

Thursday 23 May 2013 – Afternoon

AS GCE CRITICAL THINKING

F502/01/RB Assessing and Developing Argument
F502/02/RB

RESOURCE BOOKLET

To be issued with the Question Paper

Duration: 1 hour 30 minutes



INSTRUCTIONS TO CANDIDATES

- Use the Resource Booklet to answer all the questions in Section B and Section C.

INFORMATION FOR CANDIDATES

- This document consists of **2** pages. Any blank pages are indicated.

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Votes at 16

“Every young person has the right to express his or her views freely – about everything that affects him or her,” according to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. At 16, the law already allows a person to work and pay income tax, get married and join the armed forces. However, 16 and 17 year olds do not have a say in choosing the government that could send them to war or adjust the amount of tax they pay. Everyone should have a say in the decisions that affect their lives. Having an entitlement to vote would empower and motivate young people because they would feel that they could make a difference.

1

There are 1.5 million young people aged 16 and 17, but we are leaving it to chance whether MPs take into account their perspectives, concerns and opinions. If we do not listen to young people’s views, they will become alienated and voiceless, becoming an angry and resentful group who feel abandoned by society. The voting age in the UK should be reduced to 16 years old.

2

One of the reasons why compulsory Citizenship Education was put into the national curriculum in 2002 was to encourage more people to vote when they become adults. From this subject young people learn about the voting system and how laws are made. They know how it works but are not allowed to use it. It is like training for a marathon but not being allowed to run it because of some trivial entry requirement, such as the colour of your running shoes. Reducing the voting age would help young people to participate in our democracy.

3

Young people have already proved that they are calm, mature and balanced enough to have the right to vote. There are 600 elected Members of the Youth Parliament in the UK and 85% of secondary schools have student councils. This shows that young people like to engage in the democratic process and want the responsibilities that go along with this.

4

Some countries around the world already allow voting at 16, such as Austria, Brazil and Cuba, as well as parts of the British Isles – Guernsey, Jersey and the Isle of Man. In 1881, the Isle of Man was one of the first places in the world to introduce votes for women, and it is obvious to us now that this was the right thing to do. In 2006, they lowered the voting age to 16, and they will be proved right again.

5

A response by one reader

Most young people do not leave education until they are 18 years old. They will not have paid any income tax and will have limited experience of real life. They are not mature enough to vote even at 18 – they are still growing up. Nobody who is immature should have the right to vote.

6

Furthermore, people under the age of 25 are more prone to risky behaviour. This is because the part of the brain which is responsible for controlling risk-taking behaviour does not finish maturing until, on average, a person reaches their mid-20s. Therefore, the voting age should be raised not lowered.

7



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