

Canberra College
Parents Workshop on the Australian Scaling Test
(AST)



**CANBERRA
COLLEGE**
Caring for your future

ACT Scaling Test

The ACT Scaling Test (AST) is a test designed by the Australian Council for Education Research (ACER) to facilitate the comparison of T and H Course scores both within and across colleges. The test measures skills necessary for success at university. A Student Information Bulletin is available to students through their college in Semester 1 of Year 12. This provides information about administration of the test, including rules and requirements.

When is the AST held?

The AST is held on the first Tuesday and Wednesday of September each year.

Who sits the AST?

All students who are enrolled in Year 12 and who wish to gain an Australian Tertiary Admission Rank must complete all parts of the AST.

Any student enrolled in a T package in Year 12 who is unsure of what they will do after Year 12 should also sit the AST.

What makes up the AST?

The AST comprises of three papers:

The Multiple Choice Test (2 hours and fifteen minutes)

There will be 80 questions grouped into units, each based on a piece of stimulus material. The material is drawn from the humanities, social sciences, sciences and mathematics areas and is accessible to all senior secondary students.

The Short Response Test (1 hour and 45 minutes)

There will be 19 - 25 questions testing thinking and reasoning. Students will be asked for interpretations, explanations and justification of responses or points of view.

The Writing Task (2 hours and 30 minutes)

Students will be given stimulus material on a particular topic and are then expected to write a clear argumentative essay of 600 words.

An AST result will be awarded only if you make a serious attempt at all three components of the test.

How are the results of the AST used?

The AST scores of those students who complete a T package provide the basis for scaling course scores for students at the colleges they attend. A student's scaled course scores are used in the calculation of that student's ATAR. More details of this process can be found in Scaling and the ATAR.

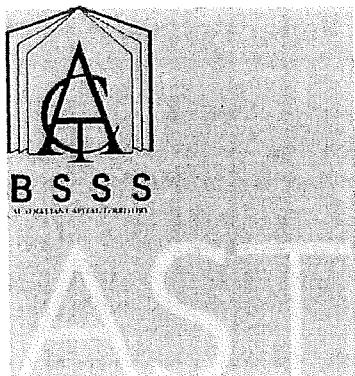
How do I find out my AST result?

The ACT Board of Senior Secondary Studies does not publish your AST score on any of the certificates it produces. At the end of Year 12, however, your college will provide you with your scores on the various components of the AST.

Preparation for the AST

Each college runs at least one trial AST with students receiving the appropriate feedback. The trial(s) introduce students to both the procedures for the conduct of the test as well as the nature of the test itself. Students can also assist in their own preparation by practising the skills required where possible and by being aware of current events and issues, through the print and other media in order to form opinions on these issues.

http://www.bsss.act.edu.au/information_for_students/act_scaling_test



ACT Scaling Test

Writing Test

DIRECTIONS TO CANDIDATES

The time allowed for this test is **2 hours 30 minutes**.

You are required to write approximately 600 words, discussing a major issue raised in the material provided in this booklet. You should develop a clear argument, and you should feel free to agree or disagree with any opinion expressed in the material.

You should begin by reading and thinking about the material provided. Your first task is to select an aspect of the issue that you wish to write about, and to consider possible titles for your piece of writing.

The material on the next two pages is to assist you in developing your argument about the issue. You do not have to refer to any of the material specifically.

The time allowed for the test gives you plenty of time for thinking, planning, drafting, re-drafting and editing your piece of writing. For the last stage of this process, you may find the checklist on the last page of this booklet helpful.

Pens and biros only (not pencils) may be used for writing the final version. Loose paper will be provided for notes, plans, rough drafts, etc.

Since examiners will take into account only what is written in the answer book, make sure that you leave yourself sufficient time to write out the final version of your piece of writing.

DO NOT TURN THE PAGE UNTIL YOU ARE TOLD.

Read carefully the material on these two pages.

Write an essay of about 600 words, giving your point of view on a major issue raised in the material.

Give your essay a clear title.

You must respond to a major issue raised in the material but you need not refer to any of the material specifically.

You should assume you are writing to an intelligent adult audience.



"Maybe this will teach you that it's morally wrong to kill people!"

The high cost of capital punishment

The death penalty is the ultimate denial of human rights. It is the premeditated and cold-blooded killing of a human being by the state in the name of justice. It violates the right to life as proclaimed in the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*. It is the ultimate cruel, inhuman and degrading punishment.

We must ask ourselves this.... What will executing murderers achieve? Will their death diminish the torment caused by their actions? What will it teach our young people – that legalized killing in the right circumstances is all right? And will society be a better place for it?

Capital punishment has no therapeutic qualities – true healing is not produced by vengeance – it merely teaches us that revenge is an acceptable means of addressing heinous crime. The effects of this teaching and attitude will be a continuing cycle of anger, hatred, rage and violence, expressed in various forms of animosity, conflict and crime in society.

Our justice system is one of the things that marks us as a civilization. By allowing those who may have committed appalling crimes to live, while still punishing them for their crimes, we show far greater strength than we would by killing them.



The ultimate punishment: a defence

We threaten punishments in order to deter crime. We impose them not only to make the threats credible but also as retribution (justice) for the crimes that were not deterred. Threats and punishments are necessary to deter, and deterrence is a sufficient practical justification for them.

Although penalties can be unwise, repulsive, or inappropriate, and those punished can be pitiable, in a sense the infliction of legal punishment on a guilty person cannot be unjust. By committing the crime, the criminal volunteered to assume the risk of receiving a legal punishment that he could have avoided by not committing the crime. The punishment he suffers is the punishment he voluntarily risked suffering and, therefore, it is no more unjust to him than any other event for which one knowingly volunteers to assume the risk. Thus, the death penalty cannot be unjust to the guilty criminal.

