

# UCAT

## VERBAL REASONING SESSION 2



# Verbal Reasoning 2

## True, False, or Can't tell

You get a passage associated with four statements For each statement, you must decide if, based on the information in the text, the statement is:

**True- if the information matches with the text**

**False- if the information contradicts the text**

**Can't tell- if you cannot tell from the passage whether the statement is true or false)**



# Strategies for UCAT VR questions

Speed reading

Keyword  
searching

Understanding  
logical fallacies

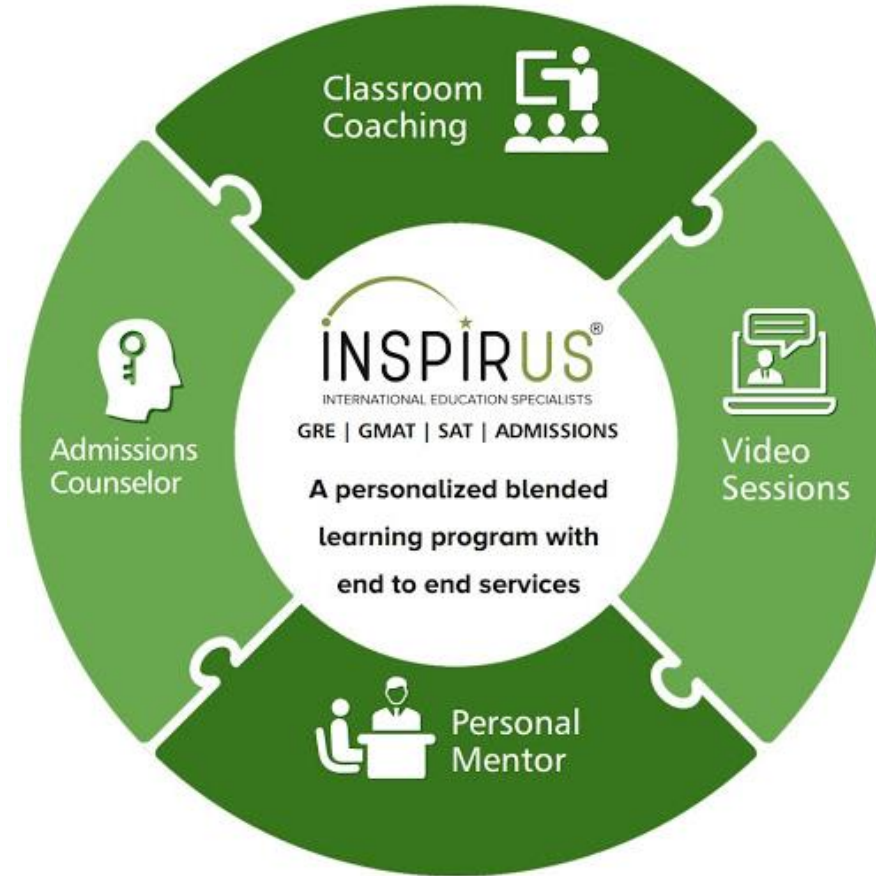
Applying a  
critical thinking  
framework

Not using your own  
knowledge/biases



# VR Practice 1

## Financial Crisis



The 2008 financial crisis was caused by a number of factors which can be difficult for a lay member of the public to understand. At the source of the crisis is the fact that a number of US banks had offered mortgages to so-called “sub-prime” customers (i.e. usually less well-off individuals with a high credit risk) without checking that the customers could actually afford to repay the loans. The bank had then sold the debt to other banks around the world, meaning that almost every bank in the world owned a share of these mortgages, with some owning a bigger share than others. When a large proportion of these “sub-prime” customers failed to repay some of their loans, all exposed banks started experiencing difficulties, having lent money that could not be repaid. This caused a domino effect and a major financial crisis, which included the nationalisation of Northern Rock, the collapse of American investment institutions such as Lehman Brothers, followed by the merger of Merrill Lynch with Bank of America and then the merger of HBOS with Lloyds TSB in the UK. Some commentators have said that bankers’ greed was a contributor to the problem.

As if a global crisis wasn’t enough, public confidence was also undermined by an alleged pyramid scheme fraud by a prominent American financier. This \$50bn alleged fraud consisted of taking money from unsuspecting rich individuals, promising high returns. As new investors paid money into the scheme, the older investors were being paid interest or dividends using the new money, and so on. As it became increasingly difficult to find new money from new investors to pay existing investors and as the old investors started to want their initial investment back, the scheme came apart and the financier had no option but to admit that there was a problem and was arrested. The alleged scam worked on an exclusive basis, i.e. only those who were invited could invest. This created a false sense of security which encouraged very prominent individuals, including bankers, to become victims. Pyramid schemes are non-sustainable models which involve enrolling new members and rewarding the members with money being paid by new members. They clearly exploit the greed and gullibility of those who are easily attracted by high returns. Such schemes are illegal in many countries, including the US and the UK.

