

ADVANCED SUBSIDIARY GCE
CRITICAL THINKING
Assessing and Developing Argument

RESOURCE BOOKLET

To be issued with the question paper

F502/01/RB
F502/02/RB

Tuesday 18 January 2011
Morning

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.

INSTRUCTION TO EXAMS OFFICER/INVIGILATOR

- Do not send this resource booklet for marking; it should be retained in the centre or destroyed.

Organic Food – What’s the fuss all about?

Organic farmers use natural methods such as fertilising their land with animal droppings. Conventional farmers employ a variety of methods, including the use of man-made fertilisers and pesticides. We are constantly told that an organic approach to farming would be better for us and better for the environment. Yet organic farming is an impractical system of food production, primarily because it is incapable of feeding the world. 1

Organic farming is less efficient than conventional farming as it requires more land and more energy to produce the same amount of food. For example, 122 sqm of land is needed to produce a tonne of organic vine tomatoes. The figure for conventionally-grown loose tomatoes is 19 sqm. The same is true for meat farming. It takes 25% more energy to produce an organic chicken than a conventionally produced chicken. 2

Another problem with organic farming is that we don’t have the natural resources to run it on a large scale, and won’t have in the future. We know this because even 100 years ago we had to resort to collecting bird droppings off exotic islands just to get enough natural fertiliser for British farming. And even that wasn’t enough, so farmers started using man-made fertilisers. So changing to a purely organic approach would lead to a decrease in the amount of food produced in the world. 3

The organic movement claims to be more environmentally friendly than conventional farming. They argue that conventional farming uses man-made fertilisers which must be made using fossil fuels and this accelerates global warming. What they say is just a myth as we could make fertilisers using solar or wind energy. 4

It is often said that man-made chemicals cause health problems so we should restrict their use in farming. But there is no solid evidence for this. In fact, in the US, since farmers began using chemicals, cancer rates have dropped by 15% and life expectancy has gone up by around 10 years. Actually, it’s organic farming that threatens our health. Mother Nature isn’t our friend. Putting animal droppings on our food is clearly an unhealthy idea. Just look at the scare in 2006, when organically grown spinach was infected with *E.coli* bacteria. 5

All of this shows that organic farming is not better than conventional farming. 6



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