

**ADVANCED SUBSIDIARY GCE  
CRITICAL THINKING**

UNIT 2: Assessing & Developing Argument

**RESOURCE BOOKLET**

**MONDAY 14 JANUARY 2008**

**F492/01/RB  
F492/02/RB**

Afternoon

Time: 1 hour 45 minutes



**INSTRUCTIONS TO CANDIDATES**

- Use Documents 1 and 2 to answer all the questions in Section B and C.

This document consists of **4** printed pages.

## Document 1

### Child of our time

The birth rate in England and Wales has fallen to its lowest level since 1924 with women having only 1.64 babies each on average. The problems caused by a lack of young people in a declining, but increasingly old, population have prompted some to suggest that we should change social policy to encourage women to have more children. However, the arguments below show that the consequences of this approach could be disastrous. It would be wrong to encourage more women to have children.

1

Women have increasingly moved from the domestic sphere into education and work. In the 1970s (just after the baby boom of the 1960s) only 60% of women worked, whereas this year that figure is 70%. In many families, the woman is now the main bread-winner. If we were to suggest that more women had babies, this trend towards equality of the sexes would be reduced and many families' finances would be damaged. Encouraging an increased birth rate could have terrible social consequences.

2

Currently the world's population is increasing at a rate of 91 million per year, despite a slight fall in Europe. Everyone knows that there are not enough precious resources to go round, shown by the pictures of starving children that are always on our T.V. screens. The world is clearly over-populated and encouraging a rise in birth rate in this country will put even more strain on the planet's resources. The only solution is to have a global population *decrease*.

3

Despite the current pressure on teenagers *not* to have babies, Britain has the highest rate of teenage pregnancies in Europe and every year over 20,000 young girls under 18 ruin their chances in life by becoming pregnant. 90% of teenage mums are in the poorest third of society and only 28% are in education. Teenage mums are facing a bleak future. Swapping to a pro-baby message can only make this situation worse.

4

There are also unacceptable financial costs involved in bringing up children. The average cost of raising a child from birth to the age of 21 is now an eye-watering £140,000. Parents who comfort themselves with the idea of their child looking after them financially later in life had better think again – an increasing number of parents (currently 2 million) have children over the age of 30 living at home! Add in the effect of rising house prices and we will soon have a situation where children never leave home. Before we know it, we will have a generation of children who never grow up and are totally dependent upon their parents.

5

It would be wrong to bring more children into such a cruel world. There are so many stresses on a young child, such as fears about bullying and crime, not to mention the terrible effect of peer pressure. No parent can reasonably protect their child from all these dangers and if we cannot protect them, it would be better not to have them.

6

**Document 2****The case of the only-child**

Although wrong, negative stereotypes about only-children have been around since the early 1900s. It started in the Victorian era (a period well known for peculiar ideas about sex and families) and became accepted academic wisdom in the 1920s. This was mainly due to the theories of the psychologist, Alfred Adler. He suggested that only-children were unable to relate properly to others. At that time, only-children were thought to be spoiled, selfish and developmentally restricted.

1

However, most of his theories are now being challenged so he is bound to be wrong in this case also. Some recent research has suggested that only-children are at a slight advantage in terms of motivation and academic achievement. This is common sense since an only-child is bound to get more attention from its parents than a child in a large family. If there are benefits to being an only-child, parents would be better to have just one child.

2

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