



GCE EXAMINERS' REPORTS

WJEC EDUQAS AS SOCIOLOGY

SUMMER 2016

Grade boundary information for this subject is available on the WJEC public website at:
<https://www.wjecservices.co.uk/MarkToUMS/default.aspx?l=en>

Online Results Analysis

WJEC provides information to examination centres via the WJEC secure website. This is restricted to centre staff only. Access is granted to centre staff by the Examinations Officer at the centre.

Annual Statistical Report

The annual Statistical Report (issued in the second half of the Autumn Term) gives overall outcomes of all examinations administered by WJEC.

Component	Page
1: Socialisation and Culture	1
2: Methods of Sociological Enquiry	6

SOCIOLOGY
AS
Summer 2016
COMPONENT 1 - SOCIALISATION AND CULTURE

General comments

This was the first Eduqas component 1 paper for the new specification. It was a longer paper (two and a half hours) than most candidates will have previously taken. However for the most part they seemed to engage with the paper and allocate their time between the different sections appropriately according to the marks available.

There were some rubric errors but these were weak candidates who seemed to be struggling in all sections. The most common one was to attempt all of the questions.

Section A

The two parts of question 1 were compulsory. There were very few candidates who did not attempt these two parts.

- Q.1 (a) Most candidates were able to offer a clear definition of secondary socialisation and to give appropriate examples and use the item accurately. However some lost marks because they only explained socialisation without reference to secondary socialisation or they gave examples of secondary agents of socialisation without explaining what is meant by socialisation.
- (b) The majority of candidates knew two agents of socialisation. The most commonly used were the family and education. The focus of the question was on the way in which socialisation influences behaviour and whilst many candidates were able to give clear and relevant examples of this using terms such as role model(s), imitation, sanctions, others offered more generalised responses and did not focus on the process.

Section B

Whilst the majority of candidates opted for question 2 on families and households a significant number chose youth cultures.

Option 1 Families and Households

- Q.2 (a) (i) This was a question that most candidates were able to respond to and those that gave details of the features of a traditional nuclear family were rewarded appropriately. Some spent time evaluating the traditional nuclear family. The question asked candidates to describe the features of a traditional nuclear family. There were no marks available for evaluation. On such a long paper it is crucial that candidates respond to the demands of the question in order to ensure they have time to complete all parts of the paper

- (ii) The question asked for two sociological reasons and most candidates were able to explain two. However some gave generalised common-sense responses. The differentiator between those who gave appropriate sociological reasons and the marks awarded was the evidence offered. Many used the work of Sue Sharpe, others used legal changes citing relevant legislation. A small minority suggested divorce led to less children for which clearly there was no reward. Some candidates provided more than two reasons in which case the best two were taken but as with the point made re (a) (ii) above this is a waste of time by the candidates who did this.
- (b) This was a popular question and many students were well informed with regard to the views of the new right and used these as a starting point. They were then able to develop and assess these views providing relevant sociological writers and/or research such as Murray and Dennis and Erdos. Weaker candidates offered a generalised common-sense view of single parent families.
- (c) In order to access the top mark bands for (b) and (c) candidates need to cite relevant sociologists to support their claims. This question was less well done than (b) because many candidates did not do this. There are plenty of relevant writers that could have been referred to such as Benston, Somerville, Delphy and Leonard. Candidates were rewarded in the higher mark bands if they assessed a range of feminisms and it was good to see that some candidates were including difference feminism as well as the more mainstream feminisms.

Option 2 Youth Cultures

- Q.3
- (a)
 - (i) This was for the most part answered well by candidates who choose this option. They appeared to engage with the question and were able to describe a wide range of features of spectacular youth sub-cultures including style and fashion, music, resistance to capitalism, masculine and class based. They were also able to give accurate and relevant examples to support the features they were describing. These were drawn from the latter half of the C20th such as punks as well as the C21st such as goths and emos.
 - (ii) Many candidates seemed to be able to explain one sociological reason – bedroom culture using studies such as McRobbie and Garber and Lincoln but thereafter seemed unable to offer a second sociological reason. Many simply referred to girls on boys arms at the end of the night without providing relevant evidence. There are a number of reasons that candidates could have explained such as less participation by girls due to social control, male sociologists were not interested in girls and therefore ignored and de facto made girls 'invisible' or males drawn to sub-cultures as a result of their socialisation.
 - (b) Most candidates who chose this option chose this question. Good candidates understood the need to offer a clearly formulated logical argument using a wide range of sociological knowledge and they were able to evaluate the view effectively. The best answers cited a range of relevant writers to support their arguments. Some candidates however did not refer to writers and therefore could not access the higher mark bands.

