

Report on the Components

June 2006

1990/MS/R/06

OCR (Oxford, Cambridge and RSA Examinations) is a unitary awarding body, established by the University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate and the RSA Examinations Board in January 1998. OCR provides a full range of GCSE, A-level, GNVQ, Key Skills and other qualifications for schools and colleges in the United Kingdom, including those previously provided by MEG and OCEAC. It is also responsible for developing new syllabuses to meet national requirements and the needs of students and teachers.

The mark schemes are published as an aid to teachers and students, to indicate the requirements of the examination. It shows the basis on which marks were awarded by Examiners. It does not indicate the details of the discussions which took place at an Examiners' meeting before marking commenced.

All Examiners are instructed that alternative correct answers and unexpected approaches in candidates' scripts must be given marks that fairly reflect the relevant knowledge and skills demonstrated.

The reports on the Examinations provide information on the performance of candidates which it is hoped will be useful to teachers in their preparation of candidates for future examinations. It is intended to be constructive and informative and to promote better understanding of the syllabus content, of the operation of the scheme of assessment and of the application of assessment criteria.

Mark schemes and Reports should be read in conjunction with the published question papers.

OCR will not enter into any discussion or correspondence in connection with this mark scheme or report.

© OCR 2006

Any enquiries about publications should be addressed to:

OCR Publications
PO Box 5050
Annersley
NOTTINGHAM
NG15 0DL

Telephone: 0870 870 6622
Facsimile: 0870 870 6621
E-mail: publications@ocr.org.uk

CONTENTS

General Certificate of Secondary Education

GCSE Sociology (1990)

Report on the Units

Unit	Content	Page
*	Chief Examiner's Report	5
1990/01	Paper 1 Foundation	6
1990/02	Paper 2 Foundation	10
1990/03	Paper 3 Higher	14
1990/04	Paper 4 Higher	18
1990/05	Paper 5 Coursework	23
*	Grade Thresholds	26

Chief Examiner Introduction

The quality of scripts for the 2006 candidates was similar to previous years with some exceptional responses from some centres and individual candidates. The comments in this report should help teachers to inform their students about how to achieve top marks. Two common factors in scripts achieving the highest levels in the mark scheme are the amount of apt examples included in the response and the conceptual detail, showing evidence of sociological learning and understanding.

There is plenty of evidence of high quality teaching with candidates offering responses that are sociological and conceptual: centres are to be congratulated.

1990/01 - Foundation Paper 1

This year the compulsory topic in Section A dealt with Power and Citizenship. In 2007 the topic for Section A will deal with Family and Identity. The compulsory Section B question dealt with Family and Identity in 2006, whilst in 2007 it will focus on the topic of Power and Citizenship. The option units in Section C remain the same from year to year and this year Crime and Deviance was by far the most popular with only a minority of candidates choosing one of the remaining option units, Religion and Protest and Social Movements. All students are to be congratulated for their hard work on the paper. A real variety of responses were seen by the team, from the excellent to the almost anecdotal. For students to maximise their marks it is crucial that they develop good examination skills and focus on the specific demands of the questions set.

Comments on Individual Questions

Section A

- 1 (a) Most candidates were able to use the source to correctly pick out two suggestions made by the researchers.
- (b) Candidates found it hard to describe what was meant by an experiment on the whole. Better candidates used examples from the source and their own sociological knowledge to illustrate the answer – as the question demands.
- (c) A significant minority of students simply paraphrased from the source and described the experiment without actually answering the question. However, many good answers were seen for this question, criticising, for example, sample size and sample composition.
- (d) This question is best approached as a question about generaliseability and therefore candidates should be encouraged to look at 2/3 reasons as to why the information in the source might **not** be useful – in this particular case as evidence of the experience of all voters. Sample size and composition would seem the most appropriate areas to focus on, although the year of the source was also well used at times.
- (e) Most candidates were able to run through a range of sociological methods and were rewarded for this. However, it needs to be emphasized that this is not a general question on methods – it is very much context specific. Many candidates failed to score high marks because they made little or no reference to the topic of the question. Better candidates referred to both secondary and primary methods, sample selection and some advantages/disadvantages of the methods chosen. A surprising number of candidates suggested using observation as a method without explaining how this would actually be put into practice re people's interest in politics. Candidates should be advised to select the methods that best fit the specific research topic, ensuring that they use both secondary and primary methods.

