

*The Story of Singapore*  
*and*  
*The Change Agent*  
*Who Created It*





Hope Life Skills student, Travis Barbour, greets Life Skills class guest, Tino Chow from Singapore, after Tino's visit to a 2016 Life Skills class.

## GLOSSARY OF KEY TERMS:

# PERSPECTIVE

## INTERPRETATION, OPINION

*“This text is not fact, rather the view of one author; consequently, it should not be automatically accepted as ‘truth.’ Two time Pulitzer Prize winning historian and author, Barbara Tuchman, stated ‘there is no such thing as a neutral or purely objective historian....without an opinion, a historian would simply be a ticking clock....’ Your mission should be to determine the ‘truth.’ Your challenge will be to explain why anyone should believe you.”*

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# CREDIBILITY

## BELIEVABILITY

*“It’s not a given, we acquiesce too quickly. Be respectfully skeptical. Do your homework; check the record and the resume. Ask the question – ‘should I trust this person as a credible source for the truth?’ Make it a prerequisite before embracing the claims of anyone who professes to have the ‘answers.’”*

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***“Change agents have to be leaders.***

***And yet,***

***not all leaders are change agents.***

***Which brings us to three traits that strike us as essential for being considered a ‘change agent’:***

***First, true change agents see a future no one else does, and that vision won’t let them rest. They don’t lead change because it “makes sense” or because change is “necessary.” They lead ‘change’ because they believe their organization must change in order to survive and win.***

***Second, ‘change agents’ have courage.*** Some leaders will sit around all day talking about the future and how the organization might adjust for it. ***True change agents are willing to take bold action, risks—and accept the consequences.*** They know that leading change can be messy, with few clear-cut answers about how events will play out. They understand that push back accompanies any initiative to ‘change’ and that they will take the brunt of any issue if things go wrong. This pushback or complaining doesn’t stop true change agents, either.

***Finally, change agents have a quality about them that brings people together, brings teams together.”***

“What Change Agents Are Made Of”

By Jack and Suzy Welch

*“.....If you don’t change, you become extinct...”*

***“Lead, follow or get out of the way!”***

Thomas Paine. American Revolutionary.

**If you can't force or are  
unwilling to force your  
people to follow you,  
with or without threats,  
you are not a leader.**



*Lee Kuan Yew*  
*www.geckoandfly.com*

*“to improve is to change;  
to be perfect is to change often.”*

***“Your smile is your logo.  
Your personality is your business card.  
How you leave others feeling after being with you  
becomes  
your brand!”***

*Moi*

# Preface

## Change.

We speak about it a lot in our 'Life Skills' class, not because it's interesting, which it is, but because it's a necessity for life time success and survival.

***"Survival?  
Sounds drastic,  
Mr Cronin.***

*Come on; we're talking about 'change' not 'death.' Aren't you taking this 'change' things a little too far? "*

10 You know, you might be right,..... for you. But for others, I know with great certainty, 'change' is critical for 'success'. Like everything else in life,

**it's a matter of perspective,**

that is, it's about how you live your life and what you want out of it.

**Some people  
don't want to be  
a passenger  
on life's bus;  
they want to drive!**

Some people don't want others to decide their future, i.e. where they will go or what they'll be in life. There are

some people who want to be behind the wheel, responsible for which way the proverbial bus is going.

**They want to drive!  
to sit in the big seat,  
in front, behind the wheel.**

They want a say in the destination and what they'll experience along the way. They want a say in the life they'll live, the things they do and the people they meet. Drivers want to chart the course, decide what roads to take and manage the 'changes' they'll encounter along the way. They want to determine their destiny and not leave it to someone else.

**They want to decide  
the experiences they'll live**



Classically trained cellists, Luka Šulić and Stjepan Hauser, **decided to change** their career course to become pop and rock artists in 2011. They released three successful rock albums and have performed before large audiences all over the world.

and who'll they'll ultimately become.

Most of us want 'success'. We want to feel 'fulfilled', pleased about who we are. This

**feeling of 'success'  
or 'fulfillment'  
often comes from  
the satisfaction of  
what we're doing in life.**



Malala Yousafzai at the international Girl Summit in 2014

Our jobs. Our relationships. Our standard of living. How we live our life. Who we have become.

We know from the lives of others we observe or read about that

**'success' can be fleeting,  
all but a brief  
moment in life.**



one time high school, college and professional basketball star, Alan Iverson, earned millions of dollars along the way yet eventually found himself bankrupt at age 35. In November 2010, Kate Fagan, a 76ers beat writer for the Philadelphia Inquirer newspaper reported that Iverson was "broke" and heavily in debt. At a divorce proceeding in Atlanta in 2012, Iverson shouted to his estranged wife, Tawanna, *"I don't even have money for a cheeseburger!"* She handed him \$61". (Wikipedia)



Edsel was an automobile planned, developed, and manufactured with great expectations by the Ford Motor Company in 1958, 1959, and 1960. The Edsel never gained popularity with American car buyers and sold poorly. The Ford Motor Company lost millions of dollars on the Edsel's development, manufacturing and marketing. The very word "Edsel" became a popular symbol for failure

History is replete with momentary success stories; a hero today, a nobody tomorrow; from 'gotta have' to 'don't want'; popularity, wealth and riches only to be followed by unanticipated misfortune in the form of a relationship breakup, a job loss or company bankruptcy, poverty even shame.





**Steve Jobs**, co-Founder of Apple, was essentially ‘fired’ from his company in 1985. In 1996, **Jobs returned** to find his former company with its brand in decline, depreciating stock value with millions of dollars in financial losses. Jobs began collaborating with Apple Vice President of Industrial Design, Jonathan Ive, to create a number of successful products, including the iPod and iPhone, restoring Apple’s brand to prominence and making Apple the most valuable company in the world.

This is where the concept of ‘change agent’ reveals its saving value to people, companies and the organizations like schools they’re a part of.

‘Change agents’ are  
**visionaries.**  
 They’re people  
 who **look**  
**to the future**  
**to determine**  
**what they should be doing**  
**in the**  
**present.**

Anticipating the future and taking the measured risks to ensure its success or avoid its catastrophe is what ‘change agents’ do. According to **Jack Welch**, one of the 21st century’s best company leaders at the General Electric Corporation, ‘change agents’ have the curiosity and ability to ‘*look around corners to see into the future*’. Steve Jobs had a similar saying, borrowed from hockey great, Wayne Gretzky. “*I skate to where the puck is going to be, not where it is.*”

This text is yet another story about ‘change’ and the ‘**agents of change**’ who envision it and lead others to it. More specifically,

**this is the story of**  
**the country of Singapore**  
**and its**  
**irrepressible and passionate**  
**‘change agent’,**  
**Lee Kuan Yew.**





# Where in the world is Singapore?

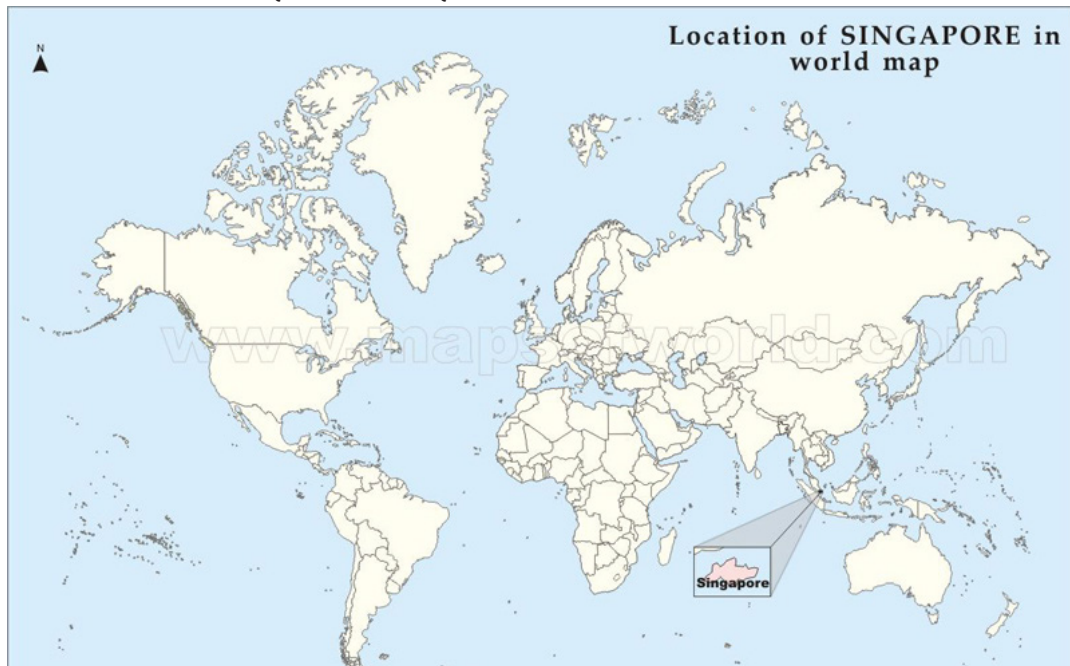
**Singapore** is an island nation; actually, it's a group of 63 islands. The main island is Pulau Ujong. Singapore is a relatively small place, only 277 square miles. That makes it

**smaller than  
New York City**

in land area. If you combine the land of the Rhode Island cities of Providence, Cranston, Warwick, Foster/Gloucester, Burrillville and Situate, you'd have the size of the country of Singapore. It's

**more like a city  
but officially a country.**

It's the reason why some refer to Singapore as a city state. It's located off the southern part of the continent of Asia separated from the country of Malaysia by a narrow body of water called the strait of Johor. Singapore is south of the countries of China, Viet-Nam, India, Cambodia, Laos, Thailand and Myanmar (Burma), north of the large island of Indonesia





The Port of Singapore is the world's second-busiest port in terms of total shipping tonnage. It ships a fifth of the world's shipping containers and a significant percentage of the world's supply of refined oil.

