



A-Level **Sociology**

7192/2

Report on the examination

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Overall comments

Some of the most successful answers come from students applying their sociological imagination and knowledge to the issues raised by the questions. It was pleasing to read answers in which students were able to draw on recent examples, or their own experience, or to show how sociology can help understand current issues.

There were some scripts which were partly or wholly illegible. Credit cannot be given for work which cannot be read. Centres should ensure that students whose writing might not be legible are provided with a word processor or scribe.

Some students wrote all they knew about one or more terms in a question. This leads to answers that are not focused on the question and are unlikely to score highly. Students should read questions carefully to work out what is being asked for. Some answers to 10-mark questions were unnecessarily long because they included material that was about one term but not directly relevant to the question.

Most students answered their chosen topics and questions in the order in which they appeared on the question paper. They therefore answered the section B 20-mark question last. For some this was a relatively brief and often apparently unfinished answer. This suggests that students need to track carefully time spent on each question.

A small number of students tried to answer all or most questions, rather than one topic from each section. It is important for students to see a full paper 2 question paper before they sit the exam. This will help them find their topics on the exam paper.

Evaluation is a challenging skill. The most successful evaluation weighs the strengths and limitations of a theory, claim or similar and reaches a reasoned judgement. This receives more credit than a learned criticism, or a statement, without explanation, that two theories or views are similar or different.

The quality of knowledge and understanding varied considerably. Credit is given for use of sociological concepts, theories, research findings, names of sociologists and so on. Some suggestions are given in the mark schemes. Knowing some sociologists and studies helps students develop their answers and give structure to them. Wordings such as “some sociologists argue that...” are used in items so that students can build on them e.g. by naming a theory or sociologist.

General comments on 10-mark questions

The nature of these questions means that students cannot rely on reciting knowledge. Questions will ask them to bring together aspects of their sociological knowledge in ways they have not done before. It is therefore important for students to allow time to think about how to answer the question.

Students should be aware that there are two types of ten-mark questions. These have different requirements and different mark schemes. There are different marks available for the assessment objectives.

10 mark “outline and explain” questions have more marks available for knowledge and understanding, and none for evaluation.

The items for 10 mark “analyse” questions are written to give prompts or “hooks” for student answers. These must be used to access application marks. Answers can indicate use of hooks by quoting, by a reference in parentheses or by wording (e.g. “As the item says...”). Items end with a sentence restating the question; the hooks are in the preceding part of the item.

Introductions and conclusions are not required for 10-mark questions, are unlikely to help students and take up time.

It is helpful if answers are set out to clearly indicate the two answers, with wording such as “One way/reason is...” or by starting a new paragraph for the second point. Answers that give more than two answers are unlikely to develop two of them sufficiently.

The most successful answers to 10-mark questions were focused, clearly stating a point that addressed the question and then developing it, using sociological concepts, evidence such as an example and, where appropriate, theory.

General comments on 20-mark questions

These require answers that are essays and are best written in paragraphs. A brief introduction can help set out the argument of the essay. It will not attract marks if it only repeats the question or parts of the item.

The purpose of the items for these questions is to suggest a few starting points for students, including ways into evaluation. Students are expected to also bring in further ideas (“and your knowledge” in the instruction) rather than relying only on the item.

A wide range of material can be relevant to these questions, so students need to be selective. It is more effective to cover a limited number of views/theories in depth rather than to try to include everything. Students should keep to the question. When a question is about a particular view, other views can be used for evaluation but without writing all that the student knows about them. There was a tendency for answers to progressively lose sight of the question and to become a list of different views.

Students who made brief essay plans appeared to benefit by having more structured and coherent responses.

Culture and Identity

Question 1

This question was not as well answered as expected, with answers sometimes not explicitly focused on ethnic groups. The better answers made connections between ethnicity and

consumption by, for example, considering the role of consumption in maintaining cultures based on ethnicity, or comparing consumption between ethnic groups.

Question 2

Answers were able to identify the hooks, but the development of the two ways globalisation may be linked to popular culture was often limited to brief examples. Some struggled with how to develop international travel being cheaper and easier, in relation to culture. The second hook was often better developed, using concepts such as homogenisation and cultural imperialism and often referring to the role of transnational corporations.

Question 3

Most students understood the difference between socialisation as a one-way process and as a two-way process. Most were also able to use appropriate studies and perspectives, including interactionism for evaluation. The greater interactivity of social media featured in some successful answers.

Families and Households

Question 4

This was generally answered well. Most responses focused on social changes such as the growth of feminism, changes in women's ambitions and secularisation. Most answers showed understanding of the effects of change in patterns of divorce. It was good to see some students looking at divorce decreasing due to pure love and cohabitation.

Question 5

Many answers tended to discuss gender roles rather than functions of the family. Some became more relevant by touching on, for example, the functions of primary socialisation and reproduction. There was also a tendency to write all that was known about, for example, lone parent families rather than analysing an effect on functions of families.

Question 6

Most answers showed good knowledge of changes in childhood over time. Most were aware of the different laws in place to improve childhood and some were aware of differences between childhood in developed and less developed countries. Some contemporary examples, such as tracking apps on mobile phones, were used well. Better answers were able to evaluate through considering ways in which childhood may not have improved, such as limits on freedom and the idea of toxic childhood.

