gathering, interpreting, analysing and evaluating information from different sources to make well-reasoned and substantiated arguments, recommendations and conclusions on societal issues;</li> <li>• demonstrate sound reasoning and responsible decision-making that considers             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Singapore’s unique contexts, constraints and vulnerabilities</li> <li>– the consequences of one’s actions on those around them;</li> </ul> </li> <li>• demonstrate perspective-taking when encountering differing views;</li> <li>• deliberate with others to address issues by             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– listening with an open mind and being receptive to new and opposing views</li> <li>– clarifying and taking turns to communicate clearly with evidence; and</li> </ul> </li> <li>• demonstrate reflective thinking when reviewing their understanding of societal issues and examining personal assumptions and beliefs about others.</li> </ul>	<p>Students will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• empathise with and care for others;</li> <li>• respect differing views and appreciate the importance of harmony when working or in dialogue with others;</li> <li>• demonstrate civic responsibility and integrity in speech and action in public and online spaces; and</li> <li>• appreciate the importance of resilience in the face of challenges.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Globalisation</li> <li>• Interconnectedness</li> <li>• Interdependence</li> </ul>

Guiding Questions	Content
<p>1. What are the factors that contribute to globalisation?</p> <p>2. How can we respond to the economic impacts of globalisation?</p> <p>3. *How can we respond to the cultural impacts of globalisation?</p> <p>4. *How can we respond to the security impacts of globalisation?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Driving forces of globalisation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Technological advancements <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Developments in transportation</li> <li>○ Developments in digital technology</li> </ul> </li> <li>– Growth of Multinational Corporations</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Economic impacts of globalisation and responses of countries and individuals <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Economic impacts of globalisation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Economic growth and economic vulnerability experienced by countries</li> <li>○ Employment opportunities and challenges experienced by individuals</li> </ul> </li> <li>– Responses to economic impacts of globalisation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Government support</li> <li>○ Acquisition of knowledge and skills by individuals</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> <li>• Cultural impacts of globalisation and responses of countries and individuals <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Cultural impacts of globalisation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Spread of culture</li> <li>○ Dilution of culture</li> </ul> </li> <li>– Responses to cultural impacts of globalisation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Varying degrees of acceptance and rejection</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> <li>• Security impacts of globalisation and responses of countries and individuals <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Security impacts of globalisation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Transnational terrorism</li> <li>○ Cyber threats</li> </ul> </li> <li>– Responses to security impacts of globalisation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Vigilance by individuals</li> <li>○ Security measures by governments within their countries</li> <li>○ Cooperation among countries</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> </ul>

\* Guiding Questions 3 and 4, as well as their corresponding content, are non-examinable at the GCE N(A)-Level Examination.

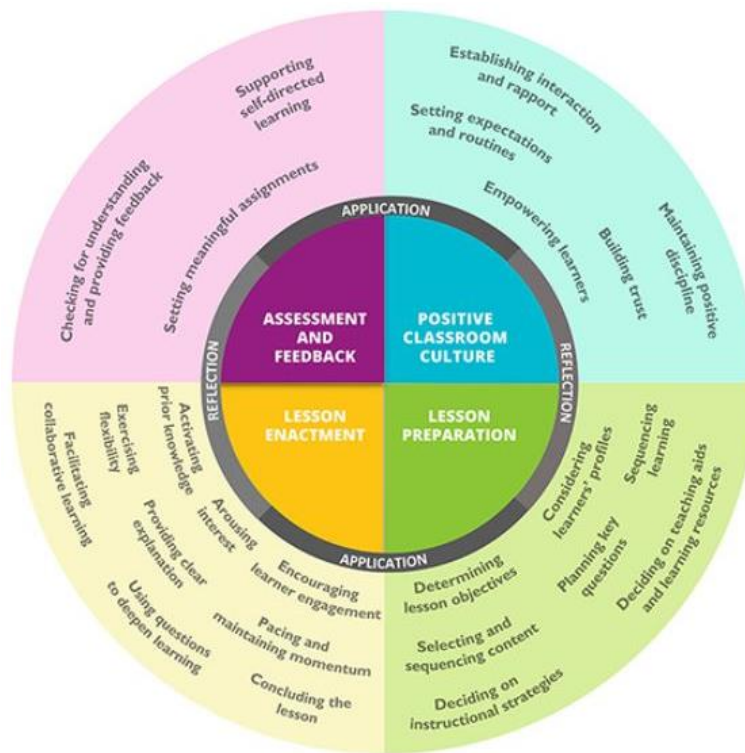
# **SECTION 3: PEDAGOGY**

The Singapore Teaching Practice  
Inquiry-based Learning in the Social Studies classroom  
Discussion-based Inquiry in the Social Studies Classroom

