



ELITE BRITISH ADMISSIONS

The Complete Guide to Oxbridge Admissions Tests

Sample Paper

AGE GROUP	Age 17–18 (Year 13)
ENTRY	Oxford or Cambridge University
DURATION	Varies by subject (typically 2–3 hours)
FORMAT	Multiple choice + Essay (subject-dependent)
SECTIONS	5 — LNAT Reasoning · Essay · TARA/TSA · TMUA/MAT · ESAT Science

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Instructions & Paper Overview

- This sample paper covers the five main admissions test types used by Oxford and Cambridge.
- In the real exam, you will only sit the test(s) relevant to your chosen course. This paper gives you practice across all types.
- For multiple choice sections, choose the **one best answer** from the options given.
- For essay sections, plan your response carefully before writing. Structure your argument clearly.
- No calculators are permitted in any section.

SECTION	TEST STYLE	QUESTIONS	TIME
1	LNAT-Style: Critical Reasoning (MCQ)	10 questions	40 min
2	LNAT-Style: Essay	1 task (choose 1 of 3)	40 min
3	TARA/TSA-Style: Problem Solving (MCQ)	10 questions	20 min
4	TMUA/MAT-Style: Mathematics (MCQ)	8 questions	25 min
5	ESAT-Style: Science Reasoning (MCQ)	8 questions	20 min

Section 1 — LNAT-Style: Critical Reasoning 10 questions · 40 minutes

Read the passage carefully, then answer the questions that follow. Choose the one best answer for each question.

International Courts and the Limits of Sovereignty

An original passage for practice purposes

- 1 The debate surrounding the jurisdiction of international courts over domestic human rights violations often hinges on the tension
- 2 between national sovereignty and universal justice. Proponents of international intervention argue that human rights are, by
- 3 definition, universal and thus transcend the boundaries of any single nation-state. They contend that when a state fails to
- 4 protect its citizens, or worse, becomes the perpetrator of abuses, the international community has a moral imperative to
- 5 intervene. This “Responsibility to Protect” suggests that sovereignty is not an absolute right but a conditional one, dependent
- 6 on a state’s ability to uphold basic human dignity. However, critics argue that such interventions are often selectively applied
- 7 and can be used as a tool for neo-colonialism. They point out that powerful nations are rarely held to the same standards as
- 8 developing ones, leading to a “victor’s justice” that undermines the very legitimacy of international law. Furthermore, the
- 9 imposition of external legal frameworks may ignore local cultural contexts and historical nuances, potentially exacerbating
- 10 internal conflicts rather than resolving them. The effectiveness of international courts is also questioned; without a global
- 11 enforcement mechanism, their rulings often remain symbolic, relying on the voluntary cooperation of the very states they seek
- 12 to sanction. This lack of “teeth” can lead to a sense of impunity for violators who know they can ignore international
- 13 warrants with little consequence. Ultimately, the quest for a global judicial system must reconcile the need for accountability
- 14 with the reality of a world composed of independent states, each with its own legal traditions and political interests.
- 15 The challenge lies in creating a system that is both impartial and enforceable, a goal that remains elusive in the current
- 16 geopolitical landscape. If the international community cannot agree on a common definition of justice, the dream of a

- 17 truly global court may remain just that — a dream. Yet, the alternative — a world where gross violations go unpunished — is
- 18 equally unacceptable to those who believe in the inherent worth of every human being. The ongoing dialogue between
- 19 internationalists and sovereignists reflects a fundamental disagreement about the nature of power and the purpose of law.
- 20 As we move further into the 21st century, the resolution of this tension will likely define the future of global governance.
- 21 The emergence of regional human rights courts offers a potential middle ground, allowing for shared standards within a
- 22 more culturally homogeneous framework. But even these courts face challenges of legitimacy and enforcement. The
- 23 fundamental question remains: who has the right to judge a sovereign state, and under what authority? Until this question
- 24 is answered to the satisfaction of the majority of the world’s nations, the role of international courts will continue to be
- 25 a source of intense controversy and debate. The path forward requires a delicate balance of idealism and pragmatism.
- 26 It necessitates a commitment to universal principles that is tempered by a respect for national self-determination. Whether
- 27 such a balance is achievable is the great legal and political question of our time. The stakes could not be higher, for the
- 28 answer will determine whether we live in a world governed by the rule of law or the rule of might. In the end, the success
- 29 of international justice depends not just on the quality of its judges, but on the political will of the nations they serve.
- 30 Without that will, the most perfectly crafted legal statutes are nothing more than words on a page.

