

AS LEVEL

Examiners' report

SOCIOLOGY

H180

For first teaching in 2015

H180/02 Summer 2019 series

Version 1

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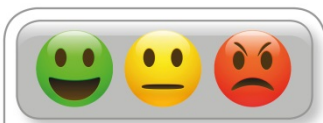
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Introduction

Our examiners' reports are produced to offer constructive feedback on candidates' performance in the examinations. They provide useful guidance for future candidates. The reports will include a general commentary on candidates' performance, identify technical aspects examined in the questions and highlight good performance and where performance could be improved. The reports will also explain aspects which caused difficulty and why the difficulties arose, whether through a lack of knowledge, poor examination technique, or any other identifiable and explainable reason.

Where overall performance on a question/question part was considered good, with no particular areas to highlight, these questions have not been included in the report. A full copy of the question paper can be downloaded from OCR.

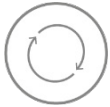
Paper 2 series overview

This was the fourth year of assessment for this paper and the vast majority of candidates seemed familiar with the structure of the question paper and attempted all the questions set. There were very few non-responses to particular questions and generally, almost all candidates understood the key command verbs such as “explain why” or “evaluate”. Timings and appropriate time spent on the different questions was generally successful so that only a tiny number of candidates did not finish the paper.

One particularly noticeable issue this year was the number of scripts with almost illegible handwriting – many scripts had to be read and re-read by examiners who regularly struggled to read long essays. It would be helpful if centres ensured that candidates with very poor handwriting are given computer provision to write their exams. Another issue that seems to continue each year and not improve is the use of paragraphs, particularly in the longer essay type questions like Question 4 and Question 6. These questions need a clear structure and paragraphs help candidates to clarify the different points they wish to make.

Key point call out

Candidates need to take care to use paragraphs in their longer responses and essays on Question 4 and Question 6, and use signposting phrases to make a clear distinction between the points they are making.

	<p>AfL</p>	<p>During revision exercises encourage students to plan essays to allow them to focus on how to structure responses making clear separate points in each separate paragraph. This then focuses on Level 3 skills which is “A well-developed line of reasoning which is clear and logically structured”</p>
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Section A overview

Many centres have prepared their students well in terms of their awareness of key skills such as Application (AO2) and Analysis and Evaluation (AO3) so that many clearly and consciously make statements linked to these skills. However, the ability to interpret the simple statistical data in Question 1 still poses a problem for many candidates, partly because they do not understand the term “trend” or “pattern” and simply lift random facts from the table.

Knowledge and understanding of key methodological theories and concepts does continue to improve, with the one notable exception of “reliability” which still continues to confuse many and which is regularly applied inaccurately.

Question 1

Source A

Item removed due to third party copyright restrictions


The graph above is based on official statistics about Households Below Average Income in the UK. Households defined as in poverty are those which receive less than 60% of the average income for all households.

Adapted from The Joseph Rowntree Foundation www.jrf.org.uk

- 1 Using data from **Source A** describe **two** conclusions which could be drawn about the relationship between a person's risk of poverty and their highest qualification. [4]

This question was generally not very well answered, with a number of responses appearing confused, so few gained full marks. A small number of candidates misinterpreted the content of the graph and thought that the poverty caused the lack of qualifications rather than the other way around. Some responses wasted time explaining the possible reasons why fewer qualifications could lead to poverty, but this is not necessary, as it is not asked for in the question.

When done well, candidates knew they had to describe two conclusions which could be drawn from the data provided and to “draw a conclusion” is not just copying figures from the graph. The good responses described a conclusion and then backed it up and developed the point with some sort of statistic from the graph. For example, if the conclusion was that the fewer qualifications you have, the more likely you are to be in poverty, the support for this is saying something like “for example 38% of those living in poverty had no qualifications COMPARED TO 15% of those who had a degree...” The best responses were written briefly and clearly and those candidates who wrote two separate paragraphs headed “The first conclusion is...This can be supported by the figures in the graph showing...” The second conclusion is...This can be supported by figures showing...” made it easier to clarify the two separate points.

