



A-LEVEL SOCIOLOGY

7192/2

Report on the Examination

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There were few rubric infringements; almost all candidates answered questions on one Section A topic and one Section B topic. A small number of candidates, however, did not follow the rubric, answering on several topics.

There was a noticeable increase in the number of scripts which were partly or wholly illegible. Credit cannot be given for work which cannot be read. Centres should ensure that students whose writing might not be legible are provided with a word processor or scribe.

Most candidates answered their chosen questions in the order in which they appeared on the question paper. They therefore answered the section B 20 mark essay question last, and for many this was a relatively brief and often apparently unfinished answer. This suggests that timing is a problem for many candidates.

10 mark questions

The nature of these questions means that students cannot rely on reciting knowledge. The questions will ask them to bring together aspects of their sociological knowledge in a way that they are unlikely to have done before. There was a tendency, however, to attempt to answer the question by giving knowledge based on words or phrases in the question, rather than meeting the demands of the question. For example, some answers to question 4, which asked for effects of increased life expectancy on the experience of childhood, gave reasons for increased life expectancy. Students are advised to spend time reading the question, and, where there is one the item, to ensure that they are answering the question.

Some students seemed unaware of the different demands of the two types of questions. The marks awarded for the assessment objectives are different in the two types of ten mark questions, and students should be aware of this. In particular, it should be noted that there are no marks available for evaluation in “outline and explain” (no item) questions. In “analyse” (with item) questions, the answers need to be clearly based on the prompts or “hooks” in the item, not just on the final sentence of the item which restates the question.

There is no need for an introduction or conclusion for 10 mark questions. It is helpful if answers are set out to clearly indicate the two answers, with wording such as “One way is...” or by starting a new paragraph for the second point.

The best answers to 10 mark questions were focused, clearly stating a point that addressed the question and then developing it, using sociological concepts, evidence and, where appropriate, theory. Answers need to address all aspects of the question. For example, answers to question 14 (B1 Beliefs in Society) needed to be clear about how the “way” given applied to sects in particular, rather than being in a form that could apply to other types of religious organisation. In this case, one way to do this would be to discuss features of sects relevant to the question, with a named example.

20 mark questions

The items for 20 mark questions are written to provide a number of ideas on which students can begin to build their answers. Students are expected to also bring in further ideas (hence “and your knowledge” in the instruction).

It is often the case that a wide range of material can be relevant to these questions, and students need to be selective. For example, it may be more effective to cover a limited number of views or theories in some depth rather than to include every possible theory. There was a tendency for answers to progressively lose sight of the question and to become a list of different views. This applied particularly to question 6 (A2 Families and Households) where in some cases a paragraph or two on Marxist views on families was followed by accounts of other theories with no reference or comparison to Marxism.

Many attempts at evaluation were learned criticisms. Evaluation is more effective where it is focused on the demands of the question. Students should also be aware that evaluation includes awareness of the strengths as well as the weaknesses of an argument or theory.

Following feedback from centres regarding the advance information for the 20 mark questions, we have monitored the marking of these questions, as well as carrying out statistical analysis on student performance. Based on this analysis, we can confirm that students have performed as we expected them to on these questions, and their performance on these questions is in line with previous series. We hope this provides the reassurance you need that students have not been disadvantaged by this paper and the advance information that was provided.

Culture and identity

Q1 Answers here often considered agencies of socialisation and the ways in which they can socialise people into ethnic identities. There were some very good answers to this question.

Q2 Most answers were able to take from the item two points which could then be analysed. The item allowed students to base answers on ideas about migration and greater choice as consumers. There were a range of successful answers.

Q3 Taking their lead from the item, many answers chose youth subcultures as examples but the best drew on a range of examples of other types of subcultures as well. A range of theories were applied in the more successful answers.

Families and households

Q4 Better answers made points about vertically extended families, the role of grandparents as carers or in socialising, and smaller numbers of siblings.

Q5 Successful answers used the item well. Answers which linked to choice in who to be in a relationship with included same sex couples and families; those linked to ways relationships end included single parent families and reconstituted families.

Q6 Many students were aware of the work of a number of Marxist writers on the family, such as Engels, Zaretsky and Althusser. Answers tended to draw heavily on the item. Better answers made evaluative points about Marxist views by applying ideas from other perspectives or applying research findings.

