1 AI Boom and the Future of Work

WHAT'S IN THE NEWS (as of 25 Sep 2026)

- **24 Sep 2026:** Moody's Analytics said Malaysia is among the Asia-Pacific economies expected to grow faster than China this year, helped by AI-driven demand for its chips and technology exports and by investment in data centres.
- **28 Jul 2026:** The government launched AI Malaysia Bhd to replace the National AI Office, together with the National AI Action Plan 2026–2030, which has 28 initiatives.
- **31 Aug 2026:** The AI Untuk Rakyat programme began. Up to 100,000 Malaysians aged 18–30 who finish six free online modules on the Rakyat Digital portal can use a premium AI tool free for three months.
- **1 May 2026:** TalentCorp said about 697,000 workers in 22 sectors are expected to be significantly affected by AI, digitalisation and the green economy within three to five years. It described AI as a "job transformer" rather than simply a threat.
- **8 Sep 2026:** The OECD's PISA 2025 report found that students who did not use AI to draft their writing assignments outperformed those who did.

Sources: The Star (24 Sep 2026; 4 Sep 2026); The Edge Malaysia (28 Jul 2026); Malay Mail / Bernama (1 May 2026); OECD press release (8 Sep 2026).

Why this topic matters for MUET

MPM lists science and technology, education and financial awareness among the areas MUET topics are drawn from, and AI touches all three. Expect questions on AI in study, jobs of the future and the skills young people need; a balanced view (benefits *and* risks) scores better than cheerleading or panic.

Word / phrase	Meaning	Example sentence
automation	using machines or software to do work people used to do	Automation has already taken over many routine tasks in banks and factories.
upskill / reskill	learn new skills for your present job / for a different job	Workers who reskill early are far less likely to be left behind.
job displacement	the loss of jobs because the work is now done in another way	Job displacement is most likely in roles built on repetitive tasks.
augment	add to and improve something, rather than replace it	AI can augment a teacher's work by marking short quizzes instantly.
digital literacy	the ability to use digital tools wisely, safely and critically	Digital literacy now matters as much as reading and writing.
over-reliance on	depending on something too much	Over-reliance on chatbots may weaken students' own reasoning.
a double-edged sword	something that has both good and bad effects	For young job seekers, AI is a double-edged sword.
future-proof	make something stay useful as times change	Strong problem-solving skills help to future-proof a career.

2 Online Scams and Staying Safe Online

WHAT'S IN THE NEWS (as of 25 Sep 2026)

- **15 Jul 2026:** In a written parliamentary reply, the Home Ministry said online scams caused RM5.37 billion in losses from 2024 to May 2026. Fake investment schemes were the biggest share at RM2.68 billion (49.9%).
- **Same reply:** telecommunication scams caused RM1.54 billion and e-financial crime RM660.64 million in losses. Together with investment scams, they made up more than 90% of the total.
- **2 Sep 2026:** The Home Minister said RM5.16 million was returned to scam victims from January to July 2026, which was 65% of the RM7.94 million seized through the National Scam Response Centre (NSRC, hotline 997). As of 28 August, 746 Malaysians had been deceived by fake overseas job offers.
- **2 Sep 2026:** The minister also said enforcement agencies must use AI against scam syndicates, which operate across borders and already use new technology.
- **22–24 Sep 2026:** A Cambodian anti-scam official said 663 scam sites there, including 86 large compounds, had been closed and US$300 million frozen. Phnom Penh then hosted an international conference on combating online scams on 23–24 September.

Sources: Media Selangor (15 Jul 2026; 2 Sep 2026); Free Malaysia Today / AFP (22 Sep 2026).

Why this topic matters for MUET

Scams combine two MUET favourites: technology and financial awareness. The topic suits Task 1 (warning or advising a friend) as well as Task 2 (problem-solution essays on who should do what). In Speaking, it is easy to give concrete examples, which helps fluency.

Word / phrase	Meaning	Example sentence
scam syndicate	an organised criminal group that cheats people for money	Many scam syndicates run their operations from outside the country.
phishing	tricking people into giving personal or banking details through fake messages or links	The phishing message looked exactly like a real bank notice.
impersonate	pretend to be someone else, such as an officer	Callers often impersonate police officers to frighten people.
too good to be true	so attractive that it is probably false	A return of 30% a month is simply too good to be true.
fall prey to	be harmed or cheated by	Even educated professionals can fall prey to clever scams.
vigilant	carefully watching for danger	Online shoppers must stay vigilant during big sales.
mule account	a bank account used by criminals to move stolen money	Renting out your account can turn it into a mule account.