	<p>AfL</p>	<p>Candidates should consider to check TUTS (Title, UNITS (% or millions) TIME and SOURCE (who produced it) in these questions before they start to write about Items</p>
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Exemplar 1

One conclusion is that those who had no qualifications were most likely to end up in poverty ^{as} just under 40% of people who achieved no qualifications receive less than 60% of the average income. However degree level were least likely to end up in poverty as only approximately 15% were which suggest that the higher the educational qualification obtained the less likely you are to be in poverty.

Another conclusion is that other qualifications that aren't ^{as} widely used ^{as} GCSEs, A-levels ^{and} higher education are put you in a more vulnerable position to end up in poverty. Approximately 25% of people who receive these other qualifications end up in poverty compared to below 20% for all the other qualifications above GCSE A* - C to Degree level.

Exemplar 1 is a good example of a full mark response because the candidate has made two clear separate points/conclusions, which have been described and then supported with a statistic, clearly using the graph (Source A).

Question 2


Source B

Item removed due to third party copyright restrictions

Adapted from Sara Arber, Jenny Hislop, Marcos Bote and Robert Meadows (2007) 'Gender Roles and Women's Sleep in Mid and Later Life: a Quantitative Approach' *Sociological Research Online*

2* With reference to **Source B** explain why representativeness is important to sociologists when selecting a sample in order to carry out a social survey. [9]

This question elicited a mixed response. The best responses focused on two or three reasons why representativeness is important when selecting a sample, which was developed fully using the appropriate concepts (such as generalisability, Positivism, etc) and then linking it to the source. This did not require a very long responses – 2 simple separate paragraphs are enough. No evaluation is asked for in this question, so no credit was given for reasons why representativeness is not important. The candidates had to refer to source B in their response in order to achieve AO2 marks – if they did not do this, then they could lose 3 marks. However, the majority did do this and have gone beyond mere “lip service” where they lifted the text from the Source and repeated it in their response. The better responses engaged with the source by saying things like “there was an under representation of widows and those with poor educational backgrounds thus the data collected didn't necessarily reflect the UK female population in a representative way”.

	Misconception	Candidates need to have a good knowledge of methodological concepts for this question. Some candidates seemed confused about the differences between sampling methods and research methods so they often wrote tangentially about why representativeness is important in questionnaires for instance. Most candidates did understand generally what was meant by representativeness but sometimes there was a lack of knowledge about its exact nature. A minority confused reliability with representativeness
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Question 3

- 3* With reference to **Source A** explain why interpretivist sociologists might criticise the use of quantitative data to study poverty. [12]

This question was answered reasonably well by most candidates, showing a good knowledge and understanding of Interpretivism and quantitative data. The best responses linked their discussion to the different approaches of Interpretivists and Positivists and how they differed on their desire to collect either qualitative or quantitative data. The main concepts used were validity, rapport, verstehen and objectivity but others were used effectively and generally accurately, with the possible exception of reliability.

To achieve full marks on this question, a candidate needed to write three short paragraphs, each containing one reason why Interpretivists might criticise the use of quantitative data **in this context** and in each paragraph they should fully explain the reason, use one or two methodological concepts/theories accurately and then link this explanation to the context of the study of poverty. It is possible to get full marks by a fully explained reason, the use of a few appropriate concepts and a link to the source. The better responses also structured their points in clear, separate paragraphs each paragraph starting off with "One reason why Interpretivist sociologists might criticise the use of... then ..." "Another reason why..."

Candidates should be encouraged to go beyond lip service phrases such as "as shown in Source A", and should fully engage with the source, e.g "the graph only provides quantitative data on two different age groups and their rates of unemployment without explaining why the younger age group is much more likely to be unemployed than the older group".

Weaker responses confused reliability occasion used reliable in its common sense usage. There were also a significant number of weaker responses that still continue to use "reliability and validity" together in various ways (such as "quantitative data is reliable and valid") thus showing a lack of understanding of the two terms.

