Admissions Testing Service

Thinking Skills Assessment — Sample Items

Time

SECTION Thinking Skills

Instructions to Candidates

Please read this page carefully, but do not open this question paper until you are told that you may do so.

A separate answer sheet is provided for this section. Please check you have one.
You also require a soft pencil and an eraser.

Please complete the answer sheet with your personal details.

Speed as well as accuracy is important in this section.
Work quickly, or you may not finish the paper.
There are no penalties for incorrect responses, only points for correct answers, so you should attempt all of the questions. All questions are worth one mark.

Answer on the sheet provided. Questions ask you to show your choice between five options. Choose the **one** option you consider correct and record your choice on the separate answer sheet. If you make a mistake, erase thoroughly and try again.

Any rough work should be done on this question paper.

Dictionaries and calculators may **NOT** be used.

Developed and administered

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Please wait to be told you may begin before turning this page.

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1 The effect of shortening degree courses at universities from three years to two would be that students would have two-thirds as much time to think about their subject. The result would be graduates whose understanding of their subject was shallower and whose intellectual development was much less extended. Any measure that leads to a lowering of the quality of graduates should be resisted by universities.

Which one of the following conclusions can reliably be drawn from the above passage?

A University graduates at present have an in-depth understanding of their subject.

B Universities should oppose the shortening of degree courses to two years.

C Universities are not proposing to reduce the length of degree courses to two years.

D Students should oppose moves by universities to shorten degree courses.

E Universities should adopt more rigorous standards for the award of degrees.

2 A dishonest act, such as stealing money from a handbag or cheating in school, may arise for one of many different reasons. But the reasons may be consistent with the personality of the individual involved. One child may steal, for example, in order to show off; another, to get money to support a hobby (or to get a birthday present for a younger sister); another, to express aggression or hatred against the person from whom he or she steals. One child may cheat in order to avoid punishment for academic failure; another, because of personal ambition; another to express contempt for the system.

Which one of the following is a conclusion that can be drawn from the passage above?

A It is wrong to assume that a child who is dishonest in one kind of situation will be dishonest in others.

B A child who cheats does so for very complex reasons.

C A child whose motive is generosity towards someone else should not be blamed for stealing.

D Underlying all dishonest acts is hostility towards others.

E Children who are neither exhibitionist nor aggressive nor acquisitive are unlikely to steal money.

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3 It is not always clear whether a doctor should tell the truth to a patient or not. On the one hand, patients have a right to know what is the matter with them and what the future holds, so that they can make their own informed decisions, however upsetting the truth may be. It is a simple issue of human rights. But on the other hand, a patient's health may sometimes be better served by not knowing a frightening truth. For instance, a doctor may believe that a patient's medical condition will actually worsen if they realise how serious it is. Therefore, there are cases in which doctors have no choice: they must decide in favour of not telling the patient the truth.

Which one of the following is an underlying assumption of the above argument?

A Patients accept that a doctor has a responsibility to decide what will be in their best interests.

B Doctors have a duty to conceal the truth if they believe it will frighten the patient.

C Doctors have a duty to tell their patients the truth even when the truth would upset them.

D Doctors have a greater responsibility for a patient's well-being than for their right to know the truth.

E It is the responsibility of doctors to respect a patient's human rights whatever their medical condition.

4 A two-month study of major producers of ivory products showed that worldwide demand for elephant tusks for ivory had fallen sharply. Therefore, it is safe to assume that there will be a general decline in elephant poaching.

Which one of the following, if true, would most weaken the above argument?

A There are far fewer elephants than there were ten years ago, so poachers are finding it increasingly difficult to make a living from the ivory trade.

B Poachers now use high-powered rifles which make it easier for them to kill larger numbers of elephants than was possible in the past.

C The worldwide demand for ivory fluctuates considerably at certain times of the year, so poachers store up ivory to sell when the market improves.

