



**ADVANCED SUBSIDIARY GCE
CRITICAL THINKING**

Unit 2: Assessing and Developing Argument

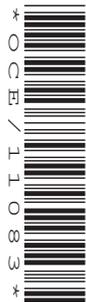
**F502/01/RB
F502/02/RB**

RESOURCE BOOKLET

To be opened on the day of the examination

**Monday 18 May 2009
Afternoon**

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.

School Summer Holidays

Lengthy summer breaks from school are a long-standing tradition. Historically, they were a necessity for farming communities as children were required as additional workforce during the harvest. These days, however, farmers are a dwindling minority and most of their work is supported by progressive mechanisation. Children are no longer needed to work on the farms.

1

One problem with long summer holidays is that they actually harm children's academic progress. Absence from organised learning and regular schooling makes students regress and forget much of what they previously learnt. No-one would expect our top footballers to take an unreasonably long break in the middle of the year and yet it is accepted that most students' brains can rest for a sizeable amount of time. For example, a school in Essex has recently introduced a radical five-term year with a significantly shorter summer break. Under this revised system, the number of pupils gaining at least five good GCSEs leapt from 70% to 88%.

2

In the dark winter months, schools are forced to waste money on high heating and lighting bills, leaving less money for valuable learning resources. In addition, many children work less productively during this time. In the UK, approximately 5% of the population has Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD). People with this condition work far more effectively during the summer months, when the days are longer and brighter. For both reasons, having schools open in the winter is not in children's best interests.

3

Reducing the summer break would also be a welcome relief for working parents, many of whom currently feel forced to take extended time off work to look after and entertain their children. Crime levels in the UK are significantly higher during the summer than at any other time of year. Metropolitan Police data has shown that London had 660 more criminal damage offences in August 2007 than in September 2007, when children and teenagers were back in school. Long summer holidays contribute to social problems in the UK.

4

It can be argued that a reduced summer break would be unpopular with teachers. This concern, however, can and should be ignored. The average teacher in the UK is off work for an amazing 14 weeks every year, which is more than double the holiday time of many employees. On top of this they generally only teach between 9 a.m. and 3.30 p.m. so hardly need sympathy. It is about time teachers were given the same conditions as the majority of other people in the country.

5

Although many teachers and pupils may like the long summer holidays, the current system creates too many problems. It is clear that we should reduce the length of the school summer holidays.

6



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