

Institute for Government internship applications: Example multiple-choice questions

As part of the application process for our internship programme, we ask you to complete a timed multiple-choice test. This is formed of around 20 questions, including the following sections:

- Verbal reasoning and comprehension
- Data interpretation
- Numeracy
- Error checking

You will have around 40 minutes to complete the test. We recommend having a calculator, paper and pen to hand before you begin. Once you start the test, a timer will count down in the corner of the screen. You cannot save your application during the test or return to this part of the application once completed.

Below are some examples of questions that we have used in the past, to give you an indication of the type of questions you can expect in this part of the application. If you would like to practice answering them before attempting the test for real, the answers to each question are included on the last page of this document.

Verbal reasoning and comprehension – Question Type A

Read the paragraph and fill each gap with a word from the list provided that best fits the sense of what the author is arguing.

The removal of the hereditary peers has changed the earlier 1)_____. Even if the House looks the same, and has the same core of active members (both hereditary and life), the mystery, even mystique, of the hereditary 2)_____ has gone. The House regards itself as more legitimate and has behaved accordingly. The very absence of the previous in-built and largely dormant majority of Conservative hereditary peers has been a 3)_____ influence. While the Salisbury convention has continued to be observed, the interim House has been more willing to challenge the government on 4)_____ issues.

1. Assumptions, Incompatibilities, Methodologies, Tendencies
2. Aristocracy, Era, Monarchy, Symbolism
3. Deleterious, Liberating, Marginalising, Symptomatic
4. Contentious, Inconsequential, Reformative, Tendentious

Verbal reasoning and comprehension – Question Type B

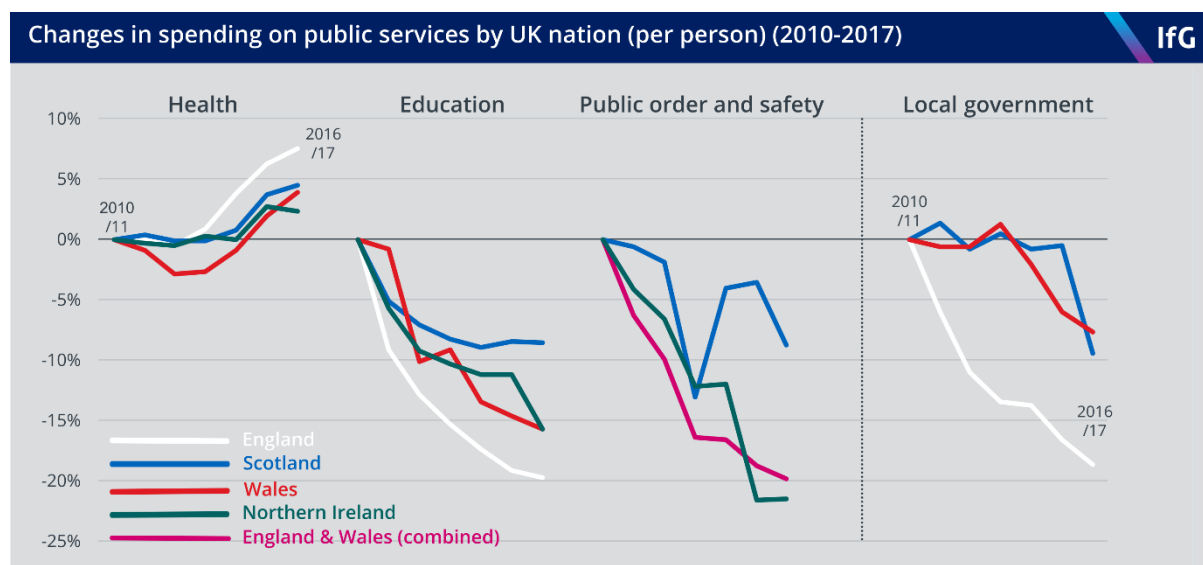
Read the passage and then decide if the statements at the bottom reflect the argument of the passage, contradicts the argument made in the passage, or makes a point that cannot be confirmed or contradicted by reading the passage.

