
THINKING SKILLS

9694/21

Paper 2 Critical Thinking

October/November 2018

1 hour 45 minutes

No Additional Materials are required.

READ THESE INSTRUCTIONS FIRST

An answer booklet is provided inside this question paper. You should follow the instructions on the front cover of the answer booklet. If you need additional answer paper ask the invigilator for a continuation booklet.

Answer **all** the questions.

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



This document consists of **6** printed pages, **2** blank pages and **1** Insert.

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

Source A

International survey of political corruption

2009

Corruption in Markovia is widespread, affecting the judicial system, police, education and health care. The collection of taxes and imposition of business regulations are inconsistent and controlled by vested interests.

There is no clear separation between public office and private enterprise. The government of Markovia has extensive powers to take possession of land and buildings for public purposes. In several cases, ownership of land acquired in this manner has subsequently been transferred to companies headed by leading politicians.

Source B

Report of World Bank investigation

2010

In 2004, the World Bank made a \$300 million loan to the government of Markovia to finance the improvement of water supplies. The aim of the project was to provide clean drinking water 24 hours a day to all households in the capital city. However, little progress has been made in improving the water supply. We were appointed by the World Bank to investigate the use of the loan. After scrutinising the records and all the work which had allegedly been done, our team of technical and financial investigators found little evidence that the money had been used to improve water supplies. Most of it had been paid to various individuals and companies without proper invoices or receipts.

Source C

Markovia news

June 2012

The United Nations has made a grant of \$80 million to our government, to finance a programme of investigation and action to eradicate corruption. The Prime Minister has announced that, because the removal of corruption from national life is the government's top priority, he will personally head the Anti-Corruption Commission. He has promised that the Commission will report within a year.

Source D

Markovia news

March 2015

The long-awaited report on corruption in public life in our country has been published. Announcing its conclusions, the Prime Minister stated that a thorough investigation by the Anti-Corruption Commission had not uncovered any evidence of wrong-doing by government ministers or senior officials, but improved accounting procedures would be introduced.

Source E

International survey of political corruption

2017

Markovian law-enforcement agencies secured convictions in 227 cases of ‘corruption crime’ in the first half of this year. This is an increase on the 198 such convictions during the same period last year. On the basis of this increase, Markovia has fallen from 82nd to 88th place in our annual ranking of corruption in 146 nations around the world. However, the Prime Minister of Markovia has claimed that this increase in the number of cases is good news.

- (a) How reliable is the report in Source B? Justify your answer. [3]
- (b) According to Source C, the Prime Minister appointed himself to head the Anti-Corruption Commission because he regarded the elimination of corruption as the top priority for his country.
Suggest and briefly explain **two** possible alternative motives for this appointment. [4]
- (c) According to Source E, the Prime Minister of Markovia has claimed that the increase in the number of corruption cases is good news. Explain how this could be true. [2]
- (d) How likely is it that the government of Markovia is reducing corruption?
Write a short, reasoned argument to support your conclusion, with critical reference to the evidence provided and considering a plausible alternative conclusion. [6]

2 *Study the evidence and answer the questions that follow.*

Source A

Research report

Students who said they played video games for less than 2 hours a week were selected for a psychological experiment. They took a series of tests at the beginning and the end of the experiment, and the difference in their performance at those two stages was recorded.

During the seven weeks of the experiment, each participant spent a total of 40 hours playing video games. They were divided into three equal-sized groups: one group played a simple version of StarCraft™, another played a more demanding version of StarCraft™; and the final group played The Sims™. StarCraft™ is a military science-fiction real-time strategy video game, while The Sims™ is a life-simulation game.

In some of the psychological tests there was no significant difference in performance before and after the video-gaming for any of the groups. However, in the tests which measured 'cognitive flexibility', the participants who had played the enhanced version of StarCraft™ showed a significant improvement.

Other researchers have found that vision, attentiveness, multi-tasking and the ability to rotate objects mentally are all improved by playing action video games.

