

Notes and guidance: 10-mark questions

Our AS and A-level Sociology specifications now use 10-mark questions. There are two types: 'Outline and explain two...', and 'Applying material from item X, analyse two...'.

This resource will help you understand both types of 10-mark questions so you can prepare your students.

Things to remember about 10-mark questions

- Students should write in continuous prose.
- Students may benefit from expressing each of their two points in at least two separate paragraphs.
- Using an extended word template approach may be useful, as would be used in longer answer questions, eg PEEL: Point, Explanation, Evidence, Link (back to question).
- All three assessment objectives are assessed within these questions.

Type 1: 'Outline and explain two...' questions

These questions ask about two elements from one or more bullet points within a specification topic (eg functions of the education system and differential educational achievement; changing gender roles and children's experience of childhood). They will generally ask about the links or relationships between these two elements.

Because these questions assess application, they will prompt students to think more independently, eg to use their knowledge and understanding to connect two elements of the specification, and to produce development/analysis around these two points.

For example

Outline and explain two ways in which the functions of the education system may affect pupil's educational achievement.
(AS Sociology May 2016 Paper 1)

There is no requirement to evaluate. Analysis only is mentioned in the mark scheme to meet the A03 requirement.

Type 2: 'Applying material from Item X, analyse two...' questions

These questions have an item that is closely linked to the question.

The item will encourage students to link two elements from the same or different bullet points within a specification topic, eg migration patterns and household structures.

The item will contain possible 'hooks' which can be developed into two ways, reasons etc.

For example

Read Item C below and then answer the question that follows.

Item C

In the 1950s, most immigrants into the United Kingdom came from Commonwealth countries such as India and Jamaica. More recently, many immigrants have come from European Union countries such as Poland. Many immigrants are young adults seeking work.

These migration patterns have affected household structures.

Applying material from Item C, analyse two ways in which migration patterns have affected household structures in the United Kingdom.
(A-level Sociology Paper 2, June 2017)

The answer must analyse/develop two ways, and it must refer to/revolve around 'hooks' in the item (eg that many immigrants are young adults, so there are more single person households, or that there has been immigration from India so extended family patterns are 'transplanted' to the UK from the Indian subcontinent, etc).

The item is designed to help and support students with their response to the question. In their analysis, students need to draw upon the item. Students should make explicit reference to the item in their responses. They can do this by using phrases such as 'As it says in the item...' or simply putting the word (item) after closely linked points.