

4. How important is it to pursue happiness?

Yes – Socially important as happiness is a catalyst that can motivate people to work hard and contribute to economy as pursuing happiness tied in with striving to make money

Comment [M1]: Ex may be difficult to come by; maybe we look at its social role in bringing everyone closer together—collective happiness which would make the whole society or country more positive (in regard to its reputation, or brand)? - BY

Yes – The more a person pursues the more he is likely to attain and as such pursuing is important

Yes – Very important for religious figures who measure happiness in terms to attaining oneness with God – as the process of pursuing is integral as it brings them closer and they come to understand their religion and in process find spiritual fulfillment

No Limited importance as the pursuit of happiness *does not imply attaining* happiness and a process is of limited value unless goal is achieved.

Comment [M2]: I think this could be crafted as a YES point too: though the attainment of happiness may not be achieved, the process is still important as so often, the focus is on the process, not the goal. In the process, other benefits may be discovered. - BY

No – Limited importance as depends how happiness is measured - in as much as it can lead to hedonistic behavior which can result in gross and excessive materialism

Not important if pursuit of happiness undertaken without integrity – in fact pursuing happiness can in some cases result in greed and in undermining others to find happiness at expense of others

Comment [M3]: If the essay argues that because this is bad, we should not see it as important (which will have given it currency), and go on to explore the ideas stated initially, then it will be great! But if such an explication isn't present, it may not deal adequately with "important" because if someone decides to do something bad to others, it doesn't show it's unimportant—on the other hand, that selfish pursuit is important—to him as an individual. - BY

Not important—some might say that happiness doesn't lead to tangible benefits like economic security, and to focus of those aspects of life that ensure survival in 21st C will ultimately lead to happiness. Thus, people should not look at happiness as the goal, but happiness is a bonus that comes with economic gains.

Not important—there are greater problems in the world to worry about, like hunger, poverty...pursuit of happiness is selfish & doesn't help the world with those exigent problems.

Some importance, but a level-headed approach towards attaining happiness is critical. Blind pursuit can lead to disasters (morally, socially, economically), but a rational approach can lead to greater self & social awareness—this ensures there are no problems (to self & others) entailing the process.

Yes—important because pursuing happiness can be beneficial to the body & mind: the process may be trying, but rewarding.

Stand: Depends on perspectives, situations

Issue: The importance of the pursuit of happiness is debatable...

Context: global, present→future; past may be relevant as projection

Key phrases: important, pursuit of happiness

12. Are some works of art more meaningful than others?

Points:-

No – taste is a matter of personal preference. Each person has things they like, but no one's preferences are any better than anyone else's. Hence in real terms art cannot be more

meaningful as it depends on preferences. There are billions of people, each with their own opinion; on what grounds can you prefer one to another?

Comment [M4]: Art's meaning comes from one's preference for certain ideas or genre. - BY

No – If there were more meaningful art, then people who liked it would have better taste than people who did not but in the end it comes down to whether it is appreciated by individual and no one appreciation is better than another.

Comment [M5]: I think this is a repeated point. - BY

No - A lot of philosophers have had a hard time believing it was possible for there to be objective standards for art. It seemed obvious that beauty, for example, was something that happened in the head of the observer, not something that was a property of objects. It was thus "subjective" rather than "objective."

Comment [M6]: Thus whether or not a person could see the meaning behind certain works will depend on how well trained he is. - BY

No – Come down to relativism. Would it make the painting better if I changed that part? If there's no such thing as better, it doesn't matter what you do. In fact, it doesn't matter if you paint at all. You could just go out and buy a ready-made blank canvas. If there's no such thing as good, that would be just as great an achievement as the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel. Less laborious, certainly, but if you can achieve the same level of performance with less effort, surely that's more impressive, not less.

No – for a work of art to be more meaningful than others it would have to be more appealing and though appeal to people is a meaningful test, in practice you can't measure it, just as you can't find north using a compass with a magnet sitting next to it. There are sources of error so powerful that if you take a vote, all you're measuring is the error.

