
THINKING SKILLS

9694/21

Paper 2 Critical Thinking

May/June 2014

1 hour 45 minutes

Additional Materials: Answer Booklet/Paper

READ THESE INSTRUCTIONS FIRST

If you have been given an Answer Booklet, follow the instructions on the front cover of the booklet.

Write your Centre number, candidate number and name on all the work you hand in.

Write in dark blue or black pen.

Do not use staples, paper clips, glue or correction fluid.

DO NOT WRITE IN ANY BARCODES.

Answer **all** the questions.

Start each question on a new answer sheet.

At the end of the examination, fasten all your work securely together.

The number of marks is given in brackets [] at the end of each question.

This document consists of **6** printed pages and **2** blank pages.

- 1 Study the evidence and answer the questions that follow.

Source A

Extract

from Guidebook

Situated in Litho Park, Litho Hall was built in 1846 by Sir Thomas Marr and remained in his family until the death of his great-grandson, Sir Frederick, in 1936. The Hall was then acquired by the Litho Town Council, who used it as the premises for an art college. Since the college closed in 2003, the Hall has been unoccupied. Various plans have been put forward for alternative uses, but none of them has been implemented.

Source B

Advertisement

For Sale

Litho Town Council invites offers for the purchase of Litho Hall, a noble house located in Litho Park. Because the Hall is listed as an ancient monument, it must not be demolished and any re-development must retain its outward appearance. Enquiries and offers to Property Department, Litho Town Hall, Litho.

Source C

Extract

from Minutes of Meeting of Litho Town Council

The Leader of the Council, Councillor Fox, reported that there had been a few enquiries concerning the sale of Litho Hall, but no firm offers. Councillors expressed concern at the worsening appearance of the Hall and criticised Councillor Fox for failing to find a suitable buyer and new use for the building. Councillor Fox replied that he wished the Hall could be demolished, and the site offered for re-development, but unfortunately this was not possible. He was sure that if the Hall could be demolished, developers would be prepared to offer a good price for the empty site, which would repay the Council for the cost of maintaining the Hall over the last eighty years.

Source D

News report

from Litho Messenger

Litho Hall was damaged by a mysterious fire on Tuesday night. Early the following morning, the Town Surveyor inspected the site and declared the building dangerous. Bulldozers were already standing by, and demolition began at 7 am. By lunch-time, the Hall had been reduced to rubble and the site had been cleared.

The Leader of the Town Council, Councillor Fox, said that the disappearance of the familiar building was very regrettable, but he had had no alternative but to order its demolition for the sake of public safety. He stated that gangs of youths had been seen near the Hall on several occasions, and they must have deliberately started the fire.

A police spokesman said there had been unconfirmed reports of young people gathering in the park and some graffiti had been painted onto the walls of the Hall.

The Chief Fire Officer stated that on a preliminary inspection he had found no evidence that the fire had been started deliberately. He added that, since the electricity and gas supplies had been disconnected, it was hard to see how it could have begun accidentally. He was unable to perform a full investigation, because the Hall was already being demolished when he arrived for that purpose.

- (a) How significant is the advertisement in Source B in relation to the fire which damaged Litho Hall and caused it to be demolished? [3]
- (b) How reliable is the evidence of Councillor Fox regarding the likely cause of the fire, as reported in Source D? [3]
- (c) How significant is the evidence of the police spokesman in Source D in relation to the fire which damaged Litho Hall and caused it to be demolished? [3]
- (d) Who or what do you think caused the fire which damaged Litho Hall and caused it to be demolished? Write a short, reasoned argument to support your conclusion, with critical reference to the evidence provided and considering plausible alternative scenarios. [6]

2 Study the evidence and answer the questions that follow.

Source A

The Birthdate Effect

There is strong evidence from around the world that, on average, the youngest children in their year group at school perform less well than their older classmates. This is known as the 'birthdate effect'. In the UK, where the school year starts on 1st September, the disadvantage is greatest for children born during the summer months (June, July, August). The effect of being the youngest in the year group also applies in other countries where the school year begins at other times in the calendar year.

