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# AS LEVEL SOCIOLOGY

7191/2

Report on the Examination

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Most students seemed able to manage their time appropriately and write answers of an appropriate length. The exam paper was fair and discriminating. Most students were well prepared, despite the disruption to their education over the last few years.

There were however, a significant number of rubric infringements with students answering more than one section B topic, selecting questions at random from all four topics or answering all 22 questions.

In general, students coped well with the demands of the exam. However, some aspects could be improved. For low mark tariff questions where candidates are required to either define, explain or outline, care should be taken to ensure that points are not just identified. Answers to essay questions were sometimes disjointed; it would be worth students considering making a brief plan for the 16 and 20 mark questions.

### **Section A: Research methods**

#### Question 1

The demands of this question were generally understood and most students were able to score at least 2 marks. Partial marks were relatively common as students did not always develop points in terms of a specific characteristic of structured interviews. The most common errors were confusion with unstructured interviews, or outlining disadvantages of structured interviews.

#### Question 2

This was an accessible question that attracted a wide range of responses. The most common approach to this question was to use the practical, ethical and theoretical factors framework. The best responses used relevant examples and studies to illustrate the disadvantages of personal documents. However, responses were often disjointed and repetitive with little reference to relevant research. Some generic material on qualitative research methods was evidenced and there was evidence of drift into secondary sources more generally. Some students showed a limited understanding of private documents, confusing them with information like medical records, however, even then most managed to score some marks.

As with question 1, the biggest weakness seemed to be mentioning a disadvantage and then not developing it. Another common error was drifting into unrelated advantages.

## **Section B**

### **Topic B1 Culture and identity**

This topic was answered by very few students.

#### Question 3

The majority of answers showed an understanding of a group that shared norms but failed to develop the definition in terms of sharing some aspects of larger culture. Partial marks were given for an example of a subculture. The most common examples given were class subcultures and youth subcultures such as goths.

#### Question 4

This question proved to be difficult for many students, with few scoring full marks. The most successful answers used the example of education and the teaching of British history. The most common responses used the example of religion without linking this to national identity and failed to score.

#### Question 5

Many students struggled with this question. Most were able to outline at least one way in which old age may be a stigmatised identity. The most common response was derogatory language but often this was repeated using different examples and only gained credit once. Assumptions about dependency and barriers to employment were often identified but only partially outlined.

#### Question 6

In general, this question was answered poorly, with limited knowledge and understanding shown. While students were familiar with the concept of gender identity, they often failed to focus on lifestyle and consumption choices in their responses. Answers often drifted into accounts of conjugal roles in the family or subject choices in education with limited success. Another approach was to write about gender role socialisation or gender stereotypes with limited direct application to the question set. Successful answers were able to discuss involvement in sport or consumption choices such as clothes and make-up as expressions of gender identity.

#### Question 7

Many students found this question challenging but were able to outline some key features of the functionalist view of the socialisation process; however, essays were often disjointed, lacking a clear structure. Successful answers were able to discuss primary and secondary socialisation using key functionalist writers. The role of the family and education were the most common agencies applied. Evaluation was generally shown by juxtaposition with other theoretical views of socialisation, most commonly Marxism and Feminism. Social action approaches were

mentioned in the item but rarely applied in answers. Answers to this question were often much shorter than would be expected for a 20 mark response.

## **Topic B2 Families and Households**

This topic was answered by the vast majority of students.

### **Question 8**

Most students were able to provide an accurate outline of the extended family, showing a clear sense of the nuclear family plus wider kin regardless of whether they lived in the same home. Some students gained partial credit for giving examples of wider kin without giving a definition of the extended family. A minority of students defined the reconstituted family and gained no marks.

### **Question 9**

In general, this question was answered well. In stronger responses there was a clear idea of blurring with an example and brief explanation. The most common response was new media technology resulting in exposure to adult knowledge. Partial responses identified an example but failed to develop it, for example 'same clothing'. There were a number of incorrect responses such as an increase in teenage pregnancies.

### **Question 10**

Many students scored well in this question and were able to identify three effects and explain them briefly. Some answers to this question were longer than necessary; some included references to, and descriptions of, research. Partial marks were achieved when an effect was identified but developed in an incorrect way. For example, parents may see less of their children as they are at work, which gained credit, but then developed by claiming the children will miss out on socialisation so won't know right from wrong which is incorrect.

Some answers drifted to effects on women's careers rather than on the family. Occasionally students confused what was meant by dual earner and went into descriptions of househusbands ie role reversal.