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and the continent of Australia. It is located at the crossroads of one of the busiest shipping seaways in the world. In other words,

**perfect geography  
for an international seaport.**

Realizing this opportunity, Lee negotiated deals with major, international oil companies who were shipping their crude oil through Singapore to refineries farther away to be refined.

**Prime Minister Lee  
invested in  
the construction of  
oil refineries  
within the nation of Singapore**

so oil companies didn't have to ship their crude oil to refineries farther away. Their shipping costs were reduced and profits increased. Singaporean refineries then turn crude oil into gasoline, heating oil and other refined products. Refined oil earns the Singapore government lots of money which Prime Minister Lee has used

**to build  
a world class  
infrastructure  
(trains, airport, seaport)  
and  
education system.**

Singapore has

**no natural resources;**



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**no oil, lumber, or gold,  
and very little fresh water.**

Most of Singapore's drinking water has to be imported from Malaysia. Singapore earns money by optimizing the potential of their geography. Besides a great seaport, Singapore started banks and built refineries while attracting international businesses to locate there. The plan has worked!

**Singapore is one of the  
richest countries  
in the world.**

One out of six Singaporean households are millionaires! The unem-

ployment rate is only 2% which means most people have a job. Most Singaporeans work at least 45 hours per week at their jobs. A person's work ethic is held in high regard. The country claims jobs are earned through merit, by one's work ethic and performance, not through family, political or union connections or other forms of cronyism.

**Corruption among politicians  
is rare  
with dire consequences  
for anyone caught**

taking bribes or stealing government funds. According to a March 2015 Atlantic Magazine article, "each year;





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the World Bank produces Governance Indicator metrics on government effectiveness, regulatory quality, rule of law, and control of corruption. Singapore leads the United States by a significant margin on each of these measures. Singapore's widest lead over both the United States and comparable nations comes in the prevention of corruption and graft. *Singapore scores in the top 10 for honest government while the United States ranks 20 countries lower on the list in the bottom third. According to the 2014 Gallup World Poll*

*only 8 percent of Singaporeans believe their government is corrupt."*

Illegal drug use is rare as a result of Singapore's mandatory death penalty for many drug related offenses.

**Singapore has one of the lowest crime rates in the world.**

*85 percent of Americans see "widespread" corruption in their government; while*

According to a recent Atlantic Magazine article, "a citizen is 24 times more likely to be murdered in the United States than in Singapore".

**Singapore's population is  
one of the  
most diverse**

in the world. Its official population in 2023 was 5,917,600; 3,143,000 (61.12%) were citizens and while the remaining 2,176,700 (**38.88%**) were **non-citizen permanent residents** (527,700) or **foreign students, foreign workers** or dependants (1,599,000).

**Racial and religious harmony  
is stressed  
by the government.**

Lee encouraged Singapore's diverse ethnic groups to live together in the

same neighborhoods and work co-operatively. As of 2016, 74% of Singaporeans were of Chinese ethnicity, 13% are Malaysian, 9% Indian and the rest are listed as "other". Lee mandated English as the official language of the country as a way of unifying the country while mandating a second language, the language of a person's ethnic group, as a person's second language. "*English is popular by design*" according to Singaporean **Tino Chow**.

Racial harmony in Singapore remains a high priority. While the country of Malaysia, Singapore's neighbor, regularly experiences racial and religious tension, Singapore has experienced relative calm among its ethnic and

# Racial Harmony Day

## Monday 22 July 2013

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**Come dressed in  
your Ethnic  
Costume!**

**Win points for your  
class in the inter-  
class competition**



**Racial Harmony Day** is celebrated annually on the 21st or 22nd July in Singapore. The event is to commemorate the 1964 Race Riots which took place on 21 July 1964 and also to encourage Singaporean citizens in the multi-ethnic country to have empathy for each other and live cooperatively. Singapore was part of Malaysia in 1964 before Singapore was essentially 'evicted' from Malaysia and forced to become an independent country. Racial Harmony Day also represents a day for schools to reflect on, and celebrate Singapore's success as a racially harmonious nation and a society built on a rich diversity of culture and heritage. Schools across the nation encourage their students to be dressed in their families' traditional costumes. Traditional foods are also featured in the celebrations.

religious groups. But there is a reason for this; the government demands it! A December 2016 edition of the Economist magazine reported anyone “wounding the religious or racial feelings of any person” or anyone

**“promoting enmity”  
or hatred  
among Singaporeans  
over a person’s religion or race  
can be punished up to  
three years in prison.**

In fact, Singapore is so focused on racial harmony within the country their

**constitution mandates  
a person from  
each of Singapore’s  
main ethnic groups  
must be chosen  
President  
within a  
certain period of time!**

Because there hadn’t been a Malay President since Yusof Ishak was President of Singapore in 1970, only Singaporeans with Malay ethnicity could run for President in the August 2017 Singaporean Presidential election. Mr Lee wanted every citizen to know that “someone from their community can become President and, in fact, from time to time, does become President.”

There are several public holidays during each year, many celebrating the cultures of the many different ethnic groups living in Singapore: Indian, Malay, Chinese and many western groups like the English, Dutch and even American.

Because the island of Singapore is so small, **most people live in high rise, government subsidized apartments.** More than **88% of Singaporeans own their own apartment or home.** Moreover, the government dedicates more than 10% of the available land for parks and nature reserves.



photo of the Bishan and Ang Mo Kio housing projects in Singapore. A beautiful and well kept park separates both building complexes.



**Singapore has one of the best public school systems in the world** boasting some of the highest scores on international tests. There is standardized testing at each stage of a student's education.

### **Singaporean students ranked first**

in the 2011 Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study. Singapore students continue to rank in the top five in the world in mathematics, science, and reading scores. Most Singaporeans are

**bilingual, English being the most common language (80%)**



Singapore American school

with one of four local languages: Mandarin Chinese (65%), Malay (17%) and Tamil (4%).

Singaporeans are some of the **world's most healthy people**. Only

**10% of Singapore's population is considered obese compared to 36% of Americans**





Sports are popular in Singapore. There are professional basketball and soccer leagues. Horse racing and Formula 1 auto racing are also popular. Cricket, swimming, sailing, table tennis, badminton, water skiing, kayaking and scuba diving attract considerable participation.

Wong Wei Long is a popular Singaporean born professional basketball player shown in the white uniform above playing for the Singapore Slingers team. The 5' 9" player earned the nickname "*Singapore assassin*" for his long range shooting prowess.

(according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention).

**Life expectancy**  
in **Singapore** is 80 for males  
and 85 for females,  
the **4<sup>th</sup> highest** in the world  
compared to  
the **United States**  
ranking of **36<sup>th</sup>**

(79.4 males and 82.2 females; in fact, US life expectancy dropped in 2016) according to The World Health Organization in 2012. Singapore has the lowest infant mortality rates in the world. Atlantic Magazine, in a comparison between Singapore and the United States in the March 2015 edition, claimed "*a child born in the United States has three times the chance of dying in infancy as a child in Singapore.... And in 2012, less than 1 percent of Singaporeans reported that they struggled to afford food or shelter, by far the lowest percentage in the world.* In 2013,

**Bloomberg Business News**  
**judged Singapore**  
**"*the world's***  
***healthiest country*";**  
**the United States**  
**was ranked 33<sup>rd</sup>.**

Severe poverty is rare in Singapore, yet, the

**government does not**  
**have a welfare system**  
**similar to**  
**the United States.**

**Instead, Singapore believes**  
**each person**  
**has the responsibility**  
**working to earn money**  
**and save money**  
**for a lifetime**  
**acceptable living standard.**










One of the “*great things about Singapore is its food*” according to my Singaporean friend, Tino Chow, and most visitors to this amazing island country. **Delicious. Diverse. Inexpensive. Always Available: - 24/7, i.e. 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.** Photo above is **Laksa**. Laksa is a combination of Chinese and Malay flavors and ingredients all in a single bowl. Noodles, often rice noodles, make up the foundation of a bowl of laksa, followed by a gravy or curry, some pieces of protein, and often some vegetables and herbs. Prices: \$3 per bowl of laksa. There are many different types of laksa, some that include rich coconut milk, and others that are more water based. When you're in Singapore, you'll find a number of extremely famous laksa restaurants.

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Much of Singapore's best food is found in **HAWKER VENUES**. Typically, these places are a few dozen to hundreds of food stalls, each specializing in one or more related dishes. Hawker Centers, which are something like food courts, are owned by the government and scores (and sometimes hundreds) of individual hawkers. They are maintained by the National Environment Agency which grades each food stall for cleanliness. In Singapore, street food has long been associated with hawker centres with communal seating areas. As far as street food goes, they're clean and well-managed, the kind of place where tables are wiped down frequently by staff and a pack of tissues or an unattended backpack is an accepted and perfectly safe way to save your seat.

