

**ADVANCED SUBSIDIARY GCE  
CRITICAL THINKING**

Unit 1: Credibility of Evidence

**RESOURCE BOOKLET**

**MONDAY 19 MAY 2008**

**F491/RB**

Afternoon  
Time: 1 hour 15 minutes



**INSTRUCTIONS TO CANDIDATES**

- Use Documents 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 to answer the questions.

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

There is a dispute as to whether disposable nappies are no worse for the environment than reusable cloth nappies in terms of raw materials, manufacture, use and disposal.

## Document 1

### **Absorbent Hygiene Products Manufacturers Association (AHPMA)**

**News Release:** May 2005

#### **Disposable nappies are no worse for the environment than reusables**

A government body, the UK Environmental Agency, has commissioned a study which looked at and evaluated the environmental impacts of disposable and reusable nappies. This study found that there was little or nothing to choose between the two types of nappies. The agency stated, "The study was carried out by independent environmental consultants, and is the most comprehensive and thorough independent study of its kind ever undertaken."

The Director General of AHPMA commented, "AHPMA welcomes this independent and conclusive study. The disposable nappy industry acknowledges the contribution of disposable nappies to total solid waste. Disposable nappies make up 2.4% of household waste (Government Strategy Unit Report 2002.) Household waste represents 4% of total solid waste. Therefore, disposable nappies make up only 0.1% of total solid waste. Disposable nappies are also compatible with waste management, which may use this waste to produce energy. As disposable nappies are the choice of 95% of UK parents, we consider the government funding of the Waste Resources Action Programme (WRAP), to promote real nappies, disproportionate to any real waste benefits."

*AHPMA – is the trade association that represents key UK manufacturers of disposable nappies.*

## Document 2

**Daily Mail:** July 2007

#### **Should you use disposable nappies?**

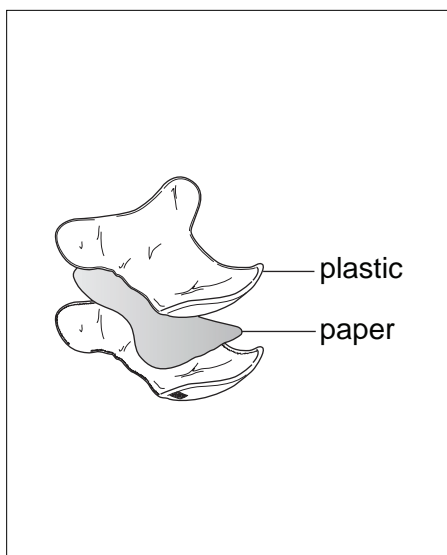
The former Waste minister confirmed the end of the WRAP nappy campaign, "Reusable nappies may reduce demands on landfill but they still impact on the environment in other ways, such as the water and energy used in washing and drying them. None of the systems studied were more or less environmentally preferable."

He said that in future it might be possible to get rid of nappies by leaving them in garden compost bins. It is estimated that at least three billion disposable nappies are thrown away every year in the UK, costing local authorities £40 million a year to treat.

## Document 3

BBC News online: October 2004

### Plans to build a nappy recycling plant



The charity Groundwork plans to build a £1 million facility which would process nearly 20,000 tonnes of waste every year. Each baby uses 1 tonne of disposable nappies.

Groundwork claimed, "A disposable nappy is mainly made up of paper and a bit of plastic to stop it leaking. They can be quite easily extracted and recycled. It gets a bit more difficult with the various specialist polymers used to absorb moisture but even they can be recycled and reused." Even the baby waste can be processed and used as a fertiliser on woodland or flower beds.