Section B

- 2 (a) Most candidates did well on this question and were able to identify two types of family and describe them sociologically. Weaker candidates either simply identified two types of family with no explanation or talked in commonsense terms about, for example, 'rich' or 'bad' families.
- (b) There were a lot of relatively weak answers for this question with some candidates seeming to ignore the word 'unequal' in the question. Many opted to talk about sibling relationships but a lot neglected the housework/power/conjugal roles debates and hence found it difficult to score well in AO2 as the required range was not there in their answers. Candidates should talk about at least three clear points in their answer to score full marks.
- (c) Many candidates were able to offer an argument for and against as well as, at times, a reasonable conclusion. Better candidates referred to norms and values, gender socialisation, other functions of the family (such as reproduction) and other agents of socialisation in their response. The more typical answers did some of this, with an encouraging amount of candidates showing good knowledge of functionalist theory. However, a large amount of candidates talked about why parents shouldn't socialise with their children and could not be well rewarded for this.

Section C

As stated earlier, the overwhelming majority of candidates answered on either Q3 or 4. A large number did not score as well in this section as they could have as they either had a go at every option question set or answered both options in a particular topic area. Centres are advised to ensure that their candidates are clear that they only need to answer one question in this section.

- 3 (a) Most candidates were able to identify and describe two agencies of social control. Some, however, talked about norms, values and beliefs!
- (b) Most candidates were able to offer several reasons why people might not report crime, using sociological ideas and examples to substantiate their points. Weaker candidates tended to give only one reason/example.
- (c) Most candidates attempted to give both a 'for' and 'against' argument to the question but on the whole found it easier to talk about why young men do break the law. Better candidates evaluated by referring to stereotypes, media representations and police targeting of certain social groups. Weaker candidates tended not to discuss sociologically and often offered a simple one sided answer.
- 4 (a) Whilst many candidates produced relevant and interesting answers focusing on, for example, 'soft' punishments, people being encouraged to report crime and the influence of the media, a significant amount did not talk about why the crime rate might be increasing. Instead, a very general answer was produced about why we have crime in society. Clearly such answers did not score highly.
- (b) A range of different and acceptable slants on this question were seen with a large amount of candidates producing good, sociological responses. Most talked about lack of money and societal perceptions of the rich and the poor. The more able candidates also looked at the behaviour of the police and the courts, focusing specifically on the word 'convicted' in the question. The best candidates described at least three different reasons, the weaker answers either made only one point or relied simply on commonsense.

Report on the Components Taken in June 2006

- (c) Most candidates, as in Q3, were able to formulate a 'for and against' structure to their answer. However, too many did not look at whether criminals should be given longer prison sentences but instead discussed whether or not they should be sent to prison and what other options might be better. Candidates need to focus specifically on the question to score the higher marks.
- 5 (a) This was not a popular question with very few candidates attempting it. Those that had been taught the topic did well, those that merely 'had a go' did not know what a social movement was.
- (b) As above. Candidates found it harder to describe why the movements had developed but the few good answers seen referred to contemporary examples and to a general unhappiness with the current 'state of play'.
- (c) Candidates that had been prepared for this topic were able to present two sides to the debate that social movements have been very successful in changing society. The best candidates made really good use of topical examples.
- 6 (a) The same trends found in Q5 were seen again here, however slightly more candidates answered Q6 than 5.
- (b) Those that had been taught the topic often answered with apt and lively examples to describe how protest groups achieve their aims. The best candidates distinguished between legal and illegal means.
- (c) This question was not well answered with candidates finding it difficult to make a debate. Some good points about having your say and making changes were made in the 'for' arguments, however.
- 7 (a) This again was not a popular question with a clear (and expected) difference seen in the answers of those students that had been prepared for the topic and those that had not. The two reasons given tended to focus on celebrity involvement and the growth in ethnic minorities.
- (b) Some interesting responses were seen here that looked at a diverse range of examples and ideas. Some of these included the perception of churches being old fashioned, growth of minority religions and religion no longer being thought of as important.
- (c) Whilst some candidates failed to make a debate here the better candidates evaluated whether belief in God was necessary to be religious. The difficulties of measuring religion were also hinted at.
- 8 (a) The question asked for two types of religious movements to be described and few candidates seemed prepared for this. Expected answers include sects, churches, cults, denominations and new religious movements. Simply naming religions is not acceptable here.
- (b) Candidates did well with this question, referring to a wide range of relevant points and ideas in their answers. The better answers contained at least three different points, backed up with examples.
- (c) If the candidates had been prepared for the topic and so understood the meaning of 'secular' they produced good and topical answers. However, too many candidates clearly did not know what this term meant and so failed to produce a relevant response.