Source B

Research report

Playing a simple video game has dramatically regenerated the brains of elderly people. The game is based on car-driving. Players navigate a car along a winding road while various signs pop up. They must push a button when they see one particular sign, while ignoring all the others. After just 12 hours of using the game during a month, the performance of the pensioners improved to such a degree that they became more successful at the game than much younger players.

Source C

Extract from book review

Baroness Susan Greenfield is a neuroscientist and populariser of science. She believes that the use of the internet, video games and social media are having an adverse physical impact on the brains of young people. Greenfield claims that she is looking at these trends "through the prism of neuroscience", but one of her critics has described this book as "bog-standard social commentary disguised as neuroscience". Greenfield's criticisms of the impact of video games on the brain focus on their effect on addiction, aggression and attention span. She argues that these games depict a world of simplistic moral judgments and without consequences, in which violence is glorified and normalised.

Source D

Medical news

Many surgical operations are now performed by ‘keyhole surgery’. Instead of opening the patient’s body in order to see what they are doing, surgeons insert instruments and a miniature camera through a small incision, and watch what they are doing on a computer screen.

Special computers known as ‘laparoscopic simulators’ have been devised to train surgeons in the specialised skills required for keyhole surgery, by imitating the conditions of an operation, without involving a patient.

It has been discovered that time spent playing video games also improves these skills. In one experiment, medical students practised on a first person shooter game for at least half an hour a day for 5 days a week over 5 weeks. They scored significantly better on a laparoscopic simulator than a matched group that had not been playing video games at all. In another experiment, junior surgeons performed better on the laparoscopic simulator after playing a balance game, using a motion-sensitive game console.

- (a) People who regularly play video games perform better in certain psychological tests than those who rarely or never play such games. This may be because playing the games develops the skills being tested.

Suggest an **alternative** explanation for the correlation between the games and the skills. [2]

- (b) Identify and explain **two** weaknesses in the evidence and/or reasoning in Source B. [4]

- (c) ‘Playing video games helps surgeons to perform operations better.’

Identify **three** weaknesses in the support which Source D gives for this claim. [3]

- (d) ‘People should be encouraged to play video games.’

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 The phrase 'Health & Safety' refers to regulations and procedures intended to prevent accidents from occurring in workplaces and public spaces. The scope of Health & Safety protection needs to be extended more widely. Fewer injuries and accidents at work have occurred since Health & Safety laws were introduced, and those which have happened have been less serious. Raising awareness of Health & Safety outside work settings will have similar benefits. After all, everyone wants to be healthy and safe.
- 2 Under Health & Safety legislation, employers are required to undertake 'risk assessments' of premises where people work. This is based on the duty of employers not to endanger their workers. But most accidents take place at home. No one would want to go back to the bad old days, when workers risked their lives and health every day. So all householders should be required by law to conduct a risk assessment of their homes.
- 3 Risk assessments are also required for activities organised as part of work or by community groups. Organisers have to identify everything which could go wrong and devise strategies to minimise the risk to participants and to the general public. The requirement to undertake risk assessments should be extended to all activities involving groups or individuals. Most of them are currently not protected, simply because they have been arranged informally, by individuals, families or friends; yet the risks are no less.
- 4 Every home should also have someone qualified in First Aid. If you are hurt at work or in a public place, you expect someone to be able to give simple medical assistance, such as putting a sticking plaster on a cut or giving an aspirin to relieve a pain. Similar help is even more likely to be needed at home.
- 5 Children have a moral right to be protected from harm. That is why schools and nurseries have detailed policies on Health & Safety, and their staff are trained in what to do in an emergency. Since few parents voluntarily take the trouble to do the same for their own children, they should be forced to do so.

- (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** intermediate conclusions. [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) 'Employers' duty of care for their workers should extend beyond the workplace.'

Write your own short argument to support **or** challenge this claim. The conclusion of your argument must be stated. Credit will not be given for repeating ideas from the passage. [5]

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