D More and more synthetic materials are being used as substitutes for ivory in the construction of such things as piano keys and billiard balls.

E The worldwide demand for ivory has been falling consistently for the last twenty years and many ivory poachers have found alternative sources of income.

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5 The government blames schools and teachers for boys underperforming. However, science tells a different story. Evolutionary biology shows that females have evolved to have better verbal and emotional skills than males because of the need in prehistoric times for women to take the lead in bringing up children. By contrast, the need for males in prehistoric times to hunt in packs for food has made males more prone to violence and also skilled at calculating and planning. Neurologists have added to this insight by showing that the male hormone testosterone has an adverse impact on language skills. So clearly differences in educational performance between boys and girls cannot be explained in terms of failing teachers.

Which one of the following is the best statement of the flaw in the above argument?

A It assumes that scientific explanations apply to the average male or female ignoring exceptions.

B It assumes that biological differences come in degrees and are not absolute.

C It assumes that skills in calculating and planning have a role in educational performance.

D It assumes that the differences in performance between the sexes are due solely to biological differences.

E It assumes that teachers are not trying to improve the performance of failing boys.

6 If I do more work tonight, I will earn more money. However, if I go for a bike ride, I will get fitter. I need to get fitter more than I need more money. So, I will go for a bike ride.

Which one of the following most closely parallels the reasoning in the above argument?

A If I eat that cake it will taste really good. But if I do not eat that cake I will lose weight. I don't care about losing weight anymore! So I'm going to eat that cake.

B If I learn to drive I will have a useful skill. If I save my money I will be able to travel round the world. I need to be able to drive, but I can learn that later. So I will travel the world while I am young.

C If I work every evening in a bar, I will be able to buy my own clothes. But, if I stay in and do my homework, I will get better grades. Right now it is more important to me to earn my own money, but I know I will regret it if I get bad grades. So I will only work two evenings a week.

D If I do the housework, the house will be clean and pleasant. If I go to the pub, I will be relaxed and pleasant. I prefer a pleasant me to a pleasant house, so I will go to the pub.

E If I go out now, I will have fun with my friends. However, if I go out, I will not do my homework, and if I don't do my homework my teacher shout at me in front of my friends. So I had better not go out.

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7 There has recently been concern about people who have had blood transfusions. Some blood donors have gone on to develop CJD, the human form of BSE i.e. 'mad cow disease'. There is a small chance that people who have received this blood may also go on to develop CJD. However the risk is small, there is nothing that can be done about this disease, and informing the patient will cause anxiety. For all these reasons, the NHS should not take steps to inform those people who may be at risk.

Which one of the following applies the principle used in the above argument?

A Not informing air passengers during turbulence of the small risk of damage to the plane.

B Not informing patients that they are suffering from a terminal disease.

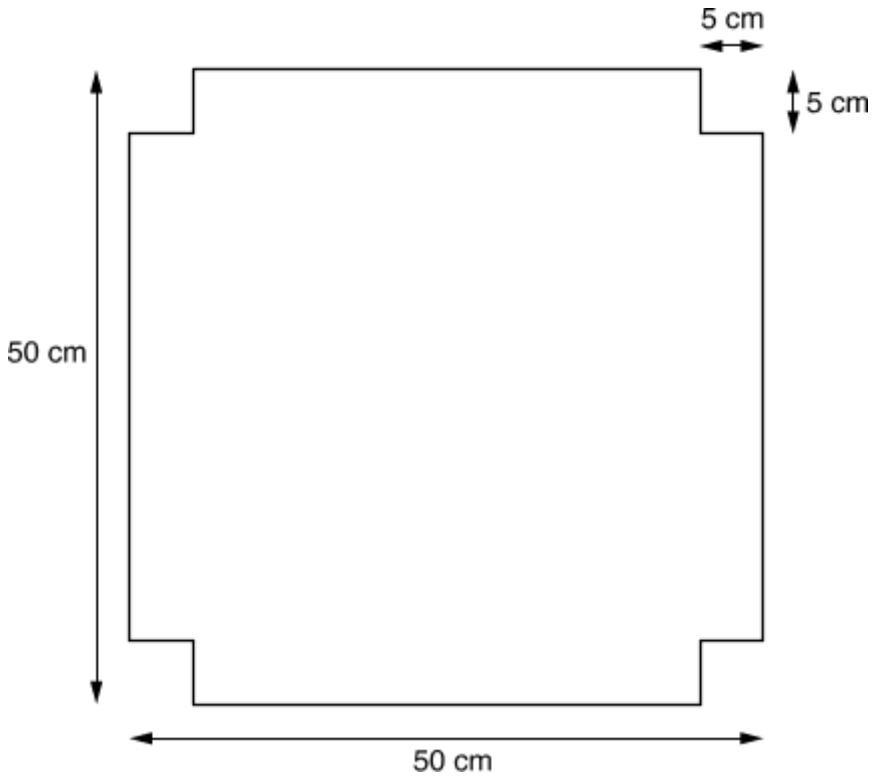
C Not informing passengers of the reason for a train being unavoidably delayed.

