

UNIVERSITY OF SWAZILAND

SUPPLEMENTARY EXAMINATION PAPER 2010/ 2011

TITLE OF PAPER: ACADEMIC COMMUNICATION SKILLS (EAP)

COURSE NUMBER: ACS 102

TIME ALLOWED: 2 Hours

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Answer both questions
2. Please write **the name of your Faculty** on the cover of your answer book

THIS EXAMINATION PAPER CONSISTS OF FIVE PAGES INCLUDING THE COVER PAGE

THIS EXMINATION PAPER IS NOT TO BE OPENED UNTIL PERMISSION IS GIVEN BY THE INVIGILATOR

Reading Comprehension

50 marks

Read the passage and then answer the questions that follow:

STUDENTS: OUT OF THE NEST

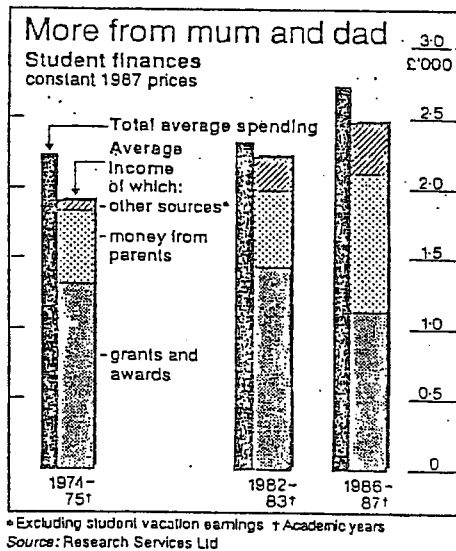
1. UNDERGRADUATES in Britain love to complain about the meanness of a government that gives them subsidies bigger than any other students in the world enjoy. They take for granted their free tuition at small tutorials, and their automatic maintenance grants that vary with parental income. Recently a fall in the value of the grant, together with a sharp rise in accommodation costs, has made students feel poorer. The government's answer, in a white paper to be published shortly, will be to introduce a system of soft loans to top up student grants.

As part of its recent review of student finance, the government commissioned a survey of undergraduate income and expenditure\*. Its findings do not immediately point to student poverty. Student incomes in the last academic year were more than 30% higher than 12 years previously—in real terms, using the retail price index (see chart). But their purchasing power was reduced by the rise in the cost of student accommodation over the same period, by 35% more than the RPI; two-thirds of this rise occurred after 1982-83. Overall, it reduced the real increase in students' purchasing power to only about 5%.

One striking trend has been a shift from dependence on state grants to dependence on money from parents, and on housing benefits—the biggest source of "other income" shown in the chart. Despite stories of massive student overdrafts, and complaints that students must take menial jobs (which American students would find natural) to supplement their incomes, the average undergraduate borrows only £99 a year. He or she earns £119 in short vacations, and spends £96 from savings from summer earnings and other sources. By comparison, he or she gets nearly £2,500 a year in handouts.

Although the government hopes eventually—perhaps after about eight years—to save money by introducing loans, it does not

\*"Undergraduate income and expenditure survey, 1986-87", £12, Research Services Limited, Station House, Harrow Road, Wembley HA9 6DE.



envisage an immediate large cut in grants. What it does plan in the short-term is to make students more self-reliant by cutting them off from means-tested housing benefits—now received by 39% of all students, and by 75% of those in private lodgings. This subsidised demand may help explain why accommodation costs have soared.

The Council for Industry and Higher Education, chaired by Lord Prior, has supported loans, provided the government uses them to attract more students, particularly part-timers, into higher education. Doubters say that the prospect of large debts will be a deterrent for potential students from poor families. Enthusiasts say that countries with loans schemes get more students to university than Britain does, that loans are the proper method of financing students whose university courses give them a passport to higher lifetime earnings, and that students should work out for themselves how to spend these bans on courses (near or far from home) which would serve them best.