Health

Q7 Most candidates were able to explain two reasons why some ethnic groups may be more likely than others to be diagnosed as mentally ill. Many gave one cultural reason, such as norms and values related to mental health, and one structural or material reason, such as access to professionals able to give a diagnosis or material deprivation leading to mental problems.

Q8 The item here gave brief information about the two models, and then asked for application of this to disability. Most answers showed some understanding of the models but there was sometimes some confusion between them and also problems in developing the answer sufficiently to access higher marks.

Q9 There was some reasonable to good knowledge of functionalist views on the role of health professionals, though with reliance on the item. Evaluation was usually by comparisons with Marxist and/or feminist approaches. Some answers drifted away from the question to general accounts of theories.

Wealth, Welfare and Poverty

Q10 There were some very good answers to this question. Many chose to give one positive effect, such as voluntary providers such as foodbanks reducing poverty, and one negative effect, such as their being unable to provide support on the scale that governments can. Good answers usually gave named examples of voluntary or informal welfare providers.

Q11 For advances in technology, answers focused on, for example, Taylorism, assembly line production and mechanisation, leading to alienation. For changes in the way workers are managed, successful answers included increased surveillance and deskilling and how these may increase stress.

Q12 There was some reasonable to good knowledge of evidence and sociological views on causes of poverty. Evaluation was both through criticisms of views focusing on structural factors and through comparisons with approaches emphasising other factors such as culture.

Beliefs in society

Q13 A number of answers to this question wrote in general terms about effects of globalisation on religious beliefs and practices rather than focusing on minority ethnic groups in the UK. Answers which leant themselves to a focus on minority ethnic groups included cultural defence and cultural transition. Among more general answers were those that looked at the growth of private worship and online religion.

Q14 As suggested above, there was a lack of knowledge of sects and their characteristics. This led to answers that were in general terms about how religion could help people in poverty or those experiencing uncertainty in times of rapid social change.

Q15 This question produced a number of thoughtful responses covering a range of relevant issues about definitions and measurement. Areas applied included church attendance, believing without belonging, private worship, online religion, televangelism, New Religious Movements, New Age Movements and various aspects of secularisation.

Global Development

Q16 There were some very good answers to this question. Many chose to give one positive effect, such as improved health care and inoculations and availability of medicines, and one negative effect, such as vulnerability to diseases from external sources or increases in diseases associated with affluence. Better answers usually included examples of specific health problems or incidents.

Q17 This question was generally answered well. Popular answers applied the item by discussing how conditions in shanty towns might keep people in poverty and hold back development, or how cities act as places where people are exposed to values and practices which can be seen as necessary for development. There was also some good application of theories.

Q18 Answers were strong on environmental problems, with good discussions of how development is linked to, for example, global heating, pollution of land, sea and air, deforestation and loss of species. Discussion of solutions and positive aspects of development, such as sustainability and grass roots or people-centered development, were less evident. There was some application of theories.

Media

Q19 There were a number of strong answers to this question drawing for example on ways that owners use their power to shape content and on censorship and propaganda.

Q20 Answers to this question were generally successful in explaining that controllers can have stereotypical views, and that news values shape selection and presentation. Relatively few answers addressed why it might be young people, rather than other groups, who are then represented in negative ways.

Q21 This question enabled students to apply their knowledge and understanding of media theories to new media. Better answers avoided reciting all they knew about a theory and focused on the question, often making insightful points on the changing nature of media. There was a tendency to focus on the positive aspects of new media (such as interactivity and citizen journalism) without always recognising more negative aspects such as the power of large corporations and the implications of surveillance and data harvesting.

Stratification and differentiation

Q22 Most candidates were aware of ways in which globalisation may affect social mobility. Answers included both social mobility for migrants, ability to move to take advantage of employment and lifestyle opportunities, and threats to employment in the UK, leading to downward social mobility, as companies close down or relocate.

Q23 Good answers here applied the item, usually by looking at ways in which women's lower average earnings affected power within families, and at how routes to management and higher positions within companies can be blocked for women, affecting their power within businesses. This question referred specifically to the United Kingdom and so answers about other countries could not be credited.

Q24 There was some good knowledge of functionalist explanations of stratification, though often with reliance on the item. Evaluation was usually by comparisons with Marxist and/or feminist approaches, or using criticisms of stratification from, for example, Wilkinson and Pickett. Some answers drifted away from the question to general accounts of the perspectives with less application.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

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