The birthdate effect is most pronounced during infant and primary school but it is still evident in the proportions of students who go to university.

The most likely explanation for this phenomenon is that the youngest children in a year group are, on average, less mature than their older classmates, leading to unequal competition that disadvantages the younger group.

Source B

Research report

An analysis of the birth dates of players selected for school representative sports teams was carried out at a high school in England. Autumn-born children, the oldest within their year groups, were found to be over-represented and summer-born pupils under-represented. In the selection of players for school sports teams, the autumn-born on average may be favoured due to initial advantages related to increased physical maturity.

Source C

Participation Rates in English Soccer Leagues by Dates of Birth

	<i>Sep–Nov</i>	<i>Dec–Feb</i>	<i>Mar–May</i>	<i>Jun–Aug</i>	<i>TOTAL</i>
<i>Premier</i>	288	190	147	136	761
<i>Division 1</i>	264	169	154	147	734
<i>Division 2</i>	251	168	123	131	673
<i>Division 3</i>	217	169	121	102	609
<i>TOTAL</i>	1020	696	545	516	2777

Source D

UK Blogger

I don't agree with this research at all. I was born in June and I have two first-class honours degrees, but my daughter was born in December and she never went to university. So, as far as I am concerned, it is not true that people who are born in the autumn or early winter are cleverer than people born in the summer. The point about sport may be true, however, because I have never been any good at sport.

- (a) Can it be reliably concluded from Source A that university students who were born early in the school year are likely to gain better degrees than those born at other times of the year? Briefly justify your answer. [2]
- (b) Source B explains why the birthdate effect might occur in school sport, but this explanation does not apply to adult footballers, because they are not competing only against people from the same school year. Yet Source C shows that the birthdate effect does still influence players' chances of becoming a professional footballer.

Suggest **two** possible explanations for why the effect of birth date on sporting ability seems not to disappear in adulthood. [4]

- (c) How effectively does the blogger in Source D respond to the claims in Sources A and B? [3]
- (d) 'Parents who want to do the best for their children should ensure that they are born as close to September as possible.'

To what extent do you agree with this claim? Write a short, reasoned argument to support your conclusion, using and evaluating the information provided in Sources A–D. [6]

3 *Read the passage and answer the questions below.*

- 1 It has often been proposed that an international language should be introduced alongside national languages, in order to make communication between different countries easier. Since wars are caused by misunderstanding, the introduction of a single language would bring about world peace.
- 2 During the first half of the 20th century, several artificial languages were published for this purpose, but more recently it has become generally agreed that a new language is not needed, since English has already become the international language. However, to use any natural language for international communications is doubly unfair on the speakers of other languages. Those whose language is chosen are spared the time and effort needed to master a foreign language, and they have a greater ability at using the international language than anyone who has had to learn it alongside their own language.
- 3 Of all the languages already devised for international use, Esperanto is the most suitable. It has far more speakers than any other artificial language. It is easy to learn, because its grammar is perfectly regular and it draws its vocabulary from natural languages.
- 4 There would be big educational advantages in introducing Esperanto into the school curriculum. Even children with little ability at languages can learn it, while it is an excellent introduction to language-learning for those who do have an aptitude for languages. For all these reasons, Esperanto should be adopted as the international language.
- 5 The only reason why some people might be reluctant to learn this international language is that at first it will be of little use to them, because so few people already know it. These objectors are motivated by their own comfort and convenience rather than long-term benefits to everyone. Furthermore, that is a very weak objection, because all new methods of communication – such as cars, telephones and the Internet – are of little use until a significant number of people have adopted them, but once some brave people have taken the plunge they become essential parts of everyday life.

- (a) Using the exact words from the passage as far as possible, identify the main conclusion. [2]
- (b) Using the exact words from the passage as far as possible, identify **three** reasons used to support the main conclusion. [3]
- (c) Evaluate the strength of the reasoning in the argument. In your answer you should consider any flaws, unstated assumptions and other weaknesses. [5]
- (d) 'All children should learn a foreign language at school.'

Write your own short argument to support **or** challenge this claim. The conclusion of your argument must be stated. [5]

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