Morally it is wrong to incarcerate someone for murder. A sentence of life in an air-conditioned, cable-equipped prison where a person gets free meals three times a day, personal recreation time, and regular visits with friends and family, is a slap in the face of morality. If the punishment for theft is imprisonment, then the punishment for murder must be logically more severe, because human life is infinitely more valuable than any material item.

Death sentences and executions

During 2002, at least 1,526 people were executed in 31 countries. At least 3,248 people were sentenced to death in 67 countries. These figures include only cases known to Amnesty International; the true figures were certainly higher.

Executions are known to have been carried out in the following countries and territories in 2002:

Belarus	Kuwait	Tajikistan
China	Malaysia	Thailand
Egypt	Nigeria	Uganda
Equatorial Guinea	Pakistan	United Arab Emirates
India	Palestinian Authority	United States of America
Iran	Saudi Arabia	Uzbekistan
Iraq	Singapore	Viet Nam
Japan	Somalia	Yemen
Jordan	Sudan	Zimbabwe
Kazakhstan	Syria	
Korea (North)	Taiwan	

Death sentences are known to have been imposed in the following countries and territories in 2002:

Afghanistan	India	Malaysia	Syria
Algeria	Indonesia	Mauritania	Taiwan
Armenia	Iran	Morocco	Tajikistan
Bahamas	Iraq	Myanmar	Tanzania
Bangladesh	Jamaica	Nigeria	Thailand
Burundi	Japan	Pakistan	Togo
Cameroon	Jordan	Palestinian Authority	Trinidad and Tobago
Central African Republic	Kazakhstan	Philippines	Turkey
China	Kenya	Qatar	Uganda
Congo (Democratic Republic)	Korea (North)	Rwanda	United Arab Emirates
Cuba	Korea (South)	Saint Lucia	United States of America
Egypt	Kuwait	Samoa	Uzbekistan
Ethiopia	Kyrgyzstan	Saudi Arabia	Viet Nam
Fiji	Laos	Singapore	Yemen
Ghana	Lebanon	Somalia	Zambia
Grenada	Libya	Sri Lanka	Zimbabwe
Guyana	Malawi	Sudan	

As in previous years, the vast majority of executions worldwide were carried out in a tiny handful of countries. In 2002, 81 per cent of all known executions took place in China, Iran and the USA. In China, limited and incomplete records available to Amnesty International at the end of the year indicated that at least 1,060 people were executed, but the true figure was believed to be much higher. At least 113 executions were carried out in Iran. Seventy-one people were executed in the USA.

© Amnesty International Australia, April 2003, www.amnesty.org.au

Should Australia have the death penalty?

	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
Yes	37%	50%	45%	44%	43%	51%
Not sure	36%	21%	24%	22%	24%	18%
No	28%	29%	32%	35%	33%	31%

Source: Australia SCAN Quantum Market Research

CRITERIA FOR ASSESSMENT

- Quality of thought and content
- Structure and organisation
- Expression, style and mechanics.

WHAT THE EXAMINERS WILL LOOK FOR

- Your choice of an aspect of the major issue directly related to the material presented
- The coherence of your argument
- The quality of your evidence or supporting arguments
- The control of language and form, including clarity, precision and appropriateness for the target audience.

SOME THINGS YOU MIGHT CONSIDER BEFORE HANDING IN YOUR PIECE OF WRITING

- Have I given my work a clear and accurate title?
- Does the work have a clear organisation and structure?
- Have I read over the piece of writing and edited the final copy for spelling, punctuation and sentence structure?
- Are there places in which my handwriting would be difficult to follow and should be tidied?
- Are all the alterations I have made clear to the reader?

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Acknowledgements

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nature_versus_nurture
Cartoon Stock, http://www.cartoonstock.com/directory/n/nature_nurture_debate_gifts.asp

THE AST WRITING TASK

What Is It?

The task, like the rest of the AST, is an aptitude test: it tests what you can do. It requires you to write an "essay", presenting an argument or point of view

How To Prepare For It

You can't study for it. Attend the trial test and make sure you get feedback.

Read daily newspapers and be informed about current affairs

How To Do It

1. Read the instructions
2. Read all the stimulus material
3. Identify the issues
4. Formulate an hypothesis or case
5. Support your point of view

You should have time to plan, draft and revise your work

TICK OFF ON THE CHECKLIST ON THE BACK OF THE TEST PAPER BEFORE YOU HAND YOUR ESSAY IN.

Checklist:

- Is the title clear, catchy, focussed and interesting?
- Does the essay thesis relate to the topic of the paper?
- Is the introduction engaging and clear – does it make the reader want to read on – does it introduce the theme and ideas for the essay?
- Does it have a logical flow of ideas and one clear idea for each paragraph.
- Have you included evidence and, if so, is it relevant to the points and the overall idea of the essay
- Is(Are) the paragraph(s) well structured?

P – Single point made at the beginning

E – Expansion of the point

E – Exploration of the idea
strong clear evidence

C – Concluding statement

- Language use – is it persuasive, well handled, clear and well structured?

A Few More Points To Remember:

- You must respond to issues raised in the stimulus material
- You may respond in a number of ways, to one or more of the issues
- Do not paraphrase the material.
- You can use information from your own personal experience if it is relevant to the issues(s) and your arguments.

