

# **SAMPLE QUESTIONS**

**MODULE:      Assessment of READING COMPREHENSION and  
CRITICAL THINKING SKILLS**

**Marks:** **10 marks**

Instructions:

Read the following article and answer the questions below in the answer booklet provided. Your answers must be written in grammatically complete sentences. Do not write in point form or in sentence fragments. Spelling and punctuation will also be assessed.

Grading Notes: (10 marks)

--1 mark for each correct answer  
--½ mark deducted for each writing-related error (spelling, grammar, sentence structure, word choice, punctuation, etc.) up to a maximum of 5 marks

## **A Question of Appropriate Punishment**

The question of capital punishment, the state-sanctioned killing of criminals for capital crimes, is one that was answered decades ago in Canada. However, the debate over the issue seems to reignite every time a heinous crime is committed or a high profile murderer goes on trial.

Capital punishment was removed from the Criminal Code in 1976 and this move to abolish capital punishment was due largely to three core reasons. Experts questioned the effectiveness of capital punishment as a deterrent. Also, there were numerous moral questions around the idea of the state executing individuals. Finally, Canadians feared the idea of wrongful convictions leading to innocent people dying at the hands of the state. Lawyers, judges, and juries are not infallible, it was argued.

And as the last few decades have shown, innocent people end up behind bars more often than most people would like to think. Opponents of capital punishment readily point to the high profile cases of David Milgaard, Donald Marshall Jr., Guy Paul Morin, and Thomas Sophonow, all men wrongfully convicted who were later exonerated by the courts after serving years in Canadian prisons. Many argue that these men would otherwise be dead if capital punishment was still an option for the courts. Opponents of

capital punishment point to Canada as a beacon of human rights, a civilized society that should lead other countries by example.

Yet Canadians should not forget their country's "uncivilized" past, a past which, according to official Canadian government records, saw a total of 710 people hanged before the death penalty was finally abolished. Of these 710 executed, 13 women met their fates at the end of a noose, death by hanging the lone method used to punish capital crimes.

Notably, Canada began to move away from capital punishment long before it was officially abolished in the 1970's. Robert Turpin and Arthur Lucas, hanged in 1962, were the last two people to be executed in Canada.

Not surprisingly, proponents of the death penalty argued that the abolishment of capital punishment would lead to a surge in murder rates. However, the opposite seems to be true. Since 1976, the murder rate in Canada has steadily fallen. And statistics Canada reported that the total number of murders in Canada in 2003 was only 548, the lowest rate since 1967.

While Canada has eliminated state-sanctioned executions within its own borders, its neighbour to the south has continued the practice, much to the dismay of the international community at large. According to statistics recently released by the U.S. Department of Justice, 53 people were executed across 14 states in 2006. No women were among those executed. As recently as 2005, 38 states and the U.S. Federal government still had capital statutes. As many opponents of capital punishment point out, most of the international community has outlawed capital punishment as a crime against human rights. Such opponents point to the irony that the American use of capital punishment leaves it in rather peculiar company, as countries like China, North Korea, Iraq, and Iran also practice state-sanctioned execution. These opponents question how the United States can claim to be a moral leader when it is associated with countries so often criticized for human rights violations.

Over the years, the value of the death penalty as a deterrent to crime has come under considerable fire by experts, but there remains one unmistakable fact: serial killer Ted Bundy will never commit another murder. Clifford Olsen or Paul Bernardo, were they to escape, or be paroled, very well might.

For most, the issue of capital punishment strikes at a deeply emotional level. And whether guided by morality or a sense of justice, people on opposite sides of the argument remain as vocal as ever.

The debate ultimately boils down to the question of whether the state-sanctioned killing of its citizens is an appropriate punishment. And it is a debate that is still very much unresolved in the court of public opinion in Canada.

Questions:

1. Why was capital punishment abolished in Canada?
2. What did proponents of capital punishment fear would happen if state-sanctioned execution was abolished in Canada? Was the warning warranted?
3. When did Canada eliminate capital punishment?
4. Why does the position of the United States on this issue make it difficult for that country to take the moral high ground on human rights issues?
5. What is the one argument that proponents of capital punishment believe is irrefutable?
6. How many years after the last hangings in Canada was capital punishment actually abolished?
7. What is capital punishment?
8. How many men, in total, were executed in Canada before capital punishment was abolished?
9. What does the word "infallible" mean?
10. What percentage of prisoners executed in the U.S. in 2006 were men?

**MODULE:            Assessment of READING COMPREHENSION and  
CRITICAL THINKING SKILLS**

**Marks:**

**10 marks**

Instructions:

Read the following report narrative excerpt and answer the questions that follow in the answer booklet provided. Your answers can be in point form.

Grading Notes:

(10 marks)

--1 mark for each correct answer

--no deductions for writing-related errors

Narrative:

At 1030 hours on 2007-01-14, the Financial Crimes Section of the Vancouver Police Department executed a warrant at the residence of Harold J. Snipps, Senior Accounting Manager at Pacific West Bank. On 2006-10-03, police received a tip from an anonymous caller claiming that a senior bank official was stealing credit card numbers from clients. This tip led to a 10-week investigation of Pacific West Bank. The bank's president, Wilma James, was extremely cooperative, as she feared for the reputation of the institution. She ordered the bank's internal security section to cooperate fully with the VPD; a secret internal investigation began on 2006-10-05. The internal security section was very helpful in uncovering half a dozen instances over a six month period when an employee accessed the client database without proper authorization. This discovery led police to focus their investigation on Snipps. Consequently, the manager's phone was tapped, he was put under surveillance, and his personal banking and other financial records were scrutinized.