## Languages spoken in Singapore

Language		Percent
English		36.9%
Mandarin		34.9%
Malay		10.7%
Tamil		3.3%
Others		14.2%

**Singapore has four official languages: English, Malay, Mandarin, and Tamil.** English is the main language used in business, government, law and education. The Constitution of Singapore and all government legislations are written in English, and interpreters are required if a language other than English is needed in Singaporean courts. **Singaporeans are mostly bilingual, typically with English as their common language and their mother-tongue as a second language** taught in schools, in order to preserve each individual's ethnic identity and values. English is the most spoken language at home at 36.9% of the population, just ahead of Mandarin per Wikipedia.

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**Image of a Singaporean woman with an umbrella and holding a small, battery operated fan.** **Singapore is humid and hot** with seeming daily rain showers. Singapore has a tropical rainforest climate with no distinctive seasons, little variation in daily temperatures, high humidity, and abundant rainfall. **Temperatures usually range from 73 to 90 °F.** While temperature do not vary greatly throughout the year, there is a wetter monsoon season from November to February.

Most people who want jobs have jobs.

**The government does,  
however,  
provide support for  
affordable housing,  
health care, education  
and job training.**

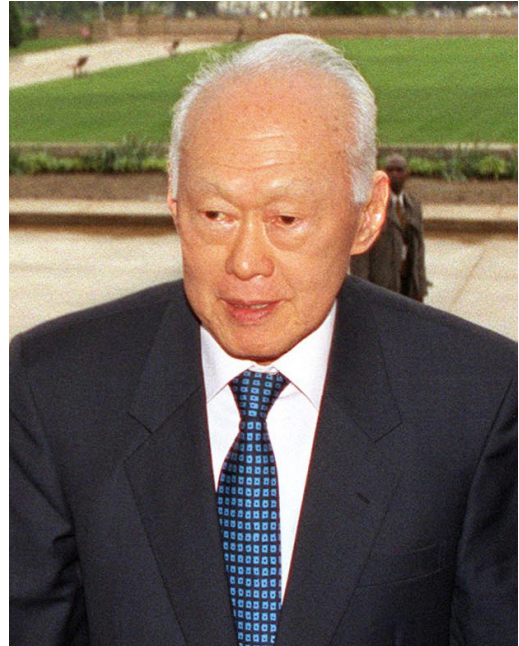
According to a 2010 Economist magazine story, *“public housing is in good shape; no slums are allowed to fester. Soup kitchens do exist, but foreign labourers are often first in line..... Disadvantaged families receive support for their utilities and additional subsidy for health care. Singapore also provides more education support for the children of disadvantaged families, so that a cycle of poverty does not arise.”*

Let's take a few moments now to find out how Singapore became the country it is today. In the process, let's compare Singapore's quality of life to the United States as we read the next several pages.

If there is a person in Singapore's history

**similar to America's  
George Washington,  
Lee Kuan Yew  
would unquestionably be  
that person.**

When Singapore faced its darkest



Lee Kuan Yew in 2002

hours in the early years of its modern history in 1964, Lee Kuan Yew stepped forward to save the country by rallying its people to follow his plan and his code of conduct for personal and national success.

**Singapore's  
international importance  
began around 1819**

when the Sultan leader of the Malaysian state of Johor in southern Malaysia, signed an agreement with a private British company. The

**British East India Company,  
establishing a trading post  
in Singapore.**



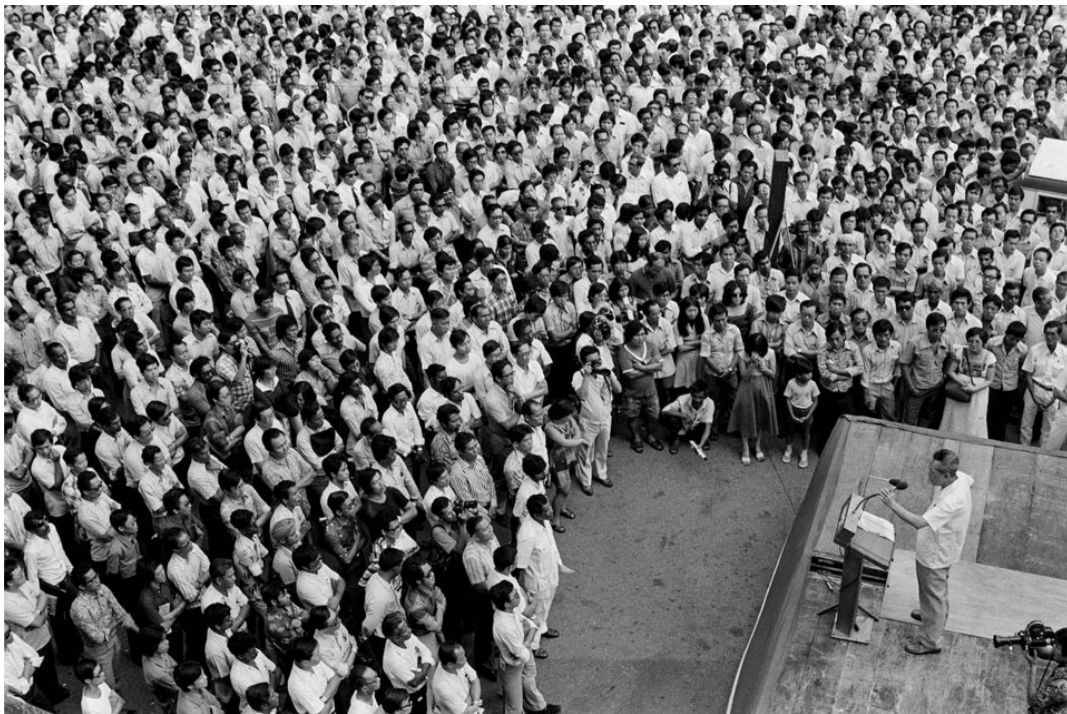
The British East India company was owned by rich English merchants and aristocrats. The company owned ships and had its own army to protect its interests throughout the world. The

**British East India Company**  
**eventually accounted for**  
**half of the world's trade**  
**especially in**  
**cotton, silk, indigo dye, salt,**  
**saltpetre, tea and opium.**

The company ultimately governed many of England's colonial territories in Asia. Around 1770s, when the East India company was losing money, the company leaders asked the British government for financial help. The

British Parliament decided to raise money for the East India Company by taxing all tea shipped to America except tea shipped by the East India Company. This tax essentially made East India tea much less expensive than other teas sold in the American colonies. American colonists quickly responded with the **Boston Tea Party** on December 16, 1773.

By 1824, the entire island of Singapore became a British possession under a new treaty with the Sultan. The island was a poor, underdeveloped, mostly swamp filled area. There were approximately 1,000 people living on the island of Singapore prior to this treaty, mostly native Malays along with a handful of Chinese. By 1860, the population grew to over 80,000



the charismatic Lee speaking at a public rally in the 1970s

when the English developed the island into a critically located trading and shipping center. More than half the people were soon Chinese. Many immigrants came to work on the rubber plantations on the island. After the 1870s, the island became a global leader in the export of rubber.

**During World War 2,  
the Japanese army  
took control of Singapore  
after defeating the British  
army  
at the Battle of Singapore.**

The Japanese army murdered thousands of Singaporeans during their occupation of the island. The Japanese military secret police committed nu-

merous atrocities against the people of Singapore. The

### **Japanese army introduced a system of terror**

to get rid of anyone thought to be anti-Japanese. A massacre unfolded claiming the lives of 25,000 to 50,000 Chinese people living in Singapore and Malaysia. The victims were often rounded up and taken to deserted spots around the island and executed. Japanese military leaders also established a network of spies around the island to help them identify those who might undermine their control. Informers were well-paid by the Japanese and had no fear of being arrested. Japanese soldiers patrolled the streets forcing Singaporeans to bow to them



Lee Kuan Yew in 1955.

when they passed by. Those who failed to do so would be slapped or beaten and some people would be taken away.

**Lee Kuan Yew  
worked as an interpreter  
for the Japanese army  
during their occupation of  
Singapore**

as well as a clerk in his grandfather's friend's company—a textile importer. At one point during the occupation, Lee was asked by a Japanese soldier to join a group of Chinese men at a separate location. A suspicious Lee, whose ancestors were Chinese, knew of the animosity the Japanese occupiers had for Chinese so he quickly asked permission to go to his home first to collect his clothes before going with the Japanese soldier; the Japanese soldier agreed. Lee did not return to meet the Japanese soldier. He fled.

**Lee eventually learned  
he was to be murdered  
with other Chinese  
by the Japanese army.**

The Japanese were finally defeated and Singapore liberated by the combined Allied armies of England and America in 1945.

Life under Japanese military rule had a profound impact on Lee Kuan Yew.

**The Japanese occupation  
of Singapore  
changed Lee**

in a number of ways. He vowed never to submit to a foreign influence in determining Singapore's future. He also reflected on best practices for running a country. Not that he ever considered using the horrific and inhumane tactics of the Japanese military during their occupation of Singapore, but the Japanese military occupation

**made Lee reflect  
on the use of power  
and  
a criminal justice system  
to ensure compliance  
with a  
country's laws.**



Lee Kwan Yew



Lee emigrated to England after the war to go to college. He returned to Singapore in 1949 to work as a lawyer.

The British regained control of Singapore, with American help, in 1945.

**Lee decided that Singapore must eventually govern itself.**

England ruled Singapore until 1955



Lee Kuan Yew in 1965

when they turned over control to the Singapore people and **its first leader, Lim Yew Hock.**

Lee Kuan Yew became a member of the 'socialist' People's Action Party (PAP) in 1954 which had strong ties to the pro-communist trade unions. In the national elections of 1959, Lee's party won 43 of the 51 seats in the legislative assembly. Singapore gained self-government in all state matters except defence and foreign affairs which were overseen by the British. Lee became the first Prime Minister

of Singapore taking over from Chief Minister Lim Yew Hock.