The titles of the stimulus material can key you in to the issues and provide a focus for your response

How It Is Assessed

- Scripts are assessed using the criteria set out on the test paper.
- Markers Will Focus On:
 - THOUGHT AND CONTENT
 - STRUCTURE AND ORGANISATION
 - EXPRESSION AND MECHANICS(in that order)

Tips and Information about the AST

- You will always be given the opportunity to look at both sides of the issue
 - Your response is scored by FOUR markers
 - They try to recognise the virtues of your essay – not penalise you
 - Natural order and logic is valued by the markers
 - It is marked out of 10. Approximately 8% attain 10/10 and approximately 8% attain 9/10
 - The markers are looking at the quality of your thought and content of the essay – the thought, quality, insight and structure, as well as a clear connection the stimulus material, are assessed
 - Your language control is assessed. Avoid long rambling sentences.
 - Take care with logic, relevance and coherence
 - Proofread
 - Your title is assessed
-
- The first step is to look for a line of argument or major issue within the stimulus material, focus on this issue and then develop an argumentative essay which develops logically and coherently.
 - This is an exercise in developing a clear argument, in writing, that is coherent with quality evidence and supporting ideas.
 - Don't try to deal with every aspect of the topic as you will only create a superficial argument – focus on the specific – do not try to cover every angle.
 - You must go beyond the stimulus material – the markers value insight into the material. Do not just repeat it. Try to find your own examples.
 - Look at both sides and then make a final decision in the conclusion.
 - The essay must be lucid and sustain a clear argument.
 - Try to be original in your approach and use valid evidence.
 - The argument may be personal.
 - You must present a point of view about some aspect of the topic.
 - Do not paraphrase the stimulus material.
 - Do not name the stimulus material in your essay – do not rely on it – there is nothing to be gained by quoting from it.
 - Find ways of analysing the material conceptually – ie looking for the concepts and ideas being dealt with.
-
- Try to capture the marker's attention straight away. Begin with an effective title that shows clearly what you are going to argue then continue with a focused, interesting and relevant introduction.
 - Avoid sweeping statements, slogans, clichés and obvious comments.
 - Avoid over simplification of complex issues.
 - Do not be offensive in any way. Freedom of expression does not give you unlimited right to speak without consideration of the consequences or repercussions.
 - Make sure you plan; then draft; then write the final copy – distinguish between each of these processes. Do not just make a hurried under thought out single attempt.
 - Don't make up your own topic; don't discuss peripheral issues.
 - Construct ideas; sequence your writing and develop your ideas so they build up to a climax and give shape to the piece of writing.

ESSAY TEMPLATE

INTRODUCTION

Define the topic and state your case (hypothesis) - always assume the reader knows nothing.

Make four (approximately) statements/points which you can use as topic sentences in each paragraph of the body to prove/illustrate/expand on the introduction. **DON'T** elaborate on any points in the introduction.

THE BODY

Use a topic sentence taken from a statement in the introduction as the start of each new paragraph or idea. (This is the **ONLY** time you repeat sentences) **DON'T** introduce new points or combine/confuse/jump between points in a single paragraph.

The body of the essay is where you make your arguments. You expand on the statements you made in the introduction, taking them in order and one at a time.

Think: tease out/expand/prove/demonstrate

THE CONCLUSION: Sums up your statements and their proofs.

Writing to Convince: Opinion Piece

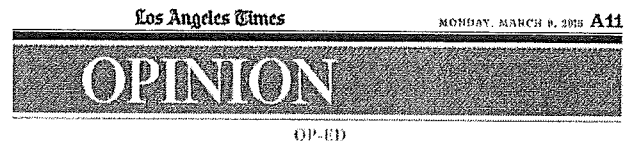
An opinion piece expresses a concise and focused opinion about a particular issue – usually published in a newspaper, magazine or advocacy website. It is a persuasive, argumentative piece focused on a particular social / community issue. You need to convince your audience that there is a problem and there is something we should do to fix it. The general structure of an opinion piece is as follows:

- A clear introduction to the issue
- Evidence and discussion of the problem
- A call to action / proposal for change

Your writing needs to be effective and efficient because you only have limited space to accomplish these goals. You should include relevant information and sound reasoning in order to convince your audience of your argument.

General characteristics of an opinion piece include:

- A title
- Writing in the 'now' – speaking to a current issue, rather than analysing something from the past
- The tone is rarely 'neutral'
- Use of first person ('I')
- Persuasive techniques and appeals to emotion



By Dick Startz and Dan Goldhaber

In Silicon Valley and other tech hubs, high-tech companies are driving the California economy by paying their salaries to drive, to attract employees whose productivity is high. But California's public schools are stuck in the old mode of paying modest salaries for modest results from teachers, most of whom are talented and very hardworking. A teacher's pay, from kindergarten to high school, is \$55,000 annually, and they are expected to spend the day and evening hours on their job.

Why not pay more to teachers? The state budget is finally recovering from a devastating recession. That makes new investments in education possible for the first time since the 1990s, when the state started reducing class size. That move in 1990 has now cost more than \$25 billion. Unfortunately, the state's achievement gap for this investment appears to have been quite small. One study of the California's size reduction found that that it

increased the number of third-grade teachers above the national average by a margin of 2 percentage points. That's very little bang for very many bucks. Today, a New York program offers a very different way to invest in schools' work, and at a substantially lower cost. Five years ago, The City of New York set a starting teacher salary of \$25,000. The budget for the city's public schools is \$1.5 billion. That's a lot of money for a city of 8 million people.

An independent research firm, Mathematica Policy Group, has found that TEP's results are strikingly successful for students. For fourth graders, the program's low-income, Latino students outperformed similar students at comparable NYC schools with test scores equal to an extra 16 years in math and 14 years in reading and language arts. What's the teacher's incentive? In New York, the extra pay is \$10,000 a year. TEP increases class size from the typical 27 to 30, reduces fringe benefits to match those in the private sector and requires teachers to

Pay teachers \$125,000 a year, expect more and see what happens.

work extra hours to replace many administrators. Together, these changes fully funded the higher teacher pay.