Comment [M7]: I think this is a repeated point. - BY

No- When you talk about art being good, you also have to say for what audience. So is it meaningless to talk about art simply being good or bad? No, because one audience is the set of all possible humans. I think that's the audience people are implicitly talking about when they say a work of art is good: they mean it would engage any human and this is mathematically unlikely. Even if there just some who disagree then we must be able to argue that some works of art are more meaningful than others.

Comment [M8]: I think this is a repeated point. - BY

Yes – meaningful art can relate to the audience and non meaningful cannot – Art has a purpose, which is to interest its audience. Good art (like good anything) is art that achieves its purpose particularly well. The meaning of "interest" can vary. Some works of art are meant to shock, and others to please; some are meant to jump out at you, and others to sit quietly in the background. But all art has to work on an audience, and members of the audience share things in common hence there can be some works of art to be more meaningful than others.

Comment [M9]: I think this is an extension of the previous point. - BY

Yes – Once you start talking about audiences, you do not have to argue simply that there are or aren't standards of taste. Instead tastes are a series of concentric rings, like ripples in a pond. There are some things that will appeal to you and your friends, others that will appeal to most people your age, others that will appeal to most humans, and perhaps others that would appeal to most sentient beings.

Comment [M10]: Ditto

Then no- (counter point) the picture is slightly more complicated than that, because in the middle of the pond there are overlapping sets of ripples. For example, there might be things that appealed particularly to men, or to people from a certain culture and another culture may not really appreciate hence some works of art may be more meaningful than others for some cultures.

Yes – some works of art are more meaningful than others because of the location of the art-form - What would make the painting more interesting to people?" And the reason you can't equal Michelangelo by going out and buying a blank canvas is that the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel is more interesting to people.

Comment [M11]: Cultural-historical significance of artworks. - BY

Yes - For some art to be more meaningful than other art then there must be such a thing as good art and hence there must be such a thing as bad art – good art interests its human audience, and since humans have a lot in common, what interests them is not random. Since there's such a thing as good art, there's also such a thing as good taste, which is the ability to recognize it.

Comment [M12]: I think this is a repeated idea. - BY

Yes - if you narrow the definition of beauty to something that works a certain way on humans, and you observe how much humans have in common, it turns out to be a property of objects after all. You don't have to choose between something being a property of the subject or the object if subjects all react similarly. Being good art is thus a property of objects as much as, say, being toxic to humans is: it's good art if it consistently affects all humans in a certain way – be that of attraction or repulsion. The test of whether some works of art more meaningful than others is thus in whether it generates reaction not necessarily whether it is liked or disliked.

Comment [M13]: So meaningful artworks are present to generate reactions that will create a sort of social or individual introspection. - BY

Yes – some works of art more meaningful than others not because they are better or even generate a reaction - but because we are conditioned to think so - for the average person, brand dominates all other factors in the judgment of art. Seeing a painting they recognize from reproductions is so overwhelming that their response to it as a painting is drowned out. And then of course there are the tricks people play on themselves. Most adults looking at art worry that if they don't like what they're supposed to, they'll be thought uncultured. This doesn't just affect what they claim to like; they actually make themselves like things they're supposed to and hence the conditioning creates a 'norm' of appreciation.

Comment [M14]: Hence due to some form of societal norms subscribed to by all in the community, the bias of meaningful and what is not is present.

Yes—Existence of the debate of high-culture art VS low-culture art

Yes—Students may also bring in issues of discrimination or power-relations in determining or undermining the importance or meanings of art works

It depends—Perspectives of artists/audience/government

It depends—A detailed discussion of what constitutes meaning is vital (economic terms, aesthetics, socially, historically conscious, politically, insights into the world of the artist or the artist him/herself). Such discussions may be grounded in societal context, tradition or climate (political or other thematic consideration), and the artist's intent