



Cambridge International AS & A Level

THINKING SKILLS

9694/21

Paper 2 Critical Thinking

May/June 2025

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**Research report**

202 former players of American football donated their brains for research after death. Researchers at Boston University diagnosed Chronic Traumatic Encephalopathy (CTE) in 177 of the brains, including 110 of 111 former National Football League players. CTE is believed to be caused by repeated head impacts. Symptoms of CTE include memory loss, confusion, impaired judgment, aggression and depression. These symptoms often begin many years after the end of active involvement in the sport. All of the people who had played American football only in high school and were diagnosed with CTE had mild forms of the disease, while most of those who had played as adults were diagnosed with severe illness.

Source B**Sports news**

Former England international soccer player Jeff Astle developed dementia and died in 2002 at the age of 59. The inquest into his death decided that repeatedly heading footballs had caused injury to his brain. Footballs during his playing career were made of leather, and – especially when wet – were much heavier than the modern plastic ball.

Prompted by the Astle case, scientists at Glasgow University studied the deaths of 7676 former professional soccer players. They found that the ex-players were three and a half times more likely to die of dementia than people of the same age range in the general population.

Source C**Sports news**

A group of former professional rugby players is taking legal action against three of the sport's national governing bodies. These players have all been diagnosed with neurological problems, including early onset dementia. They claim that the governing bodies were negligent in failing to take reasonable action to protect players from permanent injury caused by repeated blows to the head. There is evidence that the risk and the consequences of concussion in rugby are even greater for female players than for men.

Source D**Legal advice to schools and junior sports clubs from lawyer specialising in sports law**

Playing contact sports like rugby, soccer, hockey and lacrosse increases the risk of falls and collisions with objects or other players. These incidents can cause injury to the brain. Schools and sports clubs providing sport for young people must be able to show that they have undertaken a rigorous assessment of the risk posed to participants and have gained informed consent. They must have public liability insurance, which may be prohibitively expensive. It may be advisable to introduce modifications to sport for players under the age of 18, such as not allowing tackling in rugby or heading the ball in soccer.

Source E

Blog campaigning for child welfare

A Canadian neurosurgeon has argued that the benefits to young people of playing contact sports outweigh the risks. In addition to the health benefits of regular exercise, 'Team sports taught me not only how to be a better sports participant, but also how to be a better citizen,' said the neurosurgeon. He has identified eight important life lessons that youngsters learn while playing sports like hockey and football: listening to coaches, captains, and teammates; respect for rules, opponents, and coaches; patience; camaraderie; punctuality; discipline; organisational skills; protection of selves, teammates, and opponents.

- 1 (a) Is Source C an argument? Justify your answer. [2]
 - (b) Assess the reliability of Source E. [4]
 - (c) Identify **one** weakness in the support given in Source E for the playing of contact sports by young people. [2]
 - (d) State and explain **one** reason why it is **not** possible to conclude reliably from Source B that heading footballs is dangerous. [2]
 - (e) Suggest and explain **two** possible reasons why the link between playing American football and developing CTE may not be as strong as it appears in Source A. [4]
- 2 *You are advised to spend some time planning your answer before you begin to write it.*
- 'Children should not be allowed to play contact sports.'
- 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 In order to receive certain professional services, such as legal advice and medical care, members of the public need to reveal sensitive private information about themselves. Members of the relevant professions are required to keep such information secret.
- 2 However, professional confidentiality is not as secure as clients might think. Professionals share confidential information with one another, in order to seek advice, to report to supervisors or from a simple love of gossip. Once the information has been shared with one person, it becomes a little easier for that person to divulge it to another, who then has less reluctance in sharing it more widely, until it eventually becomes a matter of public knowledge.
- 3 Other workers, such as domestic cleaners and computer engineers, acquire privileged information in the course of their jobs. These workers are unlikely to keep information secret, because they may not realise that the nature of their work imposes a duty of confidentiality upon them and because their occupation is not overseen by a disciplinary body.
- 4 There are moral and legal limits to confidentiality. In particular, certain crimes are so harmful that anyone who hears about them must pass that information on to the police even if they were told in confidence. Entrusting a secret to a counsellor is as insecure as announcing it in a television advertisement.
- 5 It is foolish to trust that someone will keep confidential information secret. Even people who explicitly promise to keep something secret often find a way to justify breaking the confidentiality. One manager who had promised to keep a conversation confidential subsequently claimed that she was no longer bound by that promise because she had not repeated it in later conversations on the same topic. She then used the confidential information as the basis for disciplinary action against the person who had confided in her.
- 6 Some people may argue that this attitude towards confidentiality is too cynical and that it is safe to entrust confidential information to a trusted friend or a professional. Their claim should be firmly rejected, because those who make it are motivated solely by their desire to exploit anyone who is naïve and misguided enough to trust them with confidential information about themselves.

- 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 2 to 4. [4]

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

‘Even people who explicitly promise to keep something secret often find a way to justify breaking the confidentiality’ [2]

- (d) Identify **one unstated assumption** required by the argument in paragraph 3. [2]

- 4 (a) Identify an example of *personal attack (ad hominem)* in the passage. [1]

- (b) Identify and explain **one** flaw or weakness in the reasoning in paragraph 2. [3]

- (c) Evaluate an *analogy* in paragraph 4. [3]

- (d) ‘Even people who explicitly promise to keep something secret often find a way to justify breaking the confidentiality.’ (Paragraph 5)

How well does the *evidence* in paragraph 5 support this claim? [3]

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

‘Everyone needs a friend they can trust.’

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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