But would it work in California? It would probably cost more than New York because it doesn't make sense to increase class size here. TEP classes have averaged 25 students, which is not that different from typical California class size. It may well make sense for California to put in just enough extra money to keep the class size at about 25, rather than increasing it to 30. That's a challenge in this economy, and higher teacher pay needs to be cost-effective in this plan to work.

Our research shows that California teachers earn an average of \$10,000 less than their counterparts with similar education and experience in other states. That's better than in most states, but not nearly as

good as other states and regions. Successful tech companies don't only ask whether they're paying more or less than average; they also focus on why they need to pay more to produce a successful product. That's why some companies pay well above what would be considered necessary to attract particular positions. The pay is for quality, not just bodies – a useful distinction.

Substantial opportunity is knocking. California should increase its teacher pay to match the high-paying private sector. If it really were to do this, the New York experiment, California will have a path forward to achieve big student gains for a fairly small taxpayer investment.

Dick Startz is a professor of economics at UC Santa Barbara and professor emeritus at the University of Washington. Dan Goldhaber directs the National Center for Analysis of Longitudinal Data in Education Research at the American Institutes for Research and the Center for Education Data & Research at the University of Washington.

PARAGRAPH WRITING A paragraph discusses one point.

P

The opening sentence of a paragraph gives a description of its the point. (1 sentence)

E

The following sentence/s explain and explore the point (1-2 sentences)

E

The next sentences expands and gives evidence to back up your point of view. (2-4 sentences)

C

The final sentence concludes what you have said and sums up the argument

Remember the PEEC rule: Point, Explanation, Evidence, Conclude.

Argus Page 4
Wednesday, March 16, 2005

OPINION

THE VIEW FROM HERE

Blanchard Mountain can be a win-win scenario — with right plan

You may have read several articles in the newspapers over the last several weeks regarding Blanchard Mountain.

There have been letters to the editor lauding the wonderful recreational opportunities that the mountain affords, such as hiking, horseback riding, hang gliding, and other great outdoor activities. Other writers express their concern about the timber harvest being planned on Blanchard Mountain, worried that the harvest may destroy the beauty of the

mountain and prevent continuing recreational activities.

Still other writers have talked about the pros and cons of the Skagit County lawsuit filed against the Department of Natural Resources for the reduced harvest plan that was developed for Lake Whatcom.

In the tone of many writers, I read an either/or sentiment. That is, either leave the timber on Blanchard Mountain for its beauty and recreational use, or harvest the timber destroying the environment.



Dr. Rick Jones, B-E
Superintendent of
Public Schools

In fact, the Department of Natural Resources works diligently in their planning process to meet the needs of the recreational users of the mountain as well as generate revenue for the junior taxing districts for which the trust lands were set aside many years ago.

The Burlington-Edison School District, as well as school districts all across the State of Washington, rely heavily on the revenues from state trust lands. For taxpayers in our school district, the amount

of money that we receive on an annual basis is approximately \$150,000. Other junior taxing districts benefit as well, such as hospitals, fire districts, cities, and counties. This revenue stream from these state trust lands has been in place since the 1930s. It was set up for the express purpose of providing revenue to the agencies, and we hope to continue that revenue stream far into the future for the benefit of our taxpayers.

The Department of Natural

Resources is guided by many regulatory agencies, such as the Department of Fish and Wildlife, the Department of Ecology, etc. They also bring all of the interested parties to the table as they plan for each harvest developing a plan that can meet everyone's reasonable needs.

The timber harvest on Blanchard Mountain is not an either/or issue, because both the trust beneficiaries and the recreational users can benefit from a well thought-out plan.

A

AST Writing Scale

Mark	Summary	Details
9 – 10 10%	Intelligent and Fluent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Content organised effectively Shape and coherence, satisfying sense of completion The material has been effectively processed e.g. includes generalisation, summary, synthesis, draws inferences Accurate and comprehensive account of material Precise and skilful use of language including: syntax, vocabulary and punctuation Consistent in tone
7-8 23%	Clear, Coherent, Competent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Content organised, structured and coherent The material has obviously been processed and assimilated May be an ambitious attempt that does not quite succeed Competent use of language May contain occasional flaws in expression May be verbose May have lapses in tone
5-6 33%	Moderate – minimally developed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Presents the main ideas in the material May be inadequately organised, with a lack of coherence or lack of completion May include irrelevant material Adequate control of language, but may have flaws in expression such as: poor spelling or punctuation, limited or inappropriately used vocabulary, grammatical mistakes Tone may not be sustained May be verbose May be insubstantial
3-4 23%	Several Problems Little Understanding	<p>There will be several problems with the piece, including the following (not necessarily all of these problems):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Little organisation or coherence No evidence of reshaping or standing back from the material No processing of the material May describe details of the material without making connections to whole Intrusive problems with language use Insubstantial Needlessly long or laboriously detailed The material has been grossly misunderstood
1-2 10% Z X	Severe Problems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Little or no evidence of understanding of the task or of the material Minimal communication Nothing or less than a line Absent