Report on the Components Taken in June 2006

NB

It would be wise to remind candidates which option area they should be answering on in this section. Candidates find it extremely difficult to score well in section C if they just 'have a go' at what looks like an interesting or easy question. Perhaps encouraging them to score a line through the questions to ignore as soon as they begin the exam would help here?

1990/2 – Foundation Paper 2

General Comments

This year, the compulsory topic in Section A dealt with the module of Education. In 2007, the Section A will deal with Work. The compulsory Section B dealt with the module Work in 2006, whilst in 2007 it will focus on the module of Education. The option units in Section C remain the same from year to year and this year the Media module was the more popular, with only a minority of candidates choosing Poverty or Contemporary Social Change.

In 2006, Paper 2 appears to have differentiated successfully. Generally there seemed an improvement in the standard of achievement of some candidates, which seems to derive from being prepared for the individual requirements of each section. However, some candidates struggled to understand individual questions, which will be discussed later in the report. It was pleasing to see fewer candidates were entered for foundation inappropriately this year.

Comments on Individual Questions

SECTION A - QUESTION 1

Generally centres are preparing the students well for Section A. Due to the structure foundation students seem able to pick up marks on this section, whereas they struggle with the more open-ended sections.

- 1 (a) From the evidence in the source A the vast majority of candidates were able to identify the two functions of school.
- (b) Candidates struggled to give a fluid definition of questionnaire. Foundation candidates need to be more prepared for this question, especially as they lose marks for not giving examples of the method. Best responses draw upon either the sources given as well as their own examples, or this year offered open-ended questionnaires vs. closed-ended questionnaires.
- (c) Many candidates seemed well prepared for this answer. They understood the requirements noting that it is a question about validity, but struggled to apply their criticisms to the actual method. Many focussed on criticisms of representativeness. Students would do well to focus more closely on the problems of the method, i.e. questionnaires being closed ended, failing to achieve true validity. A minority failed to understand the question and needed more training in the actual concept of problems with validity.
- (d) Foundation candidates did well on this question. They have been trained well to look for issues of representativeness. However, a minority are still looking at generic issues of validity. Candidates still need to be able to relate problems in representativeness to the aim of the research (opinions of the function of education), or at least be able to explain the issue. Thus the candidates spotted that a male head teacher from Wales may not represent all teachers, but did not say why. Weaker responses did not focus on the sample and its representativeness, generically discussing issues of validity or even evaluating the opinion in the source.
- (e) Some candidates are prepared well for the requirements of this question however, there were still many generic rehearsed responses. Candidates seem to have knowledge of questionnaires, interviews and observation, but often justification of their use was only implicit, but many tried to mention the area of education. Many candidates are still not including secondary evidence in their answers, which limits their AO1 marks to 3 and below; and those that referred to secondary evidence

often did so in a simplistic and generic manner. Centres would do well to discuss secondary evidence i.e. what statistics and studies are available for different areas. Good candidates considered school records that state what a student goes on to do next (i.e. which job) or work experience reports. Only a minority of candidates did not understand this question and wrote an evaluate essay on whether schools prepare students for work.

