

## **Critical Thinking General Education Exam**

**I. Read the passage below and answer the questions following it.**

### **The Twinkie Defense**

More perplexing things have happened, but a Twinkie caused the death of Harvey Milk. That's right. In 1978, defense lawyers using the "Twinkie Defense" explained an inexplicable murder away. This was the first mainstream trial to use an "I am not responsible for my actions" defense.

Harvey Milk was the first openly gay man elected to a significant office in America. In 1977, Milk was elected as a member of the San Francisco Board of Supervisors. This was quite arduous at this point in American history when most people, including many psychologists and religious leaders, still classified homosexuality as deviant and a mental illness.

Harvey Milk is to the Gay Rights Movement what Martin Luther King, Jr. is to the Civil Rights Movement. Before King, little was happening with the CRM, and before Milk, little was happening with the GRM. He changed the face of California politics and paved the way for countless other gays and lesbians to enter the world of politics.

Dan White, a staunch anti-gay advocate, served on the board with Milk. They were constantly at odds with each other and often engaged in verbal confrontations.

White had been a policeman and a fireman in San Francisco before running for office. While running for office, he vowed to restore "family values" to the city government. He vowed to "rid San Francisco of radicals, social deviants, and incorrigibles."

Dan White was one of the most conservative members of the board, and many proposals brought to the board by Milk and the mayor of San Francisco, George Moscone, were defeated because of the heavily conservative vote led by White.

At that time, the Board of Supervisors was made up of eleven members; six of them, including Dan White, were conservative and had the power to defeat most, if not all of the liberal measures brought before the board. This did not fare well with Harvey Milk and the other liberal members of the board.

Because the job offered diminutive wages, Dan White soon realized that he could not support his family on \$9,800 per year, and he submitted his resignation to Mayor Moscone. This did not set well with the people who elected him. They urged him to reconsider and when he tried to rescind his resignation, Mayor Moscone refused. This decision was made, in part, because Harvey Milk convinced Moscone to deny his reinstatement.

In a fit of wrath over the decision, Dan White entered the San Francisco City Hall on the morning of November 27, 1978, through a basement window. He went to Mayor Moscone's office and shot him in the chest, and as he lay dying, shot him again in the head.

He then walked calmly down the hall and asked to see Harvey Milk. Once inside the office, he slew Milk with two bullets to the brain. He then left City Hall, called his wife, spoke with her in person at St. Mary's Cathedral, and then turned himself in.

It is reported that policemen representing the city of San Francisco shouted, cheered, and applauded when news of the murders reached the police department.

Dan White's defense lawyers used a "diminished capacity" defense suggesting that he was led to his actions by too much sugar from junk food. The lawyers convinced a jury that he was not himself and his senses were off kilter. This became known as the "Twinkie Defense".

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Dan White was convicted of second degree manslaughter and was sentenced to only seven years for two premeditated murders. After serving only five years, he was released. The “Twinkie Defense” had worked.

In 1985, after being released from Soledad Prison, Dan White walked into his garage, took a rubber hose, connected it to his car’s exhaust, and killed himself with carbon monoxide poisoning. He was 39 years old. His tomb reads, “Daniel J. White (1946-October 21, 1985), Sgt. U.S. Army, Vietnam. Cause of death: Suicide.”

1. Was being a member of the Board of Supervisors a lucrative job in 1978? Explain. *(Knowledge)*

2. Based on the story above, explain why Dan White killed Harvey Milk and George Moscone. *(Comprehension)*

3. What facts could support the contention that Dan White was guilty of premeditated murder? *(Comprehension)*

4. In 1984 Bernard Goetz, a middle-aged white man, shot four young black men on a subway because the youth had been noisy, had displayed some “attitude” and one was carrying a screwdriver. It was generally agreed that Bernard Goetz’s attack was motivated by strongly stereotyped racial images and thus was a racially motivated attack. Is there evidence to support the idea that Dan White’s murder of Milk and Moscone was motivated by anti-gay feelings? Briefly support your opinion. *(Application)*

5. How could the Board of Supervisors have discussed issues in a less polarizing fashion? What key changes would have needed to be made? (*Analysis*)

6. What appears to be the attitude of the writer of this piece towards Dan White and the Twinkie Defense? Give specific references to support your claim. (*Synthesis*)

7. Why do you believe Dan White took his own life? Was this the right thing to do? (*Evaluation*)

**II.** Below you will see a number of quotations from one of five different “interest groups” or “lobbies”. A lobby or interest group is a group of people who have a common interest and who work together to publicize and promote their point of view. The five groups are as follows :

- **The forest industry:** The forest industry makes money from cutting down trees. Therefore, they want to be able to continue to cut trees, and they want to discourage any alternative ways of producing pulp and paper.
- **The environmentalists:** The environmental lobby want to protect the forests against logging companies, so they would like to show how destructive logging is, and how valuable the forests are.
- **The hemp farming lobby:** The hemp farmers would like the fibre hemp plant to be legal so that they can grow it. They want to show how useful it is for making paper and other products, and they would like people to understand the difference between the marijuana plant and the fibre hemp plant.
- **The marijuana legalization lobby:** These people would like marijuana to be legal. They are interested in linking the fibre hemp plant with marijuana, because they think it may be possible to legalize BOTH kinds of plant. They want to show how useful industrial hemp is, and at the same time, they want to convince people that marijuana is harmless.
- **The Canadian government:** The Canadian government has just legalized industrial hemp, but they want to keep marijuana illegal, so they want to show that it is dangerous. They also get lots of taxes from the forest industry, so they do not want to restrict logging too much.

