



THINKING SKILLS

Paper 4 Applied Reasoning

May/June 2022

1 hour 45 minutes

You will need: Answer booklet (enclosed)

- Answer **all** questions.
- Follow the instructions on the front cover of the answer booklet. If you need additional answer paper, ask the invigilator for a continuation booklet.

- The total mark for this paper is 50.
- The number of marks for each question or part question is shown in brackets [].

This document has **8** pages. Any blank pages are indicated.

- 1 (a) State the main conclusion of the argument in Document 1. [1]
- (b) Identify **two** intermediate conclusions in paragraphs 3 to 4 of Document 1. [2]
- (c) Analyse the structure of the reasoning in paragraph 5 of Document 1. [4]
- (d) Identify an unstated assumption which is needed to support the reasoning in paragraph 6 of Document 1. [1]
- 2 (a) Identify and explain **three** flaws and/or weaknesses in the reasoning in paragraphs 1 to 4 of Document 1. [6]
- (b) Assess the extent to which the reasoning in paragraph 5 of Document 1 supports the argument as a whole. [3]
- 3 (a) Document 5 contains some statistical information in paragraph 4.
- Explain **two** ways in which the support given by the statistics in paragraph 4 to the claim that “Swift’s endorsements caused many of her fans to register to vote” is weak. [2]
- (b) Document 5 contains a graph.
- Explain why the support given by the graph to the claim that “Celebrities influence the public less than real politicians” is weak. [4]
- 4 *You are advised to spend some time planning your answer before you begin to write it.*
- ‘Celebrity involvement is bad for politics.’
- Construct a reasoned argument to support **or** challenge this claim. In your answer you should make critical use of the documents provided. [27]

DOCUMENT 1

Should actors enter politics?

- 1 We live in a world where members of the acting profession seem to think it is their right, or even duty, to get involved in politics – from Arnold Schwarzenegger in the US to Melina Mercouri in Greece to Sunny Deol in India. But the duty of actors is to entertain, not to influence how society works, so they should stick to what they have been trained to do and let professional politicians run things. I have no desire to see Angela Merkel star in the next Hollywood blockbuster, so why would I want to see an actor hold political office?
- 2 Most actors are not fit to hold public office. Child stars often struggle to cope with fame at a young age, suffering mental health issues and problems with addiction. No wonder we are always hearing about the latest actor to spend time in rehab. These issues can influence their views and the way they perceive the world. If actors were in charge, they might make a lot of bad decisions, which could lead to economic, environmental or geopolitical disaster.
- 3 The most well-known, and so most influential, actors have enormous salaries. Their vast wealth makes them unable to empathise with the concerns of the majority of the population. Actors do not know what it is like to hold down a steady full-time job or raise a family as a single parent and still get out of bed every morning. In this way, actors cannot hope to represent the people they would be supposed to represent.
- 4 People are increasingly likely to re-post celebrity views on political issues as if they have genuine weight. This could mean that, if a popular actor holds a dangerous opinion, that opinion is likely to gain support based on the actor's popularity, rather than the content of the opinion itself. A photo of Bollywood actress Priyanka Chopra Jonas encouraging people to vote in Indian elections was seen initially by millions of her own followers, and many times more than that after the image was re-posted. Moreover, a particularly skilled actor could use their tone of voice and body language to manipulate the emotions of voters and so would have an unfair advantage over professional politicians.
- 5 When an actor becomes involved in politics, the distinction between fact and fiction is blurred in the minds of the public. Gullible voters might think that an actor who played a judge in a well-known television series was in real life a legal expert. Thus, an actor could be elected based on the public's perception of the fictional character. This would be disastrous, as the government would become filled with people with no political expertise.
- 6 It seems the number of actor politicians is on the rise. At the same time there has been fragmentation of international alliances and an increased instability around the globe. If actors continue to become politicians, then the prospects for peace are poor.

DOCUMENT 2

Actors make good politicians

We could write several volumes about what 'good politician' actually means. However, if we all agree that politicians are necessary for an ordered and prosperous society, then those who can bring more positives to society than negatives could be described as good – but don't get me started on what 'society' means!

Indian actor Rajinikanth recently announced that he wants to enter politics, and form a new political party. He is not the first, nor will he be the last. Ronald Reagan was a well-known Hollywood star, if not quite on the 'A-list', before he became Governor of California in 1967 and then US President in 1980. Some credit him with bringing in an era of peace by ending the cold war between the US and the Soviet Union. After two successful terms in the White House, he retired with a very high (68%) approval rating. People forget that Reagan was ridiculed by many when first elected. To many of those same sceptics, he now seems like a relatively strong and stable politician. Other examples of celebrity politicians abound: Arnold Schwarzenegger was Governor of California; Joseph Estrada, a former movie star, was President of Philippines from 1998 until his impeachment trial in 2001 and, in 2019, the actor/comedian Volodymyr Zelensky became President of Ukraine.