3 The Haze Season and Air Quality

WHAT'S IN THE NEWS (as of 25 Sep 2026)

- **5 Sep 2026:** An emergency was declared in the Serian Division of Sarawak after haze from fires in Indonesia's Kalimantan and Sumatra pushed air pollution to hazardous levels. Cloud seeding was carried out.
- **7 Sep 2026:** Serian recorded a "very unhealthy" Air Pollutant Index (API) reading of 245 at 2 pm, while 40 areas nationwide were in the unhealthy range.
- **20 Sep 2026:** At 4.30 pm, 32 areas recorded unhealthy readings, including Serian (173), Putrajaya (161) and Seremban (156).
- **23–24 Sep 2026:** With Serian's API at 217 at 10 pm, all 108 schools in the Serian district were closed on 24 September and lessons moved to home-based learning.
- **API bands (APIMS):** 0–50 good, 51–100 moderate, 101–200 unhealthy, 201–300 very unhealthy, above 300 hazardous. Check the Department of Environment's APIMS portal and follow official advice.

Sources: Al Jazeera (5 Sep 2026); RTM (7 Sep 2026); Bernama (20 Sep 2026); Free Malaysia Today and Berita Harian (23 Sep 2026).

Why this topic matters for MUET

The environment is one of MPM's listed topic areas, and the haze affects students directly through school closures and cancelled activities. It works well for cause-and-solution essays and for Task 1 situations about postponing events. Keep your language factual and calm, and leave health advice to the authorities.

Word / phrase	Meaning	Example sentence
transboundary haze	smoke pollution that crosses national borders	Transboundary haze cannot be solved by one country alone.
open burning	burning rubbish or land in the open air	Open burning is banned, yet it still happens in some areas.
hotspot	a fire detected by satellite	Satellites detected hundreds of hotspots during the dry season.
peatland	wet land made of layers of dead plants, which can burn for weeks	Fires on peatland are extremely difficult to put out.
Air Pollutant Index (API)	a number showing how polluted the air is	Check the API before planning any outdoor event.
cloud seeding	spreading substances into clouds to encourage rain	Cloud seeding brought some relief, but only for a while.
visibility	how far you can see clearly	Visibility dropped sharply as the haze thickened.
recurring	happening again and again	The haze has become a recurring problem in our region.

4 PISA 2025 and the Quality of Learning

WHAT'S IN THE NEWS (as of 25 Sep 2026)

- **8 Sep 2026:** The OECD released the PISA 2025 results, its largest round so far, covering 760,000 fifteen-year-old students in 91 countries and economies.
- **Malaysia's scores** (compared with PISA 2022): Science 419 (up 3 points), Reading 393 (up 5 points), Mathematics 397 (down 11 points).
- **New assessment:** Malaysia was among six countries that did better than expected in computational problem-solving, scoring 484.
- **Across the OECD:** average scores in mathematics and reading fell to their lowest ever, and one in five 15-year-olds is now a low performer in science, mathematics and reading (up from 16% in 2022).
- **21 Sep 2026:** Education Minister Fadhlina Sidek said the ministry will do "serious work" on mathematics, while warning against reducing a whole generation of children to one number.

Sources: OECD press release (8 Sep 2026); The Star (8 Sep 2026; 21 Sep 2026); Free Malaysia Today (8 Sep 2026).

Why this topic matters for MUET

Education is one of the most common MUET topic areas, and PISA gives you real, current evidence to use. Questions may ask about exam-oriented learning, the value of international rankings, or how to make subjects such as mathematics more meaningful. Be precise: only mathematics fell, while reading and science improved.

Word / phrase	Meaning	Example sentence
benchmark	a standard used for comparison	PISA is a useful benchmark, but it is not the only one.
literacy (maths/science literacy)	the ability to use knowledge in real-life situations	Mathematical literacy means applying maths, not just memorising it.
rote learning	memorising without real understanding	Rote learning may help in a quiz but fails in unfamiliar problems.
higher-order thinking skills	analysing, evaluating and creating	Open-ended projects build higher-order thinking skills.
solid foundation	strong basic knowledge that later learning builds on	Without a solid foundation in fractions, algebra becomes a struggle.
exam-oriented	focused mainly on passing examinations	An exam-oriented culture can squeeze out curiosity.
holistic	considering the whole person or system	A holistic education develops character as well as grades.
attainment gap	the difference in results between groups of students	Targeted support can narrow the attainment gap between schools.
digital distraction	losing focus because of phones or other devices	Digital distraction in class affects everyone, not only the user.

