

GCE 2005

January Series



Mark Scheme

Sociology

Unit SC5W

Mark schemes are prepared by the Principal Examiner and considered, together with the relevant questions, by a panel of subject teachers. This mark scheme includes any amendments made at the standardisation meeting attended by all examiners and is the scheme which was used by them in this examination. The standardisation meeting ensures that the mark scheme covers the candidates' responses to questions and that every examiner understands and applies it in the same correct way. As preparation for the standardisation meeting each examiner analyses a number of candidates' scripts: alternative answers not already covered by the mark scheme are discussed at the meeting and legislated for. If, after this meeting, examiners encounter unusual answers which have not been discussed at the meeting they are required to refer these to the Principal Examiner.

It must be stressed that a mark scheme is a working document, in many cases further developed and expanded on the basis of candidates' reactions to a particular paper. Assumptions about future mark schemes on the basis of one year's document should be avoided; whilst the guiding principles of assessment remain constant, details will change, depending on the content of a particular examination paper.

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**GUIDANCE NOTES IN THE USE OF GENERAL AND QUESTION SPECIFIC
MARK SCHEMES FOR UNITS 4 AND 5**

TWO RELATED MARK SCHEMES ARE PROVIDED

Examiners are required to consult and apply the two related mark schemes as follows:

A General Mark Scheme made up of two sections on:

- (i) Knowledge and Understanding;
- (ii) Identification, Analysis, Interpretation and Evaluation.

A Question Specific Mark Scheme made up of one section on:

- (i) Knowledge and Understanding. This will enable examiners to assess the knowledge and understanding requirements of particular questions.

Marking

In the process of marking a particular question, you must follow the procedure detailed below in marking the different Skill Domains:

- (i) **Knowledge and Understanding**

Refer to the Question Specific Mark Scheme and the General Mark Scheme.

- (ii) **Identification, Analysis, Interpretation and Evaluation**

Refer to the General Mark Scheme.

Each answer should be assessed separately for each of the two Skill Domains and the mark for each Skill Domain recorded and totalled to give an overall mark. For example in the case of an answer which was rewarded 6 marks for Knowledge and Understanding and 6 for Identification, Analysis, Interpretation and Evaluation, the total mark for this answer would be 12.

QUALITY OF WRITTEN COMMUNICATION

Where candidates are required to produce extended written material in English, the scheme of assessment must make specific reference to the assessment of the quality of written communication. Candidates must be required to:

- select and use a form and style of writing appropriate to purpose and complex subject matter;
- organise relevant information clearly and coherently, using specialist vocabulary when appropriate;
- ensure text is legible, and spelling, grammar and punctuation are accurate, so that meaning is clear.

The assessment criteria for quality of written communication apply to the assessment of Question 1 (d) and Questions 2 and 3. The following criteria should be applied in conjunction with the mark schemes (the general mark scheme and the question specific mark scheme).

The quality of written communication bands must be regarded as integral to the appropriate mark scheme band even though they are listed separately in the mark scheme. Examiners should note that, in the assessment of candidates' sociological knowledge and skills, the assessment of the Quality of Written Communication will be judged through the assessment of the clarity and appropriateness of the sociological material presented.

Question 1 (d)

In the 1 – 3 band, candidates' answers are likely to be characterised by the poor logical expression of ideas and the use of a limited range of conceptual terms, perhaps often used imprecisely and/or inaccurately. Spelling, punctuation and grammar may show serious deficiencies and frequent errors, perhaps impairing the intelligibility of significant parts of the answer.

In the 4 – 7 band, candidates' answers are likely to be characterised by the fair to good logical expression of ideas and the competent use of a reasonable range of conceptual terms. Spelling, punctuation and grammar will be of a reasonable standard. Commonly used words and sociological terms will generally be spelt correctly. There may be minor errors of punctuation and grammar, but these will not seriously impair the intelligibility of the answer.