Lee questioned whether Singapore could survive as an independent nation. Indonesia and other nearby countries were intimidating and Singapore had little influence to create support and protection. Lee asked '*why would anyone want Singapore as an ally?*' Malaysian Prime Minister

**Tunku Abdul Rahman proposed a union of former British territories to include Malaysia, Singapore, and Sarawak in 1961,**

Lee campaigned for the union as a way to end British colonial influence and

**increase the value of Singapore's brand**

within their geographic region. In 1963, Singapore became part of the new Federation of Malaysia.

**Race riots** soon followed. 23 people were killed and hundreds injured as Chinese and Malays attacked each other.

**Two years later in 1965, Singapore was expelled from the Malaysian union by Malaysia's leader.**

Lee was crestfallen. He feared for Singapore's future as a stand alone, independent country again. Lee tried to work out a compromise but without success. The failure of the merger with Malaysia saddened Lee who believed the union with Malaysia was critical for Singapore's long term survival. In a televised press conference,

### **Lee fought back tears**

as he announced the separation from Malaysia and full independence of Singapore.

Lee felt a responsibility for his country.

**He decided  
to become  
a '*change agent*'**

to save it. *Lee immediately began preparing Singapore for independence, i.e.* stand alone status in the international community of nations by



A symbol of Singapore, the Merlion, was created in 1964

**creating  
a new Singaporean brand  
built upon  
a code of conduct  
founded on  
Confucian and  
British principles.**

He demanded men be “*gentlemen*” by showing respect to all Singaporeans regardless of race or ethnicity. No racial or ethnic discrimination would be tolerated. According to an Economist March 28th, 2015 article

***“the race riots  
in the 1960s  
affected  
Lee’s thinking  
for the rest of his life.”***

He realized he had to find some way of unifying his diverse country of different races and religions who had previously been hostile to each other. It was at this time Lee introduced the Confucian philosophy to bring all Singaporeans together. “*The*

***Confucianist belief  
is  
society works best  
when  
every man  
aims to be  
a gentleman....***



*this means a man is loyal to his father and mother, faithful to his wife, brings up his children well, treats his friends properly and he is a good, loyal citizen of his country.....”* Lee’s

**“Asian values” of family, diligence, education and obedience to authority were perfectly suited for unifying a poor, vulnerable former European colony**

aspiring to be independent, safe and successful according to **Orville Schell** in a Wall Street Journal retrospective on Lee in March of 2015. In another retrospective column by the New York Times in March of 2015, its Editorial Board acknowledged Singapore’s post colonial success relative to the disasters of other former European colonies like Cambodia, Nigeria, Burma and Libya. Any behavior perceived by Prime Minister Lee as offensive, disrespectful or harmful to the Singaporean community or Singapore’s international brand would have criminal consequences. Unacceptable behav-



Lee Kuan Yew

ior included spitting in public, graffiti, littering, not flushing public toilets after use, vandalism and inconsiderate loud music as well as major offenses like selling of illegal drugs and dishon-



est politics. He also mandated that all Singaporeans had to vote and enacted aggressive laws to ensure honest and fair elections.

**Ending corruption in the Singapore government became a priority.**

Lee established an agency, the **Corrupt Practices Investigation Bureau (CPIB)**, to conduct arrests, searches and investigation of bank accounts and income-tax returns of suspected persons and their families. If found guilty of corruption, imprisonment and deportation would be potential consequences.

In 1965, Singapore joined the United Nations and later founded the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) in 1967 with four other southeast Asian countries.

Lee was always **concerned**  
the young **country**  
of Singapore  
was **vulnerable** to threats  
from **powerful neighbors**

like Indonesia and communist agitators and terrorists. As a result, he immediately invested in the Singapore Armed Forces (SAF) and requested help from other countries, like Israel, for advice, training and facilities. Lee

**introduced a draft**  
**of all able-bodied male**  
**Singaporean citizens**  
**age 18 and above**

30 to serve in **National Services (NS)**  
either in the Singapore **Army, Navy,**  
**Air Force, Digital and Intelligence**



**Services**, Singapore Police Force or the Singapore Civil Defence Force. According to Singaporean friend, **Tino Chow**, "National Service has been a powerful tool for the government to instill national pride and identity. National service is an extension of the idea that everyone has a part to play to build and protect the nation and the families who live in it. Singaporeans are proud people by design."

At the same time, Lee realized Singapore's vulnerable location among hostile and competing nations. He believed for Singapore to be safe and successful, the smartest, most intelligent and honest citizens must serve in the government. To ensure this goal, he established guidelines for

**government leaders**  
**to be paid**  
**high wages**  
**in order to maintain**  
**an effective**  
**and**  
**honest government.**

In 1994, Lee proposed to link the salaries of ministers, judges, and top civil servants to the salaries of top professionals in private companies, arguing this would help recruit and retain talent to serve in the public sector. The

**current Prime Minister of  
Singapore,  
Lee Hsein Loong,  
earns  
\$2.2 million per year (2020).**



Lee Kuan Yew (left) shaking hands with his son and present Singapore Prime Minister, Lee Hsein Loong. In comparison to Prime Minister Loong's \$1.7 million compensation, US President Obama's 2014 annual compensation was \$395,000.

To make sure Singapore's economy not only survived but grew and competed in the evolving, internet-centric global economy, Lee Kuan Yew made sure Singapore had

**business friendly regulations  
and the  
least amount of corruption  
in the world  
to encourage companies  
from all over the world  
to do business  
in Singapore.**

Today, Singapore boasts one of the world's most successful economies with more than

**7,000 multinational  
corporations**



from the United States, Japan, and Europe with offices in Singapore. There are also approximately 1,500 companies from China and a similar number from India. Foreign companies are found in almost all sectors of Singapore's economy. Many of the world's richest people have also moved to Singapore because of its low income tax rates. Singapore is home to international banks and a vibrant stock market. The island nation has the second largest casino in the world. Singapore is one of the world's top three oil-refining centers, the world's largest oil-rig maker and a major hub for ship repair services. Singapore is an education hub with many foreign students studying there.

While Lee was concerned about a strong infrastructure and skilled workforce to help Singapore create jobs and grow its economy, Singapore does not have a minimum wage. Lee



believed a minimum wage would make it harder to attract great companies to Singapore. While there is a widening gap in income between Singapore's richest and poorest, Lee believed

**equality of opportunity**  
**is more important**  
**for Singaporeans**  
**and the country of Singapore**  
**than**  
**equality of income.**

Raising taxes on companies and wealthy citizens to narrow the disparity between rich and poor would actually harm Singapore's economy and citizens according to Lee. Rather than redistribute income from the rich to the poor of Singapore to lessen inequality,

Lee claimed  
money **invested** in  
the nation's **infrastructure**

**like roads, ports,**  
**education system,**  
**high speed rail,**  
**universal internet,**  
**water resources and**  
**clean energy**  
**would better serve all**  
**Singapore's people -**  
**rich, middle class and poor.**

As a result, Lee invested in Singapore's infrastructure and the nation and its people successfully competed with larger countries like America and China in the global marketplace. When a country like

**Singapore is more**  
**competitive internationally,**  
**more opportunities for**  
**jobs and wealth**  
**are created for**  
**all Singaporeans.**



A Singapore mass rapid transportation (MRT) system extends throughout the islands of Singapore. Singapore trains often travel as fast as 160 mph.



the 2nd most expensive building in the world, the Marina Bay Sands, Singapore's most luxurious hotel

Some American economists, like **Tyler Cowen**, agree. *“Focusing on inequality draws us to redistribution whereas a mobility focus is more conducive to ideas of wealth creation”* for individuals and a nation. This is the reason why Singapore invests in its world class port, airport and schools and not replicating America’s welfare system. Lee believed American style

welfare is too expensive and forces America to borrow too much money to support it. Tax money would be better spent on infrastructure, schools and internet access. **Lee claimed American welfare discourages people from working hard and persevering to create their own wealth opportunities.** *“Honesty, meritocracy, multi-racialism, fairness in rewards according to one’s contributions to society. This is why welfare and subsidies destroy motivation to perform and succeed.”* The opportunity to attend great schools for a world class education while living in a racially diverse, safe and healthy society with exceptional health care, broadband internet access, highways, ports and high speed trains should enable most Singaporeans with a strong

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Singaporeans wearing face masks during the **2020 Coronavirus pandemic**. Any person convicted for breaking one of the laws the Singapore government enacted to control the spread of the virus could be fined as much as \$7,156 and/or jailed for as long as six months. Singapore's Government Technology Agency and the Ministry of Health developed an app for contact tracing called **TraceTogether** which launched on March of 2020 *“to identify people who have been in close proximity — within 2m for at least 30 minutes — to coronavirus patients using wireless Bluetooth technology.”* A point of reference - Rhode Governor Gina Raimondo announced during the height of the 2020 Coronavirus pandemic in April of 2020 that *“Rhode Island would fine people who violate orders to quarantine or isolate themselves”*.

work ethic to find good paying, fulfilling jobs to be successful according to Lee.

### **Singapore has near full employment**

with one of the lowest unemployment rates in the world (2%) in 2015.