SECTION B – QUESTION 2

- 2 (a) The majority of candidates managed some responses to changes to way people work. There were some who did not clearly give two changes i.e. discussing the industrial revolution at length. Others that were not successful in achieving 6 marks did not give an idea and then discuss it. Centres that prepare their students well had three clear changes succinctly explained i.e. “computerisation: this has led to improvements such as being able to work at home.” Some students spent far too long on this question.
- (b) Candidates engaged with this question well. Here clear differentiation in answers is shown. Even at foundation level there were those who scored highly using the correct sociological terminology (intrinsic and extrinsic satisfaction) explaining terms and giving examples. Middle range candidates used the ideas without the sociological language, whilst low achieving candidates gave largely practical responses such as having a nice office.
- (c) Candidates were asked to evaluate the usefulness of technological advancement. Most students were able to provide some positive responses to this. Narrow responses were often automation vs. unemployment. Some candidates still failed to evaluate their responses at all.

SECTION C – QUESTIONS 3 & 4

MEDIA MODULE

Whilst being the most popular module, weaker candidates often engage with the question but give largely non-sociological answers. All centres need to ensure students have the terminology and knowledge to discuss their answers. Again this year centres still need to note that due to the constant change in media technology students need to have access to recent sociological text on this subject.

By far, question 3 was the most popular.

- 3 (a) Most candidates were able to identify 2 types of mass media although some struggled to describe all three without being repetitive.
- (b) There seemed to be a real split on the answers given. Some could not rise above common sense, whilst others considered the sociological basis of the uses and gratifications model. Some candidates offered the differing models i.e. hypodermic syringe for this answer and part c, and as was logical, this was credited for both. Many foundation candidates limited their responses to how audiences were manipulated.
- (c) Most candidates could discuss the idea that the media does influence people’s lives, however the weaker candidates could not rise above common sense evaluation. Foundation candidates struggled with offering any evaluation.

Report on the Components Taken in June 2006

This was less popular as a choice of media question, and those weaker students who attempted it, did so poorly.

- 4 (a) Many foundation candidates did not understand this question at all focussing on groups prevalent in the media, not in its' control. Successful candidates gave succinct answers noting ideas such as editors, owners and / or audience with a simple description of each groups influence.
- (b) Weaker candidates struggled to go beyond common sense with their answers merely referring to sexism. Good answers referred to the differing areas of ownership, representation and sports coverage. These answers included contemporary examples, but were not based on them.
- (c) Again the weaker candidates struggled to go beyond common sense and offer an evaluation. Better responses considered how ethnic minorities were presented considering distortion, repetitive images, association to terrorism and crime vs. specific programming, positive images and often popularity through sport and music, which on the foundation paper would be expected to be discussed through contemporary examples and implicit sociology.

SECTION C – QUESTIONS 5 & 6

POVERTY

Those that attempted this section had sociological knowledge in their answers. Candidates were split between those that understood the question and those that did not and centres need to prepare the students carefully for the terminology that is necessary in this module even at a foundation level. Foundation candidates seem to discuss poverty as an African problem, often ignoring national poverty.

- 5 (a) Candidates were largely able to discuss three groups who were more likely to be poor and give some description of why.
 - (b) Candidates understood this question and were able to offer some response. Weaker candidates were often answering from a practical non-sociological stance i.e. you could give out questionnaires. Others were highly prepared and discussed government responses i.e. below half average income, alongside sociological measurements such as Townsend's' deprivation index.
 - (c) Many foundation candidates did not understand the term "culture of poverty" often relating it to "culture" and thus ethnicity and thus their essay made little sense, others engaged well with the debate understanding it to be a cultural vs. structural debate on the explanations of poverty.
- 6 (a) This question was misunderstood by some candidates. The question required explanations, yet some offered definitions or measurements, which often meant they failed to score any marks. Successful candidates could offer the different reasons people were poor and easily describe them.
 - (b) This question was well answered by the majority who considered the different ways poverty could be reduced. Foundation candidates discussed lots of practical solutions often focussing only on the individual. Best responses considered the place of the government as well as the individual, charities and even private industry. Success for A02 marks comes from having enough / a range of ideas.