In the 8 – 10 band, candidates' answers are likely to be characterised by the very good to excellent logical expression of ideas and the precise use of a broad range of conceptual terms. Spelling, punctuation and grammar will be of a very good to excellent standard. Commonly and less commonly used words and sociological terms will almost always be spelt correctly. Punctuation and grammar will be used correctly throughout to facilitate the intelligibility of the answer.

Questions 2 and 3

In the 1 – 5 band, candidates' answers are likely to be characterised by the very poor logical expression of ideas and the use of a very limited range of conceptual terms, perhaps often used imprecisely and/or inaccurately. Spelling, punctuation and grammar may show serious deficiencies and frequent errors, impairing the intelligibility of significant parts of the answer.

In the 6 – 10 band, candidates' answers are likely to be characterised by the generally fair logical expression of ideas, though perhaps with some occasional flaws, and the use of a somewhat limited range of conceptual terms, perhaps sometimes used imprecisely and/or inaccurately. Spelling, punctuation and grammar will be fair. Commonly used words and sociological terms will mostly be spelt correctly. There may be some errors in punctuation and grammar which impair the intelligibility of some parts of the answer.

In the 11 – 15 band, candidates' answers are likely to be characterised by the reasonable to good logical expression of ideas and the competent use of a reasonable range of conceptual terms. Spelling, punctuation and grammar will be of a good standard. Commonly used words and sociological terms will be spelt correctly. Punctuation and grammar will be of a good standard facilitating a competent expression of ideas.

In the 16 – 20 band, candidates' answers are likely to be characterised by the very good to excellent logical expression of ideas and the precise use of a broad range of conceptual terms. Spelling, punctuation and grammar will be of a very good to excellent standard, with commonly and less commonly used words and sociological terms almost always spelt correctly. Meaning will be clear throughout.

GENERAL MARK SCHEME FOR UNITS 4 AND 5**Knowledge and Understanding**

- 0** No relevant knowledge or understanding.
- 1 - 5** Answers in this band will show a very limited sociological knowledge and understanding.
- Lower in the band, knowledge will consist of commonsensical points. Answers will show only minimal understanding of either the question or the material offered in response to it.
- Higher in the band, knowledge will consist of a few isolated quasi-sociological points, with omissions and perhaps with significant errors. Understanding both of the question and of material offered in response to it will be very simplistic and perhaps confused.
- 6 - 10** Answers in this band will show a somewhat limited sociological knowledge and understanding.
- Lower in the band, there will be a shallow knowledge of a limited amount of sociological material, perhaps with errors. Understanding both of the question and the material presented in response to it will be superficial.
- Higher in the band, there will be a reasonably accurate but rather shallow and descriptive knowledge of a still limited amount of sociological material, or alternatively a slightly deeper but very narrow knowledge. There may be a generalised understanding of the question, or one which shows a specific understanding of only a very limited aspect of the question.
- 11 - 15** Answers in this band will show a reasonably good sociological knowledge and understanding.
- Lower in the band, there will be a reasonably accurate knowledge of a range of sociological material with some limited success in conveying conceptual detail, or alternatively a more conceptually detailed but narrowly based knowledge. Knowledge shown may be either theoretical, empirical or both. Answers will show a specific understanding of some of the demands of the question and of the material offered in response to it, but other aspects will be neglected or treated in a generalised fashion.
- Higher in the band there will be somewhat greater success in conveying conceptual detail, or a slightly greater breadth, of knowledge; however, answers will remain somewhat limited in range or depth. Knowledge shown will be both theoretical and empirical. There will be a specific understanding of most of the principal demands or aspects of the question, but some others will be neglected or treated in a generalised fashion.
- 16 - 20** Answers in this band will show a very good sociological knowledge and understanding.
- Lower in the band, there will be a wide-ranging theoretical and empirical knowledge which will, with only very minor exceptions, be thorough, accurate and conceptually detailed. Accurate and explicit links will be made between some of the theoretical and empirical material. There will be a clear understanding both of the question, including its theoretical context, and of the material offered in response to it.
- Higher in the band, knowledge will be comprehensive and will be thorough, accurate and conceptually detailed throughout. There will be a clear understanding of the theoretical context of the question, and there will be accurate and explicit links between the theoretical and empirical parts of the answer. Answers will show a clear, full and complex understanding of the question and the material offered.

