

# THINKING SKILLS

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Paper 8436/01  
Multiple Choice

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

# THINKING SKILLS

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Paper 8436/02

Paper 2

## General comments

The new format of the paper, first introduced in June 2006, continues to work well in that in general candidates are able to attempt all questions, show that they understand what the task involves, and do not waste time and effort in simply repeating the information given in the question. Not all questions were answered equally well, and the question that proved most difficult this time was **Question 3**, whereas in June 2006 it was **Question 2**. The questions discriminated well between candidates, most candidates showed evidence of good reasoning skills, and a few gave excellent answers.

## Comments on specific questions

### Question 1

This question was generally answered well, and it seemed candidates found the subject matter interesting. Most answers were suitably concise, and it was very rare for candidates simply to repeat the content of the stimulus passage without offering evaluation.

- (a)(i) This question provided an easy mark. Almost all candidates replied correctly that the photograph was the relevant evidence.
- (ii) This discriminated well between those who simply said that the photograph was 'concrete' evidence, for which no mark was given, and those who said either that it was unlikely, or indeed that it was possible, that the picture was a fake, or that it must be reliable because Magnolia herself did not deny that it was a photograph of her and Sarah.
- (b) Most candidates suggested as explanations that Magnolia did copy Sarah's song and/or that Sarah was manufacturing the evidence in order to get compensation. Some said that Magnolia may have subconsciously remembered the song, and a few said that the songs might have had a common source, perhaps a song both had heard in Africa. Each of these gained a mark.
- (c) What was required for part (i) was any two of the following:
- Paco as a member of the band had a vested interest in protecting the band's reputation.
  - 'Being around' when she wrote it did not mean that he saw her writing it.
  - Even if he saw her writing it, this would not mean she was not recalling it from memory.
  - His claim that it came 'from her heart' is not evidence that the song was original.
  - His comments about the prevalence of accusations of plagiarism cannot establish that this accusation is untrue.

Most candidates gained a mark for the first of these, and better candidates were also able to offer one of the others. Part (ii) was generally less well answered than part (i). Many thought that it was obvious that this person had nothing to gain, or was unlikely to lie. Since we know nothing about this individual except that he was in Sarah's class, we cannot be confident that his email is reliable. Each of the following points would gain one mark:

- Not very reliable since the email was written after the article was published.
- The writer could have been seeking attention or fame, or being mischievous.
- He could have been motivated to support his former teacher.
- He is recalling something from 8 years previously, so may be mistaken.
- It contradicts Sarah's own evidence that she never gave the song another thought after the charity concert in college.

- (d) This was generally well answered, with most candidates concluding that it was likely that Magnolia did deliberately copy the song, or that she subconsciously remembered it but was embarrassed to admit to this when confronted. Either of these was acceptable as a conclusion. Highest marks were given for a well-developed and sound argument, involving weighing the evidence, and considering plausible alternative scenarios. Slightly lower marks were given for a less fully developed argument that nevertheless contained some evaluation of the evidence, and lower marks still for simply presenting items of evidence from the text, in order to support the conclusion, yet not evaluating the evidence.

## Question 2

Most candidates gained a good or fairly good mark for this question, with part (e) being particularly well answered. This is gratifying because the majority of candidates clearly understood that an argument requires both reasons and a conclusion, which is not always evident in answers to the 'further argument' section in **Question 4**. It seemed that candidates engaged well with the subject matter, and it was interesting that by far the majority disagreed with the passage's conclusion that school candidates should not be required to wear uniforms.

- (a) What was required for part (i) was reference both to the School's duty to protect its students and to uniforms allowing intruders to be detected. Most answers made the latter point, gaining one mark, and many were also able to identify the former, and get two marks. Candidates apparently found part (ii) easy, almost all identifying the final sentence of the second paragraph as the relevant reason.
- (b) As usual, candidates were not good at identifying **unstated** assumptions, most offering instead things that were stated in the passage. Very few candidates scored even one mark for this question. **Since identifying unstated assumptions is an important skill, candidates need to try to improve their ability in this area.** Any two of the following would have gained the marks:
- Distance from teachers is a bad thing.
  - People should not be taught to judge others by appearance.
  - Integration with the real world when in school is a good thing.
  - Wearing outlandish clothes is bad.
  - Revolt against the symbols of authority is wrong.
  - A school that has uniforms is not the real world.
  - Uniforms are supposed to teach candidates to wear appropriate clothes.
- (c) This was well answered, the most common answers referring to the need to be identified by the public and to gain respect from others. Also offered, and also gaining a mark, were safety reasons, hygiene, privilege.
- (d) Although this was difficult for some candidates, many did gain a mark for comments such as: preparing them for the world of work, to instil a respect for authority, to promote acceptance of equality or social uniformity.
- (e) In general candidates performed very well on this task, most offering a clear conclusion, usually that school uniforms are a good thing, with reasons such as: promoting a sense of equality between rich and poor, ensuring that candidates behaved well when travelling to and from school, ensuring that candidates did not wear inappropriate or provocative clothes, enabling candidates to concentrate on their studies when in the classroom, instead of being preoccupied with fashion and appearance.

