

GAMSAT Sample Questions

Section I

Reasoning in Humanities and Social Sciences

Questions 1 – 5

In the following passage, a nineteenth-century writer describes his view of poets.

A poet in our times is a semi-barbarian in a civilised community. He lives in the days that are past. His ideas, thoughts, feelings, associations, are all with barbarous manners, obsolete customs, and exploded superstitions. The march of his intellect is like that of a crab, backward.

The philosophic mental tranquillity which looks round with an equal eye on all external things, collects a store of ideas, discriminates their relative value, assigns to all their proper place, and from the materials of useful knowledge thus collected, appreciated, and arranged, forms new combinations that impress the stamp of their power and utility on the real business of life, is diametrically the reverse of that frame of mind which poetry inspires, or from which poetry can emanate. The highest inspirations of poetry are resolvable into three ingredients: the rant of unregulated passion, the whining of exaggerated feeling, and the cant of factitious sentiment.

Poetry cannot claim the slightest share in any one of the comforts and utilities of life of which we have witnessed so many and so rapid advances. But though not useful, it may be said it is highly ornamental, and deserves to be cultivated for the pleasure it yields. Even if this be granted, it does not follow that a writer of poetry in the present state of society is not a waster of his own time, and a robber of that of others.

Poetry is not one of those arts which, like painting, require repetition and multiplication, in order to be diffused among society. There are more good poems already existing than are sufficient to employ that portion of life which any mere reader and recipient of poetical impressions should devote to them, and these having been produced in poetical times, are far superior in all the characteristics of poetry to the artificial reconstructions of a few morbid ascetics in unpoetical times. To read the promiscuous rubbish of the present time to the exclusion of the select treasures of the past, is to substitute the worse for the better variety of the same mode of enjoyment.

Poetry was the mental rattle that awakened the attention of intellect in the infancy of civil society: but for the maturity of mind to make a serious business of the playthings of its childhood, is as absurd as for a full-grown man to rub his gums with coral, and cry to be charmed to sleep by the jingle of silver bells.

1 Poets are compared to crabs in order to emphasise that

- A poets are less intelligent than they once were.
- B poems are the least intellectual form of writing.
- C poets have sidestepped many modern problems.
- D modern poems are overly preoccupied with the past.

2 The frame of mind that is ‘diametrically the reverse’ (line 7) of a poet’s is best described as

- A observing the world without bias in order to create something new and useful.
- B powerful and extreme progress at the cost of the resources of the natural world.
- C assigning value to items and arranging them correctly in order to ensure understanding.
- D witnessing the world in a coldly scientific and emotionless way while repeating past mistakes.

- 3 Poetry is different from painting because
- A paintings are objectively better.
 - B poems have existed for much longer.
 - C painting as an art form continues to improve.
 - D creating more paintings is useful, while creating more poems is not.
- 4 The writer groups items given to babies with early human activities in order to
- A imply that the subject matter of poems is simplistic.
 - B prove that poetry is so easy to write that anyone can do it.
 - C suggest that adults should leave both activities in the past.
 - D hint at the reason why many poets have childish personalities.
- 5 The writer's opinion of poetry is best summed up as
- A an embarrassing practice that can be occasionally indulged.
 - B an outdated and worsening practice that serves no purpose anymore.
 - C a repetitive and boring pastime that provides no enjoyment to readers.
 - D an activity only pursued by vain people who are out of touch with real life.

