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University of Sri Jayewardenepura

Bachelor of Arts in English - General External Degree (Part I) Examination

September/October 2015

English Language

ELAN 1001: Critical Reading and Writing

Time: 3 hours

Answer only TWO questions from section one and answer THREE questions from section two. **The Précis (question 04) is compulsory**

Section One: Answer only TWO questions from this section

1. Read the following excerpt from the National Institute of Health – America and answer the questions given below it.

Experts say that if you feel drowsy during the day, even during boring activities, you have not had enough sleep. If you routinely fall asleep within five minutes of lying down, you probably have severe sleep deprivation, possibly even a sleep disorder. Microsleeps, or very brief episodes of sleep in an otherwise awake person, are another mark of sleep deprivation. In many cases, people are not aware that they are experiencing microsleeps. The widespread practice of “**burning the candle at both ends**” in Western industrialized societies has created so much sleep deprivation that what is abnormal sleepiness is now almost the norm. Many studies make it clear that sleep deprivation is dangerous. Sleep-deprived people who are tested by using a driving simulator or by performing a hand-eye coordination task perform as badly as or worse than those who are intoxicated. Sleep deprivation also magnifies alcohol’s effects on the body, so a **fatigued person** who drinks will become much more impaired than someone who is well rested. Driver fatigue is responsible for an estimated 100,000 motor vehicle accidents and 1,500 deaths each year, according to the National Highway Health and Medicine Traffic Safety Administration. Since drowsiness is the brain’s last step before falling asleep, driving while drowsy can—and often does—lead to disaster. Caffeine and other stimulants cannot overcome the effects of severe sleep deprivation. The National Sleep Foundation says that if you have trouble **keeping**

your eyes focused, if you cannot stop yawning, or if you cannot remember driving the last few miles, you are probably too drowsy to drive safely.

- (I) Suggest a suitable title for this passage (3 marks)
- (II) What is the attitude of the writer towards his subject matter? (3 marks)
- (III) Give the meaning of the following words and phrases as they are used in the context (2 marks each).
 - a) burning the candle at both ends
 - b) fatigued person
 - c) keeping your eyes focused
- (IV) What is the writer's message to society? (3 marks)
- (V) What is your opinion about this writer and the content as deduced from the paragraph? (5 marks)

2. Read the following passage on advertising and answer the questions given below it.

Advertising was initially meant to make people aware of the goods available in the market. It was as simple as announcing what you have in your store or the services you offer in your premises. Over the years, advertising has evolved into a major industry that goes beyond informing to persuading and influencing. It is a form of brainwashing consumers.

Advertising has become a type of culture with ardent followers. In the process, it attracts enviable attention from manufacturers and service providers who fancy an edge over their competitors. Unfortunately, in keeping with the ever-increasing demands of the manufacturers, the advertisers have created unnecessary wants and excess consumption in most of us. This is, a craving for harmful products, which we are better off without. It preys on our minds rendering us completely irrational. The billboards (hoardings), television and radio advertisements target us from a very early age, forming our view of the world as we grow into adults. The buzzwords in advertising are, 'you are cool, sophisticated', if you use this or that product.

The notion that the media is primarily in place to give us news is not very true. If the truth may be told, the media is there to gather enough audience, package them into a pricey commodity and sell it to the advertisers. The advertisers, on the other

hand, are always on the lookout for a target audience to persuade them that this product or service is better than that of the competitor.

Advertising does influence people. Most of the advertisements are filled with images that equate emotional well-being with material acquisition and associate independence and leisure with consumption of alcohol. Advertising also makes people lavish their effect on products rather than real people, thereby destroying human relationships. We have become trapped in the web of advertising where products like brands of beer and cigarette take over our minds, doing away with our core family values.

When you look critically at most of the advertisements on the television, you will discover how persuasive the advertisers are in deciding for us what, when, how much and why to buy. However, most people think that they are not influenced by advertisements. This is precisely what the advertisers want us to think, that in the end 'the people decide'. If you think deeply, no one in his profit-minded sense will pay so much money to make a thirty second advertisement, which might not be seen by a hundred people, leave alone convince them to buy. How we strike a healthy balance between the two will definitely have a direct bearing on the future of our country. It is unfortunate that alcohol and tobacco advertising forms a sizable chunk of the industry.

