



General Certificate of Education  
Advanced Subsidiary Examination  
January 2009

## Sociology

## SCLY1

### Unit 1

Friday 9 January 2009 9.00 am to 10.00 am

**For this paper you must have:**

- an 8-page answer book.

**Time allowed**

- 1 hour

**Instructions**

- Use black ink or black ball-point pen.
- Write the information required on the front of your answer book. The **Examining Body** for this paper is AQA. The **Paper Reference** is SCLY1.
- This paper is divided into **three** Sections.  
Choose **one** Section and answer **all** parts of the question from that Section.  
Do **not** answer questions from more than one Section.
- Do all rough work in your answer book. Cross through any work that you do not want to be marked.

**Information**

- The marks for part-questions are shown in brackets.
- The maximum mark for this paper is 60.
- Parts (d) and (e) of your chosen question should be answered in continuous prose. In these part-questions you will be marked on your ability to:
  - use good English
  - organise information clearly, and
  - use specialist vocabulary where appropriate.

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Choose **one** Section and answer **all** parts of the question from that Section.

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**SECTION A: CULTURE AND IDENTITY**

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**Total for this section: 60 marks**

**1** Read **Items 1A and 1B** below and answer parts (a) to (e) that follow.

**Item 1A**

Socialisation refers to the way in which we learn the culture of society, including norms and values. These norms and values help to ensure that we perform the roles expected of us by society and they are enforced by society through a system of rewards and punishments. Subcultures may develop among different social groups, especially as society becomes more diverse.

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**Item 1B**

Feminist sociologists have been influential in showing that gender is an important aspect of identity. Women experience the social world in different ways from men in areas such as education, work and the family. Different gender roles and expectations are a feature of the socialisation process.

However, some sociologists emphasise the differences between people of the same gender. There are now a variety of ways to be a woman or a man. For instance, the experience of being female has fragmented, and it varies, depending on factors such as age, ethnicity and class. Furthermore, some postmodernist writers argue that people can choose their gender identity from a range of identities that are now on offer in society.

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- (a) Explain what is meant by a subculture (**Item 1A**, line 4). *(2 marks)*
- (b) Explain the difference between norms and values (**Item 1A**, line 2). *(4 marks)*
- (c) Suggest **three** ways in which the culture of the United Kingdom is affected by global culture. *(6 marks)*
- (d) Examine sociological contributions to our understanding of youth culture. *(24 marks)*
- (e) Using material from **Item 1B** and elsewhere, assess the view that gender identities are increasingly varied in today's society. *(24 marks)*

**Turn over for Section B**

**Turn over ►**

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**SECTION B: FAMILIES AND HOUSEHOLDS**

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**Total for this section: 60 marks**

**2** Read **Items 2A** and **2B** below and answer parts (a) to (e) that follow.

**Item 2A**

Functionalists argue that the family contributes to the maintenance of the social system and that individuals benefit from the security and mutual support that the family provides. However, critics suggest that these views are optimistic and idealistic, and do not reflect the reality of family life. For example, feminists are highly critical of the family and the traditional expressive role that functionalists identify for women. Instead, feminists focus on the ways in which family life may have a harmful effect on women.

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**Item 2B**

A popular image of the family has been the ‘cereal packet’ nuclear family norm of a married couple and two children who are the couple’s biological offspring. The husband is the main breadwinner and the wife is primarily concerned with housework and childcare.

It could be argued that this nuclear family is no longer the norm. A number of changes have taken place, such as the rise in the number of same-sex couples and of lone parents. These have resulted in families becoming much more diverse.

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However, Somerville (2000) argues that these changes are exaggerated. The apparent diversity of family life is based on a snapshot at any one time and, if a life cycle approach is taken, many people have a fairly conventional experience of the family.

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- (a) Explain what is meant by the ‘expressive role’ (**Item 2A**, line 5). *(2 marks)*
- (b) Suggest **two** ways in which ‘family life may have a harmful effect on women’ (**Item 2A**, lines 6–7). *(4 marks)*
- (c) Suggest **three** reasons for the decrease in the death rate since 1900. *(6 marks)*
- (d) Examine the ways in which childhood can be said to be socially constructed. *(24 marks)*
- (e) Using material from **Item 2B** and elsewhere, assess the view that the nuclear family is no longer the norm. *(24 marks)*

**Turn over for Section C**

**Turn over ►**

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**SECTION C: WEALTH, POVERTY AND WELFARE**

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**Total for this section: 60 marks**

- 3 Read **Items 3A** and **3B** below and answer parts (a) to (e) that follow.

**Item 3A**

Poverty is not distributed evenly across the population of the United Kingdom. Some social groups are more likely to experience poverty than others. For example, disabled people are more likely to be in poverty, as are families with young children.

Alongside government efforts to help the poor, charities and voluntary organisations also aim to support groups in need. For example, the charity Scope provides information and support for people with cerebral palsy. Some people argue that charities and voluntary organisations are better placed than the government to help those in need.

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**Item 3B**

Using an absolute measure of poverty, some sociologists argue that poverty no longer exists in today's society. Compared with people in the past, and with many people around the world today, ordinary people in Britain nowadays are not poor. They have access to a range of benefits that the state provides and most have access to a greater range of material goods than ever before.

Critics of this view use alternative definitions of poverty. They use a relative measure and make comparisons between different groups in society. Furthermore, society's expectations and views about what is an acceptable standard of living have changed considerably over time.

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- (a) Suggest **two** social groups likely to experience poverty, **apart from** those mentioned in **Item 3A**. *(4 marks)*
- (b) Suggest **two** reasons why families with young children are more likely to experience poverty (**Item 3A**, line 3). *(4 marks)*
- (c) Suggest **two** reasons why charities and voluntary organisations may be ‘better placed than the government to help those in need’ (**Item 3A**, lines 7– 8). *(4 marks)*
- (d) Examine the reasons for the unequal distribution of wealth and income in the United Kingdom. *(24 marks)*
- (e) Using material from **Item 3B** and elsewhere, assess the view that poverty no longer exists in today’s society. *(24 marks)*

**END OF QUESTIONS**

**There are no questions printed on this page**