Levels of Achievement for the AST Writing Task

The weakest answers typically show	Below average answers typically show	Average answers typically show	Above average answers typically show	The strongest answers typically show
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dependence on the stimulus material Basic summary and paraphrase No evidence of grasping the issue or the stimulus material An inability to analyse or interpret the stimulus material No point of view or a simple and reductive handling of the issues Crassness or crudeness in the comments on the issues Little evidence of organisation Inability to meaningfully use or engage with the stimulus material Obvious or tangential ideas Clumsiness or crudeness in thought or expression of ideas Unclear and inaccurate expression inappropriate tone and language A clear lack of focus and substance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Basic understanding, or comprehension, of the issue or stimulus material Obvious summarising and paraphrasing of the stimulus material Rudimentary ability to develop and substantiate a point of view about the issues or the stimulus material Simple predictable and obvious thoughts and responses Wandering disorganisation or a mechanical rigidity Mere repetition or illustration of the stimulus rather than discussion or argument General or vague discussion Insubstantial or verbose and padded Rather basic and clumsy, stolid or clichéd expression 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A more than basic grasp of the issue and stimulus material An ability to move away from the stimulus material and generate some pertinent comments on the issue Some purposeful definition of the topic Difficulty giving a developed point of view or organising an argument Comparatively little evidence of real involvement or insight into the issue A rather standard or obvious direction for the argument or an eccentric or tangential approach Clear and basically sound expression but rather bland and uneven in quality 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some independent thought and some ability to generate ideas about the issue Elaboration, exploration and constructive use of the stimulus material Engagement with the issues and the ability to go beyond the obvious and recognise or deal with complexities Discussion that makes distinctions and can formulate a point of view Some evidence of the ability to organise and structure a cogent argument Clear and precise expression Ability to interest the reader 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Confident analysis and interpretation of the stimulus material Awareness of the complexities of the issues and the stimulus material Insight into the issues and the ability to think about them critically Ability to generate ideas about the issue A broad and well-informed perspective Ability to develop a point of view and organise a cogent argument A sense of shape and closure Sensitivity, involvement and responsiveness A distinctive tone, view or attitude A developed and substantiated point of view Lucid, fluent, precise and vivid expression Ability to involve the reader

Grade

"LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, DOCTOR GOD, COME TO TURN OFF YOUR MACHINES"

For most of history the task of deciding when each individual's time has come has been delegated to God, Fate, or Chance. But with the explosion of modern medical technology man now has the chance to play God himself. This dubious honour affords current civilisation a host of new moral and ethical problems; problems that will not go away, assuming medical science has not yet reached its peak. Of course, the most significant factor in any argument for or against euthanasia is that of responsibility: could you pull the plug of a life support machine? Euthanasia is legal murder, and however morally correct any specific case is, the wheels of bureaucracy and politics must turn almost full circle to accommodate this radical issue.

The problem of legal murders and suicides must be solved, and soon. The bleak irony of the present situation is horribly black, and of no credit to anyone. Medical sciences, and economic sciences for that matter, are not so advanced that there is not still disease, hunger, and millions of preventable deaths every year. While doctors congratulate each other for holding onto a comatose patient for a week beyond his natural term, children elsewhere are dying at a horrible rate of illness and starvation. Life support machines are not cheap to maintain: is it really worth holding on to one's life, possibly against the will of the patient, where so many more could be saved? Medical research and funding could surely be better employed, if the majority is the object of concern.

Justification for methods of maintaining life certainly exists, and that we can do this is undoubtedly a great achievement. It is a step towards Man's greatest dream: that of immortality. We have begun to challenge our final adversary, death: to conquer it altogether would make us gods. But at this early stage in the battle it must be realised that although we can sustain life longer than our ancestors could, and even our fathers, we cannot necessarily sustain comfortable life. What use is life when one is in symbiotic existence with a machine or paralysed from the neck down? Some of us know how to make the most of whatever they have, but for the vast majority the discomforts of such a life would outweigh the value of living altogether.

Death concerns us all, and although we cannot know beforehand the exact manner or time of our demise, the very technology that enables prolonged life should afford all an element of choice. Putting ourselves into the position, the metaphoric shoes, of those held back from death, we can see now, to an extent, how we would feel, how much we could endure. And for myself, at least, a life prolonged by the massive prosthesis that is a heart-lung machine, or any life-support system, is not life at all, merely existence.

No doctor, or government, or voting majority has the right to decide how long I should live, or when I should die. It is decided firstly by chance, or fate, or whatever supernatural being is pulling the strings, and if anyone else is involved in the decision, that person must be me. The individual knows himself better than any other, and in the 'Free World' of today there can be no greater freedom than that of the individual's choice whether to live or die.

AST Writing Task – Ideas from Stimulus Material

In dot point form list the major issue and ideas raised in each item

Cartoon: "Maybe this will teach you that it's morally wrong to kill people"

Cartoon: "For / Against"

Article: "The High Cost of Capital Punishment"

Article: "The Ultimate Punishment: a Defence"

Table: "Death Sentences and Executions"

Table: "Should Australians have the Death Penalty?"

AST Multiple Choice Training 2015

Adapted from Bill and Chris Gilmore's Powerpoint 2011
Gilmore Education Services

There is not one, and only one, correct way to work through a paper. The way that you decide is best for you, is the way to go.

You should:

- **use perusal time** productively.
 - Decide the order in which you will do units
 - You might read long passages and their items first.
 - You might then choose to start with a particular unit and just continue working.
- **not leave out** any items. There is no penalty for incorrect responses.
- **mark the response** in your booklet as well as on your response sheet.
- **keep track of time.** Do not spend too much time on any one unit or item.

You can come back to any you are finding difficult. You should try to have at least 25 items done in the first 40 minutes.
- **know what you still have to do** in the time available.

Advice

How much time do you have for each question?

Time allowed is 2 hours 30 minutes for 80 questions.

This means you could have just under 2 minutes per question

You are allowed to write on the question booklet, but **answers need to be on the answer sheet.**

Tactics

1. **Highlight/underline important words** in the stimulus and the stem.
2. **Eliminate responses** you think are incorrect until the best response is left.
3. **Calculate the correct answer** and then look for it in the responses.
4. **Work backwards** from the alternatives given (often numerical items).
5. **Guess as a last resort.** Guessing is better than leaving a blank.

The Questions

The question tells you what it is that you are supposed to do with the information contained. Often the information is quite detailed and lengthy and people tend to place their efforts on reading the information and neglect to read the question properly. The question stem will tell you what you are required to do to answer the question successfully. READ THE QUESTION CAREFULLY.