## Question 3

Candidates clearly found this question very difficult, and most had a lower mark for this one than for any other question. This is disappointing because this type of question performed very well when it first appeared in the June 2006 paper. The difficulty may have been due to the more theoretical nature of the subject matter, and also to the way in which some of the questions were asked.

- (a) The passage is not an argument, and contains no argument (i.e. no conclusion based on reasons). Nor is it in total an explanation, so those who answered 'neither', with an appropriate reason, gained two marks. However, such answers were rare, most saying that it does not offer an argument, but does offer an explanation, and a few saying, mistakenly, that it offers an argument. What is meant by 'explanation' in Critical Thinking is an account of why an accepted fact is as it is (for example someone may explain why lung cancer rates have declined by referring to a reduction in the incidence of smoking). Although the passage does not offer an explanation in this sense, it does offer an explanation of sorts as to how human language might have developed. Hence candidates who gave this answer, as many did, gained a mark.
- (b) Both parts of this question proved difficult required and assessment of a negative impact on the passage. A good answer to part (i) would be that it shows that the model does not reflect all aspects of the naming of objects, since it is an example of naming by a central decision maker, not of names emerging from the interaction of speakers and hearers. A significant number were able to make this point, and get two marks. One mark was given to those who said that it showed that the model did not reflect how language develops, without giving an appropriate reason. The statement in (ii) does not show that the model does not reflect how language develops, because the essence of the model is of language developing within a community of speakers and hearers. If humans were outside the community of 'speakers' and 'hearers' of a language developed by computers, they would not understand it. But this does not imply that human language could not have developed in the same way. Relatively few candidates appeared to understand what was being asked, and few answered correctly. There was an additional problem with this question, due to the wording, 'Which of the two, if either.....?'. It seemed that some candidates thought that they were only being asked to select one of the two that did show a way in which the computer model did not reflect language development, so made no comment at all about part (ii). Those candidates who gave a good answer to part (i), and no comment on part (ii), were assumed to have judged that (ii) did not show a way in which the model did not reflect language development, and were given one mark for (ii).
- (c) Most candidates were able to get two of the three marks available by both saying that 'spam' was a good example and relating the development of its use to the way in which the passage says the model works. To get three marks candidates needed to point out that we still understand the terms 'unsolicited email' and 'junk email', which suggests that the model has limitations as an explanation as to how human language develops. Very few succeeded in making this point.
- (d) Two marks were given for (i) for saying that it was a good objection, because the model only deals with names for objects, whereas the structure of grammar – the use of verbs, adjectives etc. – is a universal feature of human language. Those who merely said that it was a good objection because grammar is important gained only one mark. It was necessary to indicate some understanding of what grammar involves. One mark could be given to those who said that it was not a good objection because the model was only supposed to show how we share names for objects, but not two marks, because the passage explicitly relates the model to the emergence of human language. Most candidates scored one point, and many scored two. Although many obviously found part (ii) difficult, some were able to offer good objections, such as the failure of the model to account for communication about emotions or about abstract concepts.

#### Question 4

Most candidates managed to write something on all three parts of this question, suggesting that they were not too pressed for time. However, quality of answers varied widely. There were some very good and very detailed evaluations in part (b), and relevant points made in part (c) as further arguments. The subject matter seems to have been generally accessible, and of interest to candidates.

- (a) Most candidates gained two of the three marks available by correctly identifying the conclusion (the final sentence of the passage), and all or most of the reasons. Those who merely showed that they could recognise the general direction of the argument and some of the reasons received one mark, and those (very few) who merely repeated parts of the texts gained no marks. For the full three marks it was necessary to identify intermediate conclusions, and a few candidates did so. There were two intermediate conclusions, and they should not have been difficult to identify, since both were introduced by 'conclusion indicator' words. They were; 'So it is of no consequence for such objects to be kept by the finder' and 'Thus the landowner can claim no rights to what is discovered there'.

- (b) Answers to this section generally fell into the middle range of marks (3 or 4), but there were a significant number of very good answers, pointing out most of the problems with the argument. Some examples are: that it could not be known that most of the finds are not valuable if it is true that finds are not reported, that the fact that landowners do not own artefacts found on their land cannot imply that metal detectorists do own them, that the analogy in paragraph 5 is inadequate because the trade in art is not illegal, and that it is inconsistent to say that the finds are part of the community's history yet it is acceptable for the finder to keep them.
- (c) This section was answered well by many candidates, with clear indication as to whether comments were intended to support or weaken the argument, and with relevant and strong points made. Some examples against the argument are that only the experts can determine the significance of finds, that some finds may be sold abroad by detectorists and thereby lost to the community, that it is important for finds to be stored in museums so that research can be carried out, that digging by detectorists could damage sites and artefacts. Some candidates still do not perform very well on this question, and simply repeat points made in the argument. However, it does seem that separating **Question 4** into three parts prompts candidates to provide fuller answers to the request for further arguments.