

**ADVANCED SUBSIDIARY GCE
CRITICAL THINKING**

Unit 2: Assessing & Developing Argument

RESOURCE BOOKLET

MONDAY 19 MAY 2008

**F492/01/RB
F492/02/RB**

Afternoon

Time: 1 hour 45 minutes



INSTRUCTIONS TO CANDIDATES

- Use Documents 1 and 2 to answer all the questions in Sections B and C.

This document consists of **4** printed pages.

Document 1: The supermarket bill

The control over the food chain allows supermarkets to determine the price they pay to farmers. Driving down prices means that only the largest, most mechanised farms survive, showing that the pricing policy of supermarkets is destroying British agriculture. Take dairy farming as an example. The current price of milk is very low and in the last 3 years 3,394 dairy farmers have gone out of business. 1

There is serious waste involved in transporting food from its source to the supermarket shelf. A typical family lunch is estimated to have travelled 26,234 miles. Government statistics suggest that transporting food to and around the UK produces 19 million tonnes of carbon dioxide. In terms of road congestion, accidents and pollution, the estimated cost is £9 billion. 2

The need for supermarket products to be stacked on a shelf, to be fitted with a bar code and then to survive the trip home in the boot of a car, means lots of packaging. This leads to an ever growing mountain of waste and it is unreasonable to think that it will all be recycled. Supermarkets are undermining recycling. 3

Our desire to have fruit all year round means that 95% of fruit sold in the UK is now sourced from abroad. Despite the fact that we grow 700 varieties of apples in this country, it is rare to see more than two or three of them in the supermarkets. Add in the limited choice of cheese varieties (remembering that a single farm might produce 15 different varieties) and it is clear that supermarkets have led to the end of product diversity. 4

The promotion of green issues by supermarkets has led to other problems. Their car parks often contain recycling bins, but these attract rats and the sound of breaking glass bottles must be a constant irritation to residents living near by. Although they sell organic produce, they reject as much as 30%, wasting valuable food. In many cases, organic vegetables are rejected for being the wrong shape. 5

Supermarkets are known to sell high fat, unhealthy 'ready meals' that are full of salt. Not surprisingly, the initial expansion of supermarkets was followed by a sharp rise in heart disease in this country. This shows that we can blame supermarkets for some of our current health problems. We should also not forget the many teenagers working at the check-outs when they should be at home studying, showing that supermarkets could be limiting educational aspirations. 6

The impact of supermarkets and supermarket expansion is negative. Life was better before we had supermarkets. However, as it would be impossible to get rid of supermarkets, we must, therefore, do everything possible to prevent more supermarkets being built. 7

Document 2: Corner shop convenience

The expansion of supermarkets is leading to the decline of the corner shop. The All-Party Small Shops Group* suggested that the corner shop will be history by 2015. It is difficult to argue with their prediction, given that 2,000 independent shops are closing each year. In a survey of 1,000 people, 64% felt that the growth of the supermarkets would damage the local community – something of great worth that we should be protecting. Supermarket bosses might argue that they are creating new jobs, but we should ignore this view as they are clearly selfish and greedy.

1

The situation is very like the closure of the coal mines. At the time no-one thought they were needed - cheaper fuels were available - and they were closed down. Now, with supplies of gas dwindling, coal would be a useful alternative. However, coal mines cannot be re-opened and we are now dependent on foreign fuel supplies. It will be the same with corner shops: if we do not fight for their survival, they will be gone forever and we will be totally reliant on supermarkets.

2

*The All-Party Small Shops Group is a group of MPs from all parties promoting the interests of small shops.

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