GENERAL MARK SCHEME FOR UNITS 4 AND 5**Identification, Analysis, Interpretation and Evaluation**

- 0** No relevant identification, analysis, interpretation or evaluation.
- 1 - 5** Answers in this band will show very limited skills of identification, analysis, interpretation and evaluation.

Lower in the band, identification of perspectives/arguments will be very limited and/or inaccurate. There will be little or no evidence of the ability to distinguish between facts, opinions and value judgements. Interpretation of the question and the material offered in answer to it will be minimal and/or confused. Analysis of arguments and/or methodological issues, if present, will be very limited. Evaluation may be absent or limited to one or two undeveloped examples.

Higher in the band, there will be some limited and undeveloped identification of perspectives, arguments and/or methodological issues, and some evidence of the ability to distinguish between facts, opinions and value judgements. There will be some limited interpretation of the question and/or the material offered in answer to it. Analysis, if present, will be undeveloped and possibly contain inaccuracies. Evaluation may be implicit or confined to one or two critical comments on some aspect of the question or general topic area.

- 6 - 10** Answers in this band will show somewhat limited skills of identification, analysis, interpretation and evaluation.

Lower in the band, identification of perspectives/arguments will be broadly accurate, although limited and undeveloped. Attempts to distinguish between facts, opinions and value judgements will show some sociological awareness. Interpretation of the question and the material offered in answer to it will be limited but broadly sociological. Examples may be undeveloped or applied to the general topic area rather than the set question. Analysis of material, if present, will be partial and poorly focused. Evaluation may take the form of a weak juxtaposition and/or brief list of criticisms of a study, concept, perspective or method.

Higher in the band, arguments/perspectives will be accurately identified, and there will be clear evidence of the ability to distinguish between facts, opinions and value judgements. Interpretation will be focused and examples will show some development and be broadly applied to the question set. There will be some, albeit limited and undeveloped, attempt to analyse material. There will be a few explicit points or criticisms raised.

- 11 - 15** Answers in this band will show reasonably good skills of identification, analysis, interpretation and evaluation.

Lower in the band, there will be some explicit and largely successful attempts to identify and interpret sociological arguments and perspectives. There will be a general awareness of methodological issues. Analysis may remain undeveloped and/or partial. There will be some explicit evaluation, although this may be one-sided and/or undeveloped.

Higher in the band, the use of skills will be more balanced and comprehensive. Sociological arguments, perspectives and methodological issues will be accurately identified and interpreted and examples will be generally applied to the question. Both analysis and evaluation will be explicit, though not necessarily fully developed or comprehensive.

16 - 20 Answers in this band will show very good skills of identification, analysis, interpretation and evaluation, applied to a range of sociological ideas, evidence and issues.

Lower in the band, sociological arguments and perspectives will be, with only very minor exceptions, accurately identified and successfully interpreted to meet the demands of the question. Analysis and evaluation of a wide range of material, including methodological issues, will be thorough, comprehensive and balanced.

Higher in the band, all the skills will be demonstrated in a thorough, accurate and comprehensive manner throughout. There will be clear evidence that identification, interpretation, analysis and evaluation follow a clear rationale and are applied with sensitivity and sophistication. Evaluative comparisons and contrasts may be made between different areas of sociology, and analysis and argument may be applied to wider and possibly more complex issues than those raised by the set question.

SECTION A – THEORY AND METHODS

Answer **all** parts of this Section.

Total for this Section: 20 marks

- | |
|---|
| 1 (a) Identify the sociological term that describes the process of using a range of different methods to check or compare results (Item A). (2 marks) |
|---|

Two marks for a correct identification such as triangulation or methodological pluralism.
One mark for a partial identification, such as pluralism.

- | |
|---|
| (b) Identify and briefly explain two reasons why some researchers might choose overt rather than covert participant observation. (4 marks) |
|---|

One mark for each of two reasons identified, such as:

- avoids risks of ‘going native’;
- allows researcher to ask questions;
- easier to get in or get out;
- some people do not want to deceive subjects;
- allows researcher to avoid instances where illegality might be an issue;
- makes it easier to record data.