- (c) Most candidates could engage with this question however, failed to be able to evaluate the claim. They needed to consider the non-monetary effects of poverty such as cultural effects. The best responses often recognised the complicated link between financial effects and others. Again weaker students failed to evaluate the claim.

SECTION C – QUESTIONS 7 & 8

CONTEMPORARY SOCIAL CHANGE

Contemporary Social Change is the least popular in terms of responses and also seems to be the module the students are the least prepared for. This still seems to be answered by students who may have had knowledge from another discipline i.e. Science or Geography, which led to non sociological responses that scored little. As is often the case with new modules, as materials are being published currently it is hopeful that the module will be more popularly taught.

Question 8 was more popularly answered than Question 7.

- 7
 - (a) Candidates could respond either nationally or internationally.
 - (b) Candidates needed to ensure a range of causes i.e. not three natural disasters.
 - (c) Candidates again needed to think about their evaluation of this. Responses needed to show a range of technological changes to be successful.
- 8
 - (a) Responses often were Geographical or based on Leisure and Tourism studies. Good responses were able to discuss problems in relation to either a growth or a decline in population. Popularly answers just consisted of a lack of three different types of resources i.e. housing, food and jobs.
 - (b) Following on from 8a weaker candidates called for houses, food and jobs, without looking at solutions as outlined in sociological material, i.e. government aid, individual aid, international aid, charity etc.
 - (c) Generally this was poorly answered especially in reference to the evaluation. Many answers were reliant on litter vs. pollution and little terminology or development.

NB

In total agreement with the report on paper 3, the candidates that do least well in Section C seem to make their choice of question on what they think is interesting, not that which their centre has prepared them for, resulting in non sociological answers.

1990/03 – Higher Paper

This year the compulsory topic in Section A dealt with Power and Citizenship. In 2007 the topic for Section A will deal with Family and Identity. The compulsory Section B question dealt with Family and Identity in 2006, whilst in 2007 it will focus on the topic of Power and Citizenship. The option units in Section C remain the same from year to year and this year Crime and Deviance was by far the most popular with only a minority of candidates choosing one of the remaining option units, Religion and Protest and Social Movements. All students are to be congratulated for their hard work on the paper. A variety of responses were seen by the team, from the excellent to those that verged on simple commonsense. The majority, however, showed good sociological knowledge and understanding and it was nice to see the use of contemporary examples to substantiate answers. This is something that I hope will be further encouraged. For students to maximise their marks it is crucial that they develop good examination skills and focus on the specific demands of the questions set. It is hoped that this report will help in terms of this.

Comments on Individual Questions

Section A

- 1 (a) The vast majority of candidates were able to use the source to correctly pick out two suggestions made by the researchers.
- (b) A small number of students simply paraphrased from the source and described the experiment without actually answering the question. However, many good answers were seen for this question, criticising, for example, sample size and sample composition in terms of the problems they may pose for the accuracy of the evidence.
- (c) There was a lot of variety in the quality of the answers produced for this question, a clear differentiator in terms of ability. The best candidates made three clear points about the two sources and compared them to see why and how the evidence was/wasn't supported. Candidates focused on areas such as findings, sample, method used, source of the evidence and date of the evidence. Weaker candidates tended to make just one point, describe the two sources or say virtually nothing about the degree of support.
- (d) This question is best approached as a question about representativeness and generaliseability and therefore candidates should be encouraged to look at 3 reasons as to why the information in the source might **not** be useful – in this particular case as evidence of the experience of all voters. Sample size and composition would seem the most appropriate areas to focus on, although the year of the source was also well used at times.
- (e) Most candidates were able to run through a range of sociological methods and were rewarded a little for this. However, it needs to be emphasized that this is not a general question on methods – it is very much context specific. Many candidates failed to score high marks because they made little or no reference to the topic of the question. Better candidates referred to both secondary and primary methods (they must do this to score A01 L3), sample selection and some advantages/disadvantages of the methods chosen. A surprising number of candidates suggested using observation as a method without explaining how this would actually be put into practice re people's interest in politics. Candidates should be advised to select the methods that best fit the specific research topic, ensuring that they use both secondary and primary methods, and to justify their choices.