### 3. PEDAGOGY

#### The Singapore Teaching Practice

An engaged student is one whose energy and attention are channelled towards learning. To engage students, teachers need to touch the hearts and intrigue the minds of the students. They also need to consider how students learn and to design learning opportunities that will allow students to find meaning in what they learn. To help facilitate students' learning, teachers can take reference from the Singapore Teaching Practice (STP). At the heart of the STP are pedagogical practices pertaining to lesson preparation, lesson enactment, assessment and feedback. **Figure 3.1** shows these four teaching processes and the corresponding teaching areas.



**Figure 3.1: The STP Pedagogical Practices**

For details on the STP, please refer to:

<https://www.moe.gov.sg/education-in-sg/our-teachers>

## **Inquiry-based Learning in the Social Studies classroom**

This pedagogy belongs to the constructivist school of thought in which students better understand what they learn if they construct their own knowledge. Inquiry essentially is a purposeful act of identifying problems, asking good questions, collecting data (through careful observations, experiments, talking to people, reading varied information sources, etc.), making meaning of that data, and developing sound reasons, claims and arguments based on evidence drawn from data.

The disposition to be reflective is also central to inquiry, and it requires one to be open-minded, responsible, and whole-hearted. It promotes student-centred learning by creating opportunities for students to take ownership of their own learning rather than receive information purely through direct instruction.

### **Why Inquiry-based Learning?**

#### **i. Development of Critical Thinking Skills**

Inquiry is recommended for the learning of concepts, skills and exploration of issues in the Humanities subjects. It facilitates an enlarged and deepened consciousness in the student about the issues under study and what these issues mean to them. It also grows the student into a self-reflective inquirer who thinks about his/her thinking and his/her doing. Inquiry questions provide the focal point for thinking, as students will investigate, extract, analyse and synthesise information. While offering students the opportunity to sustain their interest at inquiring into an area of focus within the study of an issue, structures and support will be provided to make the Inquiry Approach accessible to and manageable for students.

#### **ii. Promotion of Knowledge Construction and Communication Skills**

Through the inquiry process, students will gain multi-faceted insights into and understandings of the issues as they engage in discussions supported by teacher facilitation. As students draw conclusions and judge whether conclusions drawn by others are supported by evidence, they will be empowered to discern and take responsibility for their own learning.

#### **iii. Development of Metacognitive Processes**

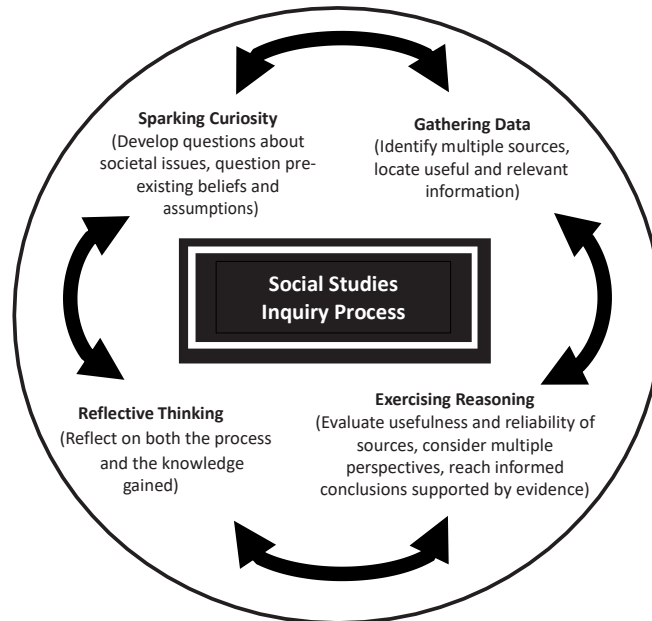
As students engage in the inquiry process of investigating into authentic societal issues, they explore various ways of thinking about these issues. Through this process of negotiating their understandings of the issues that they have studied, students will become more aware of their own beliefs, assumptions and actions. In this way, inquiry facilitates reflective thinking and meaning-making by the students.

