

## **Singapore as a Nation in the World**

**What is the purpose of the chapter?**

**What are its strengths and limitations?**

**How does Chapter 1 connect to other chapters?**

### **Sets the Context**

Spatial and temporal (post-independent Singapore)

### **Introduces Concepts**

Introduction to key and recurring issues. The challenges highlighted directly relates to all other themes in textbook. □ □

### **Need to take note of complexity of concepts related to nation, national identity**

Understanding of nationhood and national identity will be continuously built up throughout upper secondary course in subsequent chapters. Every domain of social action/issue affects/shapes our sense of nationhood and vice versa.

- e.g. The way Singapore perceives and tries to achieve ethnic harmony is a unique feature of our national identity - from the way our ethnic identity is part of our national identity and the way we package ourselves as a multi-ethnic society to non-Singaporeans, to how other countries recognize Singapore as a place which have achieved ethnic harmony and social stability.

- e.g. Another example can be seen in Singapore's international relations with other countries - our sense of our size and attendant constraints shape our national identity and in order to rise above the constraints of our size, we have projected ourselves significantly on the international arena. The image that the international community has of us – both positive (stable, well governed, rich) and negative (many rules, limited political and creative freedoms) have shaped the way Singaporeans perceive ourselves.

**Link with lower secondary?**

Important base of knowledge (both History and Geography) to tap on and re-present with the frame of Social Studies

**What do my students already know about Singapore's History?  
How will the chapter change/confirm the different points of view?**

- Sec 1 and 2 Singapore History: Have to take note of influence of prevailing perceptions, which may not be very positive.
  - Other factors influencing perceptions (value in society, role of media, exam-orientation).
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**Purpose of "The Singapore Story" Official narrative**

**Appreciate progress**

Singapore has made and limitations that Singaporeans need to continue to work on i.e. understand Singapore has come a long way, not to take progress for granted, some factors influencing perceptions are permanent (e.g. physical size) and some will take time to shift (e.g. our sense of history).

### **Importance of understanding official narrative as basis for critiquing**

Ways of seeing the official narrative as context and understanding how it is constructed

- **Prevalence of official narrative/founding myths/stories.**

Every country has an official narrative that is used to forge national identity and guide its thinking and behavior. It is especially vital in early days of independence, but will continue to exert a strong influence on the country's identity and behavior.

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- **Understanding construction of official narrative and impact.**

How did Singapore's road to independence shape its approach to meeting nation building challenges? How did each phase affect approach in all domains of social action/issues highlighted in textbook (Governing, Bonding and Conducting International Relations)?

- e.g. Impact of Japanese Occupation: lessons learnt from speed with which Singapore fell and impact of oppressive occupation had distinct impact on national defense & diplomacy strategy; impact of Japanese treatment of different ethnic groups reinforced importance of maintaining ethnic stability; the way Singapore manages relations with China/Taiwan will be shaped by how we understand the legacy of Japanese Occupation on these two countries.

- e.g. Impact of road to independence: the political upheavals of the 50s and early 60s will shape perceptions of multi-party democracy, reinforce impression of fragility of ethnic stability as well as influence Singapore's relations with Malaysia. □

### How do I bring in other 'narratives'?

- Sources on early Singapore (i.e. pre-1819) History, other versions of post 1819, post 1965 history. Especially material that looks at non-political aspects of Singapore's development in the post-independence period. Stories by and about common Singaporeans to provide perspectives about non-political life in Singapore.

- Sources of/by/about other founding fathers, e.g. Goh Keng Swee, S. Rajaratnam to provide perspectives on the challenges of nation building.