D Not informing adopted children as to the identity of their biological parents.

E Not informing young children of poor results in diagnostic educational tests.

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8 A manufacturer wishes to make an open-topped box out of the piece of cardboard shown below by folding up its sides.



What is the volume of this box in cubic centimetres?

A 1600

B 2400

C 8000

D 10125

E 12500

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9 The following table gives figures for the percentage growth per year of labour productivity per person per year in various countries during three periods.

	Period 1	*Period 2*	*Period 3*
Japan	8.5	3.0	3.2
France	5.4	3.0	2.6
United Kingdom	3.6	1.5	2.4
Belgium	3.3	2.8	2.3
Sweden	4.1	1.5	1.8
Denmark	4.3	2.6	1.7
Italy	6.3	3.0	1.6
Netherlands	4.8	2.7	1.6
Germany	4.5	3.1	1.6
United States	2.2	0.0	0.8

Which country's percentage growth per year remained consistently greater than half of its Period 1 level throughout the following periods?

A France

B United Kingdom

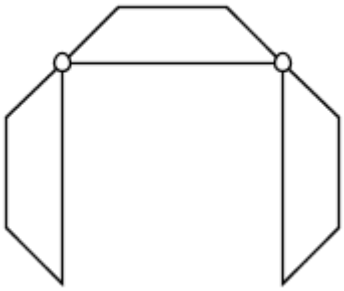
C Germany

D Denmark

E Belgium

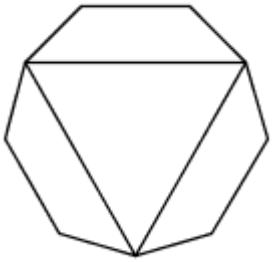
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10 The diagram below shows a rather unusual conference table which may take up a range of configurations. The three pieces are hinged together at the points shown by the circles:

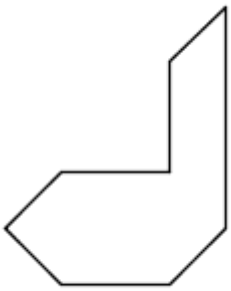


Which of the following shapes could **NOT** be made from this table?

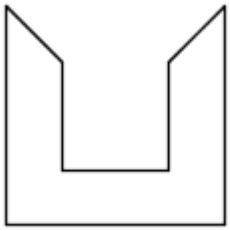
A



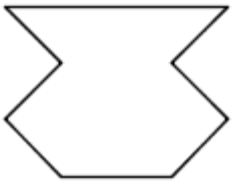
B



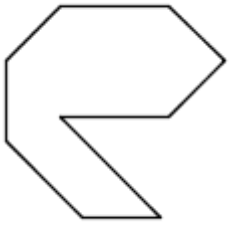
C



D



E



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