

AS LEVEL

Examiners' report

SOCIOLOGY

H180

For first teaching in 2015

H180/02 Summer 2023 series

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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. A selection of candidate answers is also provided. 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 and the mark scheme can be downloaded from OCR.

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Paper 2 series overview

The vast majority of candidates this year were able to access the majority of questions. There were a few non-responses, with the majority understanding the command words within each set question. With the exception of Question 2, the majority of students had an understanding of the knowledge required for each question. Structure was on the whole good this year.

As in previous years, candidates seemed to spend longer on Section A at the expense of Section B, which resulted in the extended essay lacking the depth and breadth required to achieve top band marks. Handwriting was an issue for a small number of candidates, illegible handwriting can lead to a lack of clarity and leads to an inability for the examiner to identify sociological evidence and to understand what the candidate is attempting to argue. It would make sense for centres to review handwriting before examinations and to put access arrangements in place such as word processing to make sure that candidates work can be interpreted in the correct way.

Key point call out (change this to a relevant heading for your key point)

In order to fully develop knowledge and demonstrate understanding, candidates need to explain why the sociological evidence they are using supports their idea.

Paragraphing is of particular importance in extended essays, as they can help to make clear distinctions between arguments for and against by using new paragraph's and signposting.

Assessment for learning



For plenary tasks, set an extended essay question for students to plan. Ask them to write 3 bullet points (3 for and 3 against) outlining what they could include in an essay.

Candidates who did well on this paper generally:

- detailed explanations of sociological evidence focused on the specifics of the question
- included accurate use of sociological evidence.
- clearly structured extended essays.

Candidates who did less well on this paper generally:

- did not plan their time, which was more likely to impact on Section B
- did not write clearly
- lacked structure to extended essays
- did not have an understanding of the full question (see Question 2 comments)
- did not use sociological evidence accurately.
- copied out the source rather than engaging with the material.

Section A overview

This section contains four compulsory questions which refer to either source A or B. In Question 3 and Question 4, to reach the higher mark bands, candidates are expected to use methodological evidence and/or perspectives such as validity and reliability. There has been improvement in structure and knowledge of methodologies overall. Some candidates continue to refer to alternative methodologies or sociological research, there is no requirement to do this.

Question 1

- 1 Using data from **Source A**, describe **two** conclusions that could be drawn about patterns of unpaid work performed by men and women in the UK in 2015.

[4]

Question 1 demonstrated clear differentiation with the full range of marks being applied. There were candidates who were unable to read data tables accurately. For instance, the 'unpaid hours' were deemed to be linked to paid jobs rather than to 'unpaid hours' in the household. Also there were many candidates stating 'approximately 4 hours' instead of exact numbers. More practice on this type of question would be useful to demonstrate to students how to lift exact data. As in previous years, candidates were still offering reasons for their conclusions wasting time on a 4 mark question as there were no marks for this.

The majority of candidates were able to identify clear patterns and trends from the data and support this with accurate data. It is useful to clearly signpost each pattern or trend. For example 'one trend is ...' and 'a second pattern is ...'

Candidates did not need to write large chunks of information for this question.

Assessment for learning



Use a range of quantitative and qualitative data extracts as starters when introducing new topics. This could be done as a round robin exercise where candidates have a different piece of data and then have to describe one conclusion, pass it on to the next candidate, who then has to support that conclusion with accurate data from the source.

Common Misconception

There is no requirement to offer an explanation for the pattern or trend that has been identified.

Exemplar 1

1	*	One conclusion you can see is that overall, women do more hours of unpaid work per week than men. You can see that for example, in the cooking field, women do 7.3 hours of unpaid work, whereas men only do 3.6 hours.
		Another conclusion is that the women do more domestic unpaid work e.g. childcare (women do 4.6 hours, whereas men only do 1.9 hours), and men do more traditional unpaid work e.g. transportation (men do 7.3 hours whereas women do only 5.7 hours).

Exemplar 1 illustrates a full mark response. The candidate has used an excellent structure, first the conclusion and then accurate data from the source. This is a clear and concise response with no unnecessary additional wording.

Question 2*

- 2* With reference to **Source B**, explain why there might be advantages in repeating a social survey based on structured interviews every year. [9]

Question 2 illustrated mixed responses. Some candidates did not refer to the 'repeating' element of the question and just gave generalised advantages of structured interviews. A common misunderstanding was that the same children would be used year on year and that they would get older within the study. Another common error is that the context is ignored completely and the question was discussed in the abstract.