**'OUT OF THE NEST'**

1. What is the significance of the title of this passage? 5 mks
2. What is the difference between a scholarship, an income and a loan? 6 mks
3. Give synonyms used in the passage for the word 'scholarship'. 3 mks
4. How can a loan become soft? 5 mks
5. What one item of expenditure most leads to the diminution of the students' money?  
3 mks
6. What does RPI (line 26) stand for? 2 mks
7. What does RPI mean? 3 mks
8. Is there any difference between 'standing for' and 'meaning' and if so what is it?  
8 mks
9. What does 'it' refer to in line 27? 4 mks
10. What is the major disadvantage of a loan scheme as, as expressed in this passage?  
6 mks
11. What are the advantages of a loan scheme? 5 mks

Summarize the following passage in about 400 words

Note : Marks will be awarded for clarity of expression and orderly presentation. As far as possible, you should use your own words.

The passage is reproduced from: Pilkington, E. in *The Guardian Source Book 1991*, p. 26.

### FAST TRAIN TO OVERPOPULATION

Although birth rates are falling, the *population explosion* is likely to have a dramatic impact on the environment.

Every second three more people are born into the world. The human race is expanding by the equivalent of the populations of Birmingham and Liverpool every week. This growth in world population is also happening faster than ever before. It has doubled since 1950 and now stands at 5.4 billion in what has been called a "population explosion".

Historians say that the world's population was brought to its present levels largely as a result of three major social and economic changes or "revolutions". For thousands of years the human race grew very slowly, reaching perhaps only 5 million by 5000 BC. By AD 100 it had risen to about 170 million. This was largely because of land cultivation which allowed people to live much closer to one another. The population grew slowly and did not reach its first billion until the early 19th century. Then the industrial revolution and the growth of factories and cities led to a further rise. Since the 1940s numbers have risen rapidly. The main factor has been the revolution in health care. Progress in the treatment and prevention of disease has led to sharp fall in death rates throughout the world. In Kenya, for instance, the death rate was halved between 1965 and 1989.

In Europe and other developed regions the birth rate has declined by a similar amount. This means that the populations of these countries of the European Community (EC) has tumbled by 25 per cent over the past three decades from 5.2 million in 1960 to 3.8 million in 1989. Women in these countries are having on average 1.6 children - one baby fewer than 30 years ago. At this rate, the population of some European countries will drop unless the trend reverses or numbers are made up through migration from other countries. In Britain, women on average have 1.8 children. This is below the 2.1 mark needed to maintain the population at its current level. There could be far-reaching social and economic consequences if the birth rate in Europe continues to fall. The population is ageing, which means that demands on medical and social services are on the increase. At the same time, there are fewer younger people available for work and so a greater proportion of the population is economically dependent on a shrinking workforce.

But the consequences of a declining birth rate in the West is a minor problem compared with the potentially disastrous prospects facing developing countries. About 95 per cent of the enormous global increase in population that is likely to take place in the next 30 years will occur in Africa, Asia and South America. Here the fall in death rates due to improved health has not been matched by an equal decline in birth rates. Tanzania and Zambia, for example, both have populations which are growing at a rate of 3.8 per cent each year. That compares with the United Kingdom's growth rate

of only 0.2 per cent. However, women in developing countries are giving birth to fewer children than in the past. In 1960 they used to have on average 6.1 children. Today they have only 3.7 children.

So why are the numbers still rising? Mainly because the age structure in developing countries is weighted heavily in favour of young people. Almost half of all Guatemalans, for instance, are aged under 15 and will soon have children of their own. That means that even if they only have two children each (in fact they are having on average three) the population will continue to grow rapidly. "It is like putting brakes on a very fast train," says Frances Perrow of the International Parenthood Federation, the world's largest voluntary family-planning organisation. "Birth rates are coming down but it will be many years before that has an effect. The faster the train is moving the longer it takes to stop." The consequences for developing countries are likely to be severe. Poverty will probably increase as countries are forced to spend more of their resources on importing food. As people compete for jobs, unemployment could rise and wages fall. Cities, too, are growing even faster than total populations. In 1970, Cairo - the capital of Egypt - had about 5.4 million inhabitants. Today it has 13 million. As a result, there are large numbers of city-dwellers living in self-built houses without clean water or services. In Delhi, India, about 60 per cent live in similar conditions.

If the world population continues to multiply, the impact on the environment could be devastating. The World Energy Conference predicts that by 2020 the amount of energy consumed will more than double. That would lead to the emission of more carbon dioxide, the main gas responsible for global warming. Every year, a large area of tropical forest the size of Austria and Belgium combined is cleared to make way for new farms and villages. Whole regions, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa, the Middle East and Asia, are gradually turning into deserts because there is not enough land to feed the extra people and animals.