Singapore does, in fact, subsidize housing, health care and education, not the same level as America, but at a basic level to help its citizens take advantage of the country's education and employment opportunities. According to *The Economist* magazine, Lee's "*public housing policy is one of Singapore's greatest success stories.*" It not only reinforced Lee's credo of universal Singaporean respect but it "*also prevented discrimination against poor Malays and Indians to help them avoid a life in a ghetto.*"

### **Singapore has the world's 2nd highest percentage of millionaires.**



business people at lunch break in Singapore

### **To protect Singapore's security and hard earned economic success, Lee created a highly regulated society**

with severe criminal penalties for activities considered fairly harmless in America and western European countries like England, Sweden and France. Unauthorized graffiti on buildings, vandalism, littering, and bullying have severe consequences.



closed-circuit, security cameras with recording-capability are at all 102 train stations as well as in the trains. Laws are so broadly phrased that the government can obtain access to sensitive data like text messages, e-mail, call logs, and web surfing history without court permission. The government investigates personal and corporate data for crimes like corruption, terrorist threats, cheating, theft, gambling and vice. The Internet of Things movement could mean that more data about people will be collected automatically – like where we walk, when we sleep – by computing devices in the near future.





A display of rattan judicial canes from the Johor Bahru Prison museum, Malaysia. While caning remains as an option penalty in the Singaporean criminal codes, it is rarely used today. **Changing social norms and the sensitivity to international criticism has made caning a rare occurrence. in Singapore.**

**Singapore  
criminalized  
the failure to  
flush public toilets  
after use,  
littering,  
graffiti,  
vandalism,  
jaywalking,  
and the  
sale of chewing gum.**

No penalty has arguably created more

questioning than Singapore's practice of caning. Singaporean courts can order caning as a punishment for many of these aforementioned offenses.

**Caning is  
a form of  
corporal punishment  
where an  
appointed administrator  
uses a stiff reed or stick  
to 'hit'  
a convicted offender  
across the  
offender's bare or clothed  
buttocks  
or  
the palm of the hand,**

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one 'hit' every 10 or 15 seconds, in a sequestered environment usually behind the walls of a prison. The size and flexibility of the cane as well as the number of the strokes vary from a couple of light strokes with a small cane across the seat of a schoolboy's trousers or palm to 24 very hard, wounding cuts on the bare buttocks



Singapore motorcycle police

with a large, heavy, soaked rattan. Singaporean law allowed caning to be ordered with a prison sentence for over 35 offences, including hostage-taking, kidnapping, robbery, gang robbery, murder, drug abuse, vandalism, rioting and unlawful possession of weapons. Caning was also a mandatory punishment for rape, drug trafficking, illegal money-lending, and for visiting foreigners who overstay their visa by more than 90 days (a measure designed to deter illegal immigrant workers). According to a Wikipedia reference, USA Today reported that caning often involved “*bits of flesh flying with each stroke*” during caning for crimes like rape and robbery. In 2007, there were 6,404 canings in Singapore. Since 2007, the number of caning sentences has declined to just 2,500. Some people by law can not be canned; men over 50 and all women.

**An infamous caning case  
involved American born,  
Michael Fay.**

Fay pleaded guilty to vandalizing cars and stealing road signs. Fay was sentenced on March 3, 1994 to four months in jail, a fine of 3,500 Singapore dollars, and

**six strokes of the cane  
for graffiti and vandalism.**

Lee was seemingly always concerned about racial tensions in his ethnical-

ly diverse country. Even as many in the world perceived life in Singapore as peaceful, successful and harmonious, Lee’s government behaved like the country was always on the brink of rebellion. His goal was always to “*transform Singapore from a cesspool of squalor and degradation to a modern, industrialized country*” according to a BBC report after his death in 2015. “*To do this, he maintained tight political control over every aspect of the country making it one of the most regulated countries in the world. ...*”

As a result, certain liberties enjoyed in western countries like the United States, France, England, and Canada were not extended to Singaporeans. “*Some freedoms, like freedom of the press, had to be sacrificed.....*”

***A liberal democracy  
like America  
would not work  
in Singapore.....***



Lee Kuan Yew circa 1960s



***Freedom of the press,  
freedom of expression  
must be subordinate  
to the needs of  
the integrity of Singapore”  
Lee stated.***

As Wall Street Journal, long time Singapore observer, **Orville Schell**, wrote in 2015, Lee felt some individual rights had to be sacrificed for the good of the country; “the

***curtailment of  
personal freedom  
sometimes  
best assures  
the advancement  
of others.....***

***Economic success  
and social order  
fully justify whatever  
state controls were necessary.”***

Journalists and Singaporean citizens critical or opposed to Lee’s government policies were often imprisoned, detained or sued into bankruptcy. The government also censored music, films and other art considered ‘undesirable’. In 2019,

## **Singapore passed an ANTI-FAKE NEWS LAW.**

The government says the law is necessary to protect Singaporeans from fake news that can threaten their safety and by inciting racial and religious tensions, even violence. But, there are critics of the Fake News law who claim this law puts too much power in the hands of the Singapore government, potentially threatening the civil liberties of its citizens. The **Fake News law** allows the government to place strict controls over what people and the press can say or publish. The law would also allow the government to control the information posted on social media sites like Facebook, Google

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The screenshot shows the homepage of the Factly.gov.sg website. At the top, there is a navigation bar with the Singaporean coat of arms, the text 'gov.sg', and links for 'Factually', 'News', 'Microsites', 'Resources', and 'Feedback'. A search bar is located on the right. Below the navigation bar is a large banner with the word 'Factually' in red, set against a background of the Singapore skyline. Underneath the banner, there is a section titled 'Corrections and clarifications regarding falsehoods and misleading statements in Mr Lim Tean's FB posts of 12 December 2019'. This section includes a date '16 Dec 2019' and a brief description of the issue: 'Misleading and false statements were made by Mr Lim Tean comparing Government spending on foreign and Singaporean students'. Social media sharing icons for Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, and others are visible at the bottom right. A disclaimer on the left states: 'Unless otherwise indicated, the articles here are generally accurate as of their publication dates. Please visit the relevant Government agency website for the latest'.

and Twitter which have their regional headquarters in Singapore. The law requires media outlets to correct fake news articles, and *“show corrections or display warnings about online falsehoods so that readers or viewers can see all sides and make up their own minds about the matter.”*

**Jail sentences and fines  
are possible  
for newspapers, television,  
and social media companies  
if the government  
determines what they publish  
is ‘false’**

that is, information that might incite racial tensions or panic that could endanger Singaporeans and the safety of the country.

In an effort to alleviate traffic congestion on Singapore streets and, in the process, pollution as well as raise tax revenues, Singapore’s government

permits only a limited number of car licenses and charges motorists as much as 1.5 times the value of the car just to get the license! As a result,

**buying a car  
in Singapore is  
very, very, very expensive!**

**People must first purchase  
a “*certificate of entitlement*”  
for government permission  
to buy a car  
before actually buying the car.**


Just getting ‘permission’ to buy, costs **at least \$85,000**. The fancier the car, the more expensive ‘*permission*’ is to buy it. Only after you buy ‘*permission*’, can you then purchase the car.

Besides rigid controls over citizens, visitors, the press, controlling the number of cars, trucks, and motorcycles on Singaporean roads, Lee also once took steps to control Singapore’s



The Merlion symbol overlooking the Port of Singapore

## Cost (\$) of Getting Permission to Buy Then Drive a Car in SINGAPORE (2023)

COST OF GETTING A CAR IN SINGAPORE				
WHY ARE COE PRICES SO @#\$%ING HIGH?				
	<b>COST</b> Perodua Bezza		<b>PREVIOUS COE</b> (18 OCT 2023)	<b>LATEST COE</b> (8 NOV 2023)
	Certificate of Entitlement (CAT A)	\$95,689	CAT A Car ≤ 1.6kcc & 110KW	\$106,000
	Open Market Value	\$11,040		\$95,689 -\$10,311
	Add Registration Fee (After VES Rebate)	\$0	CAT B Car > 1.6kcc or 110KW	\$150,001
	Excise Duty	\$2,208		\$110,001 -\$40,000
	GST	\$883.20	CAT C Buses/Goods Vehicles	\$84,790
	Registration Fee	\$350		\$78,001 -\$6,789
	Other Charges	\$8,424.58	CAT D Motorcycles	\$11,201
	Final Price	~\$118,595		\$10,889 -\$312
			CAT E Open	\$158,004
				\$125,011 -\$32,993

Category	Latest COE Price (Oct 2nd Bidding) (Wed, 18 Oct 2023, 4pm)	Latest COE Price (Nov 1st Bidding) (Wed, 8 Nov 2023, 4pm)	Quota   Bids Received
A (Cars up to 1,600cc & 110KW)	\$106,000	\$95,689 (-\$10,311)	924   1,165
B (Cars above 1,600cc or 110KW)	\$150,001	\$110,001 (-\$40,000)	636   830
C (Goods vehicles and buses)	\$84,790	\$78,001 (-\$6,789)	190   281
D (Motorcycles)	\$11,201	\$10,889 (-\$312)	520   630
E (Open - All Except Motorcycles)	\$158,004	\$125,011 (-\$32,993)	141   227

				
<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>E</b>
Cars up to 1600cc & 97kW	Cars above 1600cc or 97kW	Goods vehicles & buses	Motorcycles	Open

COE means "Certificate of Entitlement", in other words, a 10 year permit to buy THEN drive a car. ONLY after getting a COE permit can a person buy a car. This process allows the Singaporean government to limit the number of cars using their roads. Notice the far right column in the second chart showing how many COEs the government allowed and how BIDS they received for a COE.

population within the limited space of the island's 277 square miles. The government created legislation so that

**parents were ONCE charged  
higher taxes  
for having more  
than  
2 children.**

Lee later reversed these taxes when Singapore's population became dangerously below population replacement levels threatening Singapore's long term prosperity that Lee worked so hard to create and preserve.

