

**CIVICS**  
**SYLLABUS**  
*for JUNIOR COLLEGES and*  
**CENTRALISED INSTITUTES**

**CURRICULUM PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT DIVISION  
MINISTRY OF EDUCATION  
SINGAPORE**

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YEAR OF IMPLEMENTATION FROM 2000**

# CONTENTS

Introduction & Rationale

Goals & General Objectives

Overview

Features of the Syllabus

Evaluation

Leadership

Historical Perspective

Current Situation

Future Scenarios

References

## **INTRODUCTION**

The Civics Syllabus for Junior Colleges and Centralised Institutes is based on the theme, “Challenge of Leadership”. It aims to harness and develop the leadership potential of our students. This syllabus is to be taught as a 30-hour module. It is in alignment with the mission of the Ministry of Education “to mould the future of the nation, by moulding the people who will determine the future of Singapore”.

## **RATIONALE**

- With globalisation, and greater mobility among the better-educated, there is a need to develop in our students the willingness to serve as leaders in Singapore and to contribute to Singapore’s future.
- Singapore’s past and current success and achievements were due to the efforts of our people, including our leaders. The success and survival of Singapore in the future will continue to be determined by our people. Our students are the potential leaders of tomorrow. There is a need to develop their talents so as to enable us to continue renewing and regenerating our leadership.
- Moreover, there is also a need for our nation to get some of its best talents to serve in positions of leadership in the governance and administration of the country.

## **GOALS**

The goals of the Civics syllabus are to:

- equip our students with the requisite knowledge and skills as future leaders to make sound decisions for the nation,
- develop in our students the willingness to take on the responsibility to contribute to shaping the future of our nation.

## **GENERAL OBJECTIVES**

The objectives of the syllabus are to enable students to:

- have conviction and commitment to lead and serve the nation,
- contribute to social cohesion,
- be committed to the efforts of the nation to defend itself,
- have confidence in the country’s future.

## **OVERVIEW**

The theme of the syllabus, “Challenge of Leadership”, runs through the four components, namely, Leadership, Historical Perspective, Current Situation and Future Scenarios. The facets of the challenge of leadership in Singapore and other fundamental concepts of good leadership are emphasised in the first component. These are further reinforced in the other three components.

## **COMPONENTS**

### **LEADERSHIP**

This component focuses on leadership development in general, the various characteristics, principles and competencies including skills of leadership, and the importance of having good leadership in the face of rapid changes and the challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

The three aspects are:

- ▲ Nature of leadership
- ▲ Development of leadership
- ▲ The leadership challenge in Singapore

### **HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE**

In this component, students have the opportunity to understand and evaluate the historical facts of our nation building, and appreciate how our past is relevant to our present and our future. The leadership qualities shown by Singapore's first generation leaders are also highlighted.

The two aspects are:

- ▲ Critical milestones of our nation's history
- ▲ Lessons from the past

### **CURRENT SITUATION**

In this component, students apply their knowledge and understanding of Singapore's constraints and vulnerabilities in the national, regional and international contexts. They are also given opportunities to examine and discuss openly how issues, politics and policies are shaped by many factors, e.g. Singapore's principles of meritocracy, multi-racialism and demographics. Issues include those relating to race, defence, nation building, and the symbiotic relationship between citizens, leaders and the development of our nation.

The four aspects are:

- ▲ Singapore's system of government
- ▲ Social cohesiveness
- ▲ Understanding policy-making
- ▲ Singapore's place in the current world situation

### **FUTURE SCENARIOS**

This component highlights the study of local and global trends and their implications for Singapore. Students are given opportunities to look at Singapore from futuristic and global perspectives, and explore plausible future scenarios for Singapore. An important emphasis in this component is to motivate students to shape the destiny of Singapore and the next generation.

The three aspects are:

- ▲ Future challenges
- ▲ Ensuring Singapore's continued success
- ▲ Shaping Singapore's destiny

## **FEATURES OF THE SYLLABUS**

Each aspect of the four components features learning outcomes, concepts, values and scope of coverage. The learning outcomes define the knowledge and skills that students are expected to acquire, and guide teachers in assessing the effectiveness of their teaching.

The concepts are the main ideas to be taught. The scope provides the contexts or situations in which these concepts can be explored. Where concepts appear more than once, they are treated from a different perspective. Flexibility is given to teachers to decide the order in which the various concepts are to be taught.

