



General Certificate of Education  
Advanced Subsidiary Examination  
January 2010

## Sociology

## SCLY2

### Unit 2

Tuesday 19 January 2010 1.30 pm to 3.30 pm

**For this paper you must have:**

- a 12-page answer book.

**Time allowed**

- 2 hours

**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 SCLY2.
- This paper is divided into **two** Sections.  
Choose **one** Section and answer **all** the questions from that Section.  
Do **not** answer questions from more than one Section.
- Do all rough work in your answer book. Cross through any work you do not want to be marked.

**Information**

- The marks for part-questions are shown in brackets.
- The maximum mark for this paper is 90.
- Questions and part-questions carrying 12 or more marks should be answered in continuous prose. In these questions and part-questions you will be marked on your ability to:
  - use good English
  - organise information clearly
  - use specialist vocabulary where appropriate.

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Choose **either** Section A **or** Section B and answer **all** the questions from that Section.

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**SECTION A: EDUCATION WITH RESEARCH METHODS**

You are advised to spend approximately 50 minutes on Question 1

You are advised to spend approximately 30 minutes on Question 2

You are advised to spend approximately 40 minutes on Question 3

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**Total for this section: 90 marks**

**1** Read **Item A** below and answer parts (a) to (d) that follow.

**Item A**

Although the educational performance of both girls and boys has improved over the past twenty years, a significant gender gap in achievement has developed. Girls now outperform boys in most subjects and at most levels of education. This is especially true of pupils at GCSE where 10% more girls than boys achieve five or more A\* – C grades. 5

Some sociologists claim that gender differences in achievement are the result of changes in wider society, such as the impact of feminist ideas and changing employment opportunities for both girls and boys.

However, others argue that the education system has become ‘feminised’, for example through an emphasis on coursework in assessment, which may favour girls. 10  
Furthermore, a lack of male primary school teachers means that many boys do not have an adult male role model in their early experiences of school.

- (a) Explain what is meant by the term ‘ethnocentric curriculum’. (2 marks)
- (b) Suggest **three** ways in which Marxists see school as being similar to the world of work. (6 marks)
- (c) Outline some of the ways in which the labelling process may lead to educational under-achievement for some pupils. (12 marks)
- (d) Using material from **Item A** and elsewhere, assess the claim that gender differences in educational achievement are primarily the ‘result of changes in wider society’ (**Item A**, lines 6–7). (20 marks)

- 2 This question requires you to **apply** your knowledge and understanding of sociological research methods to the study of this **particular** issue in **education**.

Read **Item B** below and answer the question that follows.

**Item B**

**Investigating the effect of material deprivation on educational achievement**

Some sociologists claim that material deprivation is the main cause of educational under-achievement. ‘Material deprivation’ refers to a lack of material resources in the home background, such as low household income, poor housing and a lack of work space in the home.

Some sociologists use official statistics to investigate the nature and extent of material deprivation. As researchers usually want to know the general impact of a factor like material deprivation, official statistics are useful because they allow large-scale research to take place. However, official statistics may not tell us much about the way pupils actually respond to any material deprivation. The ways in which material deprivation are defined and measured in official statistics may also be different from the definitions and measurements used by the sociologist. 5  
10

An alternative research technique is to use unstructured interviews. Unstructured interviews allow younger pupils in particular the time they need to express themselves. This method also allows researchers to explore the sensitive issue of household income. However, this sensitivity may mean that parents and pupils do not wish to disclose their income to a stranger, especially in a face-to-face interview. 15

Using material from **Item B** and elsewhere, assess the strengths and limitations of **one** of the following methods for investigating the effect of material deprivation on educational achievement:

**EITHER** (i) unstructured interviews

**OR** (ii) official statistics.

*(20 marks)*

**Turn over for the next question**

**Turn over ►**

- 3 This question permits you to draw examples from **any areas** of sociology with which you are familiar.
- (a) Explain what is meant by the term 'hypothesis'. *(2 marks)*
  - (b) Suggest **two** advantages of using official statistics in sociological research. *(4 marks)*
  - (c) Suggest **two** problems that researchers may face when actively participating in the group they are studying. *(4 marks)*
  - (d) Examine the extent to which practical issues are the most important influence when selecting research methods and a research topic. *(20 marks)*

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**SECTION B: HEALTH WITH RESEARCH METHODS**

You are advised to spend approximately 50 minutes on Question 4

You are advised to spend approximately 30 minutes on Question 5

You are advised to spend approximately 40 minutes on Question 6

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**Total for this section: 90 marks**

**4** Read **Item C** below and answer parts (a) to (d) that follow.

**Item C**

At every stage of life – from birth to old age – mortality and survival rates show similar patterns: the higher the social class, the better the chance of survival. Regarding the causes of death, the lower classes are more vulnerable to almost all the killer diseases. Accidental death, whether by violence or injury, is also more common in the lower classes. 5

Those in lower social classes also experience more sickness and ill-health throughout their lives. For example, children from working-class families are more likely to have a lower birth weight.

Some sociologists argue that these class differences in health are the result of material differences between social classes, for example in terms of housing and work. 10  
However, cultural-behavioural explanations see health inequalities as the result of the health-damaging attitudes and behaviour of the lower classes.

Source: adapted from P. TAYLOR et al., *Sociology in Focus*, Causeway Press, 1995

- (a) Explain what is meant by the term ‘self-fulfilling prophecy’. (2 marks)
- (b) Suggest **three** reasons why women are more likely than men to visit their doctor. (6 marks)
- (c) Outline some of the criticisms sociologists make of the biomedical model of health. (12 marks)
- (d) Using material from **Item C** and elsewhere, assess sociological explanations of social class differences in health chances. (20 marks)

**Turn over for the next question**

**Turn over ►**

- 5 This question requires you to **apply** your knowledge and understanding of sociological research methods to the study of this **particular** issue in **health**.

Read **Item D** below and answer the question that follows.

**Item D**

**Investigating stigma in health care**

Stigma refers to the way certain conditions, behaviours or people may be defined negatively. Sociologists are interested in how people with certain medical conditions, such as being HIV-positive, may feel stigmatised by medical professionals during their treatment.

Some sociologists use unstructured interviews to investigate the way medical professionals interact with patients who are HIV-positive. This can involve interviewing both medical professionals and patients. Being HIV-positive is a socially sensitive condition, so there is a particular need to use methods such as unstructured interviews. However, unstructured interviews may place an unnecessary stress on HIV-positive patients. A further disadvantage is that, in interviews, the researcher only finds out how medical professionals *claim* to behave. 5

An alternative method is participant observation. By using participant observation, researchers may be able to see whether medical professionals do, in fact, stigmatise HIV-positive patients. However, GP surgery rooms and hospital wards are closed environments, which can cause problems for researchers using participant observation. There may also be difficulties for the researcher in adopting a suitable role when participating in medical settings. 10

Using material from **Item D** and elsewhere, assess the strengths and limitations of **one** of the following methods for investigating stigma in health care:

**EITHER** (i) unstructured interviews

**OR** (ii) participant observation.

(20 marks)

- 6 This question permits you to draw examples from **any areas** of sociology with which you are familiar.
- (a) Explain what is meant by the term 'hypothesis'. *(2 marks)*
  - (b) Suggest **two** advantages of using official statistics in sociological research. *(4 marks)*
  - (c) Suggest **two** ways a researcher could increase the response rate of a postal questionnaire. *(4 marks)*
  - (d) Examine the extent to which practical issues are the most important influence when selecting research methods and a research topic. *(20 marks)*

**END OF QUESTIONS**

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

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