One further mark for each brief explanation, such as:

- avoids risks of ‘going native’: being covert the researcher would be just like any other member and thus will share confidences, ideas and thoughts and might become too immersed in the group culture;
- allows researcher to ask questions: given that there is no attempt to cover up the nature of their activity the researcher can ask for explanations for things that s/he does not fully understand, without running the risk of damaging their observation.

- | |
|---|
| (c) Identify and briefly explain two criticisms of qualitative research methods. (4 marks) |
|---|

One mark for each of two criticisms identified, such as:

- getting too close to or involved with subjects;
- methods rely too much on the experience of the individual researcher;
- methods require the researcher to make too many personal judgements;
- research is unlikely to be replicable, tends to be one-off;
- recording data with some methods is erratic.

One further mark for each of two explanations, such as:

- Getting too close to or involved with subjects: it is inevitable that sympathies might develop towards the group or individuals that would reduce the objectivity of the study;
- Methods rely too much on the experience of the individual researcher: skills in either questioning or observing have to be built up and are very specific to the researcher and different from those of other researchers.

(d) Examine some of the reasons why participant observation might be particularly suitable for researching topics such as those in Items A and B. (10 marks)

0 No relevant points.

1 – 3 Answers in this band will have only limited success in identifying, interpreting, analysing and evaluating material to meet the requirements of the question. There will be little evidence of relevant knowledge or understanding.

Lower in the band, one or two points may be made on participant observation or research in general. Alternatively there may be a tendency to recycle material from the Items without identifying specific points or analysing possible explanations.

Higher in the band, one or two factors related to participant observation may be mentioned with some limited attempt to address the question. Evaluation will be limited or non-existent. Understanding will be partial.

4 – 7 Answers in this band will be reasonably successful in identifying, interpreting, analysing and/or evaluating material to meet the requirements of the question.

Lower in the band, this may be confined to a competent if basic account, for example listing a number of advantages of participant observation, but with a limited focus on the question. Answers will show a reasonable underlying knowledge and understanding. Some limited explicit evaluation may be offered.

Higher in the band, answers will be more developed and focused. Knowledge and understanding will be broader and/or deeper and will begin to identify a wider range of material. There may still be a tendency to present the material in a rather list-like manner, for example briefly listing views from a number of different authors or studies. Knowledge and understanding may extend to an awareness of some theoretical aspects but these are likely to be undeveloped.

8 – 10 Answers in this band will be successful in identifying, interpreting, analysing and evaluating material to meet the requirements of the question. Analysis and evaluation will be explicit and relevant. Sociological knowledge will be more detailed, showing an understanding of a range of sociological material, drawn from the Item and elsewhere.

Lower in the band, interpretation may be less selective or evaluation less developed and more list-like.

Higher in the band, interpretation will be more focused and evaluation more thorough, developed and explicit.

Answers will address the central issues of the question, such as researching sensitive, difficult, deviant or private areas of social life. Most answers may take as a starting point practical factors such as the ability to observe real life as it happens, experiencing the same milieu as those observed, researching issues that require time and patience and don't lend themselves to quick methods such as questionnaires, but may then go on to theoretical aspects of research. Issues relating to the reliability and validity of data are likely to be discussed. Whilst some awareness of practical and theoretical factors should be expected to get to the top of the band, full marks are possible for an answer with the focus significantly more on one aspect than the other.

SECTION B – THEORY AND METHODS

Answer **one** question from this Section.

Total for this Section: 40 marks

2 “Choices of topic and method in sociological research are more likely to be made on practical rather than ideological, theoretical or ethical grounds.”

To what extent do sociological arguments and evidence support this view of sociological research? *(40 marks)*

Knowledge and Understanding**20 marks**

0 No knowledge or understanding relevant to the set question.

1 – 5 Answers in this band will show very limited sociological knowledge and understanding.