## PRACTICE QUESTIONS

**Q1.1** The HBOS–Lloyds TSB merger could have been avoided if Lehman Brothers had not collapsed.

True  False  Can’t tell

**Q1.2** The fact that international banks were linked to the American market by owning a share of the sub-prime debt played a key role in the 2008 financial crisis.

True  False  Can’t tell

**Q1.3** If bankers had not been so greedy, there would have been no financial crisis.

True  False  Can’t tell

**Q1.4** The 2008 financial crisis has its origin in the US.

True  False  Can’t tell



The 2008 financial crisis was caused by a number of factors which can be difficult for a lay member of the public to understand. At the source of the crisis is the fact that a number of US banks had offered mortgages to so-called “sub-prime” customers (i.e. usually less well-off individuals with a high credit risk) without checking that the customers could actually afford to repay the loans. The bank had then sold the debt to other banks around the world, meaning that almost every bank in the world owned a share of these mortgages, with some owning a bigger share than others. When a large proportion of these “sub-prime” customers failed to repay some of their loans, all exposed banks started experiencing difficulties, having lent money that could not be repaid. This caused a domino effect and a major financial crisis, which included the nationalisation of Northern Rock, the collapse of American investment institutions such as Lehman Brothers, followed by the merger of Merrill Lynch with Bank of America and then the merger of HBOS with Lloyds TSB in the UK. Some commentators have said that bankers’ greed was a contributor to the problem.

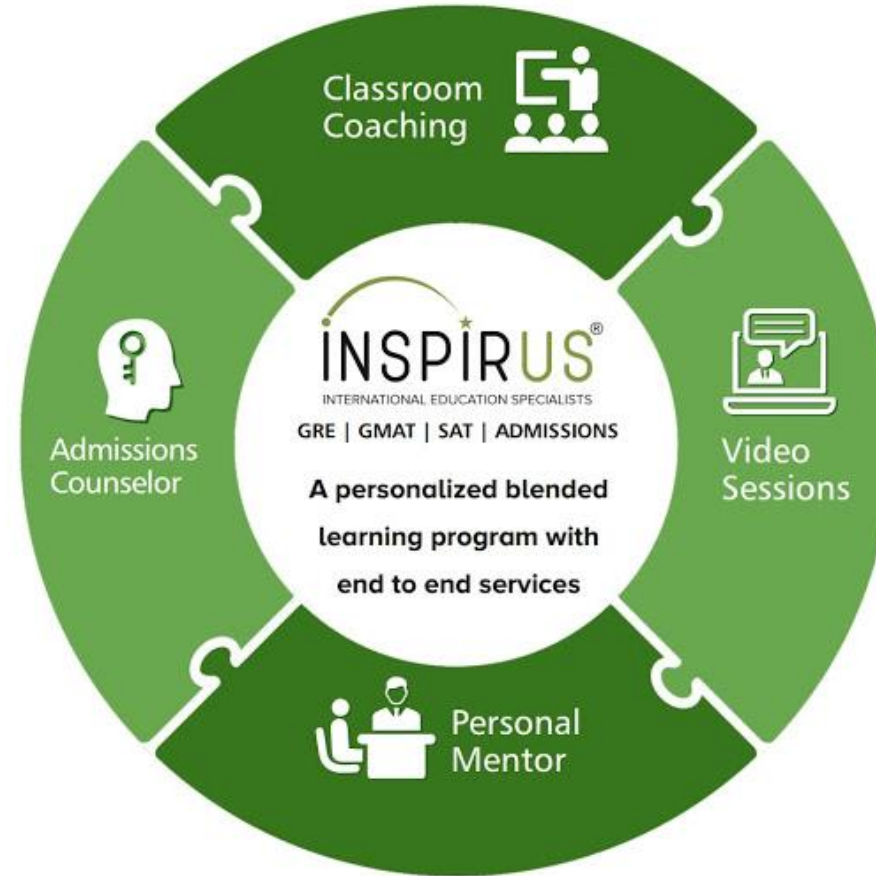
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- Q1.5** Pyramid schemes do not exist in the UK.
- True                       False                       Can’t tell
- Q1.6** The alleged fraud was one of the key triggers of the financial crisis.
- True                       False                       Can’t tell
- Q1.7** The American financier involved in the alleged fraud made a personal gain of \$50bn.
- True                       False                       Can’t tell
- Q1.8** All pyramid schemes will fail eventually.
- True                       False                       Can’t tell



# VR Practice 2

## Global Warming



There is considerable debate about the nature and causes of global warming. A large proportion of politicians believe that global warming is primarily a man-made problem and that each country should make every effort possible to reduce its carbon emissions. As a result, a range of carbon emission reduction measures are being introduced including: encouraging people to use less energy by switching to low-energy light bulbs and switching off unnecessary appliances; and reducing the number of unnecessary car journeys to the bare minimum and encouraging people to switch to public transport. Others believe that the UK is unlikely to make much of a difference since the biggest contributors to carbon emissions are countries such as China, who are refusing to take any remedial action. Others, still, believe that global warming is part of the Earth's natural cycle and, though any action will bring a degree of improvement, such improvement is bound to have little effect overall on the planet.

