



Verbal Reasoning Practice Test 5

Solution Booklet

The Wootton Report of 1968 concluded that cannabis smoking is basically harmless. A British Medical Association report of 2007 reported that cannabis can have a therapeutic value in the treatment of certain medical conditions. Another independent study by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation in 2002 concluded that relaxing the cannabis laws and reclassifying it as a Class C drug could save the police £38 million a year and improve relations between the police and the community. Yet today it is still classified as a Class B drug; it is illegal to grow, possess or supply the drug. If caught in possession, offenders can be jailed for 5 years; 14 years for trafficking. The number of adults using the drug has doubled in the last decade to around 4 million. They consume around 800 tonnes and spend £3.5 billion every year. The main argument against the use of cannabis is that it can lead on to the use of harder drugs.

Q1 The Wootton report recommended reclassifying cannabis as a Class C drug.

True False **Cannot say**

The passage tells us that the Wootton Report concluded that cannabis is "basically harmless" but we are not told whether the report made any recommendations in respect of the classification of cannabis.

Q2 A British Medical Association report of 2007 suggested that there can be therapeutic value in using cannabis to treat some symptoms which could not be alleviated with normally prescribed medication.

True False **Cannot say**

Whilst the British Medical Association report reported that there can be therapeutic value in using cannabis for certain medical conditions, the passage does not state whether the symptoms of these conditions can or cannot be alleviated with normally prescribed medication.

Q3 Offenders can be jailed for 5 years for being caught in possession of cannabis.

True False Cannot say

The passage explicitly says, "If caught in possession, offenders can be jailed for 5 years".

Q4 A study by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation has concluded that reclassifying cannabis as a Class C drug could result in savings for the police but would compromise relations between the police and the public.

True

False

Cannot say

According to the passage, the Rowntree study reported that police would save money (£38 million) if cannabis was reclassified. However, the study also reported that the measure could improve relations between the police and the community.

It is believed that around 12% of absence from work in the UK is not genuine. If this figure is correct, this amounts to about 21 million lost days every year at an annual cost to the country of more than £1.5 billion. The main contributor to non-genuine absence is 'pulling sickies' i.e. employees calling in sick when they are not sick. To reduce this practice, the government is considering introducing lie detector technology to catch people out. The system, known as 'Voice Risk Analysis' (VRA), developed by the outsourcing firm Capita, can identify lies by picking up changes in a caller's voice on the telephone. The system has already been successfully trialled by some local authorities to detect false benefit claims. Of these, Harrow Borough Council claims to have saved £420,000 during the year-long trial. If the system is introduced by employers, then many employees would think twice about lying.

Q5 Changes in people's voices can be used to detect lies.

True **False** **Cannot say**

The passage states that a lie detector system, known as Voice Risk Analysis, "can identify lies by picking up changes in a caller's voice". The passage also states that the government is considering introducing lie detector technology to "catch out" people who call in sick when they are not sick (i.e. who are lying). From these statements together it can be deduced that it is possible to use changes in people's voices to detect lies.

Q6 Voice Risk Analysis does not work when used over the telephone.

True **False** **Cannot say**

The passage tells us that "The system, known as 'Voice Risk Analysis'...can identify lies by picking up changes in a caller's voice on the telephone".

Q7 Harrow Borough Council has already used this system and saved an estimated £420,000 from the reduction in the number of 'sickies'.

True **False** **Cannot say**

The savings claimed by Harrow Borough Council have been made by detecting false benefit claims, not from reducing 'sickies'. Since the passage tells us that the government is considering using the system to detect false absenteeism, it therefore cannot currently be being used by Harrow Borough Council for this purpose.

With the Liberal Democrats averaging around 20% in recent polls, some are questioning again whether it's time for reform in the UK voting system. The 'first past the post' system (FPP) seems unfair since it does not give minor parties the number of MPs in proportion to the number of popular votes they receive. The Electoral Reform Society estimates that under FPP about 2/3 of seats are 'safe' and therefore not genuinely contestable at each election. So what are the alternatives? The Alternative Vote system (AV) allows voters to select candidates in order of preference. If no candidate has a clear majority (50% or more of the vote), then voters' second choices are taken into consideration. Another system, Mixed Member Proportionality (MMP), allows voters two votes - one for the constituency member and one for the party of their choice. This system elects two categories of MP - constituency members and list members. The number of list members is determined by the proportion of votes gained by each party.

Q8 If an election were held today under the 'Alternative Vote' system, the Liberal Democrats would win about 20% of the seats in parliament.

True False **Cannot say**

The passage states that the Liberal Democrats averaged around 20% in recent polls. It implies that the polls reflect the popular vote (i.e. what proportion of the population would vote for that party) and that the popular vote for minor parties is under-represented by the FPP system. However the passage does not suggest that the polls reflect the number of seats the Liberal Democrats would receive under any system.

Q9 The Electoral Reform Society estimates that under FPP only about 1/3 of seats are truly contestable at each general election.