## **EVALUATION**

In evaluating the Civics programme, JCs / CIs would have to ensure that the general objectives and learning outcomes are met.

# Leadership



## NATURE OF LEADERSHIP

### LEARNING OUTCOMES

Students will be able to:

- appreciate the value of leadership development at the individual and national level,
- examine the changing nature of leadership in various areas such as the work place and the local political arena.

### CONCEPTS

- leadership development
- individual empowerment and responsibility
- participative democracy
- traditional leadership vs stewardship

### VALUES

- renewal
- service
- excellence
- responsibility
- accountability
- empowerment
- collaboration
- consultation
- continual learning

## SCOPE

- leadership development as a process of self development
- vertical and horizontal opportunities for leadership development in life and career. Examples are:
  - in school – as a student to a student leader
  - in the family – from a child to a parent
  - at work – the Japanese concept of ‘horizontal fast-track’  
(where talented people are moved around the organisation in their early years so as to expose them to different areas, groups, and responsibilities, thereby giving them opportunities to discover themselves and demonstrate their strengths)
- structures that support participative democracy  
Examples are:
  - in school – student councils, student committees, Community Involvement Programme
  - at work – Quality Circles (QC), Staff Suggestions Scheme, Work Improvement Teams (WITS)
  - at the national level – the electoral system, feedback units such as Government Parliamentary Committees

## DEVELOPMENT OF LEADERSHIP

### LEARNING OUTCOME

Students will be able to:

- identify some characteristics, competencies and principles of good leadership, and come up with their own leadership credo and apply it in the different roles that they have in school and outside school.

### CONCEPTS

- leadership characteristics
- competencies of leadership
- principles of leadership
- role modelling

### VALUES

- |                            |                         |
|----------------------------|-------------------------|
| ■ integrity                | ■ continual learning    |
| ■ vision                   | ■ credibility           |
| ■ dynamism                 | ■ respect for others    |
| ■ expertise                | ■ teamwork              |
| ■ empathy                  | ■ open-mindedness       |
| ■ creativity               | ■ commitment            |
| ■ excellence               | ■ confidence            |
| ■ collaboration            | ■ moral courage         |
| ■ positive interdependence | ■ principle-centredness |
| ■ self-knowledge           |                         |

## SCOPE

- some characteristics of admired leaders e.g. being honest, forward-looking, inspiring and competent (Kouzes and Posner's four outstanding characteristics)
- some competencies of leadership:
  - communication e.g. effective communication skills, diplomacy, oratorical and negotiation skills
  - being visionary e.g. Burt Nanus' vision-crafting – 4 steps of forming a vision
  - decision-making skills e.g. analysing, problem-solving, considering all major alternatives thoroughly, seeking wise counsel
  - planning e.g. having professional competence, having a helicopter view, strategising
  - ethics e.g. having a sound value system, knowing the values of the organisation, community and the nation
  - team development e.g. sharing a vision and goal, harnessing talents, skills and competence of all team members, collaborating and coordinating efforts and actions, identifying strains and stresses in working, mediation, continuously improving the integration of efforts, building mutual trust and accountability, acknowledging and celebrating small wins and milestones of progress achievement, handling dangers of groupthink
- some principles of leadership:
  - know oneself and seek self-improvement
  - lead by example
  - seek responsibility and take responsibility for one's actions
  - empower others by creating a synergetic environment in which others are able to self-actualise in the process of completing the job
  - search for opportunities to change, grow, innovate and improve e.g. *kaizen* (continual improvement)
- alignment of practices with principles and values, e.g. "Don't talk the talk, but walk the talk"

## THE LEADERSHIP CHALLENGE IN SINGAPORE

### LEARNING OUTCOMES

Students will be able to:

- propose and justify the qualities, knowledge and skills that the future leaders of Singapore must have to ensure her continued survival, stability and growth in a fast changing world,
- identify the challenge of leadership in Singapore and propose what can be done to address this challenge.