The Answers

The Good News: The Answer is in front of you.

The Bad News: you have to work out which one it is.

3 Strategies To Increase Correct Answers

1. **Process of elimination**
Read each answer carefully and try to identify what is wrong with each option. If there is a flaw – eliminate this as an option.
2. **Factual Scope**
Often a passage will contain all the factual information you need to answer the question. Unless assumptions or deductions are specifically requested, it is not advisable to answer outside the factual scope of the question.

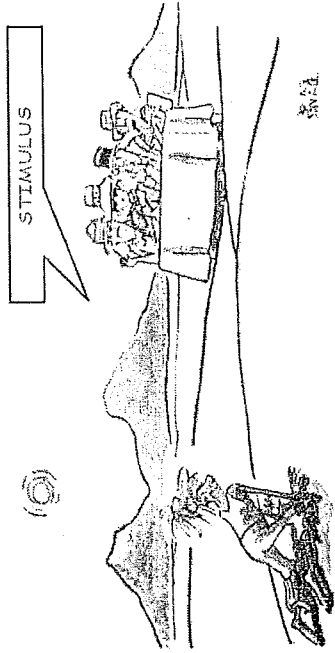
Try to avoid answers that contain information not in the factual scope.

Most questions are looking for logical reasoning from the information supplied. If an answer is adding new information, it is skewing from the question and likely to be a wrong answer.

Items 1-2

INTRODUCTION

Items 1 and 2 refer to the following cartoon.



STIMULUS

Item 1

ITEM NUMBER AND STEM

The panel of experts in this cartoon will

A provide effective help in a caring manner.

B meet the lost man's needs grudgingly.

C offer comfort, but too late.

D be completely ineffectual.

KEY AND THREE DISTRACTORS

e.g if a question is about average rainfall of Australian capital cities, then any answer which doesn't mention capital cities or rainfall in Australian Capital cities should be avoided as it is outside the factual scope of the question.

3. Wording

Often specific words contained in answer options are clues for elimination. Extreme words such as ; **Always, never, must, only, exactly, definitely, totally** strongly commit an answer option to very specific parameters, which may not always apply.
LEARN TO IDENTIFY EXTREME WORDS AND BE WARY OF THEM.

Distractors



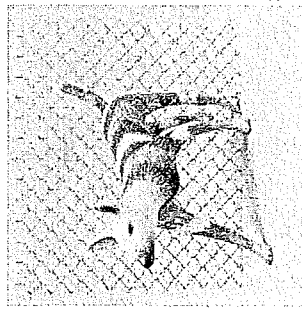
WOODCHIPPING'S DONATION TO THE AUSTRALIAN LANDSCAPE

According to Tandberg, what has woodchipping donated to the Australian landscape?

- A clarity C simplicity
- B aridity D uniformity

Some of the distractors may apply to the picture but do NOT answer the question asked.

Key: B



© Lin Olow. Licensed by VISCOPY, Australia, 2006.

The sculptor's message is that

- A dingoes are dangerous animals.
- B fences are dangerous to dingoes.
- C native animals should be protected.
- D human beings cannot control nature.

Key: D

Some of the distractors may be statements that students believe to be true BUT do not answer the question asked.

- ❖ Answer EVERY question.
- ❖ Answer the question that is asked.
- ❖ Remember
 - ONE KEY and
 - THREE DISTRACTORS!



MYTHS

1. There will usually be two options that are opposite in meaning and the key will be one of these.
2. D (or A, B or C) is usually the correct response.
3. There is always one option that is obviously incorrect.
4. There will never be more than two (or any other number) of the same letter in order, e.g. C C C
5. The longest response is usually the key.
6. 150 minutes to answer 80 items, therefore never spend more than about 2 minutes per item.



UNIT 4

Questions 11 – 14

The passage below is taken from a book about popular culture.

Fashion resembles photography. Both are liminal forms, on the threshold between art and non-art. Both are industrially produced, yet deeply individual. Both are poised ambiguously between present and past: the photograph congeals the essence of the now, while fashion freezes the moment in an eternal gesture of the only-right-way-to-be. Yet nothing more poignantly testifies to transience than the embalmed moments preserved in those old snapshots where we posed in yesterday's clothes. Far from stopping time, they locate us in history. 'Now is past' wrote the eighteenth century poet, John Clare, and the 'now' of fashion is nostalgia in the making.

Clothes are among the most fraught objects in the material world of things, since they are so closely involved with the human body and the human life cycle. They are objects, but they are also images. They communicate more subtly than most objects and commodities, precisely because of that intimate relationship to our bodies and our selves, so that we speak (however loosely) of both a 'language' and a 'psychology' of dress.

An intense interest in fashion and one's appearance is, contrary to the common view that it arises from vanity, as likely to be a form of compensation, the result of shyness and self-doubt, for fashionable dress or striking appearance provides an armour against the world. The sexual allure of dress is central, but dress is so often used to astonish and impose, to ward off as well as attract. Dress, indeed, is so protean¹ as to render its essence almost ungraspable.

¹protean: exceedingly variable

11 The writer suggests fashion and photography are 'liminal forms' (line 1) because they

- A have no boundaries.
- B are on the boundary.
- C are distinct categories.
- D are indistinguishable from each other.