So, what level of global warming is anticipated for the forthcoming years? Scientists have studied several scenarios which were integrated within climate forecasting models. Assuming that no substantial change takes place, the forecast for the next century includes a rise in the average world temperature of between 1.4 and 5.8 °C and a reduction of the ice cap in the northern hemisphere, whereas in Antarctica (i.e. in the southern hemisphere) the melting of the ice cap would be more than offset by heavier snow falls, with the snow then freezing over the existing layer of ice. Sea levels are expected to increase by between 9 cm and 88 cm. By the end of the 21st century, the average sea level should have risen by between 18 cm and 59 cm. Some scientists predict that the planet's temperature rise caused by humans should continue after the year 2100. The rise in sea level should also continue for millennia after stabilisation of the climate.

Africa is especially vulnerable because of existing pressures on its ecosystems and its low capacity to adapt to change. On all continents, water supply and the threat of flooding in coastal areas will cause problems. On the other hand, areas of the world which are further away from the equator may see an increase in agricultural productivity and colder regions will see their heating needs reduced.

## PRACTICE QUESTIONS

**Q2.1** Switching to low-energy bulbs and encouraging people to use public transport will benefit the combat against global warming.

True                       False                       Can't tell

**Q2.2** Those who believe that global warming is a natural phenomenon also believe that there is no need to take any action.

True                       False                       Can't tell

**Q2.3** China produces the majority of carbon emissions on Earth.

True                       False                       Can't tell

**Q2.4** Global warming is used as an excuse by politicians to reduce the number of cars on the roads.

True                       False                       Can't tell





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**Q2.5** In the 21st century, the sea level in Britain is projected to rise by no more than 59 cm.

True  False  Can't tell

**Q2.6** The Antarctica ice cap is expected to grow over the 21st century.

True  False  Can't tell

**Q2.7** Some countries will experience no negative impact from global warming.

True  False  Can't tell

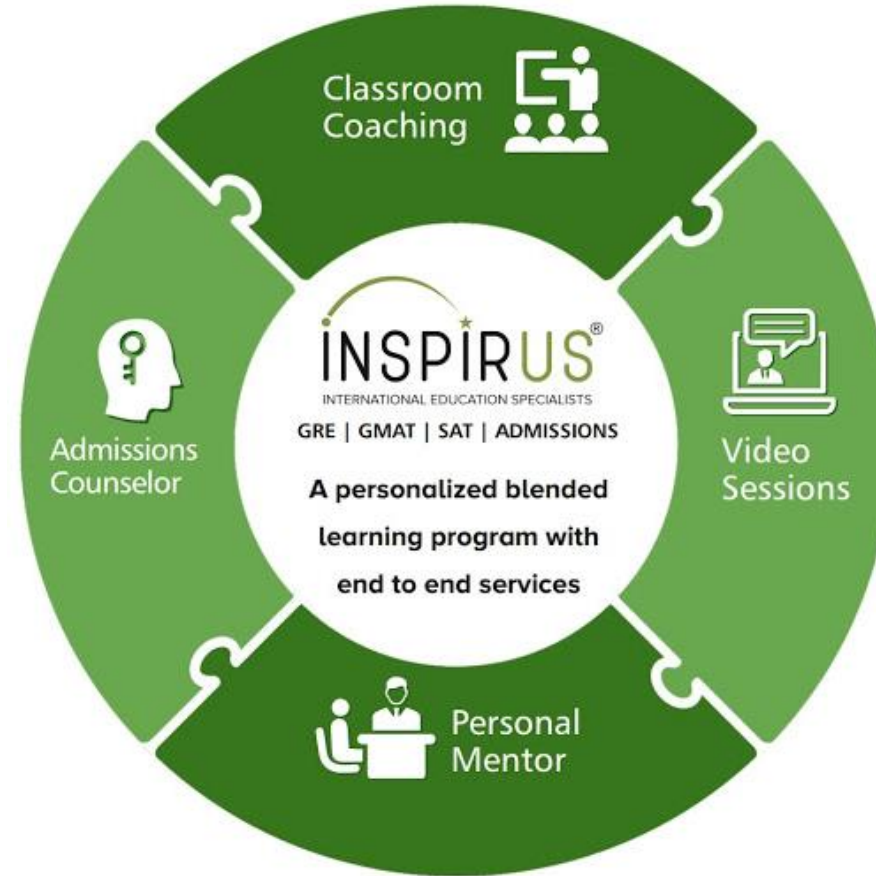
**Q2.8** Over the 21st century, some countries may experience a rise in temperature of over 5.8 °C.

