



GCSE

Sociology

8192/2

Report on the examination

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General

There was a wide variety of responses to Paper 2, but most students found it accessible. A notable number were able to achieve higher marks on the extended writing questions, and fewer students left questions unanswered compared to previous years.

Students appeared well prepared, and most schools had covered the specification broadly. However, some areas—particularly Questions 3, 4, 5, 9, 14, 16, 17, 18, and 20—were not addressed as thoroughly. Schools should remember that teaching should be based on the full specification, not just textbook content.

Overall, students showed stronger performance across the paper. Many demonstrated solid knowledge and understanding, along with noticeable improvement in analytical and evaluative skills, especially in the 12-mark questions. However, some students still rely too heavily on content from Paper 1—especially in topics like the sociology of education—which limited the quality of their responses. While some crossover is expected, it should not dominate answers.

Compared to 2024, understanding of research methods improved slightly. Still, a significant number of students confused key terms such as *reliability* and *validity*, or *quantitative* and *qualitative*. Many used vague terms like “accurate” to refer to concepts such as reliability, validity, or representativeness. Teachers should encourage students to use precise terminology, as lack of clarity often results in lower marks.

Question 1

The vast majority of students identified choice D, Victim survey correctly.

Question 2

Most students identified choice B, Anomie, correctly.

Question 3

This question focused on institutional racism within the criminal justice system. Responses varied, but the strongest answers referred to stop and search statistics, negative labelling by the police, or the overrepresentation of ethnic minorities in prison. These answers stood out because they included clear examples and supporting evidence. Weaker responses lacked detail, included little or no evidence of racism, or failed to address the issue directly.

Question 4

This question focused on methods of preventing criminal behaviour. Some students produced excellent responses, using evidence and relevant examples to support their points. The strongest answers focused on approaches such as education, socialisation, and deterrence, while others gave solid responses by discussing the reduction of opportunities to commit crime. Weaker responses often misunderstood the question, with some students writing about self-report or victim surveys—topics that were not relevant or creditworthy for this question.

Question 5

This mixed-methods question was one of the less well answered questions. Many students did not seem to understand what mixed methods were. Some advantages could have been taken from the text directly, it is so important for students to read the information thoroughly and draw on this material in their answers. The best answers came from students who wrote about the mix of primary and secondary data and the ability to triangulate the information. Weaker answers lacked any detail, were vague, and failed to offer anything creditworthy. Some students are still repeatedly using the term 'accurate', which is not accepted. Some students were able to state a weakness but then failed to develop this properly, so the second mark was lost.

Question 6

This question focused on media amplification and required students to refer to *Item A*. Many students successfully explained how the media can increase public fear, often mentioning amplification or exaggeration and providing relevant examples. However, a large number of responses did not include any reference to *Item A*, which limited the marks they could achieve due to the lack of context. The strongest answers clearly explained how the media contributes to public fear and supported their points with evidence from the item, either through description or direct quotation.

Question 7

This question focused on snowball sampling and its advantage when researching deviant subcultures. Strong responses gave a clear explanation of the method and directly linked it to the context of studying deviant groups. These students highlighted how gaining access to hard-to-reach individuals is made easier when one participant refers the researcher to others within the group. However, many responses, while demonstrating an understanding of snowball sampling, failed to apply it to the context of deviant subcultures. As a result, these answers were capped at 2 marks. It was also evident that some students were unfamiliar with this sampling method altogether.

Question 8

This question focused on Howard Becker's work and asked students to describe one way in which deviant labels can negatively impact individuals. Many students referred to concepts like *master status* or how labelling can lead to further deviant behaviour. The strongest responses clearly identified the 'way', referred to the source text, and linked their explanation to Becker's perspective and theory. Weaker answers often named the effect but provided little or no explanation, and failed to include the relevant sociological perspective, which limited their marks. To gain higher marks, students must show clear understanding of the study and its theoretical context.

Question 9

This question focused on ethical issues involved in researching deviant subcultures. Some students successfully identified specific ethical concerns and linked them clearly to the context of the question. However, other responses failed to identify an ethical issue at all, or confused ethics with practical problems. Common non-creditworthy answers included vague references to people being 'offended' or 'upset'. Weaker responses also lacked contextual links, which limited the number of marks that could be awarded.

Question 10

The first crime essay asked whether the criminal justice system (CJS) is the most effective agent of social control. Many students provided a good range of points, drawing on both conflict and consensus theories. Higher-mark responses included at least two contrasting perspectives—typically Functionalism and Marxism—and clearly compared their views. Some students went further by including a feminist perspective to show broader understanding.