Question 6

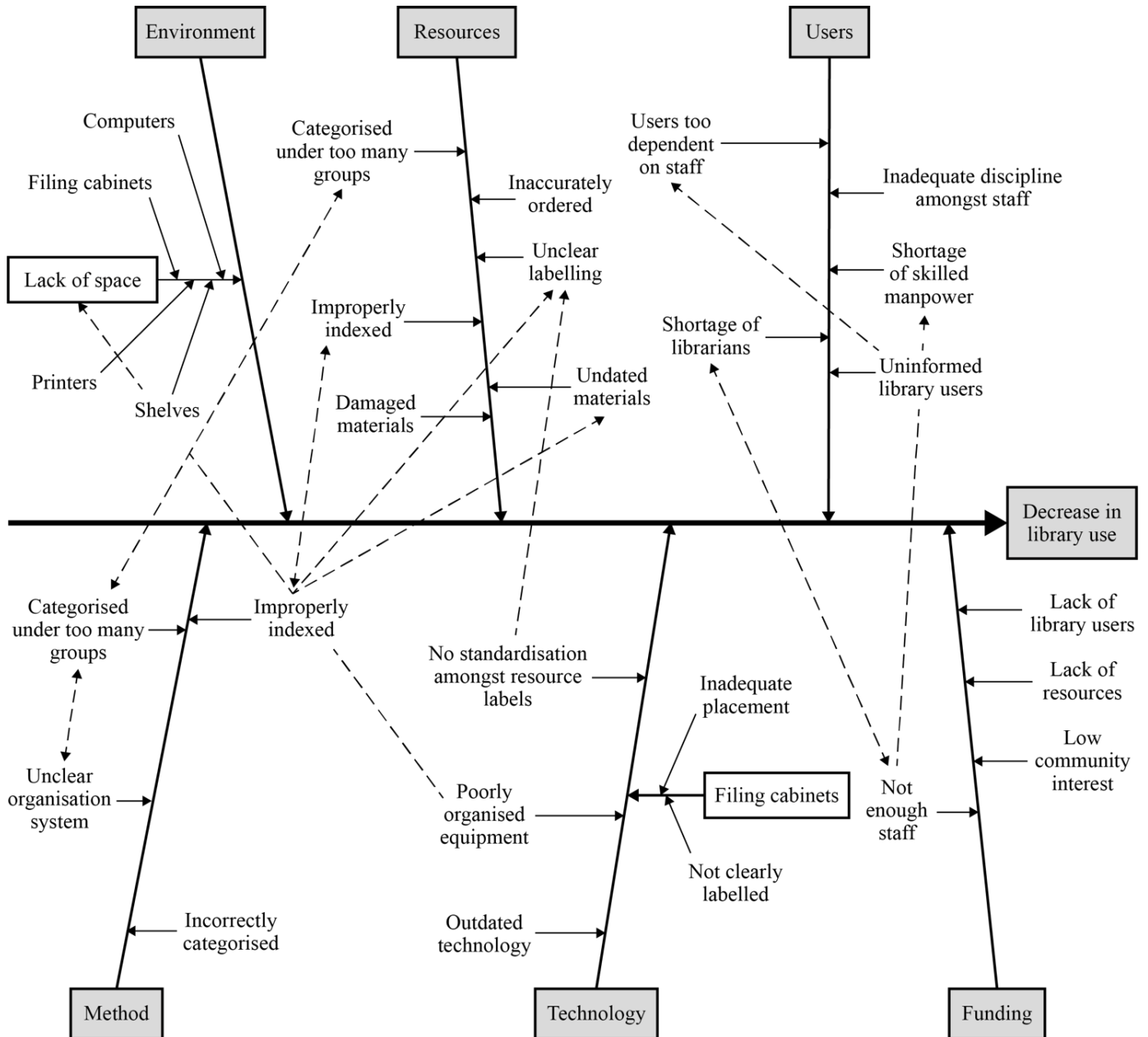
A crisis is an opportunity riding the dangerous wind.

Chinese proverb

- 6 The proverb implies that
- A we should be wary of taking risks during instability.
 - B our response to a dilemma must be carefully timed.
 - C how we interpret adversity impacts how we benefit from it.
 - D problems can be overcome if we recognise them as temporary.

Questions 7 – 10

The following cause-and-effect diagram shows an analysis of the decline in usage of public libraries.



7 Staff shortages most likely occur because

- A librarians are not sufficiently paid.
- B training is costly and time-consuming.
- C governments are allocating fewer funds to libraries.
- D people are less willing to become librarians than previously.

- 8 Issues with resource organisation could best be improved by
- A using updated computer software.
 - B decreasing the volume of resources stored in libraries.
 - C increasing the amount of filing cabinets and shelving space.
 - D methodically applying the same organisational approach to all materials.
- 9 Library technological equipment causes a problem in that it
- A lacks user-friendly labelling.
 - B contributes to environmental shortages.
 - C is not placed evenly throughout the library.
 - D includes difficult-to-use computers and printers.
- 10 A decrease in library usage
- A occurs when resource inventories decline.
 - B correlates with library staffing and funding.
 - C is primarily caused by socioeconomic factors.
 - D results from both internal and external factors.