True  False  Can't tell



# VR Practice 3

## Free Museum Entry



In 2001, the government reintroduced free entry into museums in England, Scotland and Wales, preferring instead to fund museums through governmental subsidies and Heritage Lottery Fund grants. The following year, the number of visitors increased by an average of 70%, with museums such as the V&A registering an increase of 111%.

In addition, a piece of research undertaken by Sara Selwood at City University showed that the museums which saw the biggest increase in visitor figures were also those which had opened new facilities or which had refurbished their facilities in addition to introducing free admission. Some of the increase is due to the same people who previously paid now visiting museums more often and efforts are therefore being made to broaden the appeal of museums to a wider population. As a result of this free-entry policy, some independent museums, who continued charging, have seen a decline in numbers of visitors. The policy is seen as unfair competition. There is also a perception that the subsidies are mostly directed at the already wealthy London museums, and do little to encourage museums in the regions.

In 2007, the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) announced that the free museum entry policy would be continued at least for another 3 years. Originally, the DCMS had been asked to prepare for a 5% cut in its budget, though the Chancellor, Alistair Darling, later promised that he would increase the department's funding from £1.68 billion in the 2007–08 financial year to £2.21 billion in 2010–11. Many fear though that, in view of the current financial crisis and of the impending Olympic Games, the Arts will be placed on the backburner whilst the government addresses more pressing priorities.

The Conservative Party has developed plans to scrap free entry to museums if it came to power, arguing that allowing museums to set their own entry fees would lead to an improvement in the service they offer. This point of view is likely to anger many members of the public, although perhaps not the 40% of UK residents who, according to a recent poll, seem to be unaware of the existence of the free-entry policy.

## PRACTICE QUESTIONS

**Q3.1** The only impact of the “free-entry” policy has been to encourage people who already went to museums to go more often.

True  False  Can't tell

**Q3.2** Some museums have seen an increase in visitor numbers of less than 70%.

True  False  Can't tell

**Q3.3** Only the big London museums seem to have benefited from the free-entry policy.

True  False  Can't tell

**Q3.4** The increase in visitor numbers is solely due to the free-entry policy.

True  False  Can't tell



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**Q3.5** Granting free museum entry to the public had never been attempted before.

True  False  Can't tell

**Q3.6** The DCMS's budget will increase by £530 million over 3 years.

True  False  Can't tell

**Q3.7** The 2012 Olympics will put an end to the free-entry policy.

True  False  Can't tell

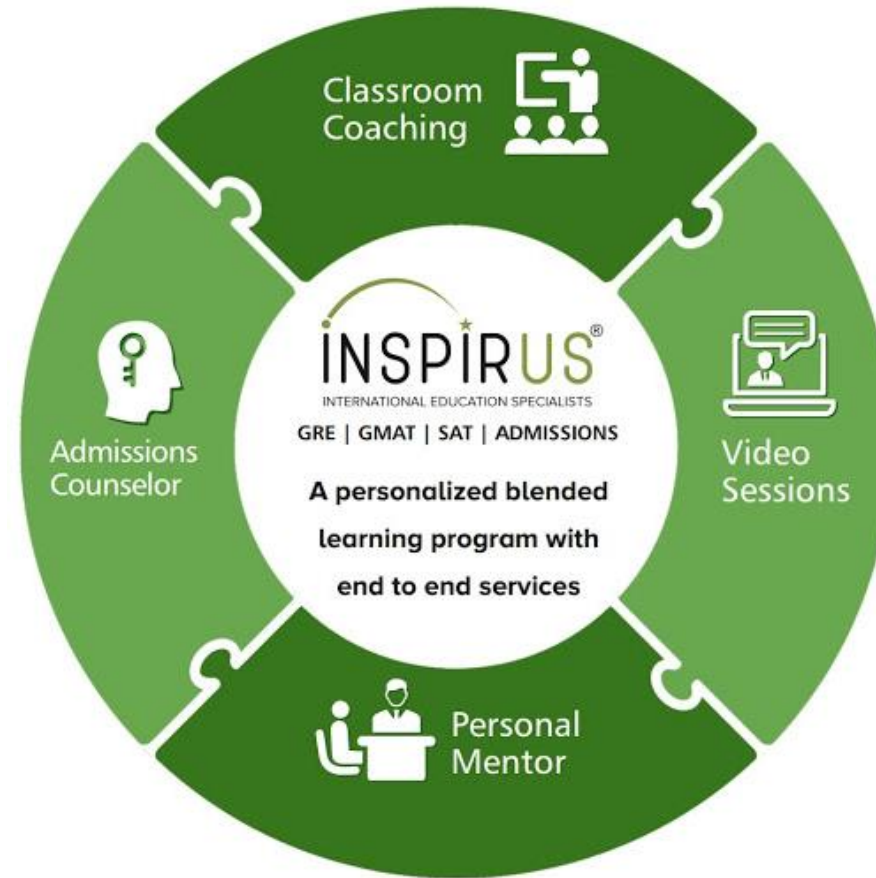
**Q3.8** A fee-paying entry policy is fairer to small museums.

