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FOREWORD

This booklet contains reports written by Examiners on the work of candidates in certain papers. **Its contents are primarily for the information of the subject teachers concerned.**

THINKING SKILLS

GCE Advanced Level and GCE Advanced Subsidiary Level

Paper 8436/01
Multiple Choice

<i>Question Number</i>	<i>Key</i>	<i>Question Number</i>	<i>Key</i>
1	B	26	D
2	C	27	D
3	D	28	B
4	C	29	B
5	E	30	A
6	C	31	D
7	D	32	A
8	C	33	B
9	C	34	B
10	E	35	B
11	B	36	D
12	E	37	E
13	C	38	E
14	E	39	C
15	B	40	C
16	A	41	D
17	B	42	B
18	E	43	C
19	C	44	C
20	E	45	C
21	D	46	D
22	A	47	C
23	C	48	E
24	E	49	C
25	B	50	A

Paper 8436/02
Paper 2

General comments

Performance was similar to that of previous years over the whole Paper. **Question 1** proved more difficult than the norm, but there were parts of **Question 2** which compensated. **Question 3** was, as always, the section which candidates found most demanding.

Performance varied noticeably between Centres, with evidence that teaching and preparation made a significant difference to attainment level. Whilst critical thinking cannot be taught in the same way as a knowledge-based subject, there are techniques and attitudes which can be instilled, and it was apparent that many candidates had been well-prepared in this respect. The examples of thinking that Examiners looked for are those associated with careful analysis and evaluation, leading to considered judgement. The candidates who worked on the questions in a casual, unsystematic fashion ran the risk of losing marks that were there for the taking.

Answers do not need to be long, although they do need to address all the key points, and to deal with them in sufficient depth to demonstrate understanding. Some candidates do in fact write too much, repeating points or giving them undue prominence. 'Don't ramble; be precise' is advice which cannot be over-stressed. Especially where a question has only one or two marks available, a short succinct response is the best, without elaboration, and will spare candidates more time for other, more discursive sections of the Paper.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

There were large variations in performance on this question, with a high proportion of candidates arguing for a 'guilty' verdict on the driver Crowe, and evaluating the evidence in ways which supported that conclusion, rather than objectively and critically. The most sustainable conclusion to be drawn from the evidence in this scenario is that the case is unproven. As likely as it may seem, on the grounds of motive, opportunity, reputation, that Crowe seized the chance to win the championship by unsporting means, there is simply not sufficient ground to accuse him of an intentional act. The possibility that the collision was just an accident; even that it was Farr's fault and not Crowe's, is too strong to ignore; and this is the conclusion that was required for the highest range of scores.

However, candidates (and there were large numbers of them) who felt that the weight of circumstantial and hearsay evidence, together with the judgements of most of the witnesses, amounted to a strong case against Crowe still scored marks in the 10-13 range, if they argued persuasively and consistently and/or if they qualified their conclusion appropriately, e.g. by saying that Crowe probably ran Farr off the track.

Too many candidates lost marks by failing to note room for reasonable doubt, and perhaps even more so by failing to note the subjectivity of much of the evidence. For instance, Akram's evidence was almost entirely speculative and judgemental. He was not condemnatory, but he expressed a cynical view about motor racing, winning, and the world champion, implying that Crowe was perfectly capable of unsporting but understandable tactics, and had done such things in the past. Too many candidates seized on this, together with previous 'controversies' surrounding Crowe, to infer that therefore he must be guilty on this occasion, instead of correctly noting that Crowe's acquittal on previous occasion conflicted with Akram's innuendo.

Many also took the smile recorded by the TV cameras as proof of intention. Few noted that Crowe only 'appeared' to be smiling, though many to their credit did observe that the smile did not necessarily denote satisfaction, less still satisfaction at having intentionally cheated.

The evidence of the journalist was also treated by many candidates as far more authoritative than it deserved, and very few noted that her evidence was both 'hearsay' and involved interpretation on her part. Many did earn marks by noting that she may have had a motive for exaggerating the significance of the overheard remarks, i.e. to make her copy more saleable.