Exemplar 2

Another reason, interviewists would criticise quantitative data is because it doesn't allow a rapport / verstehen to be built. This is a relationship between the respondent and researcher, which could make people open up more if they trust the person. Qualitative data allows this because the researcher talks to the respondent. Source A is studying poverty, ~~this means peo.~~ which is a sensitive topic; respondents are more likely to open up if a rapport is built where they trust who they are talking to. This ~~can not~~ cannot be done with quantitative data.

Exemplar 2 is a good example of a detailed paragraph (fully explained reason, the use of a few appropriate concepts and a link to the source).

Question 4

- 4* Using **Source B** and your wider sociological knowledge, explain and evaluate the use of questionnaires to investigate social factors affecting women's sleep patterns. [20]

There were some very good responses to this question, exhibiting very good knowledge of the theoretical underpinning of questionnaires as well as their strengths and weaknesses. Most candidates recognised that questionnaires collected quantitative data and that Positivists appreciated their reliable, objective and representative nature. The majority of candidates were able to write a balanced evaluation and there were some examples of Level 4 responses which contained the two developed strengths and two developed weaknesses necessary to achieve full marks for AO3. The best responses wrote in paragraphs with a structured approach so that each paragraph contained a fully explained strength/weakness, linked it to a concept such as validity or reliability and then explained how this strength/weakness would be good/bad to use in research into the social factors affecting women's sleep patterns. To achieve Level 3 or full marks for the A02 marks available, the candidate needed to make at least three relevant, accurate, explicit references to how questionnaires would be good or bad to investigate the social factors affecting women's sleep patterns.

The majority of candidates this year had their responses stuck in Level 3, with their points (either strengths or weaknesses) being underdeveloped. This was because candidates did not go into enough detail and expand enough of the points they made. (For example, why fixed questions cannot be expanded, link this to a concept or a theory and also link this to the research topic.)

Key point call out

Candidates should not waste time writing detailed introductions or conclusions that merely summarise all the points they have made in the essay. They should however make explicit reference to the research topic being studied and use paragraphs to separate out the points being made.

Exemplar 3

Additionally, Interpretivists would add that rapport is needed in order to gain a true insight into the real lives of these women and as mentioned in source B, researchers would need to identify the various 'aspects of gender roles' and how it ~~can~~ affects their sleeping patterns. They would also add that this research topic is sensitive ^{hence} ~~hence~~ why rapport and verstehen should be established in order to understand the roles of these women and how it may affect their sleep; the importance of their mental health.

Exemplar 3 is a good example of a Level 3 response. The candidate has written one paragraph (out of three) where their point is relevant, accurate explicit references evaluating how questionnaires do not allow for rapport (which is important for the topic investigated on social factors affecting sleep).

Section B overview

There was a clear difference between stronger and weaker responses in this section. At the top end, there was a range of sociological evidence contained in responses to all of the questions. Such responses included relevant and detailed explanations including sociological studies, concepts and theories where appropriate. The weaker responses were often unable to provide sociological knowledge and understanding and limited concepts. Some candidates were not demonstrating clear and distinct points being made, and there was a lack of structure of essays through the use of paragraphs. This was most notable in Question 6.

Question 5

5* Outline **two** ways in which being working class can disadvantage one's life chances. [10]

All 10 of the marks in this question are **AO1** marks and so candidates need to show excellent knowledge and understanding of studies/theories/statistics or reports. To achieve full marks, the candidate needed to give two developed pieces of sociological evidence in each of the two areas (such as crime, education or work.) When done well, responses were full of empirical evidence to support the fact that being working class in **TWO** social areas can disadvantage one's life chances. The good responses clearly structured their response by firstly, naming an area and then supporting the claim with actual evidence that in that area that working class people are shown to be disadvantaged. Some responses did not offer enough depth and were too generalised to be regarded as "developed" as merely naming the study and one sentence to describe what it did was not enough.

