



GCE AS EXAMINERS' REPORTS

**SOCIOLOGY
AS**

SUMMER 2018

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COMPONENT 1: SOCIALISATION AND CULTURE

This component has been available for three years. Once again the numbers were down and again this was almost certainly a result of the uncoupling of the Eduqas AS and A Level qualifications. For the most part candidates followed the rubric but there were considerably more rubric errors than might have been expected. This seemed to be a centre issue. Those who followed the rubric were able to use their time appropriately and many had been well prepared for the demands of the paper.

Section A question one

The two parts of question one in this section are compulsory.

- (a) In order to access the higher mark bands candidates must explain what the term means, in this case social control, and make reference to the item and to sociological knowledge in relation to the concept. The better responses included a clear definition of social control referring to norms and values and the need for some form of social order. Some referred to sociologists such as Durkheim but this was not necessary in terms of accessing full marks. The majority of candidates referred to the item although in some cases a phrase was simply lifted and not used. Candidates should be aware that they must use the item, not simply lift it, in order to access mark band 3 for AO2.
- (b) Candidates were asked to explain how any two agents of socialisation control behaviour. Most candidates were able to identify two agents of socialisation though it is surprising that some candidates did not know what is meant by an agent of socialisation. The question asked for the process of how two agents of socialisation controlled behaviour. Those who did not consider the process but simply described what they did were unable to access the higher mark bands. Centres are advised that the process of how agents of socialisation do something is essentially what this question is about and there are examples of answers on the WJEC website. The most commonly used agents of socialisation were education and the family. Using these enabled candidates to then use the item in an efficient way. The best answers made reference to sanctions and rewards and to imitation and role models. They used examples such as treats, merit awards, being grounded and detentions. The question asked candidates to use the item and also their sociological knowledge. It is important that candidates pay attention to the command/s of the question if they are to access the higher mark bands. Candidates must use the item not just repeat what the item says.

Section B

The majority of candidates chose **Option 1 - Families and Households**.

Question 2(a) (i) and (ii) is compulsory.

- Q2. (a) (i) This question asked candidates to describe the features of childhood in the contemporary UK. Many were able to identify a number of features such as being child centred, the blurring of adulthood and childhood, toxic childhoods and the relationship between grandparents and children. The best were able to refer to evidence to support the features they had identified, such as that of Palmer and of Postman.

However as indicated in previous reports on this paper there are no marks for evaluation on this question and therefore those candidates who did evaluate were wasting valuable time.

Some candidates ignored the command in the question to the '...contemporary UK' and wrote about what childhood was like in the nineteenth century.

- Q2. (a) (ii) Candidates were asked to explain two sociological reasons for extended families. A number of candidates misread the question and thought it asked for why extended families had increased or not. They then wasted time writing about the extended family in the 19th century. This is a clear example of the failure of candidates to spend a few moments to ensure they have read the commands of a question correctly.

Some candidates decided to go back to the last quarter of the C20th as a starting point for their explanation/s demonstrating they had not read the stimulus piece before the question which referred to a more recent period. The stimulus also gave candidates some pointers in relation to extended families.

The question clearly asked for **two** sociological reasons so more than two could not attract more marks and citing a third reason was wasting valuable time. The question asked for sociological reasons, weaker candidates tended to offer common sense rather than sociological responses.

Candidates then had the choice of an essay, either Q2 (b) or 2 (c).

These questions are essay style and as such candidates are expected to write a clearly structured discursive response.

In order to access the higher mark bands candidates are expected to use sociological evidence. There were some excellent answers where candidates demonstrated detailed and wide ranging knowledge and understanding of relevant sociological material. Weaker candidates tended to offer generalised answers.

- Q2. (b) Many of the candidates who did 2(b) had a good knowledge and understanding of functionalist views of the family although some tended to be more descriptive than evaluative. Reference was made to Murdoch and Parsons and was appropriately rewarded. Candidates should be advised that where the command in a question is to evaluate a theory then they should start by providing a detailed exposition of the theory. In doing so the stronger candidates will evaluate the theory from the start whilst maintaining a focus on the specifics of the theory. The balance of marks for these essay questions is AO1 9, AO2 4 and AO3 12. Hence failure to evaluate puts at risk 50% of the marks.

- Q2. (c) This question was the less popular of the two essays. It asked candidates to focus on all members of families and households however some just considered adult members. Some candidates did not discuss the negative effects of domestic violence/abuse rather they focussed on the functionalist view that families and households are positive for their members.

Option 2 Youth Cultures.

As with option one, the first question is compulsory.

- Q3. (a) (i) Most of the candidates who chose this option seemed to have no difficulty in identifying a number of features of gangs. The best cited locality, hierarchy, loyalty amongst others. Many were able to cite appropriate sociological evidence and examples. Sociologists such as Sewell, Cohen, Williamson, Patrick, Venkatesh and Willis were used appropriately.
- Q3. (a) (ii) The focus of this question was on the formation of anti-school subcultures. Again most candidates who chose Youth Culture as their option were able to provide two sociological reasons for the formation of anti-school subcultures citing relevant and appropriate sociological evidence.

Candidates then had the choice of an essay, either q3 (b) or 3 (c).

As with option 1 these questions are essay style and as such candidates are expected to write a clearly structured discursive response. They are expected to support their arguments with sociological evidence. In essay questions candidates who juxtapose ideas rather than sustain evaluation throughout are unable to access the higher mark bands.

- Q3. (b) This was the most popular choice and candidates had been well prepared. Stronger candidates were able to refer to Marxist explanations as required by the question and referred to the work of members of the CCCs such as Hebdige, Brake, Clarke, Hall, Jefferson and Willis. The work of Marxist feminists also featured in many responses.
- Q3. (c) This question was less popular. Material on this topic is readily available in all major textbooks. The question asked candidates to discuss and once again they should be advised that half of the marks are for evaluation. Those who simply wrote descriptive essays were not able to access the higher mark bands for AO3.
There was a tendency by some candidates who chose this question to write more generalised responses.