The overhead cameras were recognised by most candidates as 'hard' evidence, but too many read into the pictures what they had already decided, ignoring the fact that in the third of the frames Farr would appear to be encroaching on Crowe, more than Crowe on Farr. The right inference to draw from the pictures is that they do not support the accusations and assumptions of other witnesses; nor does the race official, who (a) was probably hindered from seeing clearly by spray and (b) thought it looked like an accident. Some made the unacceptable inference that the official's inability to see well proved that his judgement was wrong and that Crowe was at fault, so again jumping too hastily to a conclusion and then seeking to justify it. The key skill being tested by this category of question is the ability to evaluate evidence and form judgements on the basis of that evaluation, not to use evidence selectively to support a preconception or hasty verdict.

Question 2

- (a) Few problems were encountered here. Most candidates recognised the conclusion and paraphrased them accurately.
- (b) Most candidates correctly observed that paragraph 2 challenged the first paragraph, and explained how. Fewer went on to earn the second mark for noting that the challenge was not very effective, given the lack of quantitative data about relative costs.
- (c) This question got a mixed response. Marks were available for each point supporting or questioning the fairness of the analogy. Most candidates scored one or two marks.
- (d) No widespread difficulties.
- (e) This proved a challenging question, and few candidates correctly identified the target of the claim that businesses should not interfere, which was that companies should combat employees' addictions if they could. A larger number correctly answered the second part of the question, evaluating the seriousness of the challenge (for one mark). Fewer went on to get the third available mark, e.g. for noting that the challenge was about private lives, and that it did not really question employers' rights or responsibilities in the workplace, where they arguably do have the right to intervene if the business is affected.

This question illustrates very well the need for careful reading of the question to see that all parts of it are addressed, to recognise where there are two sides to an argument, and to 'weigh' claims and counter claims carefully when asked to make an evaluation. It is not just the correct answer (if there is one) that gets credit in critical thinking assessment: it is the sensitivity of the reasoning. A good answer to this question, of the right length and degree of detail, would have been:

The objection challenges the claims that employers should take action to combat on-line-news addiction if they can (1). But this does nothing to weaken the main argument because the argument is about the way employees behave at work, not about how they live their private lives (2).

This is a good critical thinking response because it:

Demonstrates understanding of the argument, and the challenge to it (analysis/assessment)

Demonstrates an ability to respond to argument and counter-argument in a reasoned way (evaluation/further argument)

A response that took the opposite line - e.g. that employers have no right to interfere with employees' personal habits even at work, so long as they do their job, would earn the same mark, if supported by an appropriate reason.

- (f) In this question, predictably, marks were spread across the full range of 0-4. This question allows candidates to introduce further ideas of their own, but it also allows for developing arguments and objections found in the passage – for instance the objection seen in the previous **Question 2 (e)**. One mark was allocated for each point of further argument raised, and a second mark for supporting reasoning – example, explanation, analogy. Answers to this type of question do not need to be elaborate, but they do need to contain both these elements.

Question 3

As always, **Question 3** was the toughest assignment. It asks for a three-part response:

- Analysis (of the argument in the passage),
- Evaluation (of the claims, assumptions and strength and weakness of the reasoning),
- Further argument.

It is not necessary for candidates to separate these in their own essays, but it has to be said that to do, make it easier for themselves to address all three tasks. If the Examiner has to decide where the argument becomes further reasoning, it is more difficult to award full credit.

The key to success in any question of this type is recognising the main conclusion. Marks are awarded for recognising the general drift or direction of the argument, but to analyse it and then evaluate it at the top level (see mark scheme), correctly identifying the conclusion is step one. The next step is to pick out the main reasons given for the conclusion, leaving aside any background or contextual information. The last step is to organise the reasons to show how they relate to each other and to the conclusion, especially if one or more of the reasons is itself supported by other reasons to form an intermediate conclusion.

