



Cambridge International AS & A Level

THINKING SKILLS

9694/23

Paper 2 Critical Thinking

October/November 2022

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**

Researchers studied 687 men and 1319 women from 12 countries. They asked participants to estimate their own general intelligence on a scale ranging from 55 to 145 IQ points. The researchers did not test the actual intelligence of the participants, because the research was focused entirely on people's perceptions.

In every country, men estimated their intelligence at significantly higher levels than women judged their own. The largest difference between the genders occurred in France, where male participants rated their intelligence on average 15 IQ points higher than female participants rated their own. The second largest difference was found in the UK, where men estimated their intelligence on average 10 IQ points higher than women.

One of the researchers commented, 'Our study shows that men like to have a high opinion of themselves and are prone to over-estimate their level of intelligence, while women are more modest, and even under-estimate their own intelligence.'

Source B**Research report**

Researchers from Arizona State University studied the impact of gender on the self-confidence of 202 students studying physiology.

The students were asked to compare their ability with that of their lab partner. 61% of male students and 33% of female students thought they were more intelligent than their lab partner.

The students who were in the middle of the range of ability were asked to say what proportion of the class they thought they were more intelligent than. On average, the male students thought they were more intelligent than 66% of the other students, while the female students thought they were more intelligent than 54% of the class.

The researchers concluded that men overestimate their own ability, while women are more realistic in estimating their own ability.

Source C**Comment on Source B**

Since 61% + 33% is nearly 100%, it appears that the number of students who thought themselves smarter than their lab partner was approximately equal to those who thought they were not smarter. The most likely explanation for the data is that most people's estimates of the ability of themselves and their lab partner were correct. The disparity between genders is not surprising, since men have traditionally excelled in science, whereas women have performed better in subjects such as literature and languages.

Source D**Article from online encyclopaedia***Illusory Superiority*

In the academic discipline of social psychology, illusory superiority is a form of cognitive bias which causes people to overestimate their own qualities and abilities by comparison with other people. Aspects of life in which illusory superiority has been identified include everyday skills (such as driving), academic performance, work performance and personal popularity. Illusory superiority has some implications for recruitment and promotion, since people who believe that they deserve a job are more likely to obtain it than those who are more diffident about their own ability.

Source E**Website of gender equality campaign**

There are many reasons for the gender imbalance in top jobs. Research has shown that, in many cultures, the traits expected in senior managerial roles – such as self-confidence, ambition and assertiveness – are considered to be masculine qualities. Men who exhibit those characteristics are esteemed highly, whereas women are expected to be demure, humble and self-effacing. Assertive women tend to be regarded as threatening and become victims of unpleasant humour. The result is that the qualities which may cause men to be appointed to high positions are regarded as disqualifications in the case of female candidates. Gender equality in the workplace will never be achieved until these stereotypes are overturned and people of all genders are treated equally.

- 1 (a) Suggest an **alternative** explanation for why the men in Source A estimated their intelligence at higher levels than the women estimated their own. [2]
- (b) Explain why the support given by Source B to the conclusion drawn by the researchers is weak. [4]
- (c) (i) Is Source C an argument? Explain your answer. [2]
- (ii) What **additional** information would be required in order to make the explanation suggested in Source C valid? [2]
- (d) Explain the significance of Source D in relation to the possible issue of men overestimating their own abilities by comparison with women. [2]
- (e) Assess the reliability of Source E. [2]
- 2 *You are advised to spend some time planning your answer before you begin to write it.*
- ‘Women should be encouraged to believe in their own ability.’*
- 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 It was a great step in social progress when some countries introduced universal retirement pensions for everyone above a certain age. Previously, workers who through advancing age ceased to be able to satisfy the requirements of their employers were dismissed and left without food or shelter. However, circumstances have changed greatly since those days, and policies of providing retirement pensions for all should now be abandoned.
- 2 Everyone who is able to earn their own living should do so, whatever their age. Work develops people's talents, fulfils their potential and gives them a sense of self-respect. Also, communities need every member to contribute their fair share to the common good if they are capable of doing so.
- 3 Some people of any age are unable to earn their own living for various reasons, including sickness, disability, and lack of skills or opportunity. Any humane society should give such people a sufficient income to enable them to experience a reasonable quality of life. If universal age-based retirement pensions are withdrawn, many older people will be likely to need help of this kind from the state. However, it will be fairer overall, since the money saved by not paying pensions to people who do not need them can be spent on increasing the amount paid to sick and unemployed people.
- 4 Life expectancy in almost all countries has now increased so far that most people hope to enjoy their pensions for twenty or even thirty years. At the same time, a decreased birth rate has gradually reduced the proportion of the community who are of working age; it is they who fund government expenditure from the taxes they pay. It is unrealistic to expect tax-payers to meet the cost of universal pensions.
- 5 Many people think that pensions are a reward for workers' previous service, but this is a mistake. Universal retirement pensions were introduced in order to protect from poverty those who had become too old to work and lacked the resources to maintain themselves. Not many people qualified for this assistance, because most workers died before reaching that age.

- 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** in paragraphs 2 to 4. [4]
- (c) Identify the following argument element from paragraph 5:
'pensions are a reward for workers' previous service' [2]
- (d) Identify **two unstated assumptions** required by the argument in paragraph 4. [4]
- 4 (a) Explain how the reasoning in paragraph 2 is weakened by the flaw of *conflation*. [2]
- (b) Identify an *inconsistency* between paragraphs 3 and 4 and explain the impact on the strength of the argument. [4]
- (c) Identify and evaluate an *appeal* in paragraph 5. [2]

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

'Most people can expect old age to be the happiest time of their life.'

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]

BLANK PAGE

Permission to reproduce items where third-party owned material protected by copyright is included has been sought and cleared where possible. Every reasonable effort has been made by the publisher (UCLES) to trace copyright holders, but if any items requiring clearance have unwittingly been included, the publisher will be pleased to make amends at the earliest possible opportunity.

To avoid the issue of disclosure of answer-related information to candidates, all copyright acknowledgements are reproduced online in the Cambridge Assessment International Education Copyright Acknowledgements Booklet. This is produced for each series of examinations and is freely available to download at www.cambridgeinternational.org after the live examination series.

Cambridge Assessment International Education is part of Cambridge Assessment. Cambridge Assessment is the brand name of the University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate (UCLES), which is a department of the University of Cambridge.