### **Question 11**

The majority of students understood the demands of this question and were able to apply their knowledge of the ageing population to the affects on family organisation and structure. The most common responses were the increase in extended families, grandparents providing childcare and beanpole families. The extent to which the application was developed was variable and this is reflected in the marks awarded. Weaker responses focused on the effects of the ageing population on the wider society, by discussing the dependency ratio for example.

### Question 12

Many answers discussed the nature and extent of family diversity without engaging in the debate about the traditional family no longer being the centre of peoples' personal lives. The best responses were able to analyse and evaluate by presenting evidence both for and against the decline of traditional families and locating this within a theoretical debate about the centrality of traditional families in people's personal lives. The theories used most effectively were functionalism, feminism, postmodernism and the personal life perspective.

Middle range answers showed sound knowledge and some focus on the debate in the question, but often included overlong accounts of diversity and changes in the role of women, and failed to focus on whether the family is no longer the centre of people's personal lives. Weaker answers were often characterised by one-sided accounts of why the family is no longer central in people's lives. There was also a tendency to explain theoretical views, for example functionalist and the New Right claims about what families should be like, rather than addressing the question directly.

### **Topic B3 Health**

This topic was answered by very few students.

### Question 13

Students who had prepared to answer questions on this topic almost always scored 2 marks. Students who answered questions on multiple topics hardly ever scored any marks.

### Question14

This question was generally answered well. Partial responses included poverty but this was not always developed into an answer directly related to accessing health care. There were a variety of responses that failed to gain credit, for example countries with no health care or children not having the language skills to tell parents they are ill.

### Question 15

This question was generally answered well. Exam technique was good with very few examples of long answers. The most common responses were language barriers, experiences of racism and social class. Social class sometimes gained a partial mark when not explicitly linked to ethnicity.

### Question 16

This question was generally answered well by students who had not chosen questions from every topic. Successful answers clearly understood the term medicalisation and successfully applied it to relevant aspects of women's lives. The most common response was pregnancy and childbirth which was often analysed using historical and cross-cultural comparisons. Some students included applications of body-projects and cosmetic surgery. Less successful responses did not show understanding of the concept of medicalisation and tended to identify

health screening for women with little elaboration.

#### Question 17

Some students interpreted this question as an opportunity to present material on patterns of mental health between different social groups and the causes of these patterns. These answers tended to focus on structural explanations of mental illness mainly from Marxist and feminist perspectives. Weaker answers listed patterns in a superficial manner in distinct sections with little or no reference to how these patterns were socially constructed. The best answers were able to evaluate by applying the biomedical and social constructionist theories to the patterns of mental illness outlined in the item. These answers were often able to reach a reasoned justified conclusion. Labelling theory was often developed effectively and supported with reference to relevant research evidence.

### **Topic B4 Work, Poverty and Welfare**

This topic was answered by very few students.

#### Question 18

Very few responses gained full marks for this question. Almost all students referred to groups who need support or those who don't earn enough money. Perhaps mistaking universal benefits for universal credit. A few were able to give an example of the NHS as a universal benefit.

#### Question 19

The most common response to this question was the idea that volunteers are not paid therefore they will provide a worse service, indicating a lack of understanding of the disadvantages of voluntary groups providing welfare services. Some responses identified patchy coverage or lack of expert knowledge but this usually gained partial marks only.

#### Question 20

Many candidates struggled with this question, interpreting it as a question about the needs of people of different ages and reasons why they can't afford to meet the needs. Most students were able to refer to different age groups. Better answers were able to link the experience of poverty to work or income opportunities available to people of different ages.

#### Question 21

There were some good answers to this question but most students found it difficult to identify and develop two applications successfully. There were some generic responses about the benefits system being difficult to access but this was not applied to disability specifically.

The concept of entitlement seemed not to be understood as a common response was that disabled people don't need benefits as their carers provide for them or they have enough money without claiming benefits. The most common responses related to a lack of awareness

of entitlement or incorrect assessments by government agencies.

#### Question 22

There were a number of different types of responses to this question. Some tended to discuss the significance of work to income and why money is important in terms of social status. This was sometimes linked to a discussion of social class and life chances, particularly the risk of unemployment. Ethnicity and gender were sometimes applied effectively when considering the significance of work for people's lives and life chances. Part-time work was often presented as an opportunity to pursue hobbies and interests; the drop in income was rarely considered. Marxism was sometimes applied to work and life chances; postmodernism was often stated in answers and linked to choice of work. The best answers addressed the debate surrounding the significance of work by locating it within the theoretical framework of Marxism, feminisms and postmodernism.



### **Mark Ranges and Award of Grades**

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