*Identify, in the blank, which group each quotation comes from.*

\_\_\_\_\_ 1. “The rainforests are quite simply the richest, oldest, most productive and most complex ecosystems on Earth.”

- a. The forestry industry
- b. The environmentalists
- c. The hemp farming lobby
- d. The marijuana legalization lobby

\_\_\_\_\_ 2. “Some have calculated that if Canada converted the entire pulp and paper production in Canada to hemp, it would be necessary to plant hemp over 18% of the country.”

- a. The forest industry
- b. The marijuana lobby
- c. The environmentalists
- d. The hemp farming lobby

\_\_\_\_\_ 3. “Farmers...can grow hemp without pesticide or herbicide application because it grows quickly and is not likely to fall to disease.”

- a. The Canadian government
- b. The hemp farming lobby

- c. The forest industry
- d. The marijuana legalization lobby

\_\_\_\_\_ 4. “Each year, forest fires destroy more forests than are used for making pulp and paper.”

- a. The environmentalists
- b. The Canadian government
- c. The hemp farming lobby
- d. The forest industry

\_\_\_\_\_ 5. “Decriminalizing cannabis could well result in a greater use of the drug by Canadians, thereby increasing the health and safety hazards associated with it.”

- a. The marijuana legalization lobby
- b. The hemp farming lobby
- c. The Canadian government
- d. The environmentalists

\_\_\_\_\_ 6. “The government added marijuana in 1923 to The Opium Act of 1908 without any health concerns inherent in the law whatsoever. The Opium Act was introduced as a purely racist measure to deport and jail Chinese-Canadians.”

- a. The hemp farming lobby
- b. The Canadian government
- c. The forest industry
- d. The marijuana legalization lobby

\_\_\_\_\_ 7. “67% of the fibre used to make Canadian pulp and paper comes from sawmill residue and recovered paper that used to be disposed of in landfills.”

- a. The environmentalists
- b. The hemp farming lobby
- c. The forestry industry
- d. The marijuana legalization lobby

\_\_\_\_\_ 8. “Hemp is about business and the environment. Marijuana is a moral question about the government’s control of what drugs people consume. These two questions have nothing in common but the shape of the leaf, and we have to separate the issues.”

- a. The hemp farming lobby
- b. The marijuana legalization lobby
- c. The forestry industry
- d. The Canadian government

\_\_\_\_\_ 9. "In the Vancouver Grasstown Riot, of 1971, police attacked and injured hundreds of peaceful marijuana smokers in one day."

- a. The marijuana legalization lobby
- b. The forestry industry
- c. The Canadian government
- d. The hemp farming lobby

\_\_\_\_\_ 10. "Logging is still the biggest employer and the single biggest contributor to tax revenue in BC."

- a. The hemp farming lobby
- b. The forestry industry
- c. The Canadian government
- d. The hemp farming lobby

The material above was found at the following URL:

<http://web2.uvcs.uvic.ca/elc/studyzone/570/pulp/index.htm>

**III. Answer the question relating to the following situation.**

You have just received a promotion at the job of your dreams—a position you landed immediately after graduation. You are now working 60-70 hours a week in order to learn your new position. You must supervise several people who had hoped for the promotion you received. However, you have excellent skills building a team and have already made good progress.

You are living with your three best friends from college, sharing a wonderful apartment downtown. Unfortunately, your new job is making it very difficult for you to do your part in the shared household chores for the apartment. Although you used to do these chores on the week-end, all your week-ends have been completely absorbed by the new job and by your church responsibilities. Luckily, you have been able to shift your work hours so that you arrive in mid-morning and can spend your mornings doing your share of the shopping, cooking, house cleaning, and repair work. This shift in work hours does, however, mean that you often do not get home until 8 or even 9 at night.

Your friends have also found wonderful jobs and are very involved establishing themselves in their adult careers. This means, however, that you have very little time together and you find that you are not able to talk with them about some of the difficult decisions you must make at work because your schedules offer so few times when you are all free.

You are dating someone that you are increasingly sure is the spouse you have always dreamed of. Your significant other also has a very fulfilling job, although that job has work hours that often conflict with yours. You and your significant other are also very active in your separate churches. You both teach Sunday school classes and the church recently asked you to join the board and to lead a prayer group that would take up your Friday night.

Although your next-door neighbor is always complaining that you and your roommates make too much noise, you get along with almost all your neighbors. In

fact, you have formed a neighborhood watch program. You are very active in this program and feel that it has an important role in the discouragement of crime and in the creation of a sense of community.

In short, everything in your life is wonderful, and you are doing everything you wanted to do after college. Yet, your friends and your significant other have commented recently that you seem irritable. You are starting to have difficulty sleeping. You feel a little flat inside and have less enthusiasm for life than usual.

*List below the four (4) most likely causes of your unpleasant feelings and responses. What should you try to do in order to improve your unpleasant feelings and responses?*

1.

2.

3.

4.

**IV.** *Answer the questions attached to the following situation.*

Matt Dale is a wealthy African American alum devoted to his alma mater, a Christian liberal arts institution of some 3000 students. He has regularly contributed to the school, but now refuses to give any more money because school publications and advertisements never include pictures of African Americans other than the occasional black male athlete.

- a. Why is Mr. Dale so angry?
- b. Why is his anger justified or not?