- (c) This was the least popular question of the two. Many students demonstrated some confusion with regard to post-modern views and answers were generally less well structured than (b). On occasion it was difficult to understand where the candidate was going with their argument. Some answered this question with a brief paragraph on post-modernism and followed this with everything they knew about youth cultures

Section C

Education was by far the most popular question in this section. This was the section which contained the most rubric errors and some candidates attempted questions 4,5 and 6.

Option 1 Education

- Q.4 (a) (i) This was a data reading exercise and candidates did not have to provide any evidence for why the data is as it is since they are required to do that in (a) (ii). A significant number of students could not distinguish between percentage differences and percentage points difference and this often meant that they were not providing any statistical data to support what they were saying. Candidates sometimes ignored the statistical data altogether. Centres are advised that candidates must cite data to support their points in order to access the higher mark bands.

- (ii) This was answered to a good standard and most candidates were able to support their two reasons with relevant sociological evidence. Those who had explained what they were summarising in (a) (i) now found themselves repeating what they had just written. There were unbalanced answers from weaker candidates who were able to explain one reason well but their second reason was less well done and they often provided no evidence to support a second reason.

There was little difference between the numbers who chose to do (b) as opposed to (c).

- (b) (i) Candidates who did this question were able to engage with it. Most used Becker and Rosenthal and Jacobson to support their points and did so to good effect.
- (ii) This was answered well by many candidates however there were some who wrote a paragraph on class and then the rest of the essay on gender and/or ethnicity. Whilst these can be used for evaluative purposes they cannot form the majority of the essay if they are to access top mark bands. Reference back to the question should permeate the essay.

- Q.4 (c) (i) Material deprivation is a concept that the candidates who answered this question were clearly familiar with and they were able to provide detailed evidence from sociologists such as Reay, Howard and Smith and Noble.

- (ii) Candidates who did this question tended to offer somewhat descriptive accounts of the functionalist views of education. They went through key functionalists in a list like manner and then often juxtaposed them with other theories. This may be a danger with theoretical questions and candidates need to understand the importance of sustaining evaluation throughout.

Option 2 Media

- Q.5 (a) (i) This was a data reading exercise and candidates did not have to provide any evidence as to why the data is as it is since they are required to do that in (a) (ii). A significant number of students could not distinguish between percentage differences and percentage points difference and this often meant that they were not providing any statistical data to support what they were saying. Candidates sometimes ignored the statistical data altogether. Centres are advised that candidates must cite data to support their points in order to access the higher mark bands.
- (ii) As with 4 (a) (ii) this was answered to a good standard and most candidates were able to support their two reasons with relevant sociological evidence. Those who had explained what they were summarising in (a) (i) now found themselves repeating what they had just written. There were unbalanced answers from weaker candidates who were able to explain one reason well but their second reason was less well done and they often provided no evidence to support a second reason. Weaker candidates offered no evidence and often relied on stereotypes and/or common-sense.
- (b) (i) Candidates who choose to do 5 (b) (i) and 5 (b) (ii) generally understood what is meant by the term gatekeeper and were able to refer to agenda setting, news values and the influence of owners. Most used Galtung and Ruge as evidence to support what they were saying.
- (ii) Candidates who choose this question engaged with the view and good candidates were able to focus on the view and support their arguments with relevant sociological evidence.
- (c) (i) There was a mixed response to this question. Those who understood the term were able to explain the term often using Galtung and Ruge to support their explanations.
- (ii) There was a tendency by some candidates to provide a descriptive account of theories such as the hypodermic syringe. Candidates should be reminded that when asked to assess a view or in this case the influence of the media on audiences they should adopt an evaluative and analytic tone.

Option 3 Religion

This was the least popular option in this section and was often done by weak candidates where the rest in their centre were doing a different option.

