Law Admission Test (LAT)

Sample Paper 2020

Australian Council *for* Educational Research

Copyright © Australian Council for Educational Research Ltd (ABN: 19 004 398 145) 2020. All rights reserved. Individuals may make one copy for their own non-commercial, personal use for the purpose of that individual's preparation for the LAT.

NOTES:
You have a total of 2 hours to complete this test, with no specified word length. However, the emphasis is on the *quality* of what you write rather than the number of words.
It is suggested that you spend 10 minutes on each question reading and planning.

Question 1

Your Task
Write an analysis of the arguments contained in the letter which evaluates the strength and weaknesses of the arguments presented in the letter, and assesses whether the author of the letter would successfully persuade his readers.

Your analysis will be assessed on the following:

- your ability to critically analyse the opinions and arguments presented;
- your ability to evaluate the persuasiveness of the arguments presented;
- how effectively you express yourself including the structure and organisation of your analysis.

Background Facts
The Canary Beach Shire Council, on the North Coast of New South Wales, has proposed banning alcohol and live music in public parks during 'Schoolies week',[1] and to run a campaign via traditional and social media with the aim of discouraging their town as a destination for Schoolies. Some local business owners oppose the ban. Below is a letter published in the local newspaper:

> Dear Sirs,
>
> As a local I know what most people expect me to say. I hate 'Schoolies' week. It's rubbish, it's full of drunk teenagers, it's a blight on our small town. But, no, that's not what I think at all. I know this will surprise people, in fact, I have told some people already and the look of horror on their faces is as though I have told them I think the town should be bulldozed to make way for a new multi-lane highway. In fact, not supporting Schoolies is the thing that will probably kill this town.
>
> We are a small regional town and surely everyone here is painfully aware that the economy at the moment is not exactly great for those who don't live in the big cities. Last year's Australia Day ban on drinking in the parks only hurt local businesses, it didn't stop any partying, they just did it somewhere else. Maybe the city councillors and uptight residents enjoyed their 'head-in-the-sand' moment of pretending they have solved something, but they are in denial. We were all meant to shake our heads and throw up our hands in despair. But, what they haven't told you is that this year they will probably spend five times that amount policing the ban. Add in the lost revenue of local businesses and you can start to see what a stupid knee-jerk reaction this is.

[1] Schoolies week', is a week of celebrations to mark the end of the final year of senior school.

I know lots of people say ‘it’s not schoolies we’re against, it’s promoting Canary Beach as a destination for schoolies’. It’s like saying we should ban people from the beach because that idiot drunk drowned there last year. People will get injured wherever they are, those young people could as easily have been drag racing, or just stayed home and gotten so drunk they fell off a balcony. Nothing about Schoolies week is more likely to result in injury than any other thing young people do in their spare time. It might not be what you want to do, or even what you want your kids to do, but they are just normal young people. Everyone did stuff like this.

This ban on the Schoolies event is an infringement of our legal rights as business owners, we should be allowed to keep our businesses afloat by whatever means are available. This is more-or-less like a ban on me renting out my caravans to specific people. Let’s be realistic they will probably go and camp illegally on the beach and who knows how vulnerable they might be there, to theft or even sexual assault. In a proper caravan park they will be safe.

If anything we should be encouraging young people with a proper schoolies event. One solution would be some kind of festival, we could easily restrict each person to one alcoholic drink each using tokens or something. At an organised event there would be no access to illegal drugs and we could easily show them how to have fun doing other activities, like waterslides or a beauty pageant or something. That’s the kind of fun we used to have back in my day and I’m pretty sure if we provided it again we would immediately see lots of the drinking and violence issues disappear. These kids have just finished school, they are adults now, let’s help them have a safe, enjoyable break and not treat them, and everyone else in the town who sensibly opposes the ban, as criminals. If you want businesses like mine open the rest of the year, well guess what, we actually need schoolies.

Brian Levitt
Owner, Canary Beach Caravan Park

Question 2

You are Policy Officer in the NSW Department of Education. You are responsible for making a recommendation to the Premier and Cabinet as to whether History should be made a compulsory subject in the HSC.

Your task
Read and consider the following materials related to the study of History. Develop a piece of writing to present to the Premier and Cabinet that outlines your recommendations (i.e. your point of view) on the issues relating to the study of History.