#### **iv. Preparation for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Living**

The increasing complexities of the global environment we live in necessitates that the curriculum equips students with the knowledge, skills and values that would enable students to succeed in becoming effective citizens, workers and leaders in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The complexities of the real world with its attendant fluidity and multiplicity of perspectives require our students to be given the opportunity to inquire into these complexities, and construct their own understanding of the 21<sup>st</sup> century world in which they live.

**Inquiry is the recommended pedagogy in the Social Studies issues-based curriculum** as the stages in inquiry-based learning help students to develop the knowledge, skills and dispositions to actively deliberate on societal issues and learn to offer well-reasoned responses to these issues. This helps students to become informed and concerned citizens who can participate responsibly for the good of society.

The Social Studies inquiry process is shown in **Figure 3.2**. The four stages of the inquiry process, *Sparking Curiosity*, *Gathering Data*, *Exercising Reasoning* and *Reflective Thinking*, are iterative and not linear.



**Figure 3.2: Social Studies Inquiry Process**

### **i. Sparking Curiosity**

Teachers are encouraged to introduce the issue in a manner that stimulates students' curiosity so that they would like to explore the issue. As teachers attempt to spark curiosity amongst students, it is important to first activate the students' prior knowledge about real-world issues, and to surface their pre-existing beliefs and views. Students need to identify with their existing cognitive frames, and be aware of the ways in which they understand the issue and why they adopt such a view of the issue.

It would also be useful to identify questions that students have about this issue, i.e. gaps in their understanding that they would like to be addressed. In the course of the lesson, teachers can then seek to address these gaps in understanding and create opportunities for the students to reflect on what they have learnt and whether there are any other gaps to be filled. It is pertinent for teachers to consider students' learning profile and interests when choosing materials to spark their curiosity.



## **ii. Gathering Data**

In Social Studies, learning extends beyond the classroom. Students should be encouraged to gather data from a variety of authentic sources of information that reflect multiple perspectives of the issue that they are critically examining. These perspectives can come about from a variety of sources of information that are gathered by the students in the study of an issue or through an Issue Investigation.

Depending on the students' level of readiness, the teacher can help provide foundational knowledge on the issue by providing sources of information; consider scoping the amount of information given and use scaffolding questions to help students understand the information given; or guide students to explore possible sources of information, such as certain books, journal articles, websites, films. Students can also gather data through making observations and conducting interviews and surveys with members of the community they live in.

## **iii. Exercising Reasoning**

Students need to make sense of the data they have gathered and extract relevant information from the various sources they have encountered. To construct knowledge about an issue, they need to describe, explain and analyse the information and infer potential implications. Through the process of comparing and contrasting sources, they make connections in their knowledge and deepen their insights about the issue. Students can apply a set of criteria for evaluating the reliability and usefulness of the information, and develop informed conclusions about the issue.

Through the exploration of differing views, students learn to provide justification for their opinions, make responsible decisions and hone their critical thinking skills. As they engage in this reasoning and deliberation process where they grapple with the multiple perspectives presented, students develop new ways of understanding, arrive at informed conclusions and in turn construct new knowledge for themselves.

## **iv. Reflective Thinking**

Reflective thinking is an integral aspect of inquiry and students ought to engage in reflection at every aspect of the inquiry process. This reflection can take place at two levels – reflecting on the process as well as the knowledge gained.

Teachers can engage students in reflecting on their current understanding of the issue and guide them to surface their assumptions, biases, values and beliefs that shape their thoughts, feelings and actions towards the issue. By asking questions that provoke deeper thought, students will reflect on what they think, do and feel, thereby developing metacognitive self-awareness.

As students engage in data gathering and sound reasoning, teachers can encourage students to critically evaluate their sources, methods, opinions and reflect on the new insights they have gained.

Though reflective thinking is positioned as the last stage of inquiry, where the teacher and student could consolidate the learning points gained and conclude the whole inquiry

process, reflective thinking is encouraged at every stage of the inquiry process.

### **Discussion-based Inquiry in the Social Studies Classroom**

Discussions is another model of inquiry that is emphasised in the 2023 Social Studies Express/Normal (Academic) Syllabuses.