Why should it be so common for celebrities, particularly actors, to enter politics? One possible reason could be a decline in public trust in professional politicians. The respected Pew Research Center has data that in 1958 75% of Americans trusted the US government to do the right thing, at least most of the time. By 1980, the year that America's first celebrity president took office, this figure had dropped to 25%.

The qualities that can underpin success in acting and politics are not dissimilar. In both, appearance matters. So much, in fact, that the CIA allegedly tried to poison Fidel Castro so that he would lose his facial hair. This, they believed, would make him look weak and would therefore lose him the support of the Cuban people. Furthermore, actors are trained to pretend to be who they are not, and, like it or loathe it, it is necessary for politicians to mislead and deceive at least some of the people some of the time. Actors and politicians both have an image they like to present to the public. Come to think of it, many politicians might make good actors.

Popularity is all that matters in a democracy and, compared to ordinary politicians, actors and other celebrities have this in abundance. This popularity can give celebrities an easy ride when starting their careers compared with aspiring politicians who are not famous already. Celebrities are often particularly popular amongst younger people, a demographic which is traditionally unlikely to vote in elections.

Celebrities also find it easier to fund their political ambitions. The fame they already enjoy attracts money from sponsors and, in most societies, a great deal of money is needed to fund political campaigns and win elections.

The usual criticisms about not understanding international issues or being out of touch with real people apply well beyond the acting profession – nobody has a monopoly on ignorance – and actors are as capable as anyone of surrounding themselves with well-informed advisors. It is by no means certain that actors and other celebrities are better than normal politicians, but they are certainly no worse, and they might encourage more young people to take an interest in politics. Politics is, at least, more interesting with a few celebrities in the mix.

DOCUMENT 3

The good and bad of celebrities in politics

2018 saw two celebrities enter politics on opposite sides of the US political divide.

Taylor Swift told her multitude of social media followers to register to vote and educate themselves on the candidates running in their state, while herself endorsing the Democratic candidate. The appeal worked – an estimated 65 000 people registered within 24 hours of her post. Meanwhile, Kanye West visited the White House for a meeting with President Trump.

The phenomenon of celebrity involvement in politics has recently acquired a name – Poliwood – at least in the US. But celebrities have been used for good and ill by politicians of every type for a long time.

Charlie Chaplin and Douglas Fairbanks, megastars in their time, sold war bonds on behalf of President Woodrow Wilson during World War 1. Frank Sinatra and Orson Welles performed at political rallies for Franklin D Roosevelt. Welles also supported Roosevelt in his newspaper columns and helped write his speeches. Before he became president, John F Kennedy commissioned Frank Sinatra to sing *High Hopes* during the 1960 election campaign. Republican Richard Nixon was backed by the likes of Bob Hope and Sammy Davis Jr, and was famously visited by Elvis Presley in the Oval Office. Democratic successor Jimmy Carter's rise was aided by his associations with Bob Dylan, Willie Nelson and the Allman Brothers.

The bulk of celebrity endorsement has been for those on the Democratic side, but the only Hollywood type that ever became president was right-wing Republican Ronald Reagan. Reagan's success seemed to inspire a host of Republican celebrities to run for office, such as California Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger.

Poliwood can make it cool to care. Bono, the singer from the band U2, encouraged George W Bush to release funds for an international AIDS drug programme. George Clooney, who worked to bring international attention to the genocide and civil war in South Sudan, said 'Celebrity can help focus news media where they have abdicated their responsibility. We can't make policy, but we can encourage politicians more than ever before.' However, Poliwood can sometimes 'dumb down' political debate, by allowing politicians to deflect attention from their own unpopular policies.

So is Poliwood a force for good or simply a glittering distraction? The answer depends on what it accomplishes. If it draws attention to a real problem, it can promote public engagement and political action. If politicians are just looking for a celebrity endorsement to boost their profile and make themselves look cool, then it dumbs down politics, which cannot be a good thing.

DOCUMENT 4

Some quotes from an online discussion about celebrities in politics

Celebrity involvement in politics is nothing new so we should not be concerned about it now. Many celebrities, such as Warren Beatty and Jane Fonda, spoke out against the Vietnam War, for example.