Lower in the band, candidates will present an answer based on a common sense understanding of research methods rather than sociological arguments or evidence. There will be only a peripheral link to the question with little evidence that the candidate has understood either the question or the material offered in response to it.

Higher in the band, candidates may present a flawed account of knowledge on research or sociology in general. The answer is likely to be characterised by isolated or disjointed points that show very little understanding. The material is still likely to lack a clear focus and is unlikely to raise issues stemming from the question set. Conceptual terms will tend to be used imprecisely or inaccurately and meaning will be unclear.

At this level possible answers might include:

- some isolated points about different research methods; or,
- some flawed material from different perspectives.

6 – 10 Answers in this band will show limited sociological knowledge and understanding.

Lower in the band, candidates will present knowledge on the set question which is likely to contain inaccuracies and some confusion in understanding. Knowledge is likely to be stronger than understanding. Answers at this level may contain significant amounts of irrelevant material.

At this level possible answers might include:

- a brief list of factors related to different research methods; or,
- some disjointed but basically accurate material from one or more perspective(s); or,
- a list of examples of research or studies from different perspectives.

Higher in the band, candidates will present an essentially descriptive account of sociological knowledge on the question. Answers will display a basic understanding of the material presented, although a few inaccuracies may still be present. There will be a limited understanding of the demands of the question set.

At this level possible answers might include:

- outlines of one or two studies focused more on the topic area than the question set, possibly Whyte, Laud Humphreys, Dobash & Dobash, or similar; or,
- a more extensive list of factors related to choices of different research methods; or,
- more coherent and accurate material from one or more perspective(s) but lacking detail on the implications for research methods.

11 – 15 Answers in this band will show reasonably good sociological knowledge and understanding.

Lower in the band, candidates may present accounts that are still somewhat generalised and descriptive and often narrowly focused.

At this level possible answers might include:

- more detailed descriptions of studies focused more on a substantive topic area than the question set, possibly Whyte, Laud Humphreys, Dobash & Dobash or similar and with the question largely implicit; or,
- a more extensive list of factors related to choices of different research methods and with a limited theoretical structure; or,
- coherent and broadly accurate material from two or more perspectives but with only limited development on the implications for research methodology.

Higher in the band, candidates' answers will present an increased amount of appropriate empirical and/or theoretical detail, and will be increasingly accurate and organised. There will be evidence that theoretical debates are understood. Candidates will display a clear understanding of the demands of the set question.

At this level possible answers might include:

- more detailed descriptions of studies focused on the question set, but with a limited theoretical structure; or,
- fuller and more accurate descriptions of factors related to choices of different research methods but still with a fairly limited theoretical structure; or,
- coherent and broadly accurate material from two or more perspectives and with more development on the implications for research methodology.

16 – 20 Answers in this band will show very good sociological knowledge and understanding.

Lower in the band, candidates' answers will demonstrate a thorough and accurate knowledge on the set question and a very good understanding of a range of relevant empirical and theoretical material.

At this level possible answers might include:

- increasingly full, accurate and wider descriptions of factors related to choices of different research methods and with a clear theoretical structure; or,
- coherent and accurate material from a range of perspectives and with concepts such as reliability, validity and triangulation understood and discussed; or,
- detailed and/or referenced accounts of research studies with concepts and/or ideological issues accurately explored and clearly understood.

Higher in the band, the links between theoretical and empirical material will be made more explicit. Accounts of studies and theories will be more detailed and the understanding of the debate and its complexities made explicit.

At this level possible answers might also include some of the following:

- discussion of the pragmatic nature of many research decisions;
- political and funding influences on research;
- awareness of the complex nature of ethical factors and their relationship to research.

In answering this question, candidates may refer to a range of different appropriate sources depending on the substantive area/s they choose to illustrate their answers.

3 Assess the usefulness of structural approaches to our understanding of society.	<i>(40 marks)</i>
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Knowledge and Understanding**20 marks**

0 No knowledge or understanding relevant to the set question.

1 – 5 Answers in this band will show very limited sociological knowledge and understanding.

Lower in the band, candidates will present an answer based on a common sense understanding of society rather than sociological arguments or evidence. There will be only a peripheral link to the question with little evidence that the candidate has understood either the question or the material offered in response to it.

