

**Tuesday 31 January 2012 – Morning**

**A2 GCE CRITICAL THINKING**

**F504/01/RB** Critical Reasoning

**RESOURCE BOOKLET**

**To be issued with the Question Paper**

**Duration:** 1 hour 30 minutes



**INSTRUCTIONS TO CANDIDATES**

- Read and use Documents 1 and 2 to answer the questions.

**INFORMATION FOR CANDIDATES**

- This document consists of 4 pages. Any blank pages are indicated.

**INSTRUCTION TO EXAMS OFFICER/INVIGILATOR**

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## Document 1

### It takes more than one to make a teenage pregnancy

By E Jane Dickson

We talk, without irony, of girls ‘getting themselves pregnant’. Bad parenting/declining morals/benefit grabbing – sooner or later the young, unmarried mother cops the lot for everything that’s wrong with society. But the biological fact remains: for every teenage mother there is a father and this, it seems to me, is an area where the government could usefully focus its initiatives. 1

There can scarcely be a teenager living in Britain now who does not know how babies are made. There remains, however, a dangerous ‘awareness gap’ – at least for teenage boys – as to what comes next. In a world where Nuts magazine is sold on the next shelf to the Beano, and pornography pops up on GCSE revision websites, boys are growing up knowing everything there is to know about sex, except its natural consequence. 2

However much the notion of sexual responsibility is dinned into boys in the classroom, and however many condoms are handed out at break-time, it isn’t working enough of the time; we still have the highest number of teenage pregnancies in Western Europe. If teenage girls are being pressured into unprotected sex, it’s because teenage boys feel they have nothing to lose. In a sense, they’re right. I won’t say early parenthood ruins a girl’s life, but it certainly defines it. The same is not true of young fathers in Britain today; where both parents are under 17, only 2 per cent of fathers are involved with the baby nine months after the birth. 3

Thirty years ago, the looming threat of a shotgun wedding\* imposed a measure of restraint; if a boy got a girl pregnant, society expected him to ‘take responsibility’. You can’t turn the clock back. Nor, when you consider the misery of trapped lives or the inhuman cruelty of forced adoption, would you wish to. But there has to be a way of involving young fathers and potential fathers with the families they have helped to create. 4

Under the Welfare Reform Act, which became law in November 2009, there is a requirement for births to be registered jointly to both parents. Debated paternity can be swiftly resolved by DNA testing. It should, therefore, be possible to track absent fathers and secure a measure of engagement with their child. For unemployed fathers perhaps we should trial compulsory community service programmes where a proportion of the wage goes directly to the upkeep of the child. That might bring home the personal impact of fatherhood. Required attendance at parenting courses for young fathers would, at best, promote the necessary skills for building a relationship with their child and their co-parent. (Even if said fathers never learn how to change a nappy, the fact of having to give up substantial chunks of their time might make them think twice about casual fatherhood.) It is time we stopped treating the pregnant teenager as a political football or as a poster girl for ‘broken Britain’, and started thinking about the realities of her children’s lives. Responsibility can be learned and is best learned by example. These children are the responsibility of us all. 5

*Source: The Independent newspaper*

\*A shotgun wedding happens when a young man is forced to marry a girl because she is pregnant with his child. The name comes from the old practice of an angry father of a pregnant girl forcing the young man to the church with a shotgun to ensure the marriage takes place.

## Document 2

### Extending our families

By Sandra Parsons

Within hours of my mother dying, my husband said to me: “Your father must come and live with us.” This is because he comes from Serbia, where several generations live together in one family home as a matter of course, and where the sense of family responsibility is very strong and it is unthinkable to allow any relative to live alone. At my father’s request, we are not yet living together all the time. He comes to us for a few weeks and then goes home for a few weeks – so that when he is alone, it is because he chooses to be. The benefits of this arrangement are great, on several levels – social, economic and emotional. 1

A new mother in Serbia is constantly surrounded by doting aunts, cousins and grandparents. There is always someone on hand to soothe a wailing baby, kiss it and entertain it while the mother has a cup of coffee and a break. This is the way we used to live in Britain, but as we have become more materialistic and obsessed by the cult of the individual, we have gradually lost the benefits of family and community. If the local post office or corner shop has closed down and their adult children live far away, it is possible for the elderly to go for days without speaking to anyone. 2

A third of us have a close friend or family member who we think is lonely, while four in ten have felt depressed because of loneliness. I’m convinced the main reason for this is the disintegration of the extended family. And yet when I told friends that my father was coming to live with us, the reaction from most of them was one of appalled horror, followed by the suggestion that I’m mad or a saint. I suggest we recognise that charity begins at home. We are most responsible for those closest to home – our families. So we should begin encouraging a return to the days when extended families lived together. 3

Living as an extended family is rarely the stuff of glossy magazines or artful sitcoms. It means mess, arguments, noise and compromise. It means having the heating on higher than you find comfortable, because your mother-in-law feels the cold. It means biting your tongue because you can’t have a blazing row in front of her. It’s tempting to think that living as an extended family should ideally entail as many TVs as occupants, but, in fact, I’ve found that watching (one) television together is almost as important as eating together. Deciding on something everyone wants to watch can make you feel it would be easier to negotiate peace in the Middle East, and it’s not always achievable. But if your teenager ends up watching a programme about opera or your mother is made to endure the Simpsons, it broadens everyone’s horizons. As I said, living together as an extended family is far from easy. Yes, it means less privacy and space. But taking on our family responsibilities also means more love. 4

*Source: Daily Mail newspaper*

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