This is the Singapore Lee Kuan Yew created. He admittedly had his critics as well as admirers. While some in the western media have criticized his apparent dictator style of government and 'inhuman' penal system, others are praiseworthy. Through the praise and criticism, Singapore remains steadfast and an economic power in today's global economy quite different from the third world poverty and vulnerability that was Singapore in the 1960s.

***"I did some harsh things  
and  
there were hard times  
to get things right....  
I'm not saying everything  
I did was right.***

***(Singapore's future)  
was at stake;  
I wanted this place  
to succeed"*** Lee said.

*"We were creating a country out of a collection of diverse immigrants from China, India, Malaysia, Indonesia and several other parts of Asia" according to Lee. When I die, "close the coffin, then decide" how I did; in other words,*

**history will determine  
my legacy.**

**Lee also  
established  
measures  
to protect  
Singapore's environment.**

He launched Singapore's first tree-planting campaign with *mempat trees* to beautify life in Singapore.

Lee Kuan Yew is like a stern parent. Although his measures might appear to some overly harsh, his love for his country and its people has always been evident. He once told a reporter

***"We would not have made  
economic progress  
if we, the government,  
had not intervened on personal matters***





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**10% of Singapore's land has been set aside for parks and nature reserves. The government also has plans to preserve the remaining natural wildlife of Singapore.** Singapore's well known gardens include the Singapore Botanic Gardens above. To reduce the country's dependence on fossil fuels, Singapore has increased the number of solar panels on rooftops and vertical surfaces of buildings. Singapore is also building one of the **world's largest floating solar farms at Tengeh Reservoir**

*like*

*who your neighbor is,  
how you should live,  
how much noise you make,  
you cannot spit in public  
or use whatever language  
you want.*

***We (the government) decides  
what is right!"***

And, in a 2010 **Economist** Magazine article,

**Several Singaporeans  
commented on  
Lee Kuan Yew's legacy  
and  
his contributions  
to  
the country and its people:**

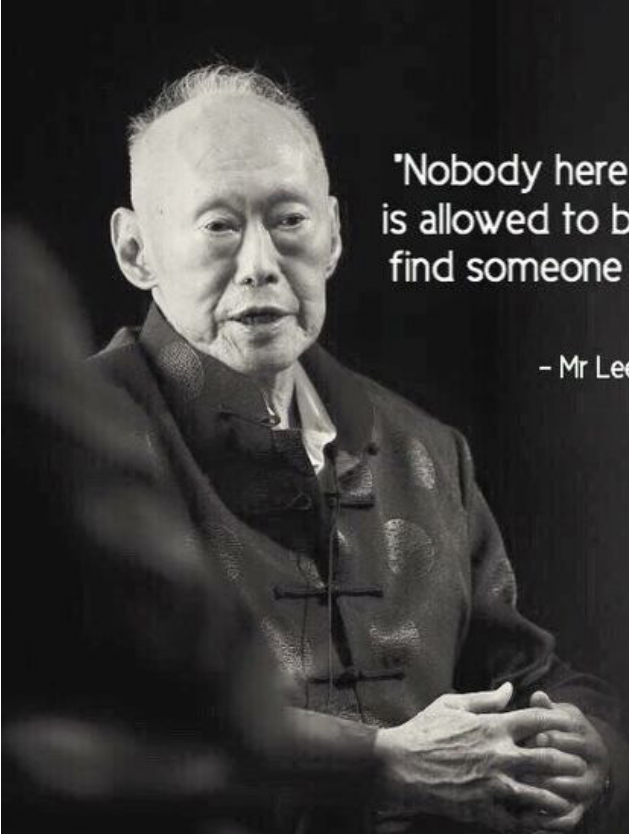
***"Singapore definitely  
does not have  
a perfect system.***

***But I'm proud of  
its achievements.***

*Like it or not, it was the authoritative ways of our leaders that brought us to where we are today. Poverty and crime DO still exist in our country. But I dare say the government has done an awesome job in keeping them low. We already have a working system; we do not need to follow a failing Western (like America and Europe) - Socialist model. Welfare is not always about providing money. Welfare is also about providing opportunities. Let me assure*


*you the Singaporean system spoils the majority of its citizens. We enjoy the best health-care system in the world. Universal medical insurance AND low hospital fees. I have been to the States, to Europe, to Japan and Korea, and nowhere else is world-class health care made affordable to all.*

***Our **education** is  
the best in the world  
and  
free!***



**"Nobody here dies of starvation. Nobody is allowed to beg in the streets. When we find someone begging, we put him into a home and feed him."**

- Mr Lee Kuan Yew, an excerpt from his book,  
The Wit & Wisdom of Lee Kuan Yew



**"If you are a troublemaker  
it's our job to  
politically destroy you.  
Everybody knows that  
in my bag I have a hatchet,  
and a very sharp one.  
You take me on,  
I take my hatchet,  
we meet in the cul-de-sac."**

Lee Kuan Yew,  
The Man and His Ideas, 1997



*In contrast, the top schools in the United States are dominated by the rich and the white who have only a superficial understanding of poverty and social injustice. At home*

*in Singapore,  
we walk our streets at night  
unmolested by crime  
unlike the United States  
where I won't even dream of  
walking downtown  
once the sun goes down.*

*I disagree  
with many things  
Mr Lee's (PAP) party does.*

***However,  
if you fly to  
America or Europe,  
don't tell us Singaporeans  
how to run our nation.***

***It's our country.***

***It's not yours!!..."***

Michael Eng Cheng Teo, a Singaporean official, reinforced Lee's philosophy: "Each society has to decide for itself the appropriate balance between unconditional welfare and self-reliance."

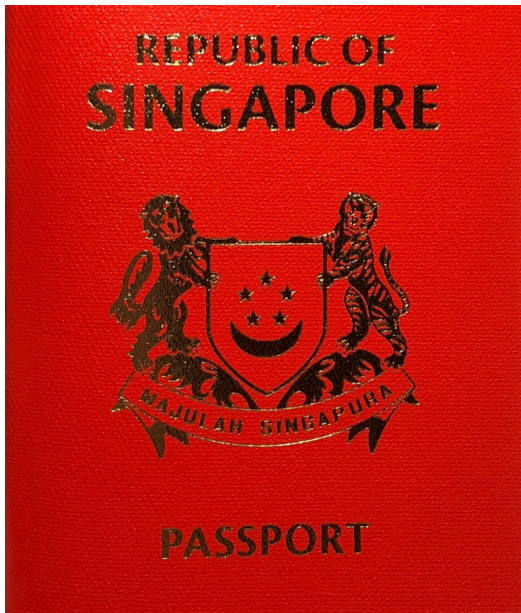
***Singapore has concluded***



***we cannot afford  
American and European-style  
state welfare,***

*not because of dogma, but because our circumstances are different. We face competition from countries with some of the most vibrant economies in the world; we have no hinterland or natural resources of our own to fall back on and our future depends on being a dynamic, well educated and self-reliant people who strive our utmost to excel and create wealth for ourselves, our families and our society. Each generation must earn and save enough for its entire life cycle.....*

***we have substantial  
state subsidies for education,  
health care  
and public housing.***



The Singapore passport is ranked 1st as the most powerful passport in the world with visa-free or visa on arrival access to 190 countries and territories, in conjunction with the passport of Japan

*These are major investments that lift the skills, promote health and increase the assets of all Singaporeans. The result has been high growth, low unemployment, high savings and the highest home-ownership rates in the world.*

Lee Kuan Yew was an admirer of the United States of America. Yet, he did not believe the American system of government would have been conducive to Singapore success in 1965 nor today, in the 21st century

***“ America’s media  
beats us up  
calling Singapore  
dictatorial and  
authoritarian....***

***because we have our own ideas  
of how  
we should govern ourselves.***

***America has a  
sense of  
cultural superiority...***

***American media’s ideas for  
East Asia are theories,  
not proven.***

So, what do you think - **does**





Singapore's success -

- ♦ the world's best schools
- ♦ safest place to live
- ♦ high incomes

*(average income in 2023 is \$121,000 Singapore dollars or \$91,000 American dollars)*

- ♦ full employment
- ♦ highest life expectancy
- ♦ harmony among its  
diverse races of people
- ♦ 88% home ownership

*'justify'*

Singapore's code of conduct,  
*i.e* its strict laws and penalties,  
created by Lee Kuan Yew.