True  False  Can't tell



# VR Practice 4

## EEC, EU, EURO



The European Economic Community (EEC) was set up in 1957 by the following countries: Belgium, France, Germany, Italy, Luxembourg and the Netherlands. The UK joined the EEC in 1973. The Maastricht Treaty of 1993 abolished the EEC and replaced it with the European Union (EU). At the time, the EU comprised the same countries as the EEC, but it now includes 27 independent sovereign countries (also known as member states). The main EU institutions are the European Commission, which resides in Brussels (Belgium), and the European Parliament, which sits in Strasbourg (France). The Euro was adopted as the EU's official currency in 1999, though coins and bank notes were not produced until 2002. Fifteen EU countries, collectively known as the Eurozone, have adopted it. In addition, 11 non-EU countries have also adopted the Euro as official currency, including Monaco, the Vatican and Andorra. Sweden and the UK have both declined to join the Euro for the time being.

The UK has adopted a "wait-and-see policy". Arguments in favour of joining the Euro are numerous. By reducing exchange rate uncertainty for UK businesses and tourists, everyone would benefit from lower transaction costs. Adopting the Euro would also encourage greater competition across borders, enabling UK customers to compare prices directly with their neighbours and purchase goods accordingly. On the other hand, adopting the Euro would bring its fair share of problems. For a start, UK interest rates would be set by the European Central Bank in Frankfurt (Germany), which sets interest rates for the whole Eurozone. It has long been argued that the UK economy is more in line with US economy than with European economy and that therefore it needs to keep closer links with US interest rates than European interest rates. In December 2008, the Bank of England was able to reduce UK interest rates drastically in an attempt to boost the UK economy; this would not have been possible had the UK adopted the Euro.

With all this in mind, the most powerful argument against the Euro in the UK is the fact that UK citizens are reluctant to relinquish yet more power to Brussels and to lose their identity in an ever-expanding Europe.

## PRACTICE QUESTIONS

**Q4.1** Monaco is part of the Eurozone.

True  False  Can't tell

**Q4.2** All original EEC countries are currently in the EU.

True  False  Can't tell

**Q4.3** All EU institutions are located either in France or in Belgium.

True  False  Can't tell

**Q4.4** Neither Sweden nor the UK intend to adopt the Euro.

True  False  Can't tell



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**Q4.5** If the UK entered the Eurozone, the Bank of England would lose the power to set interest rates.