- (I) Discuss briefly how advertising has deviated from its main purpose to what it has become today. (5 marks)
- (II) Identify the different stakeholders (parties) involved in/affected by advertising and how they are affected. (8 marks)
- (III) Do you think the writer is presenting a balanced view of the topic? Discuss. (7 marks)

3. Read the following passage and answer the questions given below it.

It is easy to make a delicious-looking hamburger at home. But would this hamburger still look delicious after it sat on your kitchen table under very bright lights for six or seven hours? If someone took a picture or made a video of this hamburger after the seventh hour, would anyone want to eat it? More importantly, do you think you could get millions of people to pay money for this hamburger?

These are the questions that fast food companies worry about when they produce commercials or print ads for their products. Video and photo shoots often last many hours. The lights that the photographers use can be extremely hot. These conditions can cause the food to look quite unappealing to **potential** consumers. Because of this, the menu items that you see in fast food commercials are probably not actually edible.

Let's use the hamburger as an example. The first step towards building the perfect commercial hamburger is the bun. The food stylist—a person employed by the company to make sure the products look perfect—sorts through hundreds of buns until he or she finds one with no wrinkles. Next, the stylist carefully rearranges the sesame seeds on the bun using glue and tweezers for maximum visual appeal. The bun is then sprayed with a waterproofing solution so that it will not get soggy from contact with other ingredients, the lights, or the humidity in the room.

Next, the food stylist shapes a meat patty into a perfect circle. Only the outside of the meat gets cooked—the inside is left raw so that the meat remains moist. The food stylist then paints the outside of the meat patty with a mixture of oil, molasses, and brown food coloring. Grill marks are either painted on or seared into the meat using hot metal skewers.

Finally, the food stylist searches through dozens of tomatoes and heads of lettuce to find the best-looking **produce**. One leaf of the crispest lettuce and one center slice of the reddest tomato are selected and then sprayed with glycerin to keep them looking fresh.

So the next time you see a **delectable** hamburger in a fast food commercial, remember: you're actually looking at glue, paint, raw meat, and glycerin! **Are you still hungry?**

- (I) What is the author's primary purpose as reflected in the passage? (6 marks)
- (II) As used in the passage, what would be synonyms for **potential**, **produce**, and **delectable**? (6 marks)
- (III). Comment on the question "Are you still hungry?" in the last paragraph. (8 marks)

Section Two: (Select Question 04 and any other two)

4. Write a précis of the following passage in about 100-110 words. (20 marks)

Man is forever changing the face of nature. He has been doing so since he first appeared on the earth. Yet, all that man has done is not always to the ultimate advantage of the earth or himself. Man has, in fact, destroyed more than necessary:

In his struggle to live and extract the most out of life, man has destroyed many species of wildlife: directly by sheer physical destruction, and indirectly by the destruction or alteration of habitats. Some species may be able to withstand disruptions to their habitat while others may not be able to cope.

Take the simple act of farming. When a farmer tills a rough ground, he makes it unsuitable for the survival of certain species. Every change in land use brings about a change in the types of plant and animals found on that land.

When man builds a new town, this means the total destruction of vast areas of farmland or woodland. Here, you have the complete destruction of entire habitats and it is inevitable.

It follows therefore, that every form of human activity unavoidably upsets or changes the wildlife complex of the area. Man has destroyed many forms of wildlife for no reasonable purpose. They have also made many great blunders in land use, habitat destruction and the extermination of many forms of wildlife.

Man's attitude towards animals depends on the degree to which his own survival is affected. He sets aside protection for animals that he hunts for sport and wages a war on any other creature that may pose a danger or inconvenience to him. This creates many problems and man has made irreversible, serious errors in his destruction of predators. He has destroyed animals and birds, which are useful to farmers as pest controllers. The tragedy that emerges is that all the killing of predators did not in any way increase the number of game birds. Therefore, there is a need for the implementation of checks and balances. The continued existence of these animals depends entirely on man and his attitude towards his own future.

5. Write two paragraphs, using each of the topic sentences given below. Begin each paragraph with the given topic sentence.

(I). Competency in English language should not be a primary requirement for all employments. (150 words) (10 marks)

(II) Garbage recycling is very important for Sri Lanka. (150 words) (10 marks)

6. (I) Write a letter to the Marketing Manager of AEC Company, informing him that you have not yet received the goods you have ordered online using your credit card. (10 marks)

(II) As a class teacher, write a letter to the principal of your school, requesting him/her to take necessary actions regarding the increased use of mobile phones among students and its negative effects on the teaching-learning process. (10 marks)

7. Write a report (300 words) to be handed over to the Human Resources Manager of 'Protect Children Organization' about the recent charity event organized with their aid by the Welfare Society of your village. You may suppose that you are the secretary of the welfare society. (20 marks)

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