Key points raised included Functionalist ideas like boundary maintenance and reinforcement of social norms and values, contrasted with Marxist arguments that the CJS upholds capitalism and serves the interests of the ruling class. The strongest answers showed depth, used appropriate terminology, referenced studies such as Becker and labelling theory, and included consistent evaluation throughout. These responses also ended with a clear, well-supported conclusion.

In contrast, weaker answers lacked sociological content, detail, or evaluation, and often failed to present or contrast different perspectives.

Question 11

The second essay in the crime section asked whether women commit more crime than men. Most students approached this question confidently and demonstrated a good understanding of why women may appear underrepresented in official crime statistics. Many responses referred to Heidensohn's control theory, highlighting how women are restricted in both public and private spheres. Some students also discussed Carlen's work, explaining how women may be controlled or influenced by men.

Stronger responses included counter-arguments, such as the chivalry thesis and the rise in female crime, and many also referred to labelling theory to explore why more men are represented in the prison population. The best answers showed a balanced argument, used relevant sociological terms and studies, and ended with a clear conclusion.

In contrast, weaker answers tended to rely on just one perspective, lacked sociological depth, and made little or no use of key terminology.

Question 12

The vast majority of students identified choice B, Power correctly.

Question 13

The vast majority of students identified choice C, Charismatic authority correctly.

Question 14

This question asked how individuals benefit from the welfare state. Most students focused on government benefits, though a range of responses also included housing schemes, education, and healthcare. The strongest answers provided clear points supported by specific examples that showed a good understanding of the topic. Weaker responses lacked detail and often failed to give a clear example of how individuals benefit, which limited the marks awarded.

Question 15

This question focused on how poverty is measured. Many students discussed concepts such as relative and absolute poverty, with a range of well-developed responses that included clear examples and demonstrated a strong understanding of the topic. Some students also referred to studies, such as Townsend, which further strengthened their answers. In contrast, weaker responses made vague references to statistics without offering explanation or detail. A lack of clarity and development in these answers meant some students were unable to gain any marks.

Question 16

This question asked about the weaknesses of using official national statistics. Some students gave clear, well-developed answers that earned full marks, including points such as the potential manipulation of quantitative data. However, many students struggled to fully develop their answers or apply relevant explanations. A common but less valid response was that the data was outdated, despite it being from 2019 to 2023.

Question 17

This question focused on the reasons behind the gender pay gap. Some students gave good, valid explanations. The strongest answers discussed issues like patriarchy and traditional gender roles. Other common reasons included women taking maternity leave, leading to gaps in employment, and workplace discrimination. Weaker responses often just described what the gender pay gap is, rather than explaining the reasons for it.

Question 18

This question asked about the advantages of using quantitative methods to study the gender pay gap. Some strong answers linked these advantages directly to the context—for example, explaining how tracking average pay differences over time helps identify patterns and trends. However, many students failed to connect their responses to the gender pay gap, which limited the marks they could earn.

Question 19

Overall, this question was well answered, with many students clearly explaining how the Bourgeoisie exploit the Proletariat. Most students made good use of the source material and supported their points with relevant examples. However, some students did not include the required sociological perspective, which meant they missed out on the fourth mark.

Question 20

This question focused on sexuality and how it affects life chances. Many students answered well, providing clear and well-developed reasons that showed a strong understanding of the topic. However, a large minority of students focused too much on gender instead of sexuality, which meant they did not earn marks. Others discussed topics like the pay gap and patriarchy, which were not relevant to the question.

Question 21

The first essay in the social stratification section asked whether inequality is negative for individuals in society. The question was accessible to most students, who generally provided strong answers. Many offered at least two perspectives, often contrasting consensus and conflict theories. A number of students included Davis and Moore's work, explaining the functionalist view that inequality is necessary for society to function effectively, with clear references to relevant studies. Strong responses were consistent, used appropriate sociological terminology, and contrasted functionalist ideas with Marxist or feminist perspectives. These extended answers also included well-structured conclusions. In contrast, weaker responses were often one-sided, lacked depth, and used few sociological terms.

Question 22

The final essay focused on the power held by elite groups in society. This question allowed students to engage with complex ideas, including Weber's theories about power and its holders. The strongest essays discussed power concentrated in elite groups, referencing Marxist perspectives and contrasting these with Weber's and feminist viewpoints. Some students also explored different types of power over women, informal control within families, and media manipulation. Many showed a good understanding by including references to Weber's types of power. Weaker responses lacked clear argument development, and some only presented one perspective, which limited their marks.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

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