Question 11



'I try not to take myself too seriously.'

- 11 The joke in this cartoon is that it is possible
- A to show respect to different cultures.
 - B for an easygoing attitude to go too far.
 - C to be tolerant in adverse circumstances.
 - D for workers to dress casually in the office.

Answers to Multiple Choice Questions

Reasoning in Humanities and Social Sciences

1. **D**

Poets are compared to crabs in the first paragraph as ‘the march of his intellect is like that of a crab, backwards’. While this, taken on its own, may sound as though he is stating that poets are less intelligent than they used to be, the rest of the paragraph suggests that he is making a different point. The writer explains his opinion that a poet ‘lives his days in the past’. The paragraph explains how poets are preoccupied with things that happened in the past, such as ‘obsolete customs and exploded superstitions.’ We can conclude that he compares poets to crabs to emphasise the point that poets are overly preoccupied with the past in their work. Answer **D** is correct.

2. **A**

The phrase ‘diametrically the reverse’ occurs in the second paragraph. Here, the writer states that observing with ‘an equal eye’, ordering items in their ‘proper place’ and using this knowledge to create ‘new combinations’ that have ‘power and utility’ in real life is diametrically the reverse of poetry. Answer **A** best summarises these points from the passage, so it is correct.

For the record: Answer **B** discusses power, but also talks about creation at the cost of the natural world, which the passage does not mention. Answer **C** mentions arranging items correctly, but states that this should be done in order to ensure understanding, while the writer actually states that the purpose should be creating something useful. Answer **D** cannot be correct as it discusses repeating past mistakes, which is the opposite of the writer’s assertion that this group should create new things.

3. **D**

The fourth paragraph compares paintings to poetry. This paragraph explains that more paintings need to be produced and reproduced for the whole of society to view a painting in real life, while there are already more than enough poems in circulation. Answer **D** must be correct.

For the record: Answer **A** is not correct as it is out of scope of the passage. Answer **B** is incorrect as the passage does not claim that poems are older than paintings. Answer **C** is incorrect as the passage explains that more paintings need to be completed in order to allow them to be distributed throughout society, not to continue to improve the art form.

4. **C**

The last paragraph compares poetry to a ‘mental rattle’ which awakens our intellect, as a rattle might wake a baby. It also states that ‘for the maturity of mind to make a serious business of the playthings of its childhood, is as absurd as for a full-grown man to cry to be charmed to sleep by the jingle of silver bells.’ While poetry was helpful in humanity’s past, as rattles and silver bells are helpful to babies, modern grown-ups need neither. The writer is suggesting that both activities should be left in the past. Answer **C** is correct.

5. **B**

Answer **B** sums up many of the points made in the passage, so it must be the correct answer.

For the record: The writer of the passage does not suggest that poetry can be occasionally indulged so answer **A** cannot be correct. Answer **C** cannot be correct as the third paragraph makes a small concession that some people may enjoy reading poetry. Answer **D** cannot be correct as it is not mentioned in the passage that poets are vain.

6. **C**

The proverb asserts that a crisis is actually an opportunity riding on dangerous wind. This suggests that how we interpret adversity – captured in terms like ‘crisis’ and the ‘dangerous wind’ – determines the potential we can extract out of it (‘opportunity’). Answer **C** is correct.

For the record: Answer **A** is incorrect as it recommends against taking risks during a crisis – a topic that the proverb does not address. Answer **B** distorts the meaning of the proverb to focus on the question of timing in how we respond to a dilemma, while the proverb strikes a more optimistic tone about finding opportunity in a crisis; the question of timing is perhaps implied by ‘the dangerous wind’, but the idea of carefully timing the response to such a crisis cannot be reasonably inferred. Answer **D** refers to the temporariness of problems, perhaps as an

interpretation of the ‘dangerous wind’, but this diverges quite significantly from the proverb; the idea of overcoming problems is also too far removed from the proverb’s suggestion of finding opportunity in a crisis, ruling out **D**.