Leaders from all over the world regularly met with Lee Kuan Yew to listen to his perspective on governance and world affairs. From

President **Barack Obama**

to

Prime Minister

**Margaret Thatcher**

of England

and

President **Xi Jinping**

of China,

all routinely

met with

**Lee Kuan Yew.**



Lee Kuan Yew and President Barack Obama

**President George W. Bush:**

*"In my long life,  
I have encountered many  
bright, able people.  
None is more impressive than  
Lee Kuan Yew."* 2011

**Chinese President Xi Jinping:**

*"You have my admiration,  
Mr Lee.  
Our country will never forget  
the important contribution  
you have made to  
the China - Singapore  
relationship."*  
2011

**Cisco CEO John Chambers:**

*"There are 2 equalizers in life:  
the Internet and education! Lee  
Kuan Yew is a world leader who  
understands this fact and is us-  
ing the power of the Internet to  
position Singapore for survival  
and success in the Internet  
economy."* 2000

**President Barack Obama:**

*"Lee is one of the  
legendary figures of Asia  
in the 20th and 21st centuries.  
He is someone who  
helped trigger  
the Asian economic miracle"*

10/29/2000

**On March 23, 2015,  
Lee Kuan Yew  
died  
at the age of 91.**



Singaporeans paying respects to their country's Founder, Lee Kwan Yew







**Like the Netherlands, Singapore expands its land into the sea. The areas in RED and PINK in the map above shows areas already reclaimed or to be reclaimed from the sea to expand the land area of the country of Singapore.**

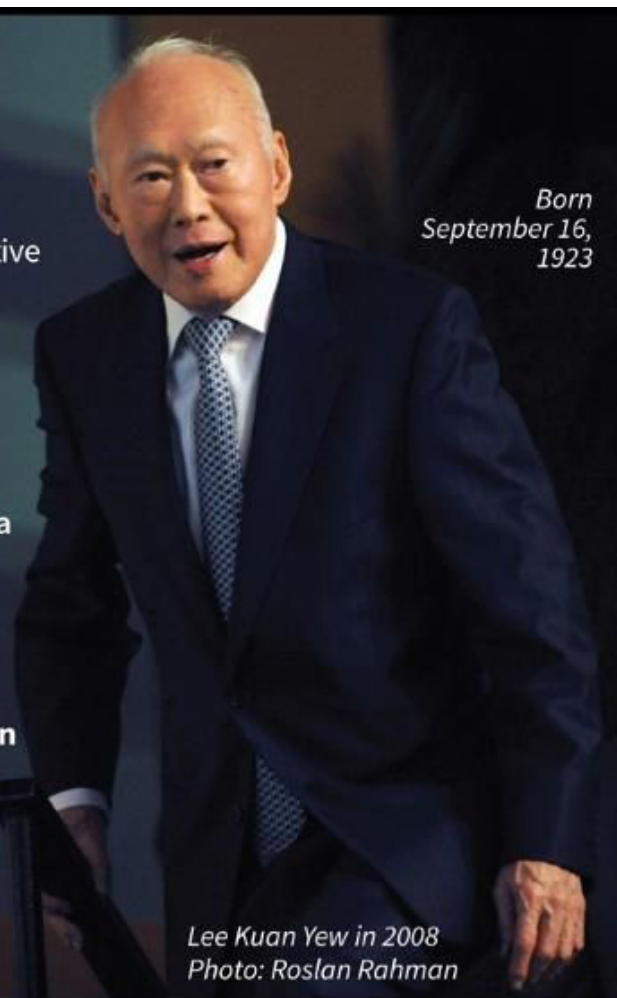
Since the first reclamation works began in 1822, Singapore's land area has expanded by almost 25 percent. The areas shaded in pink indicate how much has been reclaimed to date. The areas in red show possible plans for future reclamation and indicate how much of the island's original coastline may change by 2030 if these plans come to fruition. Part of the land reclamation program involve combining smaller islands to form larger islands. The type of sand used in reclamation is found in rivers and beaches, rather than deserts, and is in great demand worldwide. In 2010, **Singapore imported almost 15 million tons of sand for its projects**. As a result of the demand, Indonesia, Malaysia, and Vietnam have all restricted the export of their sand to Singapore. As a result, in 2016 Singapore switched to using polders – a Netherlands solution – to reclamation, in which an area is enclosed and then pumped dry.

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Singapore Harbor is the world's second busiest harbor to Shanghai, China, in terms of total ship tonnage.



A portrait of Lee Kuan Yew, an elderly man with white hair, wearing a dark blue suit, white shirt, and a patterned tie. He is looking slightly to the right with a gentle smile.

## Lee Kuan Yew

Iron-fisted former premier of Singapore

*Key dates*

- 1955 Gets elected to Legislative Assembly
- 1959 Becomes prime minister after Britain grants Singapore self-rule
- 1963 Leads Singapore into a merger with Malaysia
- 1965 Singapore is evicted from Malaysian federation
- Singapore becomes an independent nation**
- 1990 Steps down as PM
- 1990 Serves as government senior minister in advisory position
- 2004

Born September 16, 1923

*Lee Kuan Yew in 2008  
Photo: Roslan Rahman*

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Under his premiership:

- ▶ Singapore widely-hailed as **model for development**
- ▶ Courted **foreign capital**, used **foreign labour** to plug manpower gap
- ▶ Promoted "**nanny state**" that hectored public about spitting on the streets or failing to flush public toilets
- ▶ Criticised for his **iron-fisted rule**, forcing several politicians into bankruptcy or exile

AFP

## The Words of Lee Kuan Yew

*“**Different** races, cultures, religious, languages and histories require different paths to democracy and the free market.”*

*“the **Confucianist belief** is society works best  
when every man aims to be a gentleman....*

*this means a man is **loyal** to his father and mother, faithful to his wife, brings up his children  
well, treats his friends properly and  
he is a good, loyal citizen of his country.....*

*“society takes **priority** over the interests of the individual...”*

*“my colleagues and I realize how we benefited from the **tough times** in the early years of  
Singapore. We met street thugs. Had we not become streetwise, we would have been clobbered.”*

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*“I learned since 1973 that human beings and societies are fragile.....  
I also realize that people can be made **to do better**..... ”*

*“we must not lose our original languages and cultures and basic strengths. They should not be  
changed unless absolutely necessary. Honesty, **meritocracy, multi-racialism, fairness** in re-  
wards according to one’s contributions to society. This is why welfare and **subsidies** **destroy** the  
motivation to perform and succeed.”*

*“China’s stagnation in the 1700s was caused by its **arrogance** and complacency. The Emperor  
Qian Long refused to learn from the West. China paid the price for this arrogance with 200  
years of decline.”*

*“Singaporeans want a striving, acquisitive community. We must have a desire to improve. We  
must **equate rewards to performance**.....”*

*“A privileged society based on rank and wealth must give way to a society where people are  
rewarded according to their ability and their contributions to society. Everyone should not be  
given equal rewards but **equal opportunities**. Society should make it worth people’s while to  
give their best....”*

*"You must want. To want to have means to be able, first to **perceive what you want**. Secondly, how to discipline and organize yourself to possess the things you want.....thirdly, you need grit and **stamina** to work hard..."*

*"to create wealth, high motivation and incentives are crucial to drive people to achieve, to take **risks** for profit or they'll be nothing to share"*

*"young people learn best from personal **experience**."*

*"if you do not know history, you think short term. If you **know history**, you think medium and long term."*

*"human beings are inherently vicious and have to be restrained.....**humanity can be trained**, it can be disciplined..."*

*"**American media** picks on Singapore and beats us up as dictatorial and authoritarian. ...We can ill afford to let others experiment with our lives. Their ideas are theories, not proven, not proven in East Asia."*

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*"America must get its **debt** under control. They borrow too much. They need to cut down spending, especially on welfare, and increase savings and investments, most crucial of all, to its school systems in order to produce workers who are able to compete internationally."*

*"Social Security, payment to the unemployed and Medicare, is going to cost Americans an extra \$1.2 trillion in ten years - I don't know **where the money is going to come from**..."*

*"One fundamental **difference between American and Oriental** culture is the individual's position in society. In American culture, individual interest is primary. This makes America more aggressively competitive, with a sharper edge and higher performance."*

*"America has an entrepreneurial culture.... entrepreneurs and investors alike see **risk and failure** as natural and necessary for success. Europeans and Japanese now have the task of adopting these practices to increase their competitiveness....This is the spirit, this American way of looking at things, that generates a dynamic economy..."*

# The Interviews



Lee Kuan Yew  
Interview



History of Singapore



fashion

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Lee Kuan Yew in 1988



# Activity One

**Lee Kuan Yew's BRAND: The power of a 'brand.'** It's the perception others have of an image or a name. It's what comes to mind, the qualities and characteristics when we see or hear the name or an image of someone or something.

For instance, what do you think about when you hear the name 'Jay Z' or see the 'Under Armour' logo?

What do you hope comes to someone's mind when people hear or see your name? What values (e.g. work ethic, reliability, honesty, empathy, etc), what personality, what abilities do you want someone to think of when they see or hear your name? What opportunities do you want to create for yourself by the image of YOUR BRAND? If you don't know the answer to these questions, you need to stop and get them answered quickly. How people think about you will determine whether you get the job you're applying for, get into the college or grad school of your choice or get the date with the person you're attracted to. It's about 'brand', your brand.

**Let's reflect upon the way you perceive Lee Kuan Yew.** Describe the qualities you think about when you see or hear the name of *Lee Kuan Yew*. Make sure your description has a NOUN and a corresponding ADJECTIVE describing the noun. For instance, list Lee Kuan Yew as a PERSON (noun) for #1. You may add CONSCIENTIOUS and HARD WORKING as adjectives to describe the #1 noun. Add other adjectives which reflect what Mr Lee was like in the adjective column. Is there a second noun which represents what else Mr Lee did or who he was? Then, list other nouns which describe him. Is there a #3 noun? And corresponding adjectives?

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## NOUNS

for Mr Lee when he was Singapore's  
leader

1. \_\_\_\_\_ Prime Minister \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

## ADJECTIVES

*describing Mr Lee as Prime Minister*

1. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

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# Activity One: Part Two!