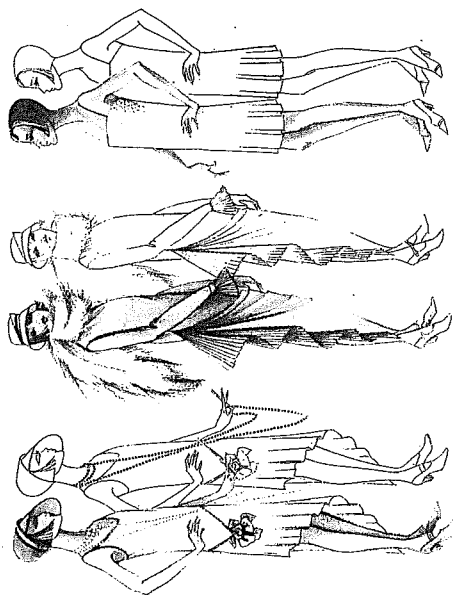
12 The statement by John Clare that 'now is past' (line 7) is best described as

- A nostalgic.
- B romantic.
- C orthodox.
- D paradoxical.

13 The writer suggests that clothes 'communicate more subtly than most objects' (lines 11 and 12) because they are

- A physically intimate.
- B material and spiritual.
- C the-only-right-way-to-be.
- D a psychological language.

The drawing below by Irina Ivanova shows women's fashions of the 1920s.



14 The drawing is best described as

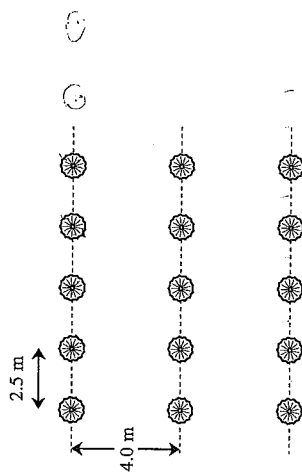
- A photographic realism.
- B a symbolic composition.
- C a dramatic representation.
- D stylised rather than realistic.

UNIT 8

Questions 24 – 27

On a beach, umbrellas are placed at precise locations to protect people from the sun. The umbrellas are arranged in straight, equally spaced, parallel rows. Each umbrella is placed in a hole in the sand. As indicated in the figure below, adjacent holes in a row are 2.5 metres apart and adjacent rows are 4.0 metres apart.

People can hire the umbrellas for \$10 per half-day, or \$15 per day.



Assume that:

- umbrellas are 1.0 metre in diameter;
- umbrellas are precisely upright;
- when viewed from above, the hole is at the centre of the umbrella;
- the *length* of a row is the distance between the centres of the umbrellas at the extreme ends of the row (where the distance between adjacent holes in a row is 2.5 metres); and
- the *width* of a set of parallel rows is the distance between the rows that are furthest apart (where the distance between adjacent rows is 4.0 metres).

24 How much would be charged for the hire of a row of beach umbrellas 1.5 metres long for half a day?

- A \$60
- B \$65
- C \$70
- D \$80

25 If there were 10 rows, each 50 metres long, how many umbrella holes would there be?

- A 210
- B 200
- C 82
- D 80

26 Which one of the following is a formula for determining how many beach umbrellas can be placed in a single row of a given length, L (where L is a multiple of 2.5)?

- A $\frac{L}{2.5 - 1}$
- B $\frac{L}{2.5 + 1}$
- C $\frac{L + 1}{2.5}$
- D $\frac{L + \frac{L}{2.5}}{2.5 - 1}$

27 In one day, what is the most that could be charged for the hire of beach umbrellas in two parallel rows each 12.5 metres long?

- A \$90
- B \$120
- C \$180
- D \$240

AST Short Response - Unit 5 2010 Paper - How to do a Literary Analysis

- Check the nominated marks allocated to the question and the space allowed. This will give you an indication of the depth of answer required.
- Read the text/s through once without making any written comments. This will help you to simply know the content of the texts.
- Read each one again – this time write down (on draft paper) what you think are the main ideas being given in each text.
- Include evidence.
 - This means a particular, word, phrase, section or sentence which expresses an idea.
- Study the particular language used and consider the meaning of individual words
 - Do they carry more than one idea – what are these? e.g. the word ‘alone’ in Simon’s song could be both lonely and empowered.
 - Are they used literally or figuratively (a secondary meaning) – how? What device is used e.g. metaphor, personification, simile, tone? e.g. an island is a literally a piece of land surrounded by water, but figuratively it evokes ideas of isolation.
 - Why are they included? Do they link to something else? Do they serve a particular purpose?
 - Do they work together with something else in the text – what and how?
- Identify specific writing structures e.g. sentence lengths, use of grammar, punctuation, stanzas and consider the effect and purpose of these.
- Consider links within the text to other ideas, concepts or elements of the world. e.g. “No man is an Island’ is now a well known saying so we already have preconceptions about its meaning.
- Track similarities
 - Compare the written features of the text/s as well as the ideas
- Track contrasts
 - This means things that are common to both texts but used differently or carry different meanings e.g. Donne says we are not an island whereas Simon says the exact opposite.
 - It could also be different ways of communicating similar ideas e.g. language and style
- Decide on which comparisons and contrasts you will discuss – allocate a paragraph for each one.
- Remember to use PEEC structure for your paragraphs:
 - make a **P**oint
 - **E**xpand on the point
 - discuss the point with **E**vidence
 - **C**onclude the point
- When you analyse there are various levels of analysis you can achieve, all of which require use of textual evidence/examples/quotes:
 - **Remembering** – this just describes and repeats the content
 - **Understanding**– this shows you have understood and have made sense of the ideas and content.
 - **Analysing** – this is taking the information apart and exploring relationships. It is also where you make some links and explain how and why something appears in the text.
 - **Evaluating** – This includes both understanding and analysis levels. It also involves justifying your opinions by making judgements and discussing the validity of ideas in the text. You do this through close examination of the text (see points above) and by providing a detailed and supported discussion of the ideas and content of the text and their importance.

Unit 5

Question 11

The following is a quotation adapted from a sermon by John Donne, published in the seventeenth century, about hearing the tolling of a funeral bell.

