

# The Application Question (AQ)

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**Prepared by Dr. Tommie Chen**

(Adapted from Dr Robert Wilks/Mr Saminathan)

# Contents

**At the end of today's session, you should be able to respond to all these questions:**

- 1) What is the application question (AQ)?
- 2) Where does it appear in the 'A' level comprehension paper?
- 3) When did Cambridge start this question?
- 4) How is the AQ graded?
- 5) Why is it challenging for students (and teachers)?

# What is special about the Application question(AQ) ?

## Overview of the various types of comprehension questions

- *literal, inferential, language awareness questions, questions on use of punctuation marks, figurative language, summary*
- **Only the AQ requires a student to go beyond the text ideas:**
  1. **You need to** apply **ideas** to your society or other societies
  2. You need to **ENGAGE** with the text ideas in the passage and **EVALUATE** them accordingly.

# When did the AQ start and where does it appear?

- The AQ started in 2002 and it is usually worth 8 marks.
- From 2013, it will be increased to 10 marks
- It is the **final question** in the comprehension paper (**rationale**: students would have consolidated their understanding of passage ideas through the short questions and summary and would be better prepared for their AQ)

# Past year examples of application questions

## Examples of AQs from 'A' level papers:

- 1) 2003 passage on animal rights (**'Which writer's views are you most in sympathy? How relevant are the views raised by both authors to Singapore society?'**)
- 2) 2004 passage on choices in life (**'Do you regard the increased degree of choice available to you and your generation as broadly beneficial or harmful?'**)

# Past year examples of application questions

- More examples from 'A' level papers

3) 2005 paper on aggression ('The author suggests some reasons why aggression may play a much reduced role in the future. **How convincing are these reasons**, and do you consider the gains would outweigh the losses if aggression ceased to be a central feature of human behaviour?')

# Past year examples of application questions

- More examples from 'A' level papers

4) 2006 passage on freedom (**'How far do you agree with the writer's view? How free do you want to be?'**)

5) 2007 passage on gender revolution(**' To what extent do you agree or disagree with his views?'**Support your answer with examples drawn from your society.)

6) 2010 and 2011 passages (**How applicable do you find the writer's observations to yourself and your own society?**)

# 4 Types of AQs

1. **Do you agree or disagree** with the writer's views?
2. **How convincing** are the writers arguments/views?
3. **Generic Questions:** No link to specific societies/  
Singapore.
4. Apply the writer's views/arguments **to the Singapore context**



# General requirements of AQs

- Students are expected to **take a stand**
- Students are expected to **engage with text ideas** (i.e **select specific text ideas** to respond to, **refer to them clearly** in their response and **apply them to their society or other societies**)
- **Evaluation skills** (students are expected to consider the merits and drawbacks of the writer's ideas with reference to their own views or society's experience).
- Offer a **balanced perspective.**

# How are AQs assessed?

- 4 bands (1-3 marks, 4-6 marks, 7-8, 9-10 marks)
- 4 main components (R, EX, EV and C)

**R (requirements)**- addressed all parts of the question and balanced?

**EX(Explanation)**- has the student developed the point with sufficient and apt illustrations?

**EV(Evaluation)**- has the student evaluated the writer's views, his/her own views and the situation in society?

**C(Coherence)** – is the response logically organized and fluent?

# Why is the AQ challenging for students?

- ✧ Requires **higher order skills** like critical reading and thinking (*inferential understanding/comparative analysis/critical evaluation*) **but** students are usually **passive readers**
- ✧ Requires students to **pick good claims or arguments to respond to** **but** students are **unable to locate the central ideas of writers**. Sometimes, they pick examples instead of the main ideas

# Why is the AQ challenging for students?

- ✧ Necessitates **an in-depth analysis of writers' ideas** and assess how their views or society's experiences **are similar or different from writers' viewpoints** **but** students find it **difficult to engage in such comparisons of viewpoints** and their **weak language ability** compounds the problem when they try to link the writer's views to their views and society.
- ✧ Requires **the Linguistic Ability** to present coherent and cogent arguments.
- ✧ Requires excellent **Time Management** skills.

# Other challenging issues for students

- ✧ **Misinterpretation** of text ideas
- ✧ **Mere restatement** of text ideas
- ✧ **General inability to argue** why they agree or disagree with something (lack conviction to take a clear position on issues as they rarely read)
- ✧ **Poor time management** (a major problem)

# Acquiring the skills for AQ

- Critical reading and thinking are skills that take time to develop.

Practice in this **life skill** starts NOW:

- **Active reading and thinking skills:**

- ❖ Strategies to process information through thinking frameworks (e.g. Paul's Wheel)
- ❖ Basic reading techniques
- ❖ Synthesizing different ideas and applying these ideas to different contexts)

# Steps to Success (Part 1: Look)

- **Read the Question very carefully – AT LEAST TWICE.**
- **Identify and UNDERLINE the separate requirements** before you begin the answer.
- **Appreciate the different demands of the question** and their respective difficulty – *e.g. does the question require a description of the various points of view? Does the second part of the question require you to evaluate arguments and apply them to another situation?*
- **Note time management** – i.e. how much time to spend on each part of the question.
- ✧ **Rule of Thumb: The harder the task, the greater the reward. Allocate more time to the parts that require higher order thinking skills such as evaluation/application.**

# Steps to Success (Part 2: LEAP)

- ① **Locate the appropriate material** (Find the relevant information from the passage).
  - ② **Evaluate the information** (Assess the value/validity of the information).
  - ③ **Apply the information** (Appreciate the relevance of the material to another situation/area and apply it as specified by the question).
  - ④ **Plan/Organise your work before you write** (Organise your answer into different parts and divide the points into paragraphs).
- ✧ You MUST ensure that your answer is **well-structured, balanced, comprehensive, coherent and cogent.**



# In a nutshell....

- To do well in an AQ:
  - ❖ one needs to be a **critical reader** and **thinker**
  - ❖ and **support one's views with concrete examples** drawn from one's own society or other societies.