True False Cannot say

The Electoral Reform Society estimates that 2/3 of seats are 'safe'. The other 1/3, therefore, are truly contestable.

Q10 Mixed Member Proportionality is a better system because it elects two MPs for each constituency.

True **False** Cannot say

According to the passage, under MMP voters have two votes, but they do not elect two constituency members. The second vote is for the party of their choice, which allows list members to be elected. The number of list members for each party is in proportion to the votes received for that party.

In 2005, Isabelle Dickson, a French woman who had been mauled by her dog was the first patient to receive a partial face transplant. She was given a new nose, chin and lips. Since then, five other partial face transplants have been carried out in France, the US and China. The Chinese patient has since died, but other patients have adapted well to their new faces. Now new ground has been broken once again in France with the world's first full face transplant. A French man who had been severely burned in an accident was given a new face that included every feature - even his scalp, forehead, nose, ears and eyelids. He was also given new hands at the same time. Approval for full face transplants in the UK was given nearly four years ago. As yet no such operations have been carried out in the UK because rigorous patient selection procedures have meant very slow progress on those going through the system.

Q11 The most recent development in facial transplants occurred in France.

True False **Cannot say**

The fifth sentence tells us "now new ground has been broken once again in France with the world's first full face transplant". However we don't know when the article was written; it is possible some developments occurred after the article was written.

Q12 The drawbacks of face transplants are the possibility of rejection of the donor's tissue and the fact that the patient has to endure the side effects of the immunosuppressant drugs.

True False **Cannot say**

These points may be valid, but there is no mention of these side effects in the passage.

Q13 Face transplant operations have not been carried out in the UK because there are no patients requiring this kind of operation.

True **False** Cannot say

The passage states that rigorous selection procedures have "meant very slow progress on those going through the system". So from this we know there must be patients requiring face transplants in order for there to be patients "in the system".

Modbury, a town of just 1,500 residents, lies on the A379, the main route east to Plymouth and the beaches of South Devon. On 1st May 2007 Modbury became the first plastic bag-free town in Britain. The owners of the supermarket and the 40 or so small shops have all agreed that they will no longer pack goods in plastic bags. Plastic bags, which can take up to 1,000 years to break down, are an environmental hazard in our countryside and on our beaches. Every year around 200 million plastic bags are found littering the streets and beaches of the UK. Marine animals can mistake plastic bags for food and often die when they swallow them. The town of Modbury has made this decision as a commitment towards preserving the local environment. Modbury shoppers are encouraged to bring their own shopping bags, use the reusable cotton, environmentally friendly bags donated by the supermarket, or use disposable cornstarch or paper bags.

Q14 From 1st May 2007 you will no longer find a plastic bag in Modbury.

True False **Cannot say**

The passage states that shops in Modbury have agreed to no longer pack goods in plastic bags, but there may well still be plastic bags remaining in people's homes.

Q15 The lifetime of a plastic bag is 1,000 years.

True False **Cannot say**

The passage tells us that plastic bags can take up to 1,000 years to break down (in landfills for example), but the passage does not say anything about how long any given plastic bag will last. The statement in the question implies that all plastic bags last 1,000 years, regardless of the length of their useful life and life after being discarded. This is unlikely, but going on the information in the passage alone, we cannot say whether it is true or not.

Q16 The UK produces around 200 million plastic bags every year.

True False **Cannot say**

The passage states that around 200 million plastic bags are found littering UK streets and beaches every year. The passage does not say how the bags got there or from where they came, and does not indicate what connection there is, if any, between the number of bags found and production volumes.

Q17 The local supermarket in Modbury donates reusable cotton bags to customers.

True False Cannot say

The last sentence in the passage tells us that Modbury shoppers are encouraged to use the reusable cotton, environmentally friendly bags donated by the supermarket.

It was reported in January 2009 that 4,600 civil servants are employed without posts. Some of them still draw full salaries even though their areas of responsibility no longer exist. This includes over 2,800 in Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs, over 800 in the Ministry of Defence and more than 200 in the Foreign Office. Most amazing is the figure in the Department for Work and Pensions, where a reported 368 staff are paid for doing no work when they should be helping others to find work. The total annual bill to the taxpayer to pay these civil servants is estimated as £130 million. This situation has been described as 'a scandal' by the Shadow Minister for the Cabinet Office, Francis Maude. However, the Cabinet Office Minister Tom Watson has defended the figures, claiming that they include mothers returning from maternity leave who are waiting to be assigned to a new job and employees on short-term projects.

Q18 In January 2009, 4,600 civil servants were employed but without formal roles.

True False **Cannot say**

The passage says that in January 2009 "it was reported" that this was true; it does not say that it was in fact true.

Q19 There are a reported 368 staff in the Department for Work and Pensions who are claiming unemployment benefit.

True False **Cannot say**

It is claimed that these 368 staff are employed by the Department for Work and Pensions, but do no work. The passage does not mention whether or not anyone on the payroll of the Department for Work and Pensions receives unemployment benefit.

Q20 Shadow Minister for the Cabinet Office, Francis Maude, is quoted as saying, "If there's no work for them, they should be given their marching orders."

