



ADVANCED SUBSIDIARY GCE
CRITICAL THINKING
Unit 1: Credibility of Evidence

F491/RB

RESOURCE BOOKLET

Monday 12 January 2009
Afternoon

Duration: 1 hour 15 minutes



INSTRUCTIONS TO CANDIDATES

- Use Documents 1, 2, 3 and 4 to answer the questions.

INFORMATION FOR CANDIDATES

- This document consists of 4 pages. Any blank pages are indicated.

At present anyone who has been investigated by the police, guilty or not, has their DNA taken and held on the national DNA database. There is a dispute as to whether this policy is unfair or not.

Document 1

Home Office

The national DNA database

The Home Office states:

“The national DNA database is a key police intelligence tool that helps to:

- quickly identify offenders
- make earlier arrests
- secure more convictions
- provide critical investigative leads for police investigations

- *Why are people who have not been convicted on the database?*

Before 2001, the police could take DNA samples during investigations but had to destroy the samples and the records on the database if people were found not guilty or charges were not proceeded with. The law was changed in 2001 to remove this requirement.

Any intrusion of personal privacy is proportionate to the benefits gained. By the end of 2005, about 200,000 samples had been retained that would have been destroyed before the 2001 change in legislation. 8,000 of these samples matched with DNA taken from crime scenes, involving nearly 14,000 offences, including murders and rapes.

- *Are under 18s disproportionately represented?*

No. Under 18s make up 23% of all arrests, and so a comparative proportion of profiles is to be expected. There are no plans to introduce a universal compulsory or voluntary DNA database.”

Source: Home Office, www.homeoffice.gov.uk

The Home Office was the former government department responsible for security, law and order.

Document 2

The Independent newspaper: 5th September 2007

Top judge has recommended: ‘Put everyone on DNA database’

However, the Information Commissioner said: “I think we have to think very long and very hard before going down the road of a universal DNA database. This would be a massive database. There are risks of mix-ups and of human error, with serious consequences.” He said if a police officer “knocked on your door”, saying your DNA had been found at a crime scene, then “in effect, you have to start proving your innocence”.

The national co-ordinator of the NO2ID campaign against identity cards, said: “You can’t make an indefensible system better by expanding it. The only way to tackle the unfairness of the DNA database and restore trust in the system is to remove the records of every innocent person currently held.”

Extract from Top judge: ‘Put everyone on DNA database’,
05 September 2007 © The Independent, www.independent.co.uk

Document 3

BBC News: 5th September 2007

All UK 'must be on DNA database'

The present DNA database in England and Wales holds details of 4 million people who are guilty or cleared of a crime. One of England's most experienced appeal court judges said this was indefensible and biased against ethnic minorities. "We have a situation where if you happen to have been in the hands of the police then your DNA is on permanent record. If you haven't, it isn't. It means that a great many people who are walking the streets and whose DNA would show them guilty of crimes, go free." He said the only option was to expand the database to cover the whole population and all those who visited the UK, even for a weekend.

WHO IS ON THE DATABASE?

5.2% OF UK POPULATION

Nearly 40% of black men

13% of Asian men

9% of white men

Home Office and Census

A Home Office Minister denied the current database was unfair. He said any imbalance in the number of black and white youths whose DNA was stored reflected disproportionality in the Criminal Justice System rather than a problem with the database. He added that there were no plans to introduce DNA profiling for everyone in the UK.

The president of the Black Police Association said the current system was unfair and backed the call for a universal database. "You can't have a system where so many black youths who have done nothing wrong, are perhaps going to the police station for elimination from a crime and they later find that their DNA has been put on the database."

Extract from BBC News at <http://news.bbc.co.uk>, 05 September 2007

Document 4

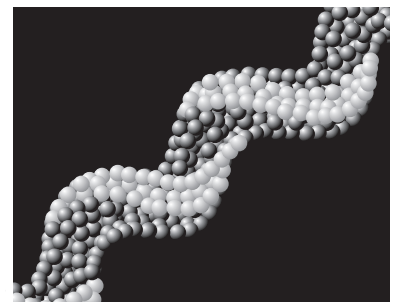
Panorama press release: 24th September 2007

Two thirds polled in favour of compulsory national DNA database

Sixty-six per cent of those questioned for BBC One's Panorama said they would approve of a new law requiring all adults to give a sample of their DNA to help with the prevention and detection of crime.

DNA is found in virtually all cells. Only a tiny sample of saliva or blood or flakes of skin, or strands of hair etc, are needed to compare the suspect's DNA with that found at the scene of the crime. Testing may identify an individual or hint at a relative and profiles can provide indications of ethnic origin. The probability of a chance match is less than one in one billion.

However a senior forensic scientist warns, "My opinion is that people put too much faith in DNA. We've shaken hands. My DNA will be on your hand. You may touch something outside of this room that I have never touched, and therefore my DNA will be somewhere where I have never been."



And, although rare, mistakes can happen. In Swindon, a man with Parkinson's disease was arrested and charged with a burglary in Bolton. He was frail and had never been there. But his DNA sample, it is claimed, matched one taken from the crime scene. Eventually it was admitted that he could not have done it.

'Panorama is a BBC 1 TV programme that gives in-depth reports on controversial issues.'

Extract: Two thirds polled in favour of compulsory national DNA database, BBC Press Release, 24 September 2007, www.bbc.co.uk



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- Document 3 *All UK 'must be on DNA database'*, 05 September 2007, © BBC News, <http://news.bbc.co.uk>. Reproduced by kind permission of BBC News Online.
- Document 4 *Two thirds polled in favour of compulsory national DNA database*, BBC Press Release, 24 September 2007, www.bbc.co.uk

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