### CONCEPTS

- borderless world
- globalisation
- paradigm shifts
- fundamentals of governance
- "serve to lead, lead to serve"

### VALUES

- vision
- common good
- meritocracy
- incorruptibility
- sacrifice
- steadfastness

## SCOPE

- Singapore's inextricable link with the world
- Singapore's fundamentals of governance:
  - good leadership
    - ▲ meritocratic, honest and transparent civil service, a good share of the best in the country serving in the government, persons of vision and direction
  - reward for work and work for reward
    - ▲ investment in education, focused subsidies, asset enhancement, limited welfare
  - test for result, not political correctness
    - ▲ policies that are in the interest of the people in the long term such as the handling of cases that involve foreigners e.g. the Flo Contemplacion and Michael Fay incidents
- serving the community in various areas e.g. grassroots organisations, town councils and charitable organisations

# Historical Perspective





## CRITICAL MILESTONES OF OUR NATION'S HISTORY

### LEARNING OUTCOMES

Students will be able to:

- evaluate the terms of merger and its implications for the statehood of Singapore,
- analyse the policies that Singapore implemented to address the problems she faced as an emerging nation,
- conceive different scenarios through varying the different forces at work at each critical milestone of our nation's history.

### CONCEPTS

- |                               |  |
|-------------------------------|--|
| ■ geo-political sensitivities | ■ different political systems and cultures |
| ■ self-determination          | ■ nation building                          |
| ■ self-governance             | ■ sovereignty                              |
| ■ independence                | ■ constraints and vulnerabilities          |
| ■ interdependence             | ■ survival                                 |
| ■ equality of opportunities   |  |

### VALUES

- |                          |                    |
|--------------------------|--------------------|
| ■ self-reliance          | ■ pragmatism       |
| ■ national consciousness | ■ diplomacy        |
| ■ moral courage          | ■ loyalty          |
| ■ sensitivity            | ■ growth           |
| ■ independence           | ■ dynamism         |
| ■ equality               | ■ indomitable will |
| ■ multi-racialism        | ■ security         |
| ■ sovereignty            | ■ social cohesion  |
| ■ foresight              |                    |

### SCOPE

- political awakening after World War Two: the emergence of political parties, and the events leading to self-government in 1959\*
- background and significance of the icons of statehood e.g. the anthem, flag and crest\*
- merger with Malaysia (1963)
  - reasons, terms and referendum\*
- issues that cause conflict between Singapore and central government of Malaysia, e.g. different interpretation of equality and special rights of the Malays
- separation from Malaysia (1965)\*
- early problems of nation building and how these were addressed:
  - recognition of sovereignty e.g. Singapore's admission into the United Nations on 21 Sept 1965
  - forging a national identity e.g. pledge, flag-raising and flag-lowering ceremonies, role of community centres
  - rights and responsibilities of citizens under the Singapore Constitution e.g. national service
  - economic measures to address the stagnant economy and high unemployment problem, e.g. the industrialisation programme and promotion of industrial peace through tripartism
  - building our defence capabilities from scratch e.g. creation of the Singapore Armed Forces and strategic military alliances
  - massive public housing programme to solve the acute housing problem e.g. Housing Development Board
  - providing mass education to meet the high demand for education, emphasis on bilingualism to maintain our cultural heritage, and vocational and technical training to develop our human resource

Note:

- \* Indicates the areas in the historical perspective component that can be de-emphasised/omitted if the students are conversant with them.

## LESSONS FROM THE PAST

### LEARNING OUTCOMES

Students will be able to:

- predict factors that can destabilise our harmonious multi-racial society,
- examine the qualities and principles our leaders showed in the context of Singapore's road to independence and nation building,
- identify qualities and principles that they would want to develop as leaders.

### CONCEPTS

- dangers of communal politics
- racial and religious sensitivity
- dangers of external political influence
- instinct for survival
- political leadership

### VALUES

- |                                |                    |
|--------------------------------|--------------------|
| ■ racial and religious harmony | ■ indomitable will |
| ■ meritocracy                  | ■ courage          |
| ■ equality                     | ■ optimism         |
| ■ discipline                   | ■ tough-mindedness |
| ■ law and order                | ■ integrity        |

### SCOPE

- racial and religious riots e.g. Maria Hertogh riots and the racial riots in 1964 and 1969\*
- destabilising effects of communist activities in Singapore e.g. the Hock Lee Bus Riots in 1955 and union strikes\*
- Indonesian Confrontation (1962-65) – impact on Singapore's security and stability\*
- the adverse conditions in Singapore during the sixties
- the leadership qualities shown by our leaders in the building of our nation e.g. Lee Kuan Yew, Rajaratnam, Goh Keng Swee, Toh Chin Chye

Note:

- \* Indicates the areas in the historical perspective component that can be de-emphasised/omitted if the students are conversant with them.