Section C

As with the previous two years, education was by far and away the most popular choice. One or two centres had taught media but there was no evidence of whole centres choosing to do religion as an option.

Option 1 Education

- Q4. (a) (i) Candidates are expected to read the data and pick out a range of points and then support those points with the statistical evidence. As mentioned last year there is no need to explain the points, to do so is to waste valuable time and the explanation is then likely to be repeated in 4 (a) (ii).

There were errors in relation to percentage differences and percentage point's difference and these were clearly on a centre basis. Where candidates confused the two they could not be rewarded. As suggested last year candidates could be referred to the education data on the ONS website where they will find relevant data and in the commentaries will find the government is able to distinguish between the two.

- Q4. (a) (ii) Candidates are asked to explain two sociological reasons. The two is emboldened at AS and therefore if candidates are reading the question carefully they will not do as some candidates did and provide as many reasons as they could think of. Marks can only be awarded for two reasons. This report should be read alongside the mark scheme where a number of possible reasons are identified. As mentioned last year candidates should be reminded that where a question asks for sociological reasons sociological evidence in the form of named research, named reports or official statistics ensures the response is sociological rather than generalised common sense.
- Q4. The split between those who chose 4 (b) and those who chose 4 (c) was approximately 50:50.
- Q4. (b) (i) Many candidates did not seem to know what was meant by cultural deprivation and confused it with cultural capital. Others confused it with material deprivation. Centres should be advised to ensure their candidates are aware of the difference between these key concepts.
- Q4. (b) (ii) Candidates who answered this question were on the whole familiar with the view that gender is a major influence on educational achievement.
- Q4. (c) (i) Candidates who answered this question tended to be familiar with the term and were able to provide a clear definition and use the work of Bourdieu to support what they were saying.
- Q4. (c) (ii) Candidates who chose this question tended to be able to cite the work of a number of key interactionists. Centres are advised to refer to the Mark Scheme on the WJEC website for further information.

Option 2 Media

As mentioned above very few centres chose to do this option.

- Q5. (a) (i) This was a data question and the comments regarding 4 (a) (i) apply to this question. Candidates need to identify the evidence in the data to support how people use the Internet.
- Q5. (a) (ii) Candidates who did this question tended to write common sense answers without any sociological evidence to support their claims.
- Q5. (b) (i) Candidates either knew what globalisation meant or not. It is a widely used term and as such candidates should be aware of it.
- Q5. (b) (ii) There were some reasonably good responses to this question. Candidates were clearly familiar with the term moral panics and were familiar with appropriate arguments together with sociologists who might be used to support those arguments.

As with the other essay questions on this paper candidates should be reminded that this should be a discursive essay. There are more marks available for what candidates do with what they know rather than descriptions of studies.

- Q5. (c) (i) Responses to this question were weak. Candidates seemed unable to provide a clear definition with supporting sociological evidence.
- Q5. (c) (ii) Few candidates chose to answer this question. Centres are advised to refer to the Mark Scheme on the WJEC website for an indication of what might have been expected.

Option 3 Religion

There was no evidence that whole centres had taught this option. Candidates who answered this option tended to be those who had misread the rubric and had answered all of the options.

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COMPONENT 2: METHODS OF SOCIOLOGICAL ENQUIRY

This component has been available for three years. Once again the numbers were down and again this was almost certainly a result of the uncoupling of the Eduqas AS and A Level qualifications.

- Q1. (a) Very few candidates obtained full marks for this question and a significant number were unable to go beyond the information that was in the item. Students need reminding that they mustn't simply copy the item - the best answers were able to apply key terms therefore showing off their additional knowledge. Lots of candidates saw longitudinal studies as a study that takes a lot of time and failed to recognise that it involves revisiting the same sample at regular intervals. Excellent answers were able to explain that they provide more than a snapshot and identify long term change and highlighted that there there can be a problem with sample attrition. Few candidates acknowledged that they can be quantitative or qualitative.
- Q1. (b) Students need to be reminded how to structure this answer as some answers contained three or more reasons or contained a long introduction. The best answers have two clear reasons in two paragraphs and were able to explain why the researchers in the item used more than one method. Some candidates focussed on other pieces of research such as Barker or Humphrey's but this meant they failed to contextualise to the item and fully answer the question. The best answers were able to use and show understanding of methodological terminology, while others used terms without showing that they understood them.
- Q1. (c) A lot of students missed out the 'in this research' part of the question and would therefore give two general problems such as low response rate or lack of validity. As a result, they couldn't obtain marks from the top band. The best answers were able to contextualise this to the item and say why the young people may not have replied or lied (sensitive topic, avoid incriminating themselves etc.) and then use methodological terminology such as validity or representativeness. It is advised that student practise these questions as they are very skills based and some centres seemed unaware of the demands of the question.
- Q1. (d) Most student knew what practical issues were and could give examples however the level of detail and application of studies and key terms varied greatly from centre to centre. The best answers were able to highlight an issue, apply studies and then talk about the methodological impact using key terms. Weaker students would use key terms without showing understand such as saying 'valid and reliable'. Some candidates spent little time talking about practical issues but instead wrote an essay on ethical issues and therefore failed to answer the question. Some centres could only refer to time and cost so it is advised that centres learn the full range of practical issues that researchers can face. The best answers were able to talk about the skills of the researcher, access, subject matter and a few referred to the operationalisation of concepts. Again candidates need to read the question carefully as the question specifically states 'with reference to sociological studies' which a significant number of candidates ignored. This seemed to vary from centre to centre.



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