True  False  Can't tell

**Q4.6** The UK would benefit more from adopting the US Dollar as its currency than from adopting the Euro.

True  False  Can't tell

**Q4.7** Andorra is not an independent sovereign country.

True  False  Can't tell

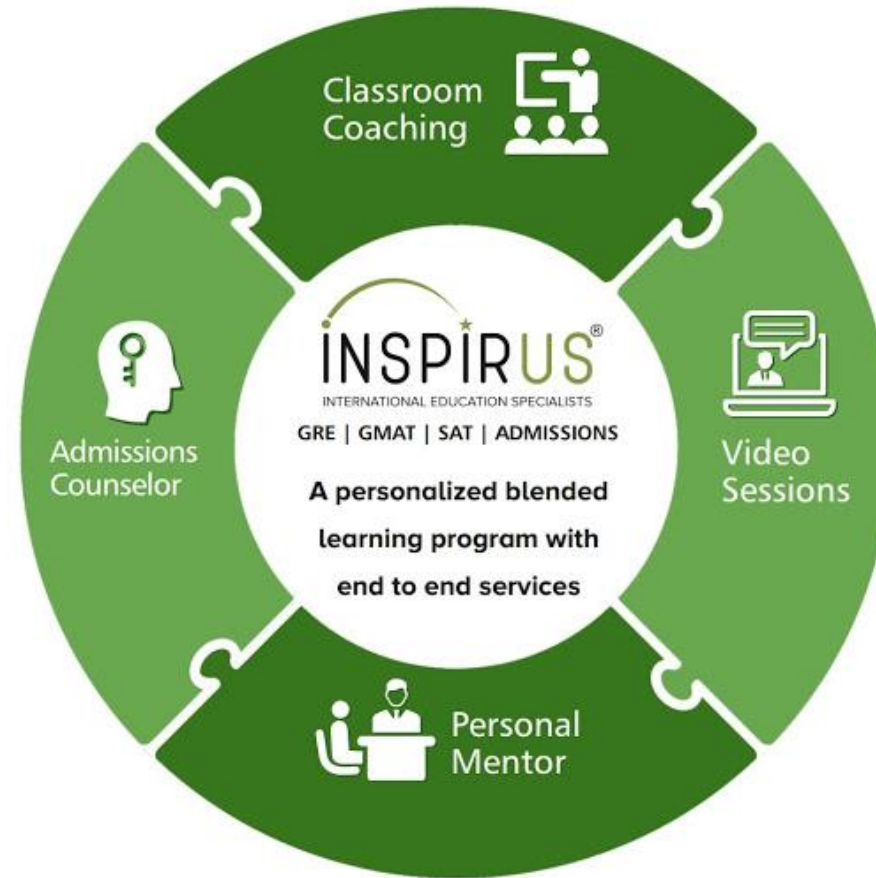
**Q4.8** If the UK adopted the Euro as official currency then the Bank of England would cease to exist.

True  False  Can't tell



# VR Practice 5

## Coq au Vin & Quiche Lorraine





“Coq au Vin” is a traditional French dish whose main ingredients are red wine, lardons, onion and occasionally garlic. The word “coq” means “rooster”. Traditional recipes use older roosters to produce a richer broth; however, roosters are not easily found and can be tough to eat. Consequently most home cooks use chicken as a substitute. Lardons are frequently used in French cooking and consist of thick slices of pork belly cut in cubes or thick strips. They are often smoked and are a main ingredient for a wide range of dishes including Quiche Lorraine. Although they can be found in some UK supermarkets, lardons are in sparse supply and thick bacon can be used as a substitute. However, bacon is not as fatty as lardons and therefore may taste drier. The original recipe uses the bird’s blood, which is added at the end to produce a thick black colour. The faint-hearted leave the blood out, though it produces a less rich sauce.

Quiche Lorraine is a dish that dates back to the 16th century, and consisted of an egg, cream and lardon mix on a crust of bread dough. Because of its primarily vegetarian ingredients, it was historically considered a somehow unmanly dish, hence the expression “real men don’t eat quiche”. There is controversy as to whether cheese formed part of the original dish (although the locals believe it didn’t, some food historians do). Today, the Quiche Lorraine is not always served with cheese.

Its name comes from the German “Kuchen”, meaning “cake”, with “Lorraine” signifying that it comes from the Lorraine region in Eastern France. Lorraine, a region bordering Belgium, Germany and Luxembourg, was first taken by France in 1648, was annexed by the Germans in 1871, and handed back to the French in 1918 following World War I. Its symbol is the Mirabelle plum (a yellow cousin of the greengage), which is often used to make pastries and to make a very refined liqueur.

## PRACTICE QUESTIONS

**Q5.1** Bacon is an essential ingredient of Coq au Vin.

True

False

Can’t tell

**Q5.2** Bacon can be used as a substitute for lardons in Quiche Lorraine.

True

False

Can’t tell

**Q5.3** Most home cooks don’t follow the traditional Coq au Vin recipe.

True

False

Can’t tell

**Q5.4** If bacon is used instead of lardons, then garlic should be added to compensate for the dryness.

True

False

Can’t tell



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**Q5.5** Quiche Lorraine is a vegetarian dish.