#### **What is Discussion?**

Discussions can take many forms and be used for many purposes. It can be described as a dialogue between or among people. It involves, at a minimum, the exchange of information about a topic (e.g., a controversy, a problem, an event, a person, etc.) as well as a particular approach to constructing knowledge that is predicated on the belief that the most powerful ideas can be produced when people are expressing their ideas on a topic and listening to others express theirs.

Through discussions, students can explore multiple perspectives about an issue from different sources and from one another as well as critically examine the reliability and usefulness of the sources. They will also be able to develop some common understanding of the issue; and construct well-reasoned and substantiated conclusions that could include recommendations, decisions or a plan of action to address the issue. Such forms of discussions are also known as deliberative discussions, or deliberations, and are important for a stronger understanding of societal issues, as these issues are often interpreted differently, depending on one's existing values, beliefs, assumptions, interests and needs.

#### **Why Discussions?**

For students to become informed, concerned and participative citizens, students are encouraged to construct their own knowledge through discussions, to make sense of and evaluate the information presented to them, and to use it for meaningful knowledge construction and problem solving.

i. **Discussions are useful when learning about societal issues.** Societal issues can be controversial as people with differing needs, interests, values and priorities would have differing perspectives regarding these issues. The use of discussions allows for these varied perspectives to be reflected so that students can understand the complex nature of societal issues, and learn to make reasoned judgements. This will prepare them for the present and future where, as citizens, they will think more critically before responding to discussions online or with their peers and not make unsupported judgements about the perspectives they encounter.

ii. **Good discussion models and strategies would incorporate appropriate sources of information to inform or provoke students' thinking on an issue, as their assumptions, beliefs and biases are challenged.** Students then learn to ask critical and insightful questions

to clarify and probe assertions made by others, and to base their opinions and conclusions on evidence. It is through such rich discussions which are well grounded in evidence and reasoning, that students learn from one another and construct their own learning.

iii. **Research has shown that engaging students in discussions about complex societal and public issues positively correlates with important civic outcomes and political and civic engagement.** Through discussions of societal issues, some of which could be controversial in nature, students learn to consider multiple perspectives and the viewpoints of others which may differ from theirs due to the complexity of the issue, and to use evidence critically to arrive at well-reasoned and substantiated conclusions that would be most beneficial for society.

iv. **Through discussions, students learn to be effective discussants, communicating with clarity, precision and confidence.** With the increased use of communication devices, face-to-face communication is declining, and many students no longer feel comfortable with speaking in front of others. Hence, discussions in the classroom will provide a suitable platform for students to practise their communication skills, as they emotionally connect with their peers and build on one another's ideas.

v. **Through discussions, students learn the value of tolerance, where they learn to respect and listen to others who may hold a different view from them.** In a rapidly evolving multicultural society like Singapore, the appreciation and tolerance of diversity is crucial in building social cohesion, especially as our socio-cultural and socio-economic landscapes become more diverse. When students learn to be more empathetic towards the feelings of others, especially those from other socio-cultural and socio-economic groups, and to respect differences from a young age, they will eventually mature into citizens who will stand united to defend against any divisive forces that would threaten our social fabric.

# **SECTION 4: ASSESSMENT**

Purpose of Assessment  
School-based Assessment: Issue Investigation  
National Assessment

## 4. ASSESSMENT

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### **Purpose of Assessment**

The purpose of assessment must be understood beyond the context of high-stake national examinations. Assessment should be seen as forming an integral part of the learning process, and is used as an important tool for teachers to gather data to inform their teaching and improve students' learning. It should also be seen as an iterative and continuous process which motivates students' learning.

Both Assessment of Learning and Assessment for Learning have a place in the 2023 Social Studies Express / Normal (Academic) Syllabuses. The modes of assessment are designed in alignment with the purpose of these Syllabuses, which are to develop our students into informed, concerned and participative citizens and evoke students' curiosity to inquire into real-world issues that concern their lives.

### **School-based Assessment: Issue Investigation**

The inquiry approach develops knowledge, skills and values that cannot be wholly assessed through conventional pen and paper assessment modes as it requires students to integrate the knowledge, skills and values learnt and demonstrate them in the classroom. Issue Investigation provides a platform for students to demonstrate these knowledge, skills and values needed for active citizenship as it requires students to work as a group to:

- identify a societal issue that is a cause of concern;
- gather data that reflects multiple perspectives;
- analyse the data gathered to surface trends and patterns that help address the issue;
- arrive at well-reasoned and substantiated conclusions;
- consider possible recommendations to the societal issue; and
- reflect on their understanding of the societal issue and examine personal assumptions and beliefs about the issue.

