



Cambridge International AS & A Level

THINKING SKILLS

9694/21

Paper 2 Critical Thinking

May/June 2024

1 hour 45 minutes



You must answer on the enclosed answer booklet.

You will need: Answer booklet (enclosed)

INSTRUCTIONS

- Answer **all** questions.
- Follow the instructions on the front cover of the answer booklet. If you need additional answer paper, ask the invigilator for a continuation booklet.

INFORMATION

- The total mark for this paper is 50.
- The number of marks for each question or part question is shown in brackets [].

This document has **8** pages. Any blank pages are indicated.

Section A

Study the evidence and then answer Questions 1 and 2.

Source A

Advice to parents from the Government

As parents, you are responsible for ensuring that your child receives a full-time education from the age of 5, but you do not have to send them to school. There are many different reasons why you may choose to educate your child at home. You may be dissatisfied with the education available through the school system. Your child may have experienced bullying at school or be unwilling to go to school. You may feel that your child has special educational or mental health needs which are not being met within the school system.

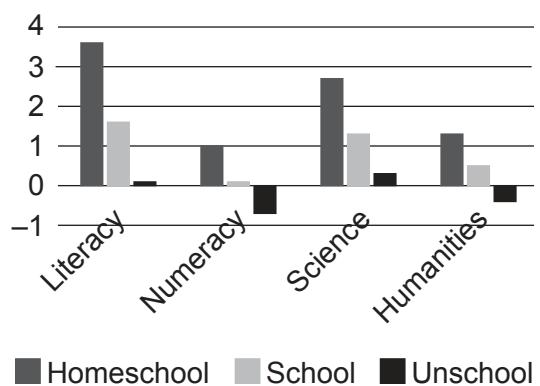
The education you provide must be suitable to the age, ability and aptitudes of the child and should aim to enable the child, when grown-up, to function as an independent citizen. However, it is not necessary for you to give formal lessons and there are no legal requirements for you to follow a timetable or to observe school hours, days or terms. You can pay for private tutors or online tuition if you wish, but you do not have to do so. School inspectors do not assess the education received by children who are educated at home.

Source B

Homeschooling support website

In a research project, students between the ages of 5 and 10 being educated in three different contexts were tested in four subject areas. Participation in these tests was voluntary. Students took the tests in the same location where they were being educated. The scores achieved were compared to the national average for students of the same age in school (marked 0 on the graph). The category 'homeschool' refers to education at home using structured lesson plans, while the category 'unschool' refers to unstructured education at home, in which children learn as a natural incidental consequence of daily life.

Comparative Academic Achievement by Grade Level



Source C

Christian parenting website

Parents are responsible before God for the care of the children He has entrusted to them. Spiritual education is even more important than academic education. In biblical times, children were primarily educated by their families and by living and working in their community. Faithful Christian parents may consider it right to do the same today.

In schools, children are exposed to the value systems of non-Christian students and teachers. Schools are soaked in anti-Christian beliefs, relative morality, and humanistic theories. Christian parents who homeschool their children can present academic subjects from a biblical worldview rather than a secular one. Instead of being taught the theory of evolution, for example, children can learn how God created the heavens and the earth.

Source D**Website of headteachers' association**

Parents who are considering homeschooling tend to underestimate the costs to themselves and their children. For one parent to remain at home instead of earning their own living greatly reduces the potential family income. There are additional costs involved in paying for resources which would be provided free of charge in a school. Homeschooled children miss out on such facilities as laboratories and sports fields. Most importantly, they lack opportunities for socialisation with other children, including playing team sports. Children who are homeschooled also do not learn to be independent of their parents, which may leave them ill-prepared to leave the security of home for college or work.

Source E**Post on social media**

I have had far fewer behavioural problems with my 10-year-old son since I began homeschooling him. The teachers at his old school tried to make him learn subjects like maths, even though he just does not understand them. He can learn much more from the internet. He likes finding out the hidden truth behind various historical events and current affairs. This morning, I could not understand what he was saying to me, and he told me he was talking in Russian, which he had taught himself from the internet.

1 (a) Assess the reliability of Source E. [3]

(b) Is Source C an argument? Justify your answer. [2]

(c) How reliably can it be concluded from Source A that parents in that country could avoid educating their children if they chose to do so? [3]

(d) In the research reported in Source B, students receiving structured education at home performed better than students at school. This may have been because such education is superior to education at school.

Suggest **two alternative** explanations for the improved performance. [4]

(e) Identify **two** ways in which Source C is significant to the issue of whether parents should be allowed to homeschool their children. [2]

2 You are advised to spend some time planning your answer before you begin to write it.

'All children should be compelled to attend school.'

To what extent do you agree with this claim? Write a short, reasoned argument to support your conclusion, using and evaluating the evidence provided. [8]

Section B

Read the following passage and then answer Questions 3, 4 and 5.

- 1 Most people trust their medical doctors and accept their recommendations without questioning them, but everyone should be cautious about accepting the advice of their doctor. This is important, because making poor decisions about medical treatments can lead to pain, disability and even premature death.
- 2 Many doctors are paid by patients for the medicines they provide or the procedures they perform, while others are employed by companies which rely on such payments for their income. Inevitably, these doctors are tempted to provide treatments which are profitable even if they are not clinically necessary. Undergoing a medical procedure because a doctor has recommended it is as unwise as buying an expensive upgrade for your computer because the engineer who installs the upgrade has told you it is needed.
- 3 Like members of other professions, doctors are now constantly assessed by statistical analyses of their work. They are expected to improve their success rates each year, but performing treatments only on people who will benefit from them will not help them to do so. They may therefore be tempted to extend treatment to those who are not ill at present but are judged to be at risk of developing an illness in the future. More of those people may meet the target of surviving for a certain number of years, but some would have done so even without the treatment, because they would not have developed the illness.
- 4 Many people think that if they fall ill it must be someone's fault and they want compensation from the guilty person. Although doctors should be guided solely by what they believe to be the best interests of their patients, they may instead be motivated by fear of legal action.
- 5 Many doctors who recommend investigations or treatments have not experienced them personally. They will therefore underestimate the unpleasantness and inconvenience that those procedures will cause to the patients.
- 6 Finally, we ourselves are the greatest experts on what is happening in our own bodies. We can try to describe our sensations to someone else, but only we know precisely what they feel like.

3 (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 **two** *intermediate conclusions* from paragraphs 3 to 4. [4]

(c) Identify the argument element and explain the function of the following words from paragraph 5:

'Many doctors who recommend investigations or treatments have not experienced them personally.' [2]

(d) Identify **one** *unstated assumption* required by the reasoning in paragraph 5. [2]

4 (a) Identify and evaluate an *appeal* in paragraph 1. [3]

(b) Evaluate the *analogy* in paragraph 2. [2]

(c) Identify and explain the flaw of *conflation* in paragraph 3. [2]

(d) Identify and explain **one** flaw or weakness in the reasoning in paragraph 6. [3]

5 You are advised to spend some time planning your answer before you begin to write it.

'Everyone should give the highest priority to maintaining their own health.'

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. [8]

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