The best responses focused on two or three reasons why repeating a social survey is advantageous, which was fully developed using appropriate concepts such as positivism, reliability and then linking it to the source.

This does not require an extended response. Candidates could either write two fully developed paragraphs or three underdeveloped ideas with methodological evidence. For AO2, candidates needed to engage with Source B. If they didn't, they could have lost up to 3 marks. Many candidates were simply re-writing the question which is not given marks for. Better responses drew on aspects of the source such as comparing attitudes from the 'least affluent' families around finance and how these could be compared over time to identify increases or decreases in regards to attitudes towards finance.

Assessment for learning



As a plenary, use a short extract from a sociological study discussed in the lesson. Ask candidates a specific question such as advantages of repeating a social survey. Focus on structure, identify the advantage, support this with a methodological concept and engage with the source.

Question 3*

3* With reference to **Source A**, explain why quantitative data might be useful to sociologists studying gender inequalities in the UK.

[12]

The majority of candidates answered this question reasonably well. Candidates were able to demonstrate an understanding of quantitative data. A minority of candidates seemed to be confused between quantitative and qualitative data. Some were also confused between structured and unstructured interviews so that the latter was used as an example of quantitative data. As in previous years, candidates were either confused between reliability and validity or were often thrown in with little to no explanation to demonstrate an understanding of these key methodological concepts.

In regards to AO2, as in all Section A responses, the majority of candidates made little or no reference to the context and so did not gain any AO2 marks. Candidates who did this successfully, were able to support their ideas with information from the source, for example, if they were discussing the ability to spot patterns and trends they would identify a correct pattern or trend and discuss how this would be useful to the sociologist.

To achieve full marks on this response, candidates needed to fully develop three reasons why quantitative data could be useful and use methodological concepts and/or theory to support their idea. This should then be reinforced with evidence from Source A.

Question 4*

- 4* Using **Source B** and your wider sociological knowledge, explain and evaluate the use of structured interviews gathered online to investigate young people's attitudes towards going to university. [20]

Question 4 had a number of non-responses despite it being quite a straightforward question. Candidates who answered it well, produced extended responses, with a range of methodological evidence used. It was clear that candidates have been trained by their teachers to write the required two advantages and two disadvantages. Of these, the majority of candidates were using explicit connectives and paragraphing which enabled examiners to clearly see what point they were raising and how it had been developed.

For candidates who were less successful, ideas were generally underdeveloped or not supported with methodological evidence such as positivism/interpretivism and/or reliability/validity. Ideas often jumped between an advantage to a disadvantage and then back to the previous point all in the same paragraph which made it challenging to see where the development of the knowledge point was. There was also confusion around methodological evidence in these responses, particularly with positivism and interpretivism, often mixing these up or just confused.

For AO2, as in previous questions, the majority of candidates did not engage with the source or merely paid lip service such as 'school children'. Many were writing out the question and/or title of the source which did not add value to their essay. Those who engaged with the source used aspects such as the sample size '2809' and then discussed this in relation to representativeness and generalisability.

Common Misconception

There is no requirement to write an introduction for this question. Go straight into the essay with 'One advantage is...'. Also, don't waste time writing a conclusion just to summarise what has already been said.

Assessment for learning



Present candidates with a short source and question. As a round robin, candidate 1 identifies the advantage or disadvantage. Candidate 2 explains why and links to a methodological concept. Candidate 3 then supports this with evidence from the source.

Exemplar 2

4	<p>An advantage of using structured interviews to gather information about attitudes of young people going to university that positivists argue is that it can be converted into statistics (quantitative data) which is ^{value,} objective free and can easily be interpreted such as that 62% white view university as less important compared to 74% ^{from a} of BME background. Furthermore because its ^{structured} statistics interviews can be presented as statistics it can be used to compare to other studies to check its re reliability.</p>
	<p>However, as it is an online interview (most likely an online survey) the response rate may be lower than if it was an in person interview, although this survey ^{received} received 2,809 responses it may still not be representative as some ^{type of people} are more likely to respond than others. Furthermore if the response rate is less than 50% it can also undermine its the survey's validity.</p>

Although, using a structured online survey/interview means it is quicker ^{and easier} than other types of research methods (such as unstructured interviews) meaning more ~~peop~~ school children aged 11-16 are willing to respond, improving representativeness. ^{which} ~~this~~ data can then be used and generalised to fit the whole population such as that 44% of females are worried about university finance.