# Current Situation

## SINGAPORE'S SYSTEM OF GOVERNMENT

### LEARNING OUTCOMES

Students will be able to:

- evaluate the evolution of Singapore's electoral system in relation to serving the needs of the nation,
- examine the structures in the country such as Government Parliamentary Committees (GPCs) and Residents' Committees (RCs) that have encouraged greater civil and political participation.

### CONCEPTS

- governance
- electoral system
- participative democracy
- consultative style of government

### VALUES

- multi-racialism
- meritocracy
- incorruptibility
- consensus
- visionary leadership

## SCOPE

- implications of “one man, one vote” system
- the Parliamentary System in Singapore
  - roles of Members of Parliament (MPs), Nominated Members of Parliament (NMPs) and Non-Constituency Members of Parliament (NCMPs)
- the Elected Presidency
  - role of the Elected President
- rationale behind Group Representation Constituencies (GRCs)
- roles of town councils and Community Development Councils (CDCs)
- feedback units and grassroots organisations e.g. the Feedback Unit, Government Parliamentary Committees (GPCs), Residents’ Committees (RCs)
- Singapore’s fundamentals of governance: good leadership; reward for work and work for reward; test for result, not political correctness
- policy of meritocracy
- comparison of other democracies

## SOCIAL COHESIVENESS

### LEARNING OUTCOMES

Students will be able to:

- examine the significance and influence of national ideology in the development of nations,
- anticipate the impact of some policies on the cohesiveness of our society and identify what might be done to address them,
- examine how racial and religious fault lines can be exploited in different countries.

### CONCEPTS

- national ideology
- national consciousness
- social cohesion
- enlightened self-interest
- “levelling up”

### VALUES

- Our Shared Values
- multi-racialism
- unity
- respect
- stability
- harmony

## SCOPE

- background to the formulation of Our Shared Values
- cross-comparison study of national ideology as instruments of nation building in other countries e.g. Indonesia (*Pancasila*) and Malaysia (*Rukunegara*)
- threats to social cohesion e.g. ethnocentrism, ethnic polarisation, communal politics, greater social stratification due to increasing income inequality
- study of demographic trends and economic issues e.g. socio-economic implications of an ageing population
- policies related to the concept of sharing success and “levelling up” that cut across races e.g. Edusave and CPF Medisave Top-Up Scheme
- study of countries that suffer ethnic and religious conflicts e.g. Bosnia and Sri Lanka

## UNDERSTANDING POLICY-MAKING

### LEARNING OUTCOMES

Students will be able to:

- examine some government policies and identify the criteria that have been used to come up with these policies,
- apply the criteria that they have identified to come up with alternative solutions.

### CONCEPTS

- policy-making and policy options
- long- and short-term goals
- limitations

### VALUES

- growth
- pragmatism
- security
- social cohesion
- open-mindedness
- flexibility
- continual learning
- sensitivity

## SCOPE

- alignment of goals with vision, alignment of plans with goals
- some policy-making criteria:
  - constraints and vulnerabilities of the nation, the Constitution and laws of the state, fundamentals of governance, demographics, ideals and vision of the nation, Our Shared Values, external environment
- some policies<sup>+</sup> to be discussed in the areas of:
  - land transport, e.g. quotas on cars – Certificate of Entitlement (COEs), introduction of Electronic Road Pricing (ERP)
  - water e.g. new water tariffs
  - public housing e.g. Housing and Development Board's (HDB) racial mix policy, building of executive condominiums
  - education e.g. emphasis on bilingualism, information technology
  - economics e.g. introduction of Goods and Services Tax (GST)
  - human resource e.g. attraction of foreign talent, extension of retirement age
  - social cohesion and community development e.g. Racial and Religious Harmony Bill, self-help groups, promotion of family life
  - defence e.g. equipping our army with technologically advanced systems

Note:

<sup>+</sup> Examples of policies are current at time of printing and need to be replaced and updated where possible

## SINGAPORE'S PLACE IN THE CURRENT WORLD SITUATION

### LEARNING OUTCOMES

Students will be able to:

- examine the implications of increasing global competitiveness on Singapore,
- examine the active posture that Singapore takes in the region and the world with reference to development in other countries.

