



SPECIMEN

Advanced Subsidiary GCE

CRITICAL THINKING

Unit F501: Introduction to Critical Thinking

Resource Booklet

F501



INSTRUCTIONS TO CANDIDATES

- Use Documents 1 and 2 to answer the questions.

This document consists of 4 printed pages.

Document 1**Degrees of value?**

A degree used to be the pinnacle of education. However, there are now many reasons why degree-level qualifications are of very little value and are not worth having. **1**

School leavers are having second thoughts about university, aware that an average graduate starting salary of £17,000 is hardly going to cover debts of up to £15,000 after three years of university. It is obvious that graduate salaries no longer match the crippling costs of getting a degree. **2**

Recently 16,000 university students were interviewed and only one third expected to get, or look for, a graduate-level job when they left university. This, combined with evidence from employers showing that 11% of graduates who are in work, have jobs in sales and customer support, makes it clear that getting a degree does not lead to better employment prospects. **3**

If we want our young people to go on to have marketable skills, we must ensure that we give them all the information they need about future employment prospects. The British Chamber of Commerce has suggested that the real skills shortage is in skilled construction and engineering technicians. This shows that degrees are not reflecting the needs of the economy. **4**

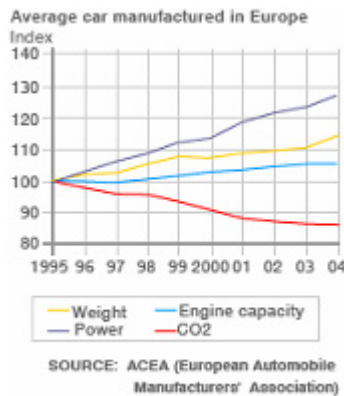
The situation is worsened by the increasing numbers entering university. Twenty years ago only one in eight young people went to university. Now it is one in three. This lowering of entrance standards has devalued degrees. Confirmation comes from the fact that there are now more students studying for a degree in management than in the traditional subjects of physics and chemistry put together. **5**

Some have argued that the planned increases in vocational degrees will result in higher status for degrees as vocational graduates are currently less likely to be unemployed than graduates with academic degrees. However, vocational degrees such as acupuncture and aromatherapy have been given the 'thumbs down' by some employers in these areas because they do not teach sufficiently specific skills and are not academically rigorous. **6**

Document 2

Car makers blame drivers over CO₂

CO₂ EMISSIONS FROM CARS



The European Commission has proposed a new strategy to reduce carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions from new cars and vans sold in the European Union, by forcing car-makers to make an 18% cut in carbon dioxide emissions from new cars by 2012. This strategy is to ensure the EU meets its greenhouse gas emission targets. By improving fuel-efficiency, the European Commission claims that this strategy will deliver substantial fuel savings for drivers. To encourage the car industry to compete on the basis of fuel-efficiency instead of size and power, the Commission has invited manufacturers to sign an EU code of good practice on car marketing and advertising.

1

The chief of industry body SMMT*, Christopher MacGowan has responded to these proposals by saying *"low-emission cars already exist, the real problem is that motorists do not buy them."* In a statement SMMT said, *"While the motor industry accepts that it has an important part to play in the climate change debate, it has grave concerns over the impact of proposals made, as this would result in less choice for the motorist and higher prices on the dealer forecourt."* Car industry officials insist they have already done much to improve efficiency, any further improvements would be prohibitively expensive. According to a Renault spokesman, *"Each car could be 3,000 euros more expensive to make, if the industry is to meet the Commission's proposed requirement."*

2

However, in the history of environmental legislation manufacturers have tended to exaggerate the cost of new legislation, according to BBC environment analyst Roger Harrabin, *"It is unlikely that more fuel-efficient cars will cost more. Often when new laws are passed, they unveil cleaner models already on the drawing board but held back to squeeze maximum profit out of existing models."* In the long-run consumers should be better off according to environment commissioner, Stavros Dimas: *"Our analysis holds that the extra capital cost of making cars more fuel-efficient will be more than offset by the fuel savings over the car's lifetime,"* he said. *"More fuel-efficient cars are good news for consumers. Not only will people be reducing their contribution to climate change that threatens us all, they will also pay less in fuel bills."*

3

Car industry officials insist they have already done much to improve efficiency. In 1996 the car industry agreed to reduce emission output by 25% to 140g per kilometre by 2008. *"We have proven that we are doing our bit by hitting interim targets of our voluntary agreement,"* Mr MacGowan said. But industry analysts point out that despite such lofty talk the industry does not stand a chance; *"The European Automobile Manufacturers Association will miss the target"* according to Lehman Brother's analyst Christopher Will. He observed that the car industry had achieved a 14% fall in average CO₂ emissions to 160g per kilometre by 2005 but commented, *"However, going forward would be much tougher. The easy improvements are behind us, and progress is now at an even slower rate"*

4

* SMMT – The Society of Motor Manufacturers Ltd

Copyright Acknowledgements:

Sources

Document 2: Adapted from Car makers blame drivers over CO₂, by Jorn Madslie, Business reporter, BBC News Website 7 January 2007

Graph: CO₂ Emissions from cars, Average car manufactured in Europe index, ACEA (European Automobile Manufacturers' Association)

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