Health

Question 7

Students generally chose to interpret this question by focusing on access to health care and how this affected the distribution of health chances. The idea that more affluent individuals resided in places with better health care provision was a common way to do this and the inverse care law frequently featured.

Question 8

Answers often linked being poor or working class to higher levels of stress and a greater prevalence of anxiety or depression. Access to private health care was frequently linked to more affluent classes securing a wider range of effective treatments and therapies. Some effective responses used empirical material to bring out the extent of differences in rates of mental illness between classes.

Question 9

Most answers showed some knowledge and understanding of social construction as applied to health and illness. This was often illustrated by using examples relating to disability and impairment. Answers were then often developed by juxtaposing other explanations such as the biomedical model and the social construction view. This could be successful but often drifted into accounts of these explanations rather than them being used to evaluate the social construction view.

Work, Poverty and Welfare

Question 10

Most answers showed understanding of why women might be prevented from entering full time employment. Some of the most successful answers used intersectionality, for example considering how ethnic minority women may face a double oppression of racism and patriarchy that affects employment opportunities.

Question 11

Most answers were able to make two points based on the hooks in the item and showed some knowledge of welfare policies. Ways based on the second hook tended to be less well developed than those based on the first.

Question 12

Most answers were able to consider both the positive aspects, such as upskilling, and negative ones such as automation and deskilling. The best answers often discussed how the quality of life and life chances may improve because of manual labour declining. Less successful answers often lacked studies and relied on anecdotal evidence.

Beliefs in Society

Question 13

Some students found it difficult to interpret “social groups”, although this term is in the specification, and gave two reasons for secularisation rather than addressing the question. There were some unorthodox social groups, but credit as given where these were reasonable and plausible. Many better answers focused on age and ethnicity; for example, ethnic minorities and cultural defence slowing secularisation down and young people no longer feeling religious speeding it up.

Question 14

Most students were able to identify the hooks. Good responses used the hooks to show the difference between denominations and New Age Movements focusing on individuality,

spirituality and equality, with examples. Less successful answers essentially took the hooks and stated that NAMs were different, with little if any further development. A number were also unclear about NAMs, confusing them with New Religious Movements or sects.

Question 15

Most responses successfully focused on the concept of powerful groups. Marxism and feminism featured strongly, often contrasted with functionalism. Better answers were able to apply a range of studies and when attempting to evaluate avoided drifting into listing functions. A minority answered the question more as if it were about religiosity by class or gender.

Global Development

Question 16

This question was generally well answered with successful answers often discussing standardised Western teaching practices spreading globally and ways in which aid from non-governmental organisations may affect education.

Question 17

Most students showed some knowledge of the information in the hooks but some had difficulty making a connection with global inequalities. This was particularly the case for the first hook. Good answers often explored how having a young population provided workers who could help a country develop. The second hook led to more developed answers, often considering how remittances from emigrants could reduce poverty in the country of origin.

Question 18

Most answers showed good knowledge and understanding of different theories of industrialisation, though some lacked range. There was a tendency to give information about modernisation and dependency theories without relating these clearly to industrialisation. Answers could often have been stronger with detailed examples of countries that have followed different paths to development.

The Media

Question 19

Answers often showed good knowledge and understanding of some issues around this area but did not always manage to make a clear connection between ownership or control and representations of social class. Better answers often gave one way based on ownership (e.g. by media oligarchs) and one on control (e.g. new media allowing the audience to contribute some content).

Question 20

A small number of students took this as a gender question rather than a sexuality question. covered both with gender points that were about sex, using concepts such as the male gaze. Most were able to apply the hooks and develop their analysis of two ways, using concepts

such as heteronormativity. Some found it difficult to go beyond representations and discuss effects on people's views.

Question 21

Although this question was focused on one perspective, answers tended to try to cover several perspectives with only a short section on postmodernism itself. The best approach to a question like this is to use other perspectives only to evaluate (for example, by explaining points of agreement and difference). Some answers were limited by taking postmodernism as a synonym for pluralism. There were also some very good answers, showing knowledge of a range of studies and concepts.

Stratification and Differentiation

Question 22

Students were generally able to identify two reasons. Answers often discussed lack of educational achievement amongst the working class, reducing their opportunity for upward mobility, contrasting with resources available to the middle classes. Better answers were able to explain how upward mobility could be achieved through, for example, investment, benefitting from inheritance and education. Only a minority of students referred to studies of social mobility such as by the Sutton Trust which could have allowed deeper analysis.

Question 23

Some answers showed difficulty in developing effective answers from the hooks. Examples of the convergence of different types of occupation and how that process might pose issues of categorisation for classifications such as the National Statistics Socio-economic Classification only featured in a minority of answers.

Question 24

Students generally produced answers which applied relevant material to the question. Popular approaches were to expand on cues given in the item, for example unpacking ethnicity as applied to education or another topic area. Evaluation and analysis were often based on theories that view ethnicity as not being the most central factor in determining life chances, most commonly Marxism (following the item) and feminism.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

Grade boundaries and cumulative percentage grades are available on the [Results Statistics](#) page of the AQA Website.