5 Budget 2027: Wages and the Cost of Living

WHAT'S IN THE NEWS (as of 25 Sep 2026)

- **9 Oct 2026:** Budget 2027 is scheduled to be tabled in the Dewan Rakyat. It will be the second budget under the Thirteenth Malaysia Plan (RMK13).
- **24 Sep 2026:** Economy Minister Akmal Nasrullah Mohd Nasir said income and wage issues must remain a priority in Budget 2027, and that high and uncertain oil prices also need to be taken into account.
- **22 Sep 2026:** Human Resources Minister R. Ramanan hinted that the budget would bring good news on wages, but left the details to the Prime Minister's budget speech.
- **Minimum wage:** RM1,700 a month since 1 February 2025, applying to all employers regardless of size since 1 August 2025.
- **Ministry of Finance pre-budget statement:** unemployment was 2.9% in the first quarter of 2026 (its lowest in 11 years) and inflation was 1.9% in June 2026. Malaysia is expected to become an aged nation by 2030, with about 15% of the population aged 60 or above.

Sources: RTM (12 Sep 2026); Berita Harian / Bernama (24 Sep 2026); Kosmo (22 Sep 2026); Bernama (18 Oct 2024; 22 Jul 2025); Ministry of Finance, Pre-Budget 2027 Statement (2026).

Why this topic matters for MUET

Financial awareness and consumerism are named MUET topic areas, and Budget 2027 will dominate the news during the exam period. Expect questions on saving, spending, wages, subsidies or the cost of living. Stay neutral: discuss policies and their effects, not political parties.

Word / phrase	Meaning	Example sentence
cost of living	the amount of money needed for basic needs	The cost of living is highest in large cities.
purchasing power	how much your money can buy	If prices rise faster than wages, purchasing power falls.
targeted subsidy	help given only to those who qualify	A targeted subsidy costs less than helping everyone equally.
disposable income	money left after taxes and essential bills	Rising rents have squeezed young workers' disposable income.
household income	the total earnings of everyone in a home	Household income decides who qualifies for some forms of aid.
make ends meet	have just enough money for your needs	Many young families struggle to make ends meet.
productivity	how much value a worker or firm produces	Higher productivity allows firms to pay better wages.
inflation	a general rise in prices over time	Low inflation helps families plan their spending.

7 Visit Malaysia 2026 and tourism

WHAT'S IN THE NEWS (as of 25 Sep 2026)

- **Visit Malaysia 2026 (VM2026)** officially began on **1 January 2026** with welcome events at 55 entry points in all 13 states. Tourism Malaysia planned **more than 300 events** for the year, and the mascots are Wira and Manja (Tourism Malaysia, Jan 2026).
- In **April 2026**, the campaign was **extended to the end of 2027**. The reasons included the conflict in West Asia and its effect on travel (NST, 8 Apr 2026).
- Malaysia received **21,118,039 international visitors in January–June 2026**, up 2.5%. This was the slowest first-half growth since the post-pandemic recovery began, and 4,111 scheduled flights were cancelled (Tourism Minister, via FMT, 24 Aug 2026).
- Tourism Malaysia says the country is **behind the pace** for its full-year target of **47 million tourist arrivals**, but it is still aiming for that number (DayakDaily, 23 Sep 2026).
- Malaysia Airlines now flies to **nine gateways in Greater China**, with new daily flights to Shenzhen and Changsha. It expects **52,000+ passengers** over China's Golden Week holiday (26 Sep – 11 Oct), **up 21%** on last year (Malay Mail, 24 Sep 2026).

Sources: Tourism Malaysia (Jan 2026); NST (8 Apr & 25 Jun 2026); FMT (24 Aug 2026); DayakDaily (23 Sep 2026); Malay Mail (24 Sep 2026).

Why this topic matters for MUET

Tourism links the economy, culture, the environment and local communities, so it suits discursive and problem-solution essays. It is also an easy group-discussion topic, because everyone can suggest ways to attract visitors and weigh up the costs. VM2026 gives you current, checkable facts to support your points.