True

False

Can’t tell

**Q5.6** Originally, Quiche Lorraine was not a French dish.

True

False

Can’t tell

**Q5.7** The Lorraine region has remained French since it was handed back by Germany in 1918.

True

False

Can’t tell

**Q5.8** Mirabelle liqueur is yellow.

True

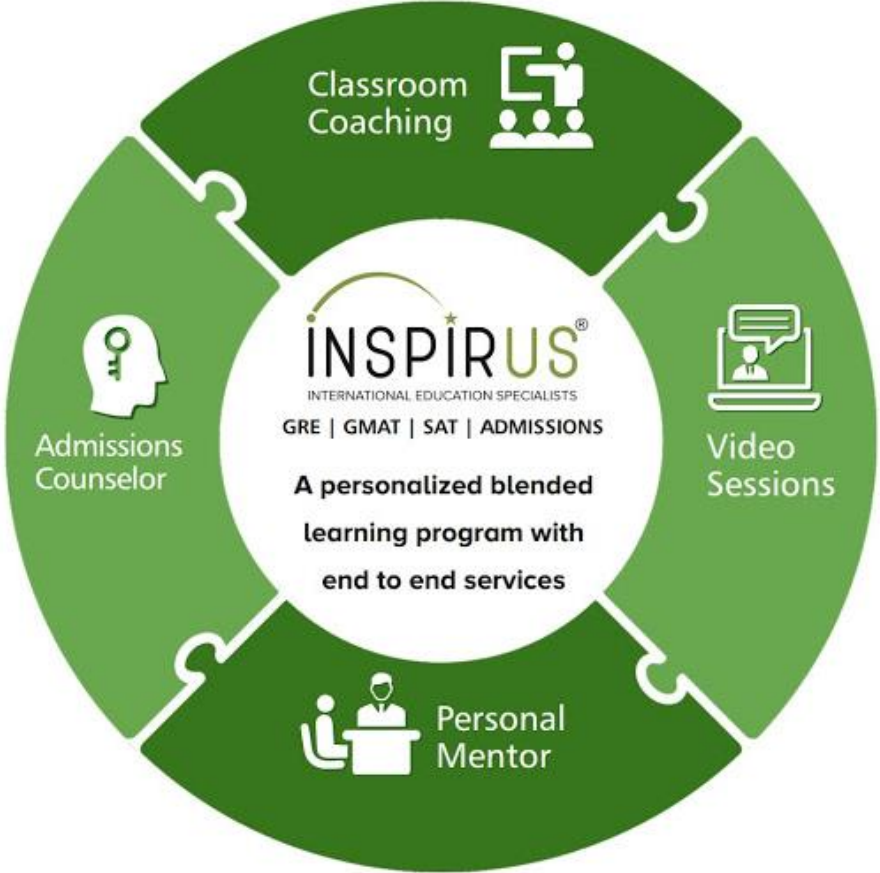
False

Can’t tell



# VR Practice 6

## Blue-Ray



Blu-Ray – its full name is Blu-Ray Disc (BD) – is the next generation of optical discs developed jointly by a wide range of leading manufacturers, including Dell, Apple, Sony, Philips, Samsung and Sharp. The name of this new technology comes from the fact that it uses a blue-violet laser instead of the red laser currently used by DVD players. Because blue-violet lasers have a shorter wavelength than red lasers, they can be focused with greater precision. This means that data can be packed more tightly onto the disc. Blu-Ray discs can take as much as 25 gigabytes (GB) on each layer. Research carried out by Pioneer has demonstrated that discs can be constructed with up to 20 layers. Hollywood studios have recently announced that they would choose Blu-Ray as their preferred format, and would be releasing titles on both normal DVD and BD format for some time. Although the DVD format will eventually disappear, BD players will be able to play DVDs.

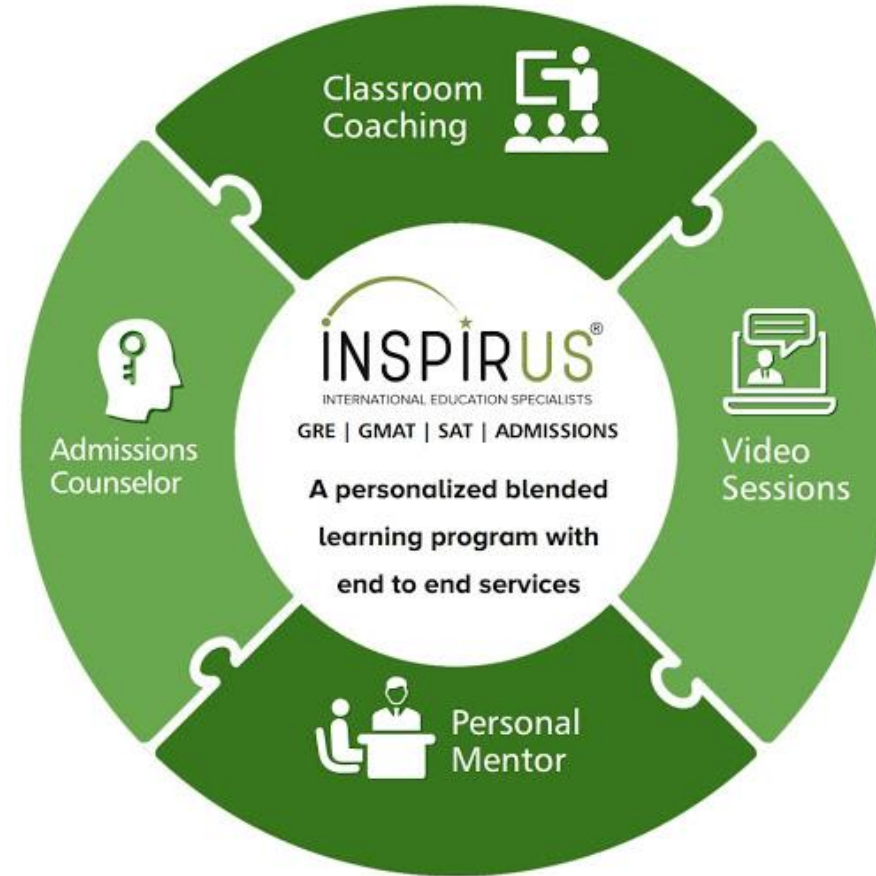
The Blu-Ray Disc Association (BRDA) has indicated that British consumers bought over 400,000 BDs in November 2008, an increase of 165% on October 2008 sales. Such an increase could be reasonably explained by three factors: (i) Blu-Ray has won the format war over DVDs and is bound to become more popular; (ii) the release of popular movies such as Batman on Blu-Ray format just before Christmas has boosted sales; and (iii) as Blu-Ray players become cheaper, BDs will sell more. The BRDA is expecting sales of Blu-Ray players to triple over 2009, reaching 2.5 million units Europe-wide. However, there are strong reasons to suspect that such an increase is unrealistic. No Blu-Ray players are manufactured in the UK and, in the context of a falling Pound and a rising Yen, products manufactured in Japan will become more expensive. BDs also remain comparatively expensive against DVDs and, consequently, the average buyer may delay any purchase until better economic times.