No man is an island, entire of itself, every man is a piece of the continent, a part of the whole. If a clod of earth be washed away by the sea, Europe is the less, as well as if a whole promontory were. Any man's death diminishes me, because I am involved in mankind and therefore never send to know for whom the bell tolls, it tolls for thee.

John Donne's ideas seem to have influenced the following modern songs.

Song I	Song II
No Man Is An Island - Joan Baez No man is an island, No man stands alone, Each man's joy is joy to me, Each man's grief is my own. We need one another, So I will defend, Each man as my brother, Each man as my friend. I saw the people gather, I heard the music start, The song that they were singing, Is ringing in my heart.	I Am A Rock - Paul Simon A winter's day- in a deep and dark December I am alone- Gazing from my window to the streets below On a freshly fallen silent shroud of snow. I am a rock, I am an island. I've built walls, A fortress deep and mighty That none may penetrate I have no need of friendship friendship causes pain It's laughter and loving I disdain I am a rock, I am an island

Question 11

Compare the ideas in the John Donne statement with the song by Joan Baez and that by Paul Simon.

(5)

Your responses will be judged on the:

- accuracy of the description and understanding of the material;
- substance and quality of the interpretation offered.

AST Unit 6 Question Approach:

- Read the information given.
- Look over the table.
- Read what the actual question asks.
- Look back at the table. What is the table telling us? What do the columns and rows mean? For this table the columns are the types of trees and the rows are to do with money around these trees.
- Is there previous information that works with the table (In this example the formula for profit).
- Look back at the question and see how it relates to the table. For this question it is asking for each tree type when is the trees value greatest. It is important that this is interpreted as the highest profit of the trees.
- Next you can look at how the profit formula works. To see the profit is the income – 2 different costs. One cost is fixed the other changes based on years.
- The long way to approach the question would be to work out the profit for each tree for each of the years. Then look for the highest profit for each tree and put those years as your answer. This would take too long and involve 27 calculations.
- A better way is to as a starting point look for the highest income for each tree. Then look for any reason why this should not give the maximum profit for each tree.
- Look at the closest income above and below the highest income tree and check that it doesn't give a higher profit. So solution would be:

As a starting point look for highest income for each tree:

\$1310 for X at 60 years

\$1360 for Y at 70 years

\$1580 for Z at 80 years

Any reason why this should not be the maximum profit?

For X look at 50 years income \$830 -> Costs \$10 less but income \$480 less

For X look at 70 years income \$1040 -> Costs \$10 more and price \$270 less

Neither increases the profit therefore starting point stands.

Same approach can be used for Trees Y and Z.

Question 13

The company wants to maximise its profits over 90 years.

Which one of the following two strategies would better enable it to achieve its goal?

Strategy I Plant species Z, cut the trees after 90 years

Strategy II Plant species Y, cut the trees after 50 years, then replant with species X and cut these after 40 years

-

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with ten horizontal dashed lines, typical of primary-ruled notebook paper. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

.....

(I)

Writing an Art Response – Using the Four Point Plan

Before writing your response consider how many point are allocated to the answer and how much space is given. Not all of the questions below will be applicable – choose the ones that best fit the artwork.

1. Description

Describe everything you see in detail. Exclude interpretations and evaluations, and instead take an objective* inventory of the work. Point out single features such as objects, trees, and people. Then point out abstract elements such as texture, shape, line and colour.

*A test of objectivity would be that most people would agree with your statement.

2. Analysis

Explore how the elements of art (line, shape, colour, texture and form) have been organised. How do the objects you described earlier relate to each other? Note similarities and dissimilarities in the art elements and continuities (such as the colour red repeated throughout the work) and of connections (for example, the shape of a window repeated in the shape of a table) between these art elements and the subject matter. What principles of design are used to create the composition? Do you see examples of repetition, gradation, contrast or rhythm? Discuss the focal point, colour relationships and mood of the artwork.

3. Interpretation

Make statements about the meaning(s) of the work. This is the most creative part of your critique. Using a hypothesis, support it with arguments, based on evidence given in the description and analysis. What is happening? What is the artist trying to say? **What is the Artist trying to communicate?** What does the artwork mean? What ideas do you think the Artist was exploring? What response to the artwork do you have? What imaginative qualities do you think it has? What contextual influences (political, social, cultural, and historical) do you think have affected the Artist's response?

4. Judgment

(Only use point 4 if the question has asked for your opinion)

This is the most complex part of the critique and requires an opinion regarding the worth of the artwork, based on what was stated in the previous stages of the critique. Evaluate the artwork. Are parts of the work successfully interrelated? Does the work illicit a response or communicate an idea? Are you moved by this work? What do you think of it? What is your aesthetic judgment? And on what is your judgement based? Where do you think it fits in the world of art making? (Does it have a particular place, e.g. Social commentary?) How significant is it in relation to other artworks? (Is it important historically/culturally? Why?)

Question 14

Question 14

The images on the opposite page are of the president of the United States, Barack Obama. (5)
Compare the two images.

What impression do they give of Barack Obama?
How are they similar and how are they different?

Your responses will be judged on the:

- accuracy of the description and understanding of the material;
- substance and quality of the interpretation offered.

Image 1

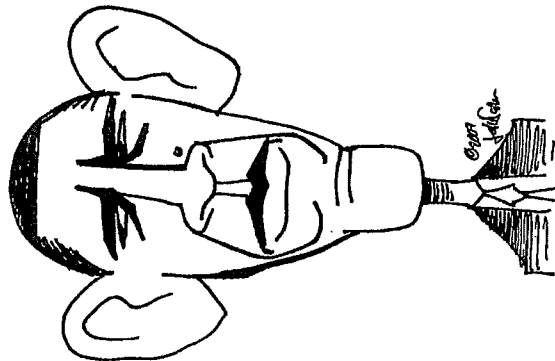


Image 2