True False **Cannot say**

The passage states that Mr Maude has described the situation as 'a scandal', but attributes no other quotes to him.

A fossilised skeleton of a lemur-like animal recently found in Germany could be a missing link in the evolutionary chain of human ancestry. Jorn Hurum, a palaeontologist from Oslo, Norway, and his team have studied the 47 million year old fossil and say it provides a link between lemurs and the higher primates that include apes, monkeys and humans. The lemur-like creature, named 'Ida' has characteristics similar to those of higher primates including short limbs, nails instead of claws, hands that can grasp things, and opposable thumbs. The most remarkable thing about the fossil is that it is so well preserved, showing evidence of fur and soft tissue as well as the remains of a meal. However, a biological anthropologist at George Washington University, Brian Richmond, says it provides only one branching point in the evolutionary tree and there's still a big gap in the fossil record. Ida's discovery probably provides more questions than answers.

Q21 Ida is a fossilised skeleton of a lemur-like creature recently found in Norway.

True

False

Cannot say

According to the passage, Ida was found in Germany. The palaeontologist who led the team studying Ida is from Norway.

Q22 Ida had short limbs, nails instead of claws, and opposable thumbs.

True

False

Cannot say

The passage states that Ida has the characteristics of short limbs, nails and opposable thumbs that distinguish higher primates.

Q23 Ida's European origins show that the European continent was an important area for primate evolution.

True

False

Cannot say

The passage implies that so far Ida is a unique discovery and there is no mention about the importance of Europe in primate evolution. Further, the passage states that there is still a big gap in the fossil record, implying that the true importance of geographical areas may not yet be known.

The price of a barrel of oil, which fell from around \$147 in July 2008 to just \$36 in December 2008, has shown an increase in recent months to around \$60 a barrel in May 2009. The oil ministers of Saudi Arabia and Iran believe that, as the world recovers from the global recession, the price of oil will increase further and there may be another price shock ahead similar to that of last year. To prevent this happening experts agree that now is the time to invest in exploration and the development of new fields. However, the opposite is happening. The number of drilling rigs in use around the world fell by 32% in the year to April, and big companies such as Shell and BP have delayed expansion plans and cut staff. Oil-rich states, such as Saudi Arabia (whose king thinks \$75 a barrel is a fair price), are happy to see the price rise again to increase their revenue.

Q24 The price of a barrel of oil more than halved between July 2008 and May 2009.

True False Cannot say

We are told that the price of a barrel of oil fell from around \$147 in July 2008 to around \$60 in May 2009. Half of \$147 is \$73.50, so a price of \$60 equates to a drop of more than half.

Q25 To prevent oil prices spiralling again to new heights, experts agree that oil companies need to reduce investment in exploration and the development of new fields.

True **False** Cannot say

The passage states that this is happening, but that experts agree that to avoid prices spiralling upwards oil companies should be doing the opposite, i.e., investing in exploration and developing new fields.

Q26 A fair price for a barrel of oil is \$75.

True False **Cannot say**

The passage presents this figure as the opinion of the king of Saudi Arabia, who is also stated to have an interest in seeing the price rise. The question of what is a 'fair' price is a subjective one, to which suppliers and consumers may have differing answers..

Acupuncture originated in China at least 2,000 years ago but is widely used in other East Asian countries. Before the early part of the twentieth century, acupuncture needles were large and inserted deeply at the site of the problem. Today they use smaller, fine needles which are inserted at strategic points in the body. These points give access to 14 channels that connect the bodily organs, called meridians. It is believed by some that a natural energy called Qi flows freely through the meridians of a healthy person. Qi consists of two opposite forces, Yin and Yang. When a person is ill, the Yin and Yang are out of balance, or the Qi is blocked. The aim of acupuncture is to restore this balance and thus harmony and health in the patient. Acupuncture is an invasive technique, so there are risks in its use - of harm to bodily organs from incorrect positioning of needles, or from infection. Although there is evidence that acupuncture can give some pain relief, its treatment of other diseases is not proven and you would be better off visiting a conventional doctor.

Q27 Acupuncture has been used in Europe since the early 18th century.

True False **Cannot say**

This is in fact true, but there is no mention of this in the passage.

Q28 Today acupuncturists use large needles inserted at the site of the problem.

True **False** Cannot say

The passage states that this was the method used before the early twentieth century. Today smaller, fine needles are used, which are inserted at strategic points in the body.

Q29 Acupuncturists believe that a natural energy called Qi flows through channels in our bodies called meridians.

True False **Cannot say**

From the passage alone, we are not told what acupuncturists as a whole do or do not believe. The text does say "It is believed by some that a natural energy called Qi flows freely through the meridians of a healthy person". However the text does not tell us who believes this.

Q30 The only risk associated with acupuncture is infection from needles.

True **False** Cannot say

The passage states that “there are risks in its use – of harm to bodily organs from incorrect positioning of needles, or from infection”. So there is more than one single risk associated with acupuncture.