1. Which of the following best expresses the main argument of the passage?

A International courts are a tool for neo-colonialism.

B Sovereignty is an absolute right that cannot be violated.

C Global justice requires a balance between sovereignty and accountability.

D Regional courts are the only effective way to protect human rights.

E International law is fundamentally symbolic and lacks real power.

2. The author mentions “victor’s justice” (line 8) primarily to:

- | | | |
|--|--|---|
| A Praise the efficiency of international courts. | B Highlight the perceived bias in the application of international law. | C Explain why powerful nations support international intervention. |
| D Suggest that only winners of wars should be allowed to judge. | E Argue for a more aggressive enforcement of human rights. | |

3. Based on the passage, what is a major obstacle to the effectiveness of international courts?

- | | | |
|--|--|---|
| A A lack of qualified judges. | B The high cost of legal proceedings. | C The absence of a global enforcement mechanism. |
| D Interference from regional human rights courts. | E A lack of interest from the general public. | |

4. The term “teeth” (line 12) is used metaphorically to refer to:

- | | | |
|--|---|--|
| A The wisdom of international judges. | B The severity of human rights abuses. | C The ability to enforce rulings. |
| D The complexity of legal statutes. | E The resistance of sovereign states. | |

5. What can be inferred about the author’s view on regional human rights courts?

- | | | |
|---|--|--|
| A They are a perfect solution to global justice issues. | B They are inherently superior to international courts. | C They offer a potential compromise but still face significant hurdles. |
| D They are irrelevant in the current geopolitical landscape. | E They are primarily used to protect powerful nations. | |

6. Which of the following would the author most likely agree with?

- | | | |
|--|---|--|
| A Might makes right in international relations. | B International law is a waste of time and resources. | C The success of international justice depends on political will. |
| D National sovereignty should always take precedence over human rights. | E Universal principles are easy to define and implement. | |

7. The “Responsibility to Protect” (line 5) implies that:

A States have no obligations to their citizens.

B Sovereignty is a privilege that can be revoked if a state fails its people.

C Only the UN can authorise military intervention.

D Human rights are secondary to national interests.

E Every individual is responsible for their own safety.

8. The passage suggests that critics of international intervention fear:

A Increased global cooperation.

B The erosion of national identity and autonomy.

C The promotion of universal human rights.

D A lack of international interest in their affairs.

E The high cost of international trials.

9. The tone of the passage can best be described as:

A Optimistic and encouraging.

B Dismissive and cynical.

C Balanced and analytical.

D Aggressive and confrontational.

E Indifferent and detached.

10. In the final paragraph, the author emphasises the importance of:

A Perfectly crafted legal statutes.

B The quality of international judges.

C The political will of nations.

D Ignoring national self-determination.

E The rule of might.

Section 3 — TARA/TSA-Style: Problem Solving 10 questions · 20 minutes

Each question has four answer options (A–D). Choose the one best answer.

1. A company's profits increased by 10% in Year 1 and then decreased by 10% in Year 2. What was the net change over the two years?

A 0% change

B 1% increase

C 1% decrease

D 2% decrease

2. "All birds have feathers. A penguin is a bird. Therefore, a penguin has feathers." This is an example of:

A Inductive reasoning

B Deductive reasoning

C Circular reasoning

D Ad hominem attack

3. A cube is painted red on all sides and then cut into 27 smaller equal cubes. How many of the smaller cubes have exactly two sides painted red?

A 8

B 10

C 12

D 14

4. If some A are B, and all B are C, which of the following must be true?

A All A are C

B Some A are C

C No A are C

D All C are A

5. A train travels 60 miles in 45 minutes. What is its average speed in miles per hour?

A 45 mph

B 60 mph

C 75 mph

D 80 mph

6. Which of the following identifies a flaw in the argument: "Eating breakfast improves grades because students who eat breakfast have higher average test scores"?

A It assumes correlation implies causation.

B It uses biased data.

C It is a circular argument.

D It relies on an appeal to authority.

7. A clock shows 3:15. What is the angle between the hour and minute hands?

A 0°

B 7.5°

C 15°

D 22.5°

8. If 5 machines can make 5 widgets in 5 minutes, how long does it take 100 machines to make 100 widgets?

A 1 minute

B 5 minutes

C 20 minutes

D 100 minutes

9. In a group of 30 people, 15 like tea, 20 like coffee, and 10 like both. How many like neither?

A 0

B 5

C 10

D 15

10. A sequence of shapes is: Triangle, Square, Pentagon, Hexagon... What is the 10th shape in the sequence?

A Decagon (10 sides)

B Hendecagon (11 sides)

C Dodecagon (12 sides)

D Tridecagon (13 sides)

Section 4 — TMUA/MAT-Style: Mathematics 8 questions · 25 minutes

Each question has four answer options (A–D). No calculator permitted. Choose the one best answer.