AB, New Zealand

It is well documented that certain types of mental illness, such as bipolar disorder, are more common in people with a talent for performance or creativity. We might appreciate a Van Gogh painting, but we wouldn't want him running the Netherlands. Beethoven had bipolar disorder. Great symphonies, but would you rather have him or Angela Merkel as German Chancellor?

PJ, Belgium

It is cowardly to have a large platform and not speak out about injustices that are happening in society. Several black celebrities have spoken out about racism. This sends a powerful message.

TT, Canada

Celebrities are citizens first and as such have the right to get involved. They have the right to freedom of speech like everyone else!

AG, South Africa

Who actually looks at the campaign videos anymore? We look for recognisable faces and names. Because we think they're always good people, we listen to what they say.

RM, India

With great power comes great responsibility. Many celebrities perceive politics as all about winning elections, but they lack the knowledge and skills to implement any policies they might support.

CH, USA

People like being fooled by actors, but they like being fooled by politicians even more.

US, Brazil

DOCUMENT 5

Do celebrities really influence voters?

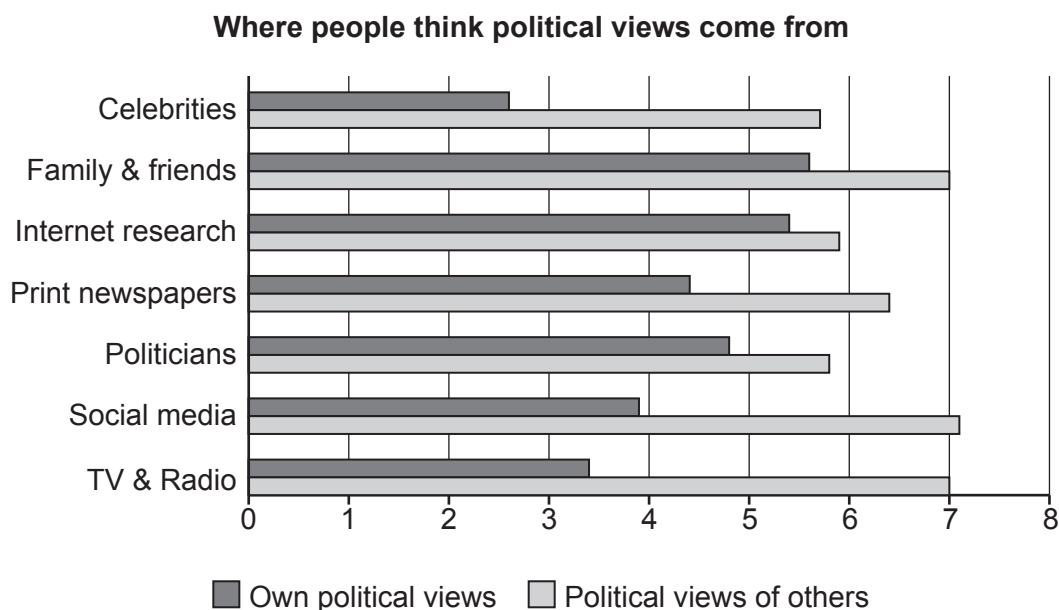
The University of Maryland conducted research that suggests that Oprah Winfrey's backing brought Barack Obama more than a million votes in the 2008 election to choose the Democratic Party's presidential nominee. However, the University of Michigan found that friends and family were more influential than celebrities on young voters in the 2004 US election. 'Celebrities may have looked pretty, but they were not particularly influential on first-time voters,' the report said.

A survey in 2016 regarding that year's US presidential election concluded that celebrity endorsements had no effect on most voters' intentions. Some celebrities even put people off voting for their endorsed candidate.

Respected academics say that there are two types of celebrity influence. People are more likely to listen to celebrities that are already known for campaigning work in politics or civil rights, such as George Clooney. Their activism gives them more credibility. People who occasionally chip in an opinion, like Robert De Niro, are in a different category and are less likely to influence the voting public. One professor of politics said that celebrity support can work but only if the celebrity involved is generating positive publicity.

In the US mid-term elections in the state of Tennessee, the Democrat candidate that Taylor Swift endorsed for the House of Representatives won. In the two days after the star posted her original message, there were 213 000 new voter registrations across the whole country. Most of these were in the 18 to 24 age group, so it seems that Swift's endorsements caused many of her fans to register to vote.

A survey taken across a range of democracies shows that celebrities influence the public less than real politicians do. A large sample of voters that were representative of the general voting populations in their countries were asked to rate, on a scale of 1 to 10, how much different information sources influenced their political views. Not only did politicians come out much higher than celebrities but 63% of respondents said that celebrities did not influence their views at all.



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