Word / phrase	Meaning	Example sentence
tourist arrivals	the number of visitors who enter a country	Tourist arrivals grew by only 2.5% in the first half of 2026.
tourism receipts	the money that tourists spend in a country	Higher tourism receipts help hotels, restaurants and transport firms.
connectivity	how easily people can travel between places, e.g. by air or rail	Better air connectivity with China brings more visitors to Malaysia.
hidden gem	a lesser-known place that is well worth visiting	Short videos can turn a quiet village into a hidden gem that everyone wants to see.
overtourism	too many visitors, harming a place and the people who live there	Overtourism can push up rents and crowd out local residents.
carrying capacity	the largest number of visitors a place can handle without damage	Marine parks limit visitor numbers to protect their carrying capacity.
spillover effect	benefits that spread from one sector to others	Tourism has a spillover effect on farming, crafts and transport.

Phrase bank for any issue

These phrases work with all ten issues in this pack. Learn a few from each group and use them naturally. Examiners reward accurate, varied language, not a long list of memorised phrases squeezed into one paragraph.

Linking words by function

Function	Linking words and phrases	Example
Adding	Furthermore, · Moreover, · In addition, · Not only … but also …	Not only does tourism create jobs, but it also keeps traditions alive.
Contrasting	However, · Nevertheless, · In contrast, · whereas · On the other hand,	Subsidies help households today, whereas clean energy helps future generations.
Conceding	Admittedly, · Although … · While it is true that … · That said,	While it is true that a degree opens doors, it no longer guarantees a good job.
Cause	because of · owing to · due to · as a result of · since	Owing to the conflict in West Asia, thousands of flights were cancelled.
Result	As a result, · Consequently, · Therefore, · This means that …	Oil prices rose sharply. Consequently, the expected subsidy bill more than doubled.
Examples	For instance, · For example, · such as · A case in point is …	A case in point is Malaysia's first esports gold at the Asian Games.
Sequencing	Firstly, · Secondly, · Finally, · To begin with, · Last but not least,	To begin with, we should look at who actually earns from tourism.
Emphasising	In fact, · Indeed, · Above all, · Most importantly,	Above all, young workers need chances to learn and grow.
Concluding	In conclusion, · To sum up, · All things considered, · On balance,	On balance, the benefits of closer ties outweigh the risks.

Opinion and hedging language

- **Clear opinion:** In my view, … / I firmly believe that … / I am convinced that …
- **Partial agreement:** I agree to a large extent, but … / I partly agree with the statement because …
- **Disagreement:** I am not convinced that … / I would argue the opposite, because …
- **Balanced view:** There are strong arguments on both sides. / Much depends on …
- **Hedging (softening a claim):** It could be argued that … / This tends to … / arguably / to some extent
- **Careful quantities:** a significant proportion of … / many, though not all, … / in most cases
- **Using evidence:** According to DOSM, … / Figures released in September 2026 show that …
- **Showing certainty levels:** This is likely to … / This may well … / It is unlikely that …

a lot of	a great deal of / numerous	Numerous events are planned for VM2026.
think	believe / maintain	Some experts maintain that esports is a true sport.
make better	improve / enhance	Better coaches enhance the performance of a whole squad.
go up	rise / surge	Subsidy spending surged in March and April.
problem	challenge / issue	Underemployment remains a serious challenge.
because of this	consequently / as a result	Consequently, the campaign was extended to 2027.
nowadays	in recent years / today	In recent years, esports has gained mainstream recognition.

Sentence structures that lift your band

Structure	Pattern	Example
Inversion	Not only + auxiliary + subject … but also … / Rarely has …	Not only does esports build teamwork, but it also opens new careers.
Cleft sentence	What … is … / It is … that …	What young workers need most is a clear path to career progression.
Participle clause	Having + past participle …, subject …	Having weighed all five options, our group chose more bus routes.
Second conditional	If + past simple, would + verb	If more bus routes were built, fewer families would need a second car.
Non-defining relative clause	Noun, which/who …, verb …	Esports, which was once dismissed as a hobby, is now a medal sport.
Impersonal passive	It is widely believed / It has been argued that …	It is widely believed that tourism should benefit local communities.

Use two or three of these in each essay. Accuracy matters more than variety, so choose the ones you can write without mistakes.

Suka sampel ini?

MUET 2026

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