In contrast, interpretists would argue using structured interviews is not a good way to gather ~~peop~~ information about attitudes towards university as life is too complex to be put into a 'few boxes'. In addition, as there is ^{no verbal} ~~no verbal~~ ^{report} ~~report~~ being made in the structured interview students may ^{with held} ~~with held~~ the truth and present themselves with what they perceive as demanding characteristics, meaning the statistics that 61% of the least affluent university is important may not be accurate.

		and may not be valid data
		If the person is not truthful
		the data would
		and not verifiable. be reliable, whereas
		unstructured would provide verbal and
		be more valid according to interpreters.//

Exemplar 2 demonstrates a candidate who has produced two strengths and two weaknesses All ideas were fully developed and included methodological evidence. Each idea had an explicit link to the source and the material is used to support their idea. A clear and concise full mark response.

Section B overview

As with Section A, both Question 5 and Question 6 were able to illustrate differentiation of ability. There has clearly been work around how to approach these questions as there has been some improvement on overall structure particularly in Question 5.

A key point for these questions is sociological evidence: sociological studies, concepts, theories, accurate statistics and/or legislation. To gain the top marking band, examiners were looking at how well developed each knowledge point was and the supporting sociological evidence.

Key Point

When planning responses to Section B, make sure that sociological evidence is included in the plan. Use a new paragraph for each new knowledge or evaluation point.

Question 5*

5* Outline **two** ways in which women in the UK have worse life chances than men. **[10]**

Candidate approach to this question has seen improvement. To gain top mark band, candidates should have two clear ways in which women in the UK have worse life chances than men and each way should be supported by two pieces of sociological evidence. The key is to make sure that the sociological evidence is explained in relation to the question and not just dropped in.

Candidates who did less well, often made sweeping generalisations such as 'women go hungry to feed their children'. Candidates also spent time on an introduction where there is no requirement to do so and no marks available for this. Some candidates were also evaluating their evidence. Marks in this question are only given for AO1, therefore, evaluation is not rewarded and time could be focused elsewhere.

Candidates who did well demonstrated some excellent knowledge and understanding, focusing on issues such as employment as the 'way' and then used evidence such as the glass ceiling and horizontal segregation to support their idea.

Some candidates were unable to fully develop the evidence used which could be indicative of a lack of depth of knowledge and understanding of the evidence being taught.

Exemplar 3

5	<p>One way women in the UK have worse life chances is in the workforce. with The dual labour market splits into two categories; Primary and Secondary. Women are in the secondary market which consist of less important and low paid jobs compared to white collar jobs in the primary sector. Women also make up 45% of the labour force however only 40% of those women work part time. Women are also a res reserve army of labour</p>
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	<p>in which they are employed part time & when companies are struggling this means that during economic growth and wealth they are laid off and fired. Women are also employed for jobs such as cleaning, catering, clerical, caring which is known as the 4 C's.</p>
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Exemplar 3 is an example of one full 'way' for this question. The candidate has clearly identified the area of inequality, in this case the workplace. They have then offered two pieces of sociological evidence (conceptual) and fully developed both with explicit links to the question. This would be worth 5 marks. To gain 10 marks, the candidate would need to offer another 'way' with two developed pieces of sociological evidence.

Question 6*

6* Assess the view that capitalism is the main cause of social inequality in the UK.

[20]

There was a mixed response to this question. A number of responses were very short and candidates who gave extended responses tended to focus more on evaluation than on AO1. Candidates gave responses that tended to be shorter than those offered for Question 4, which could be indicative of timing issues. The concept of capitalism was generally linked to Marxist views, with Functionalism and Feminism as the main basis for evaluation. Weber was rarely mentioned, however, there were frequent references to 'the patriarchy' as if this was a tangible object.

To achieve the top mark band, candidates needed to write three fully developed ideas for each side of the debate. There were many candidates who offered below this and a sizeable minority who could only offer one underdeveloped idea to support the statement in the question. AO3 often included juxtaposition, simply offering alternative theories rather than comparing and contrasting ideas.

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