The investigation revealed a staggering amount of criminal activity. On three separate occasions, Snipps was seen meeting with known members of a criminal biker association. During these meetings, he was seen surreptitiously passing data disks to his biker contact: the disks were usually concealed in a book or a folded newspaper. A search of Snipps' banking records show that he made five large deposits to his bank account over a six month period in the following amounts: \$75, 000.00, \$88, 000.00, \$94,000.00, \$103,000.00, and \$213, 000.00. In addition, four large wire transfers were made in his name to an account in the Grand Cayman Islands. The total amount transferred was \$1.3 million.

When police searched Snipps' home, they found three data disks that contained a total of 22, 000 credit card numbers. They also found equipment used in the manufacturing of credit cards. Finally, in a hidden compartment in Snipps' bedroom closet, police found

three cardboard boxes filled with newly minted credit cards and three large pieces of luggage filled with U.S. currency. One box contained 500 Visa cards. One of the other boxes contained 678 American Express cards. Finally, the last box contained 435 MasterCard. Each Visa had a credit limit of \$5, 000.00. Each American Express card had a limit of \$7, 500.00. Each MasterCard had a limit of \$6, 000.00. The total amount of U.S. cash found in the luggage was \$235, 000.00.

Snipps was not found on the premises when the search warrant was executed. A Canada-wide warrant was subsequently issued for his arrest.

Questions:

1. For what reason did the police begin to suspect Harold Snipps?
2. What caused the Vancouver Police to investigate Pacific West Bank?
3. What does the word “surreptitiously” mean?
4. What was the total amount of the five large bank deposits that Snipps made over a six month period?
5. If Snipps’ second wire transfer to the Grand Cayman Islands was 1/5 of the total amount transferred, and that second wire transfer was four times the amount of the first, what was the total amount of the first wire transfer?
6. If Snipps’ third wire transfer was \$200,000.00 more than the second one, how much did the final wire transfer total?
7. How much more credit is available on all of the American Express Cards together when compared to the total amount of credit available on the combined MasterCard?
8. What is the combined total amount of credit available on all of the Visa cards?
9. If 60% of the U.S. currency was found in one of the three large bags, and the other two bags accounted for 15% and 25% respectively, how much cash was in each of the three bags?
10. What methods did the Vancouver Police use to investigate Snipps?

## **MODULE:            Assessment of SUMMARY SKILLS**

**Marks:**

**10 marks**

### Instructions:

Read the following witness statement and, in your answer booklet, write a synopsis / summary of no more than 200 words that summarizes the essential elements of the event.

Your synopsis must be written in grammatically complete sentences, as one coherent paragraph. Do not write in point form or in sentence fragments. Spelling and punctuation will also be assessed.

### Grading Notes:

- synopsis identifies the key information from the event                                 (6 marks)
- synopsis excludes unnecessary details   (1 mark)
- synopsis is organized in a logical, coherent way   (1 mark)
- synopsis meets the length and paragraph format requirements                             (2 marks)
- ½ mark deducted for each writing-related error  
(spelling, grammar, sentence structure, word choice, punctuation, etc.) up to a maximum of 5 marks

### The Narrative:

My name is Calvin Chai. I'm a blackjack dealer at the Big Win Casino at 3453 West Broadway in Vancouver. At 2:45 am on 2005-09-18, I was working at the casino, halfway through a four hour shift, and looking forward to my vacation. The house has won the last twelve hands and one of the two players at my table was becoming agitated. This huge white guy was sweating profusely and mumbling profanities under his breath each time he lost a hand. His face was flushed and his body language was very tense. He had introduced himself earlier as Jimmy Malone, so I said "Hey Jimmy, why don't you take a break to get some fresh air," but he just stared at me and sat silently. At 2:50am I took my 15-minute break and another dealer took over for me. While on my break, I went outside of the casino and joined three other dealers for a cigarette and a coffee. On my break, I told my colleagues about the agitated player at my table; they cautioned me to be careful and suggested that I notify security that there may be a problem patron.

When I returned to my table at 3:05am, I found out that the agitated player had lost an additional \$2,500.00 in the last 20 minutes. I started dealing again and won the next three hands. After losing \$250.00 on the last hand, Malone slammed his fists on the



At 2300 hrs on 2006-07-24, Constable Taylor and Constable Norris observed a 2004 Nissan Pathfinder ran a red light on Granville Street. The officers pulled the vehicle over and questioned the driver.

The driver's speech was slurred and his eyes were red. In addition, his hand movements seemed uncoordinated. The driver claimed he had not been drinking. Suspecting the driver was intoxicated, he stepped out of the vehicle; where Constable Taylor administered a field sobriety test.

The driver failed the test. Falling over twice while trying to balance on one foot. The officers took the driver into custody, and arranged for a tow truck to retrieve the Pathfinder. The driver threatened to sue the police officers involved.