

THE UNIVERSITY OF SWAZILAND  
DEPARTMENT OF ACADEMIC COMMUNICATION SKILLS  
SUPPLEMENTARY EXAMINATION 2008

TITLE OF PAPER	ACADEMIC COMMUNICATION SKILLS
COURSE CODE	ACS 103 (S)
TIME ALLOWED	TWO (2) HOURS
INSTRUCTIONS	<b>WRITE THE NAME OF YOUR FACULTY ON THE ANSWER SCRIPT</b>  ANSWER ALL QUESTIONS
TOTAL MARKS	100

DO NOT OPEN UNTIL PERMISSION HAS BEEN GRANTED BY THE  
INVIGILATOR

QUESTION 1

WRITING AN ESSAY

50 Marks

There have been many articles in The Times of Swaziland on the increasing number of ritual murders in the kingdom. Write a letter to the editor of the paper stating your views on the matter

## QUESTION 2

### COMPREHENSION

*Read the passage below and then answer the questions that follow.*

### Memory Erasers

Although we still have a lot to learn about how you can augment your memory, it is very clear what we can do to destroy it. Poor sleep and stress are two of the most common causes of memory loss. Research suggests that less than six hours of sleep per night will impair memory for most people; eight hours seems to promote optimum function.

Severe chronic stress causes increases in the hormone cortisol, which damages part of the brain essential to laying down new memories. A lack of physical exercise is also bad for memory formation. Aerobic exercise seems to raise levels of nerve growth factor, which plays a key role in maintaining brain elasticity.

Alcoholism is next in line. People who drink heavily (depleting their vitamin B1 levels) will have problems with short-term memory. Eventually, their long-term memory goes as well, creating banks where once there was recollection. Smoking, which limits blood flow to the brain, has an adverse effect on memory, as it does on just about everything else. There is good evidence now that memory decay may be caused by severe head injuries such as concussion (which also seems to bring on premature Alzheimer's.) Lead and aluminium exposure and the herpes virus are other possible risk factors. Untreated diabetes, high blood pressure, meningitis and Lyme disease all lower memory functions. And many scientists believe that sustained, untreated depression will also damage memory because it distracts the mind and limits attention and because it appears to cause cell death in key areas of the brain. The longer the depression remains untreated, the worse the memory loss will be. Finally, several medications, including, ironically, some used to treat depression, are known to cause memory loss.

Even if one avoids all the pitfalls of memory loss and lives a healthy, intellectually challenging life, at some point the mind will begin to falter. The most common complaints among older people – indeed among people across the board – are forgetting the names of friends or where you've put your glasses, and finding you can't recall a PIN number or a phone number.

But what of deeper memory loss? Does one increasingly forget one's feelings, the nature of one's first love, the scenes that make up a remembered childhood? One doesn't forget how to ride a bicycle, because such muscle memory has permanence. One does forget facts and information unless they are rehearsed. Between that which we naturally remember and that which we naturally forget lie our emotions, which are always present in our current personality. This is the domain of greatest mystery. Mental practice can help you to improve cognitive function, but those profound memories that give us the feeling of substance in our lives are much less likely to respond to self-improvement techniques; they are simply who we are. We give them

weight when our own actions are consistent with them, and we hold on to them by being constant and true to ourselves, by having a coherence in our lives that makes the past fully relevant to the present.

By Andrew Solomon, author of *The Noonday Demon*, Scribner.

*Basing your answers on the passage above, indicate whether the following statements are true (write T), probably true (write PT), false (write F), or probably false (write PF). In some cases, the information is not available in the passage. If so, write NA (not available).*

A Memory loss is caused by:

- 1 Sleeping less than six hours per night.
- 2 Cortisol
- 3 Herpes
- 4 Diabetes
- 5 Poor diet
- 6 Meningitis
- 7 Lack of exercise
- 8 Vitamin B1
- 9 Aerobic exercise
- 10 Wearing glasses
- 11 Sleeping eight hours per night
- 12 Alcohol
- 13 Smoking
- 14 Sexual activity
- 15 Concussion
- 16 Alzheimer's
- 17 Poverty
- 18 High blood pressure
- 19 Lyme disease
- 20 Depression
- 21 Medications that treat depression
- 22 Old age
- 23 Brain elasticity
- 24 Exposure to some metals
- 25 Intellectual exercise

B What do we not forget?

- 1 PIN numbers
- 2 Youthful experiences
- 3 Facts
- 4 Faces
- 5 Parents