- Q6.1** Everyone should replace their DVD players with a Blu-Ray player as soon as possible as DVDs are being phased out.
- True  False  Can't tell
- Q6.2** Blu-Ray discs are manufactured to store 500GB of data.
- True  False  Can't tell
- Q6.3** Those who purchase Blu-Ray players can discard their DVD players.
- True  False  Can't tell
- Q6.4** Blue-violet lasers are safer than red lasers.
- True  False  Can't tell
- Q6.5** Blu-Ray players would be cheaper if they were manufactured in the UK.
- True  False  Can't tell
- Q6.6** Sales of Blu-Ray players in the UK are expected to increase over 2009.
- True  False  Can't tell
- Q6.7** Batman was not released in DVD format.
- True  False  Can't tell
- Q6.8** Fewer than 200,000 Blu-Ray discs were sold in the UK in October 2008.
- True  False  Can't tell



# VR Practice 7

## Cyanide And Arsenic



Cyanide is a substance commonly found in nature, for example in apple pips, apricot stones and coffee beans. Ingested in small amounts it can cause headaches and cardiac palpitations. Cyanide is sometimes described as having a “bitter almond” smell. However, it can sometimes be odourless. In addition, when it does emit a smell, not all humans have the ability to detect it. Death is likely to occur within 5 minutes if as little as 50 mg is ingested. More substantial amounts would result in instant death. The poison acts by preventing oxygen from reaching the cells, which quickly affects the heart and the brain. As well as being a well-known poison, cyanide has been used by butterfly collectors – who would crush laurel leaves (which contain cyanide) to produce a preservative liquid – as well as in the gold industry where it is commonly used for mining and electroplating.

Arsenic is also colourless but is totally odourless in its normal state. It is a weak acid which is totally soluble in water. When heated in air at atmospheric pressure, it converts directly from solid form to gaseous form. The fumes from the reaction have a similar smell to garlic. Arsenic was used in Victorian times by women, who mixed it with vinegar and chalk and either ingested it or rubbed it into their skin to improve their complexion; the result was a whiter skin which proved that they were not peasants. It has also been abundantly used as a poison, both for humans and also for insects, fungi and bacteria, and is often used to preserve wood. Scientists have often exploited its medicinal virtues; originally used for the treatment of syphilis, it has not been superseded in this role by modern antibiotics. It is, however, currently used for the treatment of some leukaemias, and psoriasis, and new research suggests that it may be better than iodine-124 in locating tumours when doing PET-scan imaging.

- Q7.1** Most humans would detect cyanide's bitter almond smell when it is present.
- True  False  Can't tell
- Q7.2** Butterflies caught by collectors were killed using a cyanide-based solution made from laurel leaves.
- True  False  Can't tell
- Q7.3** Humans should avoid consuming large quantities of apples, apricots and coffee.
- True  False  Can't tell
- Q7.4** Cyanide is a by-product of gold mining.
- True  False  Can't tell
- Q7.5** Arsenic does not exist in liquid form.
- True  False  Can't tell
- Q7.6** Iodine-124 is currently being used to locate tumours.
- True  False  Can't tell
- Q7.7** Arsenic and cyanide are both toxic to insects.
- True  False  Can't tell
- Q7.8** Someone who was being poisoned by ingesting water containing arsenic would not be able to detect its presence.
- True  False  Can't tell





*Thank you*