### CONCEPTS

- economic development
- active diplomacy
- networking
- regional cooperation

### VALUES

- survival
- interdependence
- cooperation
- goodwill
- security

## **SCOPE**

- Singapore's inextricable link with the world
- venturing overseas
- cross-comparison studies of emerging economies with reference to global competition e.g. China, India, Indonesia, Mexico and Thailand
- Singapore attaining developed country status and its implications
- Singapore's membership and contributions in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM), United Nations (UN), World Trade Organisation (WTO)
- Singapore's contributions to the world through national organisations or programmes like the Singapore International Foundation (SIF) and the Singapore Cooperation Programme (SCP)
- networking of youth leaders through programmes such as Community Involvement Programme in neighbouring countries and ASEAN Youth Exchange Programme

# **Future Scenarios**



## **FUTURE CHALLENGES**

### **LEARNING OUTCOMES**

Students will be able to:

- recognise change as a permanent state and justify the need to change with particular reference to small nations,
- anticipate scenarios that can occur in the future with reference to megatrends and local trends.

### **CONCEPTS**

- world in constant flux
- dangers of complacency
- interdependence

### **VALUES**

- |                         |               |
|-------------------------|---------------|
| ■ courage               | ■ astuteness  |
| ■ vision                | ■ sensitivity |
| ■ foresight             | ■ realism     |
| ■ proactiveness         | ■ flexibility |
| ■ instinct for survival |               |

### **SCOPE**

- Singapore's inextricable link with the world
- vulnerabilities and limitations of being a small nation
- world trends and their implications e.g. rise of new economies, advancement in information technology, de-emphasis on political ideologies in economic cooperation
- local trends and their implications e.g. regionalisation and going global, devolution of government control in the economy, accelerated effort to import foreign talent, a more educated and demanding population, migration of Singaporeans, changing family structures, participative democracy



## ENSURING SINGAPORE'S CONTINUED SUCCESS

### LEARNING OUTCOMES

Students will be able to:

- analyse how different countries handle the issue of national security,
- propose what Singapore can do to sustain her economic success and survival in a fast-changing world,
- identify the key values, attitudes and skills Singaporeans need to have to ensure the success and survival of the nation.

### CONCEPTS

- military self-reliance
- deterrence
- active diplomacy
- globalisation and the borderless world
- staying competitive
- enlightened population
- effective and transparent civil service

### VALUES

- loyalty
- security
- self-reliance
- independence
- interdependence
- peace
- internal stability
- cooperation
- adaptability
- continual learning
- excellence
- entrepreneurial spirit
- risk-taking
- innovativeness
- forward-looking
- integrity

### SCOPE

- national security
- Singapore's membership in the United Nations (UN) and Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN)
- defence agreement and joint military exercises
- acquisition of sophisticated weaponry
- highly developed home grown armed industry
- study of how other countries handle the issue of national security e.g. Switzerland, Israel and United States of America
- impact of globalisation and the borderless world:
  - economic competitiveness and trading blocs
  - international bench-marking and going beyond benchmarks
  - networking
  - increase in emphasis on research and development
- implications of being an advanced nation
- creative and innovative workforce
- nurturing of local multinational corporations
- key ingredients of an enlightened population: educated, disciplined and forward-looking workforce, entrepreneurs, good leadership
- social cohesion
- forward-looking civil service: meritocratic and honest, people- and future-oriented, attraction of talents, PS21

## SHAPING SINGAPORE'S DESTINY

### LEARNING OUTCOMES

Students will be able to:

- identify the roles that they have as citizens and leaders in influencing the destiny of Singapore,
- demonstrate their confidence in the future of Singapore,
- show their willingness to serve as leaders in the Singapore community.

### CONCEPTS

- common destiny
- shared vision
- civil participation
- embracing change

### VALUES

- empowerment
- open-mindedness
- love for the nation
- confidence in the nation
- civic responsibility
- risk-taking
- creativity
- proactiveness
- commitment
- service

### SCOPE

- Singapore as best home
  - impact of positive attitudes towards Singapore's economic growth and development, political leadership, quality of life and vision for our nation
  - synergising of self-interests and national interests
- anticipate, harness and execute change for individual and national survival
- community involvement
- being leaders in different community organisations such as grassroots and ethnic organisations



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