

ADVANCED SUBSIDIARY GCE

CRITICAL THINKING

Introduction to Critical Thinking

F501/RB

RESOURCE BOOKLET

To be issued with the question paper

Monday 10 January 2011
Afternoon

Duration: 1 hour 30 minutes



INSTRUCTIONS TO CANDIDATES

- Read the background information and Documents 1, 2 and 3 before starting to answer the questions.

INFORMATION FOR CANDIDATES

- This document consists of 4 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.

Background information:

Traditionally, gap years have been taken by young people between their A levels and university. However, more university graduates are now taking a gap year between finishing their degrees and starting work.

Many of these graduates want to do voluntary work overseas as part of their gap year. There are a number of gap year organisations, such as Raleigh, that will organise the volunteer work and charge a fee for this service.

Document 1**Graduates offered gap year funding to boost employability skills****The award scheme**

The number of graduates who are unemployed six months after leaving university has reached a worrying level. In 2009, one in ten new graduates was not in a job or further study. As a response to this, the government introduced a graduate bursary award scheme to help pay for gap year expeditions. The government claimed that this scheme would help graduates develop the 'soft skills', like teamwork, leadership, project management and problem solving that their CV might lack, and so it should help them to find jobs in a reduced graduate job market when they returned to Britain.

An advertisement for the award scheme recommended joining an overseas expedition: "It could be just the thing you need if you have recently graduated and feel like everything is all gloom and doom, since an expedition would boost your employability skills and help set you apart from the crowd."



The award scheme is endorsed by leading employers and government departments, so you don't have to feel guilty about having the time of your life!

Responses to the award scheme

The NUS (National Union of Students) president told the BBC, "Funding opportunities for skills development is surely better than the soul destroying experience of sitting at home receiving benefits." The Higher Education government minister in the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills added that volunteering was particularly beneficial to new graduates as, "it can help develop the communication and leadership skills that are so highly valued in the workplace."

Despite many applications for the funding, critics complained that the awards were a complete waste of public money and an attempt to make youth unemployment figures look better. A taxpayers' campaign group claimed, "This kind of charity, paid out of the taxpayer's pocket, is unfair as it helps only a few. Also, the skills learned will not help the volunteers get jobs back in the UK."

The author's argument

Criticisms that the financial awards are a complete waste of public money are unjustified, since to qualify, the graduates had to raise £1000 to pay for their own immunisation and flights, and prove that they could not afford an overseas expedition without the award. Additionally, Raleigh, with which Prince William travelled during his gap year, says that the money is used efficiently. Three quarters of the money is used to support the volunteers overseas by paying expenses such as accommodation, transport, safety equipment, food and medical care. The rest is spent on fund-raising, marketing and office costs.

Document 2

Government funding for Raleigh expeditions

Raleigh, a youth and education charity, is working in partnership with the government's Department for Business, Innovation and Skills to offer graduates the opportunity to join a 10 week volunteer expedition.

Are you worried about how you'll set yourself apart from the crowd and find a great job in this tough economic climate? Joining a Raleigh expedition could be just the thing you need to develop the key skills employers are looking for and to give your CV that competitive edge.

You can choose from Borneo, India, or Costa Rica and Nicaragua. You will make a difference to people in remote areas by working on community and environmental projects which are worthwhile and sustainable. Raleigh has 500 awards of £2000 for graduates who want to challenge themselves and to improve their employability skills, self-confidence and global awareness.

www.gapwork.com Aug 2009

About us: Gapwork, the UK's biggest gap year information provider, is involved with a number of industry leaders. We also work with the UK Foreign Office and Tourism Concern to promote awareness and safety issues for young travellers and we are partners in the Foreign & Commonwealth Office's 'Know Before You Go' campaign. The gapwork website is run by an award winning company.

Document 3

Gap years should not have government funding

As Xtreme Gap is in the gap year industry, most would expect that we would support this initiative. However we actually feel that this is a questionable use of taxpayers' money, as the award is based on two incorrect assumptions:

- that volunteering directly improves your job prospects
- that without financial help only the privileged can take a gap year.

Surely it would be better for the "gappers" to actually leave the country for longer than 10 weeks and enrol on a programme that trains their skills, allowing them to earn money in their gap year. This is easier to do than you might expect. Our Beach Lifeguard Training Programme costs each "gapper" under £2000 and enables them to gain jobs all over the world as lifeguards earning up to £500 a week. When their gap year is up they actually bring back money into the UK economy and do not cost the UK tax payer a penny.

Founding director of Xtreme Gap, a gap year company

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