



GCSE

SOCIOLOGY

8192/1: Paper 1-The Sociology of Families and Education
Report on the Examination

8192
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General Introduction to the November Series

This has been an unusual exam series in many ways. Entry patterns have been very different from those normally seen in the summer, and students had a very different experience in preparation for these exams. It is therefore more difficult to make meaningful comparisons between the range of student responses seen in this series and those seen in a normal summer series. The smaller entry also means that there is less evidence available for examiners to comment on.

In this report, senior examiners will summarise the performance of students in this series in a way that is as helpful as possible to teachers preparing future cohorts while taking into account the unusual circumstances and limited evidence available.

Overview of Entry

Just over 100 students sat this paper. Despite the relatively small number of entries, a range of responses were seen. The majority of students found the paper accessible. Many students were able to write in detail and complete both papers in the time allowed for the examination and most attempted most questions. The questions enabled students at the lower end of the ability range to show their knowledge and understanding and gain credit for this while students at the higher end of the ability range wrote clear and excellent answers, often achieving maximum marks or the highest level available.

Comments on Individual Questions

Question 1

This question was well answered, with well over three quarters of students selecting the correct answer D, serial monogamy.

Question 2

Students performed very well on this question, with four fifths of students selecting the correct response B, blended family.

Question 3

Many students gained at least two marks for their description. However, a significant amount were unaware of what a dual career family is.

Question 4

This was a well answered question, with the vast majority of students obtaining at least two marks. Most of the top-level responses focused on the changing social attitudes as the key factor that may have led to the increase.

Question 5

Most students achieved at least one mark for their response, with many gaining credit for commenting on how the data can be used to identify trends.

Question 6

There was a range of responses to this question. Many students failed to explain a factor in sufficient detail in order to reach level 4, or were unable to describe the type of statistical data

(official statistics). Most gained some credit since they were able to identify the trend shown by the data as an upward trend.

Question 7

Most students were able to provide a disadvantage of using postal questionnaires to investigate attitudes towards cohabitation, with many gaining further credit by giving a detailed explanation as to why this research method may not be the most appropriate to use.

Question 8

This was a well answered question, with the vast majority of students able to access some of the marks. Many students were able to make good use of the item to identify a way in which the family can be seen as important for society. An impressive number of students were able to identify that Parsons wrote from a functionalist perspective, showing strong knowledge and understanding of this key study.

Question 9

This was a very well answered question, with over a quarter of students receiving maximum marks for this question. Most students gained some credit as they wrote about an appropriate advantage, such as stating that unstructured interviews provide the researcher with qualitative (in-depth) data from which to investigate role of parents in a family.

Question 10

This question produced a range of responses. Many students were able to apply the theory of Willmott and Young to the question, and gained appropriate credit for this. More successful students often approached the 'how far' aspect by citing the work of feminist writers such as Oakley. However, some students clearly struggled to respond to this question, as they were unaware of the idea of a symmetrical family.

Question 11

This question produced some notably lower quality responses. A significant minority of students simply made general points about families. Better responses focused on how and why the extended family is still important in Britain today. Stronger answers referred to relevant sociological perspectives and evidence, such as the functionalist approach in comparison with the feminist.

Question 12

Many students were able to identify B, marketization. However, a significant minority selected one of the distractors, A: comprehensivisation.

Question 13

Most students correctly identified option A, de-schooling.

Question 14

This was generally well answered, with many students able to gain at least two marks for their description. Some students opted to describe one function of education as serving the needs of the economy, whilst others described how it facilitates social mobility. Many students were able to provide a well developed, coherent description for their chosen function of the education system.

Question 15

There were plenty of very effective responses to this question. Most students correctly identified and described an anti-school subculture, with many developing their description in order to reach level 3.

Question 16

There were a range of different responses to this question. Many chose an appropriate feature to examine, such as it provides quantitative data. However, a considerable percentage of students failed to explain their choice fully enough as a weakness for the second mark.

Question 17

There was a good range of responses to this question. Over a third of students achieved maximum marks as they identified a relevant internal factor along with a detailed, well developed explanation. Many chose to concentrate on how teacher expectations and labelling might be a factor. However, a significant percentage of students were not able to access any marks for this question, as they incorrectly identified an external (out-of-school) factor.

Question 18

This was a very well answered question. Many students scored maximum marks by identifying a relevant advantage of the method, and then further providing an excellent explanation as to why it would be a good research method in which to investigate the extent of sexism in schools.

Question 19

There were a range of different responses to this question. Some students were unfamiliar with Bowles and Gintis' idea of the correspondence principle, and therefore struggled to gain credit. However, many had a good grasp of the concept, and were able to identify and describe an example of how the correspondence principle works according to these sociologists. More successful students knew that they wrote from a Marxist perspective.

Question 20

Most students were able to identify an advantage, with many going on to give an appropriate reason as to why using a longitudinal study would be beneficial when investigating the effects of streaming in schools. Some students received no credit for this question since they did not know what streaming and a longitudinal study was.

Question 21

This 12-mark question was generally well answered. Many responses were awarded six or more marks since they included many relevant pieces of evidence, particularly for the view in favour of the statement. Stronger responses referred to both external and internal factors for why there might be gender differences in educational achievement.

Question 22

This was a question that saw some excellent responses. Many students had a strong grasp of the concept of social mobility, and were able to explain the idea in relation to whether the education system enables upward social mobility. The strongest responses evaluated the differing sociological perspectives relevant to the discussion. Although this second section B extended writing question was slightly better answered than the previous question, a significant minority of students did not attempt the question, or wrote a very brief, limited response.

Concluding Remarks

It is important that students are taught to read the questions and actually answer the question which has been set. By way of illustration of this, a significant number of students provided more than one advantage in response to questions 09, 18, and 20. Some students were unfamiliar with

key terms such as the 'symmetrical family', 'dual career family' and the 'correspondence principle'. These are part of the specification content and therefore are required to be taught. Questions that required longer extended answers produced mixed responses, with some students able to demonstrate a very good knowledge and understanding of relevant sociological theories, concepts and evidence, together with the ability to apply this knowledge and understanding to the demands of the question. The skills of analysis and evaluation were less apparent. In order to reach level four, students are required to apply these skills to the particular question.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

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