“The 2015 Spending Review produced plans to cut real day-to-day spending by more than £10bn by 2019/20. These cuts were not spread evenly, either across departments or over time. Relative protections for the largest spending areas – health, education and defence – mean sharp cuts for smaller budgets, such as the Ministry of Justice and the Department for Transport; the former will see its real budget decline by 15%, while the latter will see day-to-day spending fall by over 30%. And the Government also has a series of policies that increase the financial costs of providing services, most noticeably the commitment to increase the National Living Wage. This is, for example, estimated to add over £2bn to the pay costs of providing social care. Over time, the cuts have been back-loaded. So, for the NHS, 2016/17 is a year of relative plenty, with spending per person in England rising by 0.9% (though much of this has gone in covering the deficits built up in 2015/16). In contrast, spending per head will be frozen in 2017/18 and actually fall by 0.6% in both 2018/19 and 2019/20. The warnings that the NHS does not have enough resources are increasing. Beyond health, departments like the Ministry of Justice, Department for Business, Innovation and Skills, HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC), Department for Work and Pensions, and Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs all had nominal increases in their funding this year, but all face cuts by 2019/20. Over the full five years, their budgets will be frozen in cash terms, with inflation forecast to average 2% per annum.”

5. The amount of money saved by the cut in the budget of the Department for Transport will be greater than that saved by the cut in the Ministry of Justice budget.
6. The likely increase in the cost of social care is due to rising demand for services.
7. Overall, planned cuts are profiled to be deeper towards the end of the five-year spending review period.
8. By the end of 2019/20 HMRC's budget will be lower in real terms than it is today

Data interpretation

Using the chart below, decide whether the following statements are true, false, or unclear from this chart.



9. In 2016/17 spending on health (per person) was higher in England than in the other three parts of the UK.

10. Spending on education (per person) fell by more than 10% between 2010/11 and 2016/17 in all four parts of the UK.

11. In 2016/17, Scotland spent approximately the same amount on education (per person) as it did on public order and safety.

12. Local government spending in England (per person) fell in every year between 2010/11 and 2016/17.

Numeracy

13. The Institute for Government has 45 members of staff, each of whom drinks an average of 4 cups of coffee per day that they are in the office. 10 people work 4 days per week, 5 people work just 3 days per week, and the rest work full-time (5 days per week). One bag of coffee beans costs £8.50 and produces 60 cups of coffee. How much does the Institute spend on coffee in one week (to the nearest pound)?

- a) £114 b) £116 c) £119 d) £128

14. The Institute for Government employs 22 research staff, each of whom writes one 500-word blog per month and one 12,000-word report per year, all of which must be edited before publication. Our hard-working publications manager takes one hour to edit every 850 words. Assuming he takes six weeks holiday out of a 52-week year, how many hours per working week does he spend editing?

- a) About 7 hours b) About 9 hours c) About 10 hours d) About 12 hours

15. The Institute for Government organises a training session for 10 civil servants. The trainer charges a fixed fee of £400, plus £5 per person for training materials. Catering costs £22 per person. VAT at 20% must be added to all of these costs. What is the minimum the Institute can charge to make a profit of over £500?"

- a) £1200 b) £1300 c) £1400 d) £1500

16. 1500 people are invited to the Institute for Government summer party. One third accept, and half of those show up on the day, along with 20 other people who did not confirm attendance. In addition, two-thirds of the Institute's 45 staff attend. What proportion of people at the party are staff of the Institute?

- a) 1 in 8 b) 1 in 9 c) 1 in 10 d) 1 in 11

Error checking

17. Read the following passage. How many typos does it contain?

In May 2021, NHS Digital announced the launch of a new service to improve the collection of patient data from general practitioners (GPs): General Practice Data for Planning and Research (GPDR). In the announcement, it noted that the pandemic had led to 'a significant increase in the need for GP data from NHS Digital to support clinicians, researchers, academics and commissioners', which could be used to improve health services through clinical research and operational planning. GPDR would replace the General Practice Extraction Service (GPES, which 'performed adequately during the pandemic but is based on legacy technology'. The scheme was due to come into beeing on 1 September 2021.