Occasionally some candidates made up evidence or statistical data and this should be discouraged as it does not gain credit. Less successful responses used common sense examples and not sociological evidence. Answers that only use contemporary examples cannot get above Level 2 (maximum 4 marks) as their points are unsubstantiated and vague. Candidates should be mindful to answer the question asked and stay focused on the specific question wording. A minority of students lost focus on the question and wrote about middle class advantage and not working class disadvantage. Another mistake was to write about studies that talked about the underclass instead of the working class.

Exemplar 4

One way in which being working class can disadvantage ones life chances ~~is~~ ^{is a phrase} by the crisis of masculinity. This ~~is a term~~ ^{is a term} ~~is a term~~ means that traditional working class jobs such as coal mining is no longer done in Great Britain so men feel like their identity is lost. This can lead to mental break down and Durkheim would ~~also~~ call this suffering anomie.

Exemplar 4: Here we can see an example of a Level 1 paragraph, whereby the candidate has only offered one concept but offers no evidence to support this and there is little development to unpack the point being made.

Exemplar 5

This also links with A. Cohen and status frustration where they're struggling to keep their higher status this is because they get labelled as Becker would say and they'll live up to it 'self-fulfilling prophecy' because they don't have any other opportunity than deviant behaviour, this affects their image because police will target more working class and because they don't have much cultural capital they'll approach police wrong as A. Cooley would explain through 'negotiation justice' where working class are more likely to get themselves in trouble than upper class.

Exemplar 5 is a good example of a very good Level 4 paragraph, with plenty of developed evidence.

Question 6

- 6* Evaluate the view that gender inequalities exist in society because they serve the needs of capitalism. [20]

Question 6 is always based on a particular sociological view relating to some sort of inequality. This year the inequality was relating to gender and the view that it was linked to in the question was clearly a Marxist view. Hence, those candidates who recognised that straight away, taking their clue from the word “capitalism”, started well and used other theories about gender inequalities for evaluation purposes. To achieve full marks on AO1, candidates needed to make at least **THREE DEVELOPED** points linked to either the Marxist theory or Marxist Feminist theory. A developed point needs to link to the question, e.g. Marxist Feminists would agree that gender inequalities in society exist because they serve the needs of capitalism...then give a study/concept linked to this, e.g. for instance, Feeley described how women are transmitters of capitalist ideology(explaining it fully) and then link it to the question asked.

The better responses used signposting techniques joining Evaluation and Application, e.g. “Functionalists would argue gender inequality is not due to capitalism but due to biological functions and ensuring a stable society as a whole.” Using studies and concepts in the paragraph are crucial for development, as is using a separate paragraph for each point.

Weaker responses had less range and depth and may have just dropped in names/concepts without any sort of explanation or development or alternatively, just generally outlined the Marxist view of how society works, losing sight of the question set. Many did not read the question carefully and just gave examples of gender inequality rather than discussing WHY they exist. Some even just gave examples of differences between men and women. There were a minority of candidates who responded to a different question altogether i.e. evaluate the view that gender inequality exists in society rather than WHY it exists. Not addressing the question asked was one of the major reasons for lower level marks being given.

There were some inaccuracies in knowledge too in this question, e.g. “Functionalists believe gender inequality serves capitalism”. Some candidates were starting with evaluations at the beginning of the essay before they have laid out the evidence for the view in the question. This should be discouraged, and it is best practice to argue the evidence for the question, and then evaluate it. Some essays lost focus, and it would be recommended that students take some time to pre plan their responses in order to prevent this lack of structure.

Exemplar 6

Marxist feminist believe women's exploitation within capitalism has led to them seeing the needs of the capitalist system. Women are ~~not~~ made to believe in the patriarchal ideology that the natural family form is the nuclear family.

Exemplar 6 is an example of a developed paragraph (using good sociological concepts).

Exemplar 7

The idea of family benefiting capitalism stated by Zaretsky proves gender inequalities exist due to capitalism by the fact the women stays at home and has loads of children in order to send them to work. This shows women not getting a chance to work due to their traditional role of being a housewife.

Exemplar 7 is an example of an underdeveloped paragraph.

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