



AS LEVEL SOCIOLOGY

7191/1 Education with methods in context
Report on the Examination

7191
Summer 2022

Version: 1.0

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In general:

It was a privilege to assess the entries of students sitting the first externally assessed examinations since the restrictions and detriment imposed by Covid.

Centres have worked hard to teach the subject content and to prepare their students for the experience of sitting an exam. This meant that, in most cases, students showed a good level of knowledge, especially in the higher tariff questions. The majority of students also understood the rubrics of this examination – for example, students consistently used short statements/bullet points in the lower tariff questions and wrote in full prose for questions worth 10 marks and higher.

Students were particularly confident with educational policies and social class inequalities along with Marxist explanations of social class and education. Many students also embraced the opportunity to show their AO3 skills of analysis and evaluation, particularly in the education higher tariff questions

However, they were less consistently able to identify some of the key terms in the questions and consequently some students weren't able to gain full credit for their sociological knowledge. The specific key terms that students had difficulty with are detailed below.

Question 01:

Students were awarded marks for being able to state correct and specific information about comprehensives schools. Many were aware that comprehensives admit students from a local catchment area and that they do not take an examination to gain entry to the school. Unfortunately, many students made generic statements that did not gain credit, as they could equally be applied to other types of school, for example that comprehensives do not charge fees to attend.

Question 02:

This question was answered very well by most students. Centres have clearly taught the correspondence principle well and this was used by many students to gain full marks. Other students were equally successful using a less theoretical approach, giving practical examples from schools. Where some students missed available marks, they tended to lack an explicit link to the world of work.

Question 03:

The responses to this question showed that students have a good deal of knowledge about labelling theory. Unfortunately, many students did not gain credit, as their responses critiqued the process of labelling itself, rather than criticising the theory of labelling. Those who were able to gain marks in this question often used the example of the self-refuting prophecy to show that the theory can be too deterministic.

Question 04:

In order to produce a good response to this question, students were required to show an understanding of two changes that have taken place in the labour market and then to use their application and analysis skills to relate this to the achievement of boys and/ or girls in education. Unfortunately, many students found the term 'labour market' difficult and their response dealt with changes made by the Labour government, or focussed on marketisation. Good responses often referred to declining manual labour opportunities in the UK and the impact this has had on boys in schools, along with equality laws that had a positive impact on the employment of women.

Question 05:

This question was answered well by students. It was clear that centres had prepared students to be confident in their knowledge of educational policies. Many students were able to successfully identify a range of appropriate policies and the impact they had on social class inequalities. The best responses were able to separate intention from consequences and were able to give a critical account of the short-term and long-term impact of government educational interventions.

Question 06:

The majority of students were able to give a good account of the strengths and limitations of using covert participant observation to investigate education. Many had a good understanding of the ethical implications of deception and the theoretical benefit of validity. Students were often able to show application of one part of the method (eg covert or participant) to the problem of gaining entry to a school. To receive marks in the top level, students needed to be able to show that they had understood each element of the method (covert and participant and observation) and be able to apply this to gendered behaviour in schools. The difficulty of doing this is reflected in the mark scheme that the full application is only required for the top level. However, lots of students were successful in partial application and it was clear that they had been prepared to think practically about completing research in an educational setting.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

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