Here there were two lines of reasoning: one to argue that the court ruling is unjust, and the other to argue that it is foolish. This claim is not, however, the main conclusion: the main conclusion is that (because the ruling is unjust and foolish), owners would be wise to ignore it.

Many candidates got these two conclusions the wrong way round. A little reflection would have told them that it does not make good sense to say:

Owners should ignore the ruling, therefore it is unjust and foolish,

But it makes very good sense to say,

It is unjust and foolish and therefore owners should ignore it.

This simple test (though not infallible) gives one of the best clues as to which of two apparent conclusions is the main or final one, and candidates should be encouraged to employ it when drafting their essays.

Many, possibly most, natural arguments contain some information that 'sets out the stall' for the main argument but is not actually part of it. It is an important part of analysis to identify which parts are and which are not in the argument. In this case, just under half the passage (the first half) was background, 'historical' information, explaining what has generated the debate about tips, and giving the other side of the story. This provides the argument with a direction and something to argue against, i.e. the owner's case. Candidates who cited these parts of the passage as reasons for the conclusion were therefore failing to understand the structure of the passage, which was:

Par. 1:	Background information.
Par. 2:	The owner's case for keeping service charges
Par. 3 (sentence 1):	The Euro-court ruling.
Par. 3 (rest):	Conclusions – intermediate (IC) + main (MC)
Par. 4	Reasons for IC
Par. 5	More reasons for IC

Obviously analysis of all the elements of such an argument like this requires considerable perception. Candidates are strongly advised to do it first in rough and in note form to see if the argument, as they interpret it, hangs together and makes sense. This can be crossed out before starting on the essay, and will not be marked. Many candidates did this and benefited from it. It is worth the short time it takes.

Analysis and evaluation are assessed at three levels. The highest level of analysis requires candidates to identify the main conclusion and the main reasons, and to show that they understand how these relate to each other (as above), and/or that they can separate background information from the argument itself. The two lower levels require just the recognition of the conclusion and reasons, or of the general direction of the argument respectively.

The highest level of evaluation requires the candidate to comment on strengths and weaknesses, assumptions made (but not explicitly stated), and any flaws in the reasoning, as well as considering the acceptability of the reasons. Lower levels require some of these elements.

Many candidates missed the point of evaluation and treated it simply as stating some content. Some misrepresented the text in the process. For example, many said that (maybe) not all waiters are poorly paid/not all customers are ill-mannered. For this to be a valid criticism, the author would have to have claimed that waiters were all badly paid and all customers ill-mannered, but the author does not. All the further argument part of the argument is claiming is that if waiters are poorly paid, and lose their tips, they won't put up with ill-mannered customers and long hours. This part of the argument is not weak and certainly not flawed. What is unsound is the next claim, that 'standards ... will inevitably fall' as a result of lost tips. For this strong assertion there is no adequate support. There may be many ways in which a waiter could be compensated for the tips which would avert the crisis the author predicts.

Listing some of the ways in which waiters could be compensated properly belongs to further argument, although it serves two purposes because it also supports the point of evaluation. Candidates who made this, or a similar point, about the reasoning in paragraph 5 were therefore credited for both evaluation and further argument. It is also possible, however, to add completely new issues in the further argument section (so long as they are relevant). For example, it could have been said that tipping is out of date, or patronising, and should be abolished altogether, whoever gets to keep the money. Alternatively, further argument could have been generated by taking up the owners' case from paragraph 2 – and many candidates successfully did this.

Performance in **Question 3** was, as always, mixed, with a full range of being achieved by candidates. Many candidates who did well on other parts of the Paper came unstuck on **Question 3**, possibly because they had left it until last and spent too much time on other questions – a point worth discussing in preparation for the exam.

All in all, performance on **Question 3** shows the need for work on the techniques of analysis and evaluation, and adequate practice on passages like those found in the exam. Candidates need to adopt effective strategies and planned approaches to the question if they are to get higher marks. Many scripts showed that candidates have such strategies in place and were rewarded accordingly.