1. What is the value of the integral $\int x e^x dx$?

A $e^x (x - 1) + C$

B $e^x (x + 1) + C$

C $x^2 e^x / 2 + C$

D $e^x + C$

2. Which of the following is the modulus of the complex number $3 + 4i$?

A 5

B 7

C 25

D $\sqrt{7}$

3. The sum of the infinite geometric series $1 + 1/2 + 1/4 + 1/8 + \dots$ is:

A 1.5

B 2

C 3

D ∞

4. If $P(n)$ is the statement “ $n^2 + n$ is even”, which of the following is the first step in a proof by induction?

A Assume $P(k)$ is true

B Show $P(1)$ is true

C Show $P(k+1)$ is true

D Differentiate $n^2 + n$

5. Find the value of $\int \sin(2x) dx$ from 0 to $\pi/2$.

A 0

B 1

C 2

D -1

6. The argument of the complex number $1 + i$ is:

A $\pi/4$

B $\pi/2$

C 0

D π

7. A sequence is defined by $a_n = 2n + 1$. Is the series $\sum a_n$ convergent?

A Yes, it converges to 0

B Yes, it converges to 1

C No, it diverges

D It depends on the first term

8. In a proof by induction, after showing $P(1)$ is true and assuming $P(k)$ is true, we must show:

A $P(k-1)$ is true

B $P(k+1)$ is true

C $P(2k)$ is true

D $P(n)$ is true for all n

Section 5 — ESAT-Style: Science Reasoning 8 questions · 20 minutes

Questions cover Physics, Chemistry, and Biology at A-Level standard. Each question has four answer options (A–D). Choose the one best answer.

1. A projectile is launched with initial velocity v at angle θ . What is its horizontal range?

A $(v^2 \sin 2\theta) / g$

B $(v^2 \cos 2\theta) / g$

C $(v \sin \theta) / g$

D $(v^2 \sin^2 \theta) / 2g$

2. According to Kirchhoff's Junction Law, the sum of currents entering a junction is:

A Zero

B Equal to the sum of currents leaving

C Equal to the voltage drop

D Proportional to the resistance

3. What is the equilibrium constant (K_c) for the reaction $A + B \rightleftharpoons C + D$?

A $[A][B] / [C][D]$

B $[C][D] / [A][B]$

C $[A] + [B] - [C] - [D]$

D $([C] + [D]) / ([A] + [B])$

4. In Mendelian genetics, what is the phenotypic ratio of a dihybrid cross ($AaBb \times AaBb$)?

A 3:1

B 9:3:3:1

C 1:1:1:1

D 1:2:1

5. Which functional group is characteristic of an alcohol?

A $-\text{COOH}$

B $-\text{OH}$

C $-\text{CHO}$

D $-\text{NH}_2$

6. What is the primary function of a G-protein coupled receptor (GPCR)?

A DNA replication

B Signal transduction

C Protein synthesis

D Energy production

7. An object of mass m is moving with velocity v . What is its kinetic energy?

A mv

B $\frac{1}{2}mv^2$

C mgh

D $\frac{1}{2}mv$

8. Which of the following is a characteristic of an S_N2 reaction?

A Two-step mechanism

B Inversion of configuration

C Carbocation intermediate

D Unimolecular rate law

— END OF QUESTIONS —

Answer Key

Sections 1, 3, 4 & 5 — Multiple Choice

SECTION 1 — CRITICAL REASONING

Q1 C	Q2 B	Q3 C	Q4 C	Q5 C
Q6 C	Q7 B	Q8 B	Q9 C	Q10 C

SECTION 3 — PROBLEM SOLVING

Q1 C	Q2 B	Q3 C	Q4 B	Q5 D
Q6 A	Q7 B	Q8 B	Q9 B	Q10 C

SECTION 4 — MATHEMATICS

Q1 A	Q2 A	Q3 B	Q4 B	Q5 B
Q6 A	Q7 C	Q8 B		

SECTION 5 — SCIENCE REASONING

Q1 A	Q2 B	Q3 B	Q4 B	Q5 B
Q6 B	Q7 B	Q8 B		

Section 2 (Essay) is assessed holistically. Look for: a clear thesis, structured argument, use of evidence, counter-argument acknowledgement, and quality of written expression.