

Eton College King's Scholarship Examination 2015

GENERAL II

(One and a half hours)

Answer **both** parts. Each of the two parts is worth the same number of marks.

You need not answer the parts in the order set,
but you must start each one on a separate piece of paper.

Remember to write your candidate number on every sheet of answer paper used.

Spend about 45 minutes on each part.

Do not open the paper until instructed to do so.

Part 1 : **START A NEW SHEET OF PAPER NOW**

Read the following article carefully.

UNIVERSITY OF GOOGLE

Google is “white bread for the mind”, and the internet is producing a generation of students who survive on a diet of unreliable information, a professor of media studies will claim this week.

In her inaugural lecture at the University of Brighton, Tara Brabazon will urge teachers at all levels of the education system to equip students with the skills they need to interpret and sift through information gleaned from the internet. She believes that easy access to information has dulled students’ sense of curiosity and is stifling debate. She claims that many undergraduates arrive at university unable to discriminate between anecdotal and unsubstantiated material posted on the internet and peer-reviewed scholarly research. “I call this type of education ‘the University of Google’.

Google offers easy answers to difficult questions. But students do not know how to tell if they come from serious work or are merely composed of shallow ideas, superficial surfing and fleeting commitments. Google is white bread for the mind – it is filling but it does not necessarily offer nutritional content,” she said.

Professor Brabazon’s concerns echo the author Andrew Keen’s criticisms of online amateurism. In his book *The Cult of the Amateur*, Keen says, “Today’s media is shattering the world into a billion personalised truths, each seeming equally valid.” Professor Brabazon said: “Students live in an age of information, but what they lack is correct information. They turn to Wikipedia. Why wouldn’t they? It’s there,” she said. With libraries in decline, media platforms such as Google made perfect sense. According to Professor Brabazon, the trick was to learn to use them properly. “We need to teach our students the interpretative skills first before we teach them the technological skills. Students must be trained to be dynamic and critical thinkers rather than drifting to the first site returned through Google,” she said. There have been concerns about students plagiarising from the internet and the growth of a new online “coursework industry”, in which websites produce tailor-made essays, some selling for up to £1,000 each.

Wikipedia, containing millions of articles, contributed by users, was founded in 2001. It has been criticised for being riddled with inaccuracies. Google is the dominant search engine on the internet. It uses a formula designed to place the most relevant content at the top of its listings. But a multimillion-pound industry has grown up concerned with manipulating Google rankings through a process called “search engine optimisation.”

(adapted from *www.Inat.ac.uk*)

[Part 1 continued]

Now answer the following questions.

- (a) You are the headmaster of a boarding school. The school has good wireless internet access and all the students have laptop computers. You are concerned by the issues raised in this article and plan to give a short talk to the new intake of 13-year-old pupils, inspiring them to use the internet wisely. You have time to make five key points at most. Write a set of up to five bullet points, each of no more than twenty words, outlining the things you want to say to your new students, in the order in which you plan to say them.

[6]

- (b) Andrew Keen believes “Today’s media is shattering the world into a billion personalised truths.” Discuss briefly what this means, using examples you may have come across from your own exploration of the internet.

[6]

- (c) Eton College has been approached by some former students with an idea for a new business. They have discovered that: —

- the amount that middle-class students in the 13-18 age range in developed nations are prepared to pay to have their homework done for them represents a good rate of pay to university students in emerging economies such as India;
- technology can be used to bring the two groups together;
- if Eton is prepared to invest money in this business, the school will make a profit which it can use to pay for more scholarships.

You are the person at Eton who needs to make a decision on this. You believe that this team knows what they are doing and can make this work in financial and technological terms. You are also keen on the idea of more scholarships. What do you decide and why?

[6]

- (d) Professor Brabazon’s subject is media studies. This has been defined as the field of study that deals with the content, history and effects of various media; in particular, the “mass media.” We do not currently teach this subject at Eton. Should we?

[7]

Part 2 : START A NEW SHEET OF PAPER NOW

Write a response of no more than 700 words, in whatever style seems appropriate, to ONE of the following.

EITHER

Is there too much football on television?

OR

“There is nothing either good or bad, but thinking makes it so.”

Do you agree with this statement?

OR

Courage

[25]