
A-LEVEL SOCIOLOGY

7192/2 Topics in Sociology
Report on the Examination

7192/2
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General comments

It was encouraging that many students were able to use contemporary issues and examples in their answers. This showed the ability to use their sociological imaginations to apply what they had learned to the world around them. This was particularly evident in answers on Section A Topic 1 (Culture and Identity) and Section B Topic 3 (Media).

There were a significant number of scripts which were partly or wholly illegible. Despite our very best efforts, 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.

Some students wrote all they knew about one or more terms in a question. Students should read questions carefully to work out what is being asked for. For example, A2 question 6 asked about how demographic changes had affected families. Some answers included a lot of material on reasons for demographic changes, which were not asked for.

Most students answered their chosen questions in the order in which they appeared on the question paper. They therefore answered the section B 20 mark question last. For some this was a relatively brief and often apparently unfinished answer. This suggests that students need to track carefully time spent on each question.

A small number of students answered all or most questions, rather than one topic from each section. It is important for students to see a full Paper 2 question paper before they sit the exam. This will help them find their topics on the exam paper.

Evaluation is the most challenging skill. The most successful evaluation weighs the strengths and limitations of a theory, claim or similar and reaches a reasoned judgement. This receives more credit than a learned criticism, or a statement, without explanation, that two theories or views are different.

The quality of knowledge and understanding varied considerably. Credit is given for use of sociological concepts, theories, research findings, names of sociologists and so on. Suggestions of studies are given in the mark schemes. Knowing some sociologists and studies helps students develop and give structure to their answers. Wordings such as “some sociologists argue that...” are used in items so that students can build on them eg by naming a theory or sociologist. They are better not used in student answers.

General comments on 10 mark questions

The nature of these questions means that students cannot rely on reciting knowledge. Questions will ask them to bring together aspects of their sociological knowledge in ways they are unlikely to have done before. It is therefore important for students to allow time to think about how to answer the question.

Students should be made aware that there are two types of 10 mark questions. These have different requirements and different mark schemes. There are different marks available for the assessment objectives.

10 mark “outline and explain” questions have more marks available for knowledge and understanding, and none for evaluation.

The items for 10 mark “analyse” questions are written to give prompts or “hooks” for student answers. These have to be used to access application marks. Answers can indicate use of hooks by quoting, by a reference in parentheses or by wording (eg “As the item says...”). Items end with a sentence restating the question; the hooks are in the preceding part of the item.

Introductions and conclusions are not required for 10 mark questions and take up valuable time.

It is helpful if answers are set out to clearly indicate the two separate points, with wording such as “One way/reason is...” or by starting a new paragraph for the second point. Answers that give more than two points are unlikely to develop two of them sufficiently.

General comments on 20 mark questions

The purpose of the items for these questions is to suggest a few starting points for students, including ways into evaluation. Students are expected to also bring in further ideas (“and your knowledge” in the instruction).

A wide range of material can be relevant to these questions, so students need to be selective. It is more effective to cover a limited number of views/theories in depth rather than to include every possible theory.

Students who made essay plans appeared to benefit by having more structured and coherent responses.

Culture and Identity

Question 1: This was well answered. Students were able to develop points about, for example, products or services based on sexuality and ways that consumption can symbolise sexual identity.

Question 2: Again, this was generally well answered but some wrote about other agencies of socialisation than those given in the item.

Question 3: This produced some good answers. Most were aware of sociological ideas about the self and interpretivism. They were also able to evaluate using Marxism and other theories.

Families and Households

Question 4: This was generally answered quite well, with answers often citing changes in values or legal changes. Some did not explicitly state what the change to pattern of marriage was, although this was usually implicit from the context.

Question 5: Some did not approach this as a Families and Households question, focusing instead on employment and taking “domestic” as the opposite of “foreign”. Most were able to draw on the item to develop points about migration and household appliances. Some of the best answers developed these ideas through gendered division of domestic labour, analysing the impact on conjugal roles.

Question 6: Students were knowledgeable about demographic changes but some gave descriptive accounts rather than focusing on effects on families. Many included a debate about nuclear families as opposed to family diversity, using theories. This sometimes focused on more general arguments rather than connecting these with demographic changes.

Health

Question 7: Successful answers developed points about, for example, medical tourism and the availability (or not) in the UK of medicines and procedures.

Question 8: Region is included in the specification for this topic, and was explained in the item. The item helped students make points about the ways in which health care provision may vary between urban and rural areas, and between areas with different levels of prosperity.

Question 9: Answers showed awareness of the debate between the different perspectives on labelling, structural and cultural factors in explaining mental illness. Better answers were able to use points from the item effectively, expand on them and bring in other relevant material.

Wealth, Welfare and Poverty

Question 10: Answers often considered how new technology can both make some skills and jobs redundant and can create new opportunities. “Life chances” tended to be taken as employment; looking beyond this would give greater scope for developing points.

Question 11: Answers developed from “educational opportunities” in the item to discuss, for example, apprenticeships. Points from the reference in the item to support for businesses tended to be less well developed.

Question 12: Answers showed a good range of knowledge on sociological explanations of the distribution of poverty. Because of the number of explanations that could be discussed, this was a question where it benefited students to be selective. This gave the opportunity for some depth to answers.

Beliefs

Question 13: Many answers were able to identify two ways that globalisation has affected religion, for example how new media can provide access to a range of beliefs online. The connection to the functions of religion was often less clear and led to less successful answers.

Question 14: This was generally answered well. Sometimes there was overlap between the two reasons, or the claim about religion lacked a comparison with science. A small minority of students misread the question, reading it as asking why science had a greater influence than religion.

Question 15: The best answers here were very good, applying a range of ideas from across the topic to ethnicity. Some answers were brief, perhaps because this question was being answered last. Others drifted from the question to, for example, a general discussion of secularisation.

Global Development

Question 16: Most answers were able to identify two ways education affects global inequalities. Ways included how girls are often disadvantaged in education or how education can help girls escape restrictive roles. Others looked at how education can help redress inequalities in aspects of development such as health.

Question 17: Most answers were able to develop from the item two ways in which globalisation may bring about political change in developing countries. Better answers often included good contemporary examples, such as states restricting citizen access to social media to prevent change.

Question 18: There were some very good answers analysing other measures of development such as the Human Development Index, Sustainable Development Goals and indices of sustainability and happiness. Most students showed a good knowledge of theories as well. Sometimes, however, discussion of a theory led to a loss of focus on the question.

Media

Question 19: This was generally well done, with most able to discuss two ways in which the new media may affect audiences. Some weaker answers were about media generally, for example outlining models of media effects without considering how these apply to new media.

Question 20: Most answers were able to develop from the item two ways that globalisation affects the content of the news. Popular answers included citizen journalism and the immediacy of reporting leading to less checking of facts and more misleading information.

Question 21: There were a wide range of responses with some sophisticated answers applying conceptually detailed knowledge supported by theories and examples. Weaker answers made insubstantial points and had undeveloped examples, or considered only females.

Stratification

Question 22: Most were able to answer this question adequately. Many focused on discrimination and restricted access as ways, but some lacked sociology and were very generalised.

Question 23: Most students were able to develop two points from the item. Some students seemed not to recognise the term 'transnational capitalist class', although it is part of the specification for this topic.

Question 24: There were some good outlines of Marxist views, and most answers compared and contrasted Marxism with other perspectives. This was less effective when the other perspectives interrogated each other rather than Marxism. Sections on, for example, functionalist criticisms of feminism, drifted a long way from the question.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

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