



# Cambridge International AS & A Level

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## THINKING SKILLS

9694/21

Paper 2 Critical Thinking

October/November 2024

1 hour 45 minutes



You must answer on the enclosed answer booklet.

You will need: Answer booklet (enclosed)

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## 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 [ ].

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

**Section A**

*Study the evidence and then answer Questions 1 and 2.*

**Source A****Dictionary of Philosophy**

Altruism is concern for the welfare of other people purely for their own sake, rather than for any self-centred reason. It is often contrasted with egoism, in which the concern is focused on our own wellbeing. An altruistic action is one that is motivated by altruism.

Egoists often claim that actions that appear to be altruistic are actually motivated by selfish desires, such as the expectation of a reward or to impress other people.

**Source B****Psychology magazine**

Studies over the last few decades have shown that there is a strong link between behaving altruistically and having good mental health. People who regularly behave in an unselfish way generally have better psychological health than those whose behaviour is driven mainly by egoism.

For example, one study examined people aged over 65 years who had retired from work. The study compared those who were involved in altruistic activities, through voluntary work for the direct benefit of other people, with those who were not occupied in this way. Adjustment was made for factors such as income and family caring responsibilities, where differences between people's circumstances may have affected the results of the study. Compared to the non-volunteers, the volunteers had fewer symptoms of depression and anxiety, found life more satisfying, and had a stronger will to live.

The researchers concluded that acts of altruism bring real benefits to those who perform them.

**Source C****Textbook of Ethics**

There has always been doubt among some philosophers and scientists as to whether altruism is possible. An influential seventeenth century English philosopher, Thomas Hobbes, who was famously sceptical about the possibility of altruism, based much of his work on the view that people always act out of self-interest. When asked to explain why he had given money to a homeless man, he justified this act of apparent generosity by explaining that the gift was intended to ease his own unhappiness at seeing the man in such great need.

More generally, such doubters have claimed that what appear to be purely altruistic actions would be explained better if we knew *all* the motives behind the actions of other people. If we had this knowledge, we would find that every action that seems to be focussed solely on someone else's well-being is actually motivated, at least in part, by a benefit to the person acting. The doubters conclude that no action can be purely altruistic.

## Source D

**Website of organisation dedicated to increasing global co-operation**

There should be no doubt that altruism is real. Especially during times of emergency, history shows us that people generally help each other, sharing what they have, even if this means having less themselves, so that someone more vulnerable gets what he or she needs. This help is not just given to neighbours and others living in the same country or community – people to whom we might feel some loyalty or who might repay us some day. Aid, in the form of money, food or clothing, is often sent far overseas to countries about which all we know is that their citizens need help.

There is no need to look back in time or elsewhere in the world, though, to be satisfied that altruism is a reality. When we do something for someone else, we know what has prompted us to do it. We are aware whether we just want to help someone or there are other, more selfish, reasons for our action.

## Source E

**Website of medical organisation**

In recently published research, an American psychologist has claimed that the influence of our unconscious mind on our actions is even greater than has been believed up until now. This new research suggests that, even if we believe that we are in full conscious control of what we are doing and why we are doing it, this is even more of an illusion than was previously thought. In reality, the unconscious parts of our minds do most of the work. What our goals are when we act, and how we decide to achieve these goals, are largely the work of unconscious thought processes. Our real motives when we do something are mostly hidden from us.

- 1 (a) Is the second paragraph of Source D an argument? Justify your answer. [2]
- (b) Source B claims that ‘acts of altruism bring real benefits to those who perform them’.
- Identify and explain **two** weaknesses in Source B’s support for this claim. [4]
- (c) Assess the reliability of Hobbes’ claim in Source C that he helped the homeless man because he wanted to make himself feel better. [4]
- (d) Source E states that ‘Our real motives when we do something are mostly hidden from us’.
- To what extent does this statement support Source C’s claim that no action can be purely altruistic? [4]
- 2 *You are advised to spend some time planning your answer before you begin to write it.*
- ‘Some human acts are purely altruistic.’
- 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 Over the last few decades, we have become heavy users of hi-tech equipment. From cars to washing machines, many of the devices upon which we now rely to run our lives need sophisticated computers to work properly. When these devices break down, they will be expensive to repair, because of the high cost of the electronic parts they contain.
- 2 High repair costs discourage consumers from having machines fixed. If people do not have their machines repaired, then they have to purchase new ones. Manufacturing new products uses a lot of energy, and hence our heavy usage of hi-tech equipment is very bad for the environment.
- 3 We have become accustomed to getting work done merely by feeding a few instructions into a computer or a smartphone. Since many machines have removed the need for hard, boring, physical work, whether at home or in the workplace, their introduction has resulted in people becoming less active. This laziness has degraded the moral value of society.
- 4 While it is true that technology has made it easier than ever before to keep in touch with people who are important to us but do not live near us, contact by electronic means has tended to replace meaningful face-to-face interaction with family and friends.
- 5 Increasingly, we have to use some devices that are designed to record what we do with them. Our activities on the internet leave traces, and other people can gather and analyse these traces, then use them to build detailed pictures of our personal interests and habits. Our purchasing choices, even the websites we like to visit, are known and can be used to influence our behaviour, for example, by targeting advertising to our known interests or by showing us material relevant to websites that we've visited. Even if this seems of benefit to us, it is clear that all hi-tech devices result in an invasion of privacy. Modern technology causes more harm than good.

- 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 3. [4]
- (c) Using the exact words from the passage as far as possible, identify **one counter-assertion**. [2]
- (d) Identify **one unstated assumption** required by the reasoning in paragraph 1. [2]
- 4 (a) Identify and explain the flaw of *restriction of options* in paragraph 2. [2]
- (b) Identify and explain the flaw of *conflation* in paragraph 3. [2]
- (c) Identify and explain **one** flaw or weakness in the reasoning in paragraph 4. [2]
- (d) (i) Identify and explain the flaw of *rash generalisation* in paragraph 5. [2]
- (ii) To what extent does this flaw weaken the support that paragraph 5 gives to the argument as a whole? [2]
- 5 *You are advised to spend some time planning your answer before you begin to write it.*

‘It is good for young people to lead busy lives.’

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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