But the scheme was subject to controversy, with campaign groups and journalists complaining about a lack of transparency and the possibility of the private sector using the data. A kegal challenge claimed that 'rushing this major change through with no transparency or debate violates patient trust' and called for a pause to allow patients more time to opt out from their data being included. Several groups referenced a previous scheme intended to bring individual GP records together for research and planning, which was halted in 2014 and scrapped in 2016 over controversy about a lack of information given to patients..

a) 2 b) 3 c) 4 d) 5

18. Read the following passage. How many typos does it contain?

In 2019, the UK government passed trailblazing legislation committing itself to achieving 'net zero' greenhouse gas emissions by 2050. The UK has already cut its emissions by over 45& since 1990, mostly through centrally directed policy around power generation. But eliminating the remaining emissions will be more difficult and require policy interventions across a wider range of sectors involving a more diffuse set of people and organisations, often operating at a local level.

The green transition will not succeed without strong local involvement. In the run-up to the COP27 climate negotiations in November 1022, the Greater Manchester mayor, Andy burnham, argued that his region is "ready to lead the next industrial revolution for the UK. But we urgently need full government backing for our 2038 target." Andy Street, his West Midlands counterpart, argued that mayors "will play a huge collective role in tackling the climate emergency", and said the government needed to make it easier for them to do so.

a) 1 b) 2 c) 3 d) 4

19. Read the following passage. How many typos does it contain?

Data is a key aspect of any counter fraud activity, requiring a combination of personal and transactional data to be shared, often across multiple organisations including government and private sector organisations. While there were high-profile casesof government data sharing during the pandemic for counter fraud activities, such as with high street banks for the Bounce Back Loan scheme and other elements of business support, the increase in online activities necessitated by the pandemic increased opportunities for other types of Fraud, such as identity fraud.

The Bounce Back Loan scheme was established rapidly during the pandemic to provide urgent and immediate direct financial support to businesses who could request a loan of up to £50,000 from a high street bank, which were 100% guaranteed by the government. Ministers took the decision to launch the service quickly to save jobs and businesses from collapse, but in doing so accepted the risk of fraud in the scheme – now estimated by the business department as £4.9 billion of fraudulent loans on a total of £47 billion lent during the scheme.. The British Business Bank, which was responsible for setting up the scheme, submitted both a reservation notice to the department and a request for ministerial direction to proceed with the scheme, which outlined how the proposed scheme did not have a robust value for money assessment and presented a “very high” risk of fraud and error.

- a) 2 b) 3 c) 4 d) 5

20. Read the following passage. How many typos does it contain?

To respond to the pandemic, the government commissioned NHS England, NHS Improvement and NHSX (which merged with NHS Digital in February 2022 to form NHS England’s Transformation Directorate)¹ to develop a solution that would provide those national organisations responsible for co-ordinating the response with secure, reliable and timely data – in a way that protected the privacy of citizens – so that they could make informed, effective decisions.

This needed data from across the NHS, social care and partner organisations. In March 2020, a joint team from these organisations and the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) came together and worked with the secretary of state for health and social care to issue control of patient information (COPI) notices, which required that data was shared for purposes of Covid. The health secretary first issued COPPI notices in March 2020 and they were renewed several times until June 2022.

- a) 1 b) 2 c) 3 d) 4

Correct answers:

1. Assumptions
2. Aristocracy
3. Liberating
4. Contentious
5. Makes a point that cannot be confirmed or contradicted by reading the passage
6. Contradicts the argument made in the passage
7. Reflects the argument of the passage
8. Reflects the argument of the passage
9. Can't say from this chart
10. False
11. Can't say from the chart
12. True
13. b) £116
14. c) About 10 hours
15. c) £1400
16. c) 1 in 10
17. d) 5
18. c) 3
19. d) 5
20. b) 2