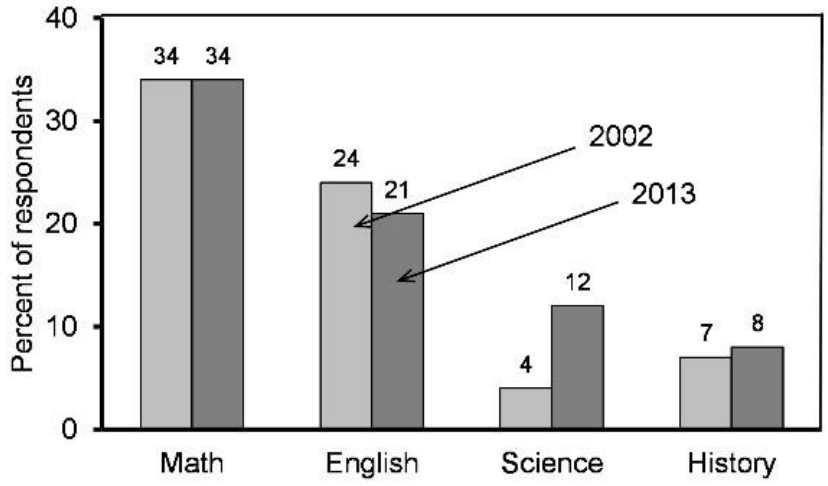
Please note: While it is not a requirement to reference all the material reproduced below, your piece of writing should be clearly based on the issues arising in this material. You can reference the materials reproduced below in your argument by their Item number in brackets, eg. (see Item 2). You may also refer to other information or sources/resources you think relevant.

Item 1: Quotations

'History will be kind to me for I intend to write it.'- Winston Churchill *Winston Churchill was the Prime Minister of the UK from 1940 to 1945 and again from 1951 to 1955. Churchill was also an officer in the British Army, a historian, a writer, and an artist.*
'Historical knowledge is no more and no less than carefully and critically constructed collective memory. As such it can both make us wiser in our public choices and more richly human in our private lives.' William H. McNeill, from the book *Why Study History?* (1985).
'It is often said that the study of History is actually the study of the winners, the victors, the aggressors. Until this is recognised and taught as such to students, then we will only ever tell half the story. Racism, sexism and oppression will go unacknowledged.' From a speech on Australia Day by Prof. K. Grant, 2014.

Item 2: Graph

The following graph shows the results from two polls in 2002 and 2013 that asked people the following question: 'Thinking of all the subjects you studied in school, which one, if any, has been the most valuable to you in your life?'



Item 3: Interview

The following is an excerpt from an interview with a senior manager at a major bank.

Q. What sort of skills do you look for when filling positions in your graduate programs?

A. We need people with good numeracy and an aptitude for finance. We also need people who can think creatively and critically.

Q. What degrees do your graduates tend to have studied at university?

A. The vast majority have done economics or business, but we also get a number from law, often people who aren't sure if they want to go on and be lawyers. We also get smaller numbers from humanities and science.

Q. So you would recommend business and economics to people who are looking for a job at your organisation?

A. I certainly wouldn't discourage it, but, that said, much of what people need to know in our organisation isn't taught in any specific degree (despite what the universities might tell you). We certainly want people with a tertiary education, but it isn't quite the same as something like medicine where there is vast body of knowledge students must know before they begin working in their field.

Q. So what did you study?

A. Economics! Though if I went back again, I might choose something else, it's hard to say. Studying economics definitely stoked my enthusiasm for working in this world, but, much of what I learned 20 years ago is out-of-date now. Sometimes I wonder if I had studied English or History, I could have learned about something completely different and then still got into this job.

Q. So do you hire people who have studied those areas?

A. Yes definitely. Not that many apply and those who do aren't always right for the job, but I would never exclude them just based on what they studied. People who have pursued an interest (rather than just having an eye on what will get them a well-paid job), who have learned how to research, and are open to absorbing and critically examining new ideas, these people can be really useful.

Q. Could you give an example?

A. Sure, I worked in sales for a long time and a lot of what I did involved large international deals. You obviously needed to understand the business and finance side inside-out, as you would be grilled on it. But, closing a deal is also about human connection and having a knowledge of arts, history and so on really helps. You need to be open to understanding different cultures and ways of thinking.

Item 4: Opinion piece

Below is an opinion piece that responds to the statement: 'History should be made a compulsory subject in secondary school'.

Of course history is an important subject, no one would deny that, but the idea that it is a subject that needs to be studied in depth by every school student is ridiculous. It is already part of the curriculum that all children study at primary school, and is encountered on school excursions to historic sites and museums. The truth is that making history a compulsory subject for students in high school would simply repeat much of what students have already learned. Students who prefer more practical subjects will 'zone out', those who enjoy it will study it anyway. A compulsory subject would take time away from other areas of study that are equally valid. History is obviously full of useful ideas and philosophies, but we also need students capable of dealing with the present. We need students who are strong in maths and science to come up with solutions to current problems. Not every modern problem is a repeat of a moment from history. Just think of the challenges posed by climate change, new technologies, increasing globalisation and a growing population. These are not problems we will find the answers to in history. The world needs historians, no one is denying that, but the world also needs scientists, IT experts, lawyers, plumbers, and so on!

Item 5: Cartoon

"Those who don't study history are doomed to repeat it. Yet those who *do* study history are doomed to stand by helplessly while everyone else repeats it."

Tom Toro/The New Yorker Collection/The Cartoon Bank.