## Document 4

### Women's Environmental Network (WEN)

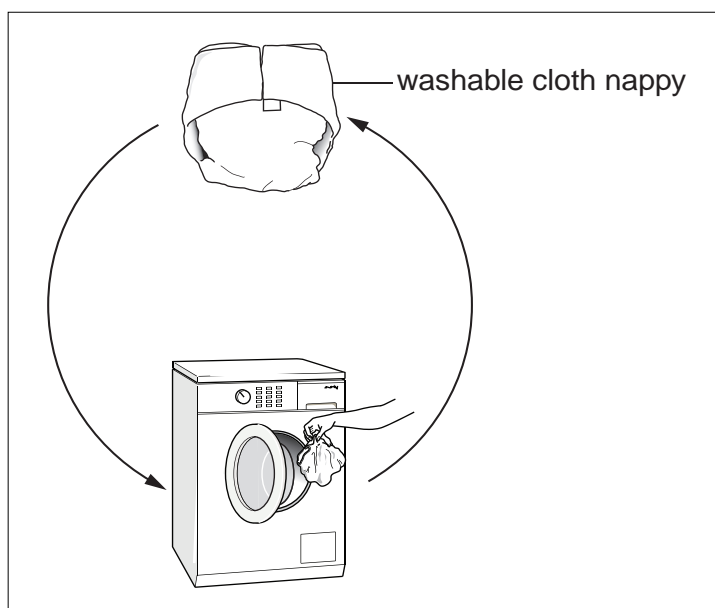
#### Media statements:

- WEN May 2005

The study commissioned by the UK Environment Agency comparing the environmental impacts of disposable and cloth nappies is seriously flawed. The conclusion misses the point of its own findings. The study says that both systems use similar amounts of energy, however the disposable system uses more materials and puts more into landfill. Even in its current flawed state the study shows that parents who use reusable nappies can save waste, confident in the knowledge that washing them will cause no more global warming than disposable nappies.

- WEN July 2007

Parents can prevent waste going to landfill and reduce the global warming impact of their nappy use by a quarter, by choosing reusables, despite reports to the contrary. Government funding for WRAP to support real nappy schemes was not a waste of money, as it diverted 26,000 tonnes of disposable nappy waste from landfill.



#### WRAP:

A £2.6 million government funded programme to promote real nappies spread over 2 years, 2004–2006.

Its planned target was to divert 35,000 tonnes of disposable nappy waste from landfill by April 2006.

*WEN – a registered charity 'Educating, empowering and informing women and men who care about the environment and health issues from a female perspective.'*

## Document 5

**The Ecologist magazine:** February 2005

### Reusable nappies

The Green Pages editor asks: "Do you want the best for your baby, but don't want to harm the environment? Then use reusable nappies.

85% of people are using disposable nappies. They form 4% of all household waste, costing the taxpayer £40m each year to dispose of them. Disposable nappies use three and a half times more energy than real nappies to produce, eight times more non-renewable materials and ninety times more renewable resources.

The 3 billion disposable nappies thrown away each year add 1 million tonnes of nappy waste to our already overfull landfill sites. They then take up to 500 years to decompose, additionally producing the potent greenhouse gas methane and a toxic liquid that can leak into soil and local water supplies. Those that aren't landfilled get incinerated, resulting in the release of cancer causing dioxins into the atmosphere and creating ash containing heavy metals and other toxins which needs to be landfilled."

*About us: 'For 35 years The Ecologist has helped set environmental and political agendas around the world. It challenges conventional thinking and empowers readers to tackle global issues on a local scale.'*

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#### Copyright Acknowledgements:

Document 1	Source: AHPMA, May 2005, <a href="http://www.nappyinformationservice.co.uk">www.nappyinformationservice.co.uk</a> .
Document 2	Source: 'The great real nappy debate...', by Steve Doughty, The Daily Mail, 3 July 2007.
Document 3	Source: BBC News, October 2004, <a href="http://www.news.bbc.co.uk">www.news.bbc.co.uk</a> .
Document 4	Source: WEN, <a href="http://www.wen.org.uk">www.wen.org.uk</a> .
Document 5	Source: 'Reusable nappies', by Matilda Lee, The Ecologist Magazine, February 2005; <a href="http://www.theecologist.org">www.theecologist.org</a> .

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