- Q.6 (a) (i) This was a data reading exercise and candidates did not have to provide any evidence as to why the data is as it is since they are required to do that in (a) (ii). A significant number of students could not distinguish between percentage differences and percentage points difference and this often meant that they were not providing any statistical data to support what they were saying. Candidates sometimes ignored the statistical data altogether. Centres are advised that candidates must cite data to support their points in order to access the higher mark bands.
- (ii) As with 4 (a) (ii) those who had explained reasons in 6 (a) (i) now found themselves repeating what they had just written. There were unbalanced answers from weaker candidates. Weaker candidates offered no evidence and often relied on stereotypes and/or common-sense.
- (b) (i) Most of those who choose to do this question were able to provide some generalised response.
- (ii) As with 6 (b) (i) this was chosen by weaker candidates who were often those who were making rubric errors.
- (c) (i)&(ii) Apart from those who had answered all questions on the paper there were no answers seen.

Overall an encouraging start to the new specification. The length of the paper did not seem to worry candidates and most seemed to find questions accessible.

Centres should note however that an increasing number of candidates have illegible handwriting. Centres are advised to take advice on this.

SOCIOLOGY

AS

Summer 2016

COMPONENT 2 - METHODS OF SOCIOLOGICAL ENQUIRY

General Comments

This was the first component 2 paper of the new AS Eduqas specification. Most candidates had been well prepared for the requirements of the paper and had used the hour and a quarter in an appropriate way in terms of the marks allocated to each part of the question.

Some candidates omitted one part but they were generally the weaker candidates.

The most successful candidates were those who demonstrated a detailed and wide ranging knowledge and understanding of methodological issues and of the key concepts. They also had a wide ranging and detailed knowledge and understanding of relevant sociological studies and demonstrated the ability to apply them where required in particular in part (d).

Others however were less well prepared and this was particularly noticeable in their somewhat random use of the key concepts. This random use of the key concepts demonstrated a lack of knowledge and understanding of the very basics of sociological enquiry.

- Q.1 (a) This part was generally answered well. As with parts (b) and (c) of the question this part required candidates to use material from the item. Those who failed to do this, even if they provided an excellent response, were unable to access the top mark bands. Candidates must provide answers which meet the demands of the question. Candidates who did use the item and provided a clear definition of unstructured interviews which they linked to qualitative data and interpretivism were able to access the top mark bands. On the whole good accurate use was made of the concept of validity in relation to the data collected from unstructured interviews. Some candidates wasted time by evaluating the use of unstructured interviews others wasted time by referring to a range of sociological studies which either did or did not use unstructured interviews. There are 5 marks for this part and they are for explaining the meaning of the term.
- (b) Responses to this part were varied. Some candidates engaged with the idea of interviewing young people and predominantly focused on access, ethics and the interviewer/interviewee relationship. The best answers then used the relevant key concepts to explain the consequent impact upon the research. However a significant minority slipped into a response that was more appropriate for part (c). Candidates should be advised to make their two problems distinct as some tended to recycle their first one. The question asks the candidate to use material from the item. The best candidates were able to do that to good effect making links to the age ranges that were referred to in the item and the problems they were discussing. These candidates were appropriately rewarded.

- (c) Those candidates who knew what snowball sampling was were able to identify one advantage and one disadvantage. They were able to make good use of the item and also of studies they knew which had used snowball sampling. Some candidates wasted time defining what snowball sampling is and then repeating what they had said in their advantage. The item was not used so effectively in this part even though the reference to local contacts could have been a good start for the advantage and the ratio of males to females in the research could have been used as a starting point for a disadvantage of snowball sampling. References to representativeness/generalisability were used well by many candidates. Weaker candidates however tended to use all of the key concepts, often in one sentence, demonstrating their lack of knowledge and understanding of the terms.
- (d) This part was worth 50% of the marks. It was tackled well by many candidates and even the weaker ones were able to pick up marks by thinking through the question in a logical way. The best answers knew what was meant by a realist approach to research. The best candidates were able to accurately distinguish between triangulation and methodological pluralism. Most candidates however simply referred to one or the other often as though they were interchangeable terms. The question asked candidates to refer to sociological studies. The best candidates did do this with good effect integrating the study/ies with the point they were making, others simply described a study at the end of each strength or weakness. Studies most commonly used were Barker, Humphreys, Willis, Breeze, Archer and Wright and Durkheim. Of those Humphreys was used least well and was often just a long description of what he did. Given how dated the research is and how poorly candidates used it in their answers it is probably best avoided. There are many recent examples which would be more effective.

Overall an encouraging start to the new specification. This paper seemed to have worked well and candidates had found the questions accessible.

Centres should note however that an increasing number of candidates have illegible handwriting. Centres are advised to take advice on this.