Through Issue Investigation, students not only have an in-depth understanding of societal issues, they also learn to question unexamined assumptions and develop the ability of perspective-taking, all of which will contribute towards helping them arrive at informed conclusions. Thus, Issue Investigation provides students with the opportunity to practise and demonstrate the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Competencies to become informed, concerned and participative citizens. Issue Investigation can be considered as part of the Weighted Assessment for the term(s).

## National Assessment

Assessment of Learning, to establish and find the evidence of the quality of students' learning, can be done through both school-based assessment (e.g. Issue Investigation) and national assessment. Both school-based and national assessments are designed in alignment with the 2023 Social Studies Express/Normal (Academic) Syllabuses. Through the Syllabuses, students will acquire the relevant knowledge and understanding about societal issues, develop critical and reflective thinking skills, and appreciate multiple perspectives. The Assessment Objectives are in alignment with these aims. The assessments are, in addition, appropriately scoped for the Social Studies Ordinary Level and Social Studies Normal (Academic) Level Examinations.

## Assessment Objectives

The three Assessment Objectives of Social Studies National Assessment are:

Assessment Objective 1: Knowledge with Understanding

Assessment Objective 2: Interpreting and Evaluating Sources/Given Information

Assessment Objective 3: Constructing Explanations

### **AO1 – Knowledge with Understanding**

Candidates should be able to:

- demonstrate an understanding of societal issues.

### **AO2 – Interpreting and Evaluating Sources/Given Information**

Candidates should be able to:

- comprehend and extract relevant information
- draw inferences from given information
- analyse and evaluate evidence
- compare and contrast different views
- distinguish between fact, opinion and judgement
- recognise values and detect bias
- draw conclusions based on reasoned consideration of evidence and arguments.

### **AO3 – Constructing Explanations**

Candidates should be able to:

- analyse societal issues through different perspectives
- construct reasoned arguments and make informed judgement and recommendations.

**Figure 4.1: Assessment Objectives for the Social Studies Ordinary Level and Social Studies Normal (Academic) Level Syllabuses**

The weighting for the Assessment Objectives for both the Social Studies Ordinary Level and Social Studies Normal (Academic) Level Assessment Specification Grid can be found in **Figure 4.2**.

Assessment Objectives (AOs)	Weighting
AO 1 + AO 2	35%
AO 1 + AO 3	15%
Total	50%

Note: Assessment Objective 1 is inevitably part of the testing of Assessment Objectives 2 and 3.

**Figure 4.2: Social Studies Ordinary Level and Social Studies Normal (Academic) Level Assessment Specification Grid**

Both papers comprise two sections: Section A Source-Based Case Study (SBCS) and Section B Structured-Response Question (SRQ). For both the O- and N(A)- Level papers, the total number of marks for SBCS is 35. Correspondingly, the total number of marks for SRQ is 15. The greater weighting for SBCS shows the emphasis on critical thinking skills, which are more evidently assessed through the SBCS where students work with sources they have not seen before.

### **Section A: Source-Based Case Study**

The Syllabuses aim to develop critical and reflective thinking, and perspective-taking in students. This is assessed in Section A, an unseen Source-based Case Study, where students are expected to have an understanding of the ways in which sources may be evaluated. The case study will be set on one of the three Issues of the syllabus and will require the skills and concepts taught during the course. The issue of the case study will be related to the syllabus and may or may not be covered in the syllabus content. Students are expected to use their knowledge, skills and conceptual understanding developed during the course to help them use the given sources to answer the questions. There is hence, an alignment between Assessment Objectives 1 and 2 with the assessment items in this section.

### **Section B: Structured-Response Question**

The Syllabuses are anchored on issues and driven by inquiry, where knowledge is important as a basis for discourse on societal issues. In Section B, students will be required to apply their knowledge and understanding as they analyse societal issues and construct explanations. This emphasis on knowledge beyond factual recall and on the ability to construct reasoned arguments, make informed judgement on and recommendations for societal issues are tested in this section. These fulfil Assessment Objectives 1 and 3, as seen in **Figure 4.2**. In an examination, the question set will not be on the same Issue as the source-based case study.