7. **C**

One of the categories given to explain the decrease in library usage is Funding, one component of which is not enough staff, meaning a lack of funds has negatively impacted the number of staff. As the explanatory note states that this diagram analyses public libraries, the funding of these libraries will come from governments. A lack of government funding must therefore be responsible for staff shortages, so **C** is the correct answer.

For the record: In the diagram, the staff shortages issue is linked to funding, but no information is given on staff pay, so it is impossible to conclude whether staff are being insufficiently paid or if there is insufficient funding to hire enough staff at a sufficient rate of pay, ruling out answer **A**. The diagram does not indicate that training is either expensive or time consuming, meaning this is unlikely a barrier to hiring adequate numbers of staff, ruling out **B**. The diagram links staff shortages to issues with funding rather than difficulties finding enough people to hire, and there is no indication that people are less willing to work at libraries than previously, meaning **D** is incorrect.

8. **D**

According to the diagram there are multiple issues with resource organisation. Issues such as improper indexing and resources being categorised under too many groups, come under both the Resources and Methods categories, with issues such as unclear labelling and dating of materials, and lack of standardisation affecting multiple categories as well. It is therefore likely that a standardised approach to indexing and organising all materials would best improve resource organisation issues. The correct answer is **D**.

For the record: According to the diagram, outdated technology is an issue which affects library usage, but the diagram does not specify whether the technology that is outdated is computer software or not, ruling out answer **A**. Whilst, according to the diagram, a lack of space is a contributing factor to the decline of library usage, this issue is linked to poorly organised equipment and improper indexing rather than the presence of too many materials. Decreasing the volume of resources in libraries would therefore be unlikely to improve resource organisation, ruling out **B**. For similar reasons, increasing the amount of filing cabinets and shelves to store library resources is unlikely to address the resource organisation issues, ruling out **C**.

9. **B**

One problem in the Technology part of the diagram is with poorly organised equipment, which is linked to a lack of space in the Environment part of the diagram. Thus, poorly organised technological equipment is linked to space shortages. Answer **B** is correct.

For the record: The Technology part of the diagram suggests that filing cabinets are not clearly labelled, but that is not necessarily the same as the filing cabinets lacking user-friendly labelling, ruling out answer **A**. Filing cabinets have inadequate placement, but this is not the same as technological equipment not being evenly placed throughout the library, ruling out **C**. Finally, the technology at the library is outdated, and the Environment part of the diagram suggests that this includes computers and printers; however, it does not necessarily follow that the computers and printers are difficult to use, ruling out **D**.

10. **D**

The diagram details a variety of factors that contribute to decreases in library usage. Factors such as a lack of space and the inefficiency of library organisational systems are internal factors, whereas factors such as low community interest and a shortage of skilled manpower are external factors. Therefore both internal and external factors contribute to a decrease in library usage, meaning **D** is correct.

For the record: Notice that the Funding section of the diagram indicates that lack of resources is a funding-related issue, and there are a number of problems related to resources in the Resources section of the diagram, yet nothing directly states or suggests that resource inventories decline (note that a lack of resources does not necessarily equal a decline in resources) or that such a decline is linked to a decrease in library usage, ruling out answer **A**. Answer **B** may seem tempting, since a decrease in library usage *could* correlate with library staffing and funding levels, but only if there are not enough staff or resources as indicated in the diagram. Notice that **B** does not specify such shortages: a decrease in library usage would not necessarily follow if library staffing and funding levels were

similarly sufficient. Socioeconomic factors such as those relating to funding and staff employment levels may be contributing factors to decreases in library usage; however, as the diagram details many more factors which are not related to socioeconomic factors, it cannot be concluded that socioeconomic factors are the primary issue impacting library usage, ruling out **C**.

11. **B**

The cartoon shows two co-workers, one of whom is dressed as a clown. The caption is clearly a maxim that the person in a clown costume tries to live by. However, the easygoing attitude described in the caption can be taken to the extreme and make one into a clown. Answer **B** is correct.

For the record: **A** is incorrect because the cartoon makes no reference to cultural differences. Perhaps the man on the left needs tolerance to put up with his colleague's clownlike behaviour, but the joke is about the way in which the person on the right becomes a caricature, making **C** incorrect. The clown costume stands for the immature behaviour of the character on the right. The point of the cartoon is not literally about dress codes, making **D** incorrect.