**Your brand.** Just as we did with Mr Lee, I'm asking you to do the same for **your perceived brand, in other words, how others perceive your brand.** I am asking you to list NOUNS that apply to you and corresponding ADJECTIVES which describe **how others perceive this noun or, in other words, your brand relating to this part of you.** For instance, your noun should be 'person', since you are a person. Another noun would be 'student', since you are presently a student. Others may be 'son' or 'daughters', 'brother' or 'sister', even a noun representing any job you have. Then, write the corresponding ADJECTIVES which describe how others perceive your brand as a 'student' at Hope High or how others may perceive your brand as a 'person' or even how your employer may perceive your brand in your job.

## NOUNS

1. \_\_\_\_\_ Stu-  
dent \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

## ADJECTIVES

1. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Now, take the lists of nouns and corresponding adjectives to write a paragraph which **describes how others perceive your brand.** \_\_\_\_\_

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# Activity Two

**Lee Kuan Yew's WHY:** The most effective stories have a '*why*'. The "*WHY*" of a story is the story teller's purpose, cause, or belief that inspires them to do what they do. It's their life's mission, their goal to achieve, what they feel responsible for, their motivation. '*Why*' is a key ingredient for every story. It connects the story teller to the audience so that the story resonates. It becomes the reason an audience listens to understand.

After reading "*The Story of Singapore and The Change Agent Who Created It*", **please state, what you believe to be, Lee Kuan Yew's 'WHY'.**

# Activity Two: Part Two!

## Your ‘Why’!

Just as I asked you to state your perception of Lee Kuan Yew’s ‘why’, I’m asking you to state your ‘why’, your purpose, cause, or belief that inspires you to do what you do. It’s your life’s mission, your goal in life, what you feel responsible for, your motivation every day which affects how you act and live your life.

Thank you for sharing your ‘why’.

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# Activity Three

**Analysis:** Below, under Country 1 and Country 2, is data about two 21st century countries. I will not initially tell you the names of these countries. I am asking you to examine this data and, after analysis and reflection, **choose one of the two countries you would prefer to live if you were forced to choose. Next, explain ‘why’** you find the country the more preferable place to live. I acknowledge this data provides only a partial picture of each country and more data would obviously be required before making a decision on which you consider the best and where you’d prefer to live. But, for the sake of this exercise, I am asking you to analyze the available data and make a decision based on the inferences you make from it. Thank you.

After you send me your answers electronically, I will identify the name of this 21st century country. Then I will ask you to further research this country to either confirm your initial decision or alter your choice and explain your reasons for the reversal of opinion.

This exercise is intended to reinforce the concept of ‘perspective.’ It also challenges your skills of accessing credible data in this accelerating and dynamic world and your ability to distinguish between fact and opinion in the formulation of your own, hopefully, well founded, credible perspectives. Good luck.

## Country #1

- **life expectancy:** 78.5 years
- **infant mortality:** 5.9 deaths/1000 births
- **adult obesity:** 33%
- **population density:** 32 people per km
- **total population:** 317,000,000
- **total area of the country:** 3,794,100 square miles; 4th largest by land area in the world
- **Total murders 2013:** 14,612
- **incarceration rate:** highest in the world - .007 (707 per 100,000 people)
- **internet access:** 78%
- **government surveillance** of citizens internet activity: exact percentage unknown but it is significant.
- **government \$ spent on education:** 7% of GDP
- **international ranking of the education system:** #17
- **School test scores by the Program for International Assessment (Pisa) for:**
  - **Math rank:** 36th in the world
  - **Reading rank:** 36
  - **Science rank:** 36
- **World Bank per capita income** (Per capita income is used to measure the wealth of a country by comparing the average income of its people with another country. Per capita income is often used to measure a country's standard of living)
  - per capita income rank: 10th highest in the world
  - \$53,143 income by person as of 2013
  - 12.6% of total population are **millionaires**
- **Unemployment rate:** 9%
- **% of people in this country's Congress who are women:** 22%
- **official language:** English
- **Fresh water supply:** #4 largest supply in the world with 3,083 cubic kilometers.
- **climate:** a range of polar, temperate to tropical through the wide range of its large geographic area.
- **Poll results** to an online question by ‘Find The Best’ web site - *Which country, #1 or #2, do you think is the best?* 34% chose country #1

## Country #2

- **life expectancy:** 84.1 years
- **infant mortality:** 3 deaths/1000
- **adult obesity:** 7%
- **population density:** 7834 people per km
- **total population:** 5,460,000
- **total area of the country:** 274 square miles; one of the smallest nations by land area in the world
- **Total murders 2013:** 16
- **incarceration rate:** .002 (233 per every 100,000 people)
- **internet access:** 60%
- **government surveillance** of citizens' internet activity: 100%
- **government \$ spent on education:** 4% of GDP
- **international ranking of the education system:** #5
- **school test scores by the Program for International Assessment (Pisa) for:**
  - **Math rank:** 2nd in the world
  - **Reading rank:** 2
  - **Science rank:** 2
- **World Bank per capita income** (Per capita income is used to measure the wealth of a country by comparing the average income of its people with another country. Per capita income is often used to measure a country's standard of living)
  - per capita income rank: 4th highest in the world
  - \$78,744 income per person as of 2013
  - 16% of total population are **millionaires**; the highest % of any country's population in the world
- **unemployment rate:** 2%
- **% of people in this country's Congress who are women:** 12%
- **official language:** English
- **Fresh water supply:** only 116 cubic kilometers; 50% of daily water use is imported from a neighboring country.
- **climate:** tropical rainforest
- **Poll results** to an online question by ‘Find The Best’ web site - *Which country, #1 or #2, do you think is the best?* 66% chose country #2

# Activity Four

**As Generative (*conversational*) AI** continues to be more involved in the lives of American people, businesses, organizations, and government, **please prompt ChatGPT** (or some other conversational bot of your choice) with the following:

1. *“please compose a 500 word essay in the parlance of a high achieving 17 year old high school student at Central High School in Providence, RI on the lessons America can learn from Singapore”.*
2. after reviewing the bot’s essay response, REVISE the bot essay with your own words and adding any OBJECTIVE information you feel the bot has left out to create your 500 word essay identifying the MOST IMPORTANT LESSONS America can learn from the country of Singapore that will improve the quality of life of ALL AMERICANS. **IN YOUR REVISED ESSAY, PLEASE prioritize the lessons America can learn from Singapore;** i.e. begin your REVISED essay with the most important policy or lesson, then the 2nd most important policy or lesson, then the third most important lesson or policy and so on for America to adopt.
3. NEXT, in a well written statement, please explain the differences between YOUR REVISED ESSAY and THE BOT’S RESPONSE TO YOUR PROMPT. WELL WRITTEN MEANS perfect spelling, good grammar, punctuation, and capitalization AND NO RUN ON SENTENCES.
4. Send your answers to my email address (stevecronin1949@gmail.com) or print copies of your answers and give them to me in class.

# Activity Five

**CRITICAL THINKING:** In order to make the best decisions or create the best answers to questions and assignments, it's very important to get access to and then analyze FACTS. Opinions of others and the bias in their answers and analysis can be helpful AS LONG AS WE REVIEW ALL THE BIAS ON A SPECIFIC TOPIC.

Please begin by reading this text on "THE STORY OF SINGAPORE AND THE CHANGE AGENT WHO CREATED IT". See this text posted on our web site ([www.hopelifeskills.com](http://www.hopelifeskills.com))

Part of this activity will be having a conversation presenting your questions and listening to the answers about Singapore from our class guest, Tino Chow, a native Singaporean.

**Prior to Tino's appearance, please do the following:**

- o Please research the biography on [Linked In](#) of **Tino Chow** and/or Google '**Tino Chow**'.
- o Write a question(s) for Tino on the card I distributed in class and write your name on the card as well. I will collect the cards at the start of the next class and present to Tino. Your questions, for example, could be about Singapore's present brand, its quality of life, national service program, automobile ownership, personal safety, quality of education, median income, crime rates, race relations, legal system, surveillance, personal rights vs Singaporean community rights, American quality of life vs Singaporean quality of life, etc. You decide the question - whatever you would like to have answered by our Singaporean guest, Tino Chow; you decide what is important to ask. Each student will be asked to present me their question card at the beginning of the next class. *"Questions are more important than answers."*

# Activity Six

**Analysis and Presentation:** After reading this entire text and listening to our guest, TINO CHOW, **indicate whether you would choose to live the rest of your life in Singapore or the United States of America.** Then, in a well written essay, indicate WHY you chose either Singapore or the United States of America.



# Activity Seven

## Credibility and Perspective:

This author makes a point of stating on the last page, 64, of this book “*the author of this book is an American*”. Why is that fact helpful to know as you read this text book?

Express your answer in a well written paragraph with perfect spelling, grammar and punctuation. Thank you.

# Activity Eight

**Inference:** Definition - *an inference is a conclusion that is derived from certain assumptions made after an analysis of specific data or information; the conclusion, although not initially obvious, has a high probability of correctness based on certain assumptions made after an examination of specific data and a reflection on related attributes or characteristics.* **For instance, a boy observes his dog scratching behind his floppy ear and his chest with his hind leg. The boy makes the inference his dog has fleas.**

**On page 29** in this text, there is a statement attributed to Mr Lee in the 1960s about his interpretation of the Confucian way of life. Mr Lee had stated

*“ the Confucianist belief  
is  
‘society works best  
when  
every man  
aims to be  
a gentleman....’*

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**What inferences** can you make about Mr Lee and Singapore from his statement about the ‘Confucian belief’?

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