Higher in the band, candidates may present a flawed account of knowledge on contemporary society or sociology in general. The answer is likely to be characterised by isolated or disjointed points that show very little understanding. The material is still likely to lack a clear focus and is unlikely to raise issues stemming from the question set. Conceptual terms will tend to be used imprecisely or inaccurately and meaning will be unclear.

At this level possible answers might include:

- some isolated points about social structures; or,
- some flawed material from theories of society.

6 – 10 Answers in this band will show limited sociological knowledge and understanding.

Lower in the band, candidates will present knowledge on the set question which is likely to contain inaccuracies and some confusion in understanding. Knowledge is likely to be stronger than understanding. Answers at this level may contain significant amounts of irrelevant material.

At this level possible answers might include:

- a brief list of factors related to contemporary society; or,
- some disjointed but basically accurate material from one or more perspective(s); or,
- a brief list of examples of factors related to social structures – e.g. groups, subcultures, social classes, etc.

Higher in the band, candidates will present an essentially descriptive account of sociological knowledge on the question. Answers will display a basic understanding of the material presented, although a few inaccuracies may still be present. There will be a limited understanding of the demands of the question set.

At this level possible answers might include:

- outlines of one or two studies focused more on a substantive topic area than the question set, possibly Durkheim, Marx or Oakley; or,
- a list of factors related to social structures and contemporary society, for example socialisation, norms, rules, status, etc.;
- more coherent and accurate material from one or more perspective(s), possibly in a simple juxtaposition, but lacking focus on the question set.

11 – 15 Answers in this band will show reasonably good sociological knowledge and understanding.

Lower in the band, candidates may present accounts that are still somewhat generalised and descriptive and often narrowly focused.

At this level possible answers might include:

- more detailed descriptions of studies focused more on a substantive topic area than the question set, possibly Durkheim, Marx or Oakley and with the question largely implicit; or,
- a list of factors and/or examples related to social structures and society and with a limited theoretical structure; or,
- coherent and broadly accurate material from two or more perspectives, possibly a developed juxtaposition, but with only limited development on understanding society.

Higher in the band, candidates' answers will present an increased amount of appropriate empirical and/or theoretical detail, and will be increasingly accurate and organised. There will be evidence that the theoretical debate is understood. Candidates will display a clear understanding of the demands of the set question.

At this level possible answers might include:

- more detailed descriptions of studies focused on the question set, but with a limited theoretical structure; or,
- fuller and more accurate accounts of factors and/or examples related to social structures but still with limited theoretical structure; or,
- coherent and broadly accurate material from two or more perspectives and with more development on understanding society.

16 – 20 Answers in this band will show very good sociological knowledge and understanding.

Lower in the band, candidates' answers will demonstrate a thorough and accurate knowledge on the set question and a very good understanding of a range of relevant empirical and theoretical material.

At this level possible answers might include:

- increasingly full, accurate and wider accounts of factors and/or examples related to social structures and with a clear theoretical structure; or,
- coherent and accurate material from a range of perspectives and with concepts such as social systems, consensus, interrelationships, socialisation, meta-narratives, subordination and domination understood and discussed; or,
- detailed and/or referenced accounts of studies on the question set with concepts and/or ideological issues accurately explored and clearly understood.

Higher in the band, the links between theoretical and empirical material will be made more explicit. Accounts of studies and theories will be more detailed and the understanding of the debate and its complexities made explicit.

At this level possible answers might also include some of the following:

- greater awareness of the complexity of ideological issues;
- greater understanding of the chronology of the debate between perspectives;
- greater awareness and understanding of attempts to update classic theories – e.g. considering neo-Marxism or post-structural feminism.

In answering this question, candidates may refer to some of the following sources and/or relevant alternative ones: sources referred to may vary depending on the substantive area from which the candidate draws the material, but could include: Marx, Durkheim, Parsons, Weber, Merton, Oakley, Baudrillard, Lyotard, Holland, Jones, Foucault, Bauman.