Section B

- 2 (a) Most candidates did well on this question and were able to identify three types of family and describe them sociologically. Weaker candidates either simply identified three types of family with no explanation or confused the meanings of terms – extended and reconstituted were surprisingly muddled quite frequently. Candidates should be reminded that on this Higher paper we do expect accurate sociological terms to be used.
- (b) There were a lot of relatively weak answers for this question with some candidates seeming to ignore or not understand the word 'unequal' in the question. Many opted to talk about sibling relationships and parental preferences but a lot neglected the housework/power/conjugal roles debates and hence found it difficult to score well in AO2 as the required range was not there in their answers. Candidates should talk about at least three clear points in their answer to score full marks. It was, however, really encouraging to see large amounts of candidates referring to specific sociologists, theories and studies in their answers and clearly this was rewarded.
- (c) Many candidates were able to offer an argument for and against as well as a reasonable conclusion which aided the quality of their answers. Better candidates referred to norms and values, gender socialisation, other functions of the family (such as reproduction) and other agents of socialisation in their response. The more typical answers did some of this, with an encouraging amount of candidates showing good knowledge of functionalist theory. However, too many candidates talked about why parents shouldn't/should socialise with their children and could not be rewarded for this.

Section C

As stated earlier, the overwhelming majority of candidates answered on either Q3 or 4. A significant number did not score as well in this section as they could have as they either had a go at every option question set or answered both options in a particular topic area. Centres are advised to ensure that their candidates are clear that they only need to answer one question in this section. Time management also seemed to be an issue for some candidates with answers typically being shorter and less developed in this section of the exam paper. They would be advised to work on this skill via practice exam questions/mock papers.

- 3 (a) Most candidates were able to identify and describe three informal agencies of social control. Some, however, talked about formal agencies and could not be rewarded for this.
- (b) Most candidates were able to offer several reasons why the crime statistics might be inaccurate, using sociological ideas and examples to substantiate their points. Weaker candidates tended to give only one reason/example whereas better candidates looked at reporting, recording, police practices and the role of the government.
- (c) Most candidates attempted to give both a 'for' and 'against' argument to the question but on the whole found it easier to talk about why young men do break the law. Better candidates evaluated by referring to stereotypes, media representations, labelling and police targeting of certain social groups. Weaker candidates tended not to discuss sociologically and often offered a simple one-sided answer. The gender side of the question was debated more successfully than age, although some candidates did talk knowledgeably about opportunity and white-collar crime.

Report on the Components Taken in June 2006

- 4 (a) Whilst many candidates produced relevant and interesting answers focusing on, for example, 'soft' punishments, people being encouraged to report crime and the influence of the media, a significant amount did not talk about why the crime rate might be increasing. Instead, a very general answer was produced about why we have crime in society. Clearly such answers did not score highly.
- (b) A range of different and acceptable slants on this question were seen with a large amount of candidates producing good, sociological responses. Most talked about lack of money and societal perceptions of the middle and working classes. The more able candidates also looked at the behaviour of the police, and the courts, focusing specifically on the word 'convicted' in the question. The best candidates described at least three different reasons, the weaker answers either made only one point or relied simply on commonsense.
- (c) Most candidates, as in Q3, were able to formulate a 'for and against' structure to their answer. However, too many did not look at whether criminals should be given longer prison sentences but instead discussed whether or not they should be sent to prison and what other options might be better. Candidates need to focus specifically on the question to score the higher marks. Some excellent answers were seen that really engaged with contemporary examples to evidence the debate.
- 5 (a) This was not a popular question with very few candidates attempting it. Those that had been taught the topic did well, those that merely 'had a go' did not know what a social movement was.
- (b) As above. Candidates found it harder to describe why the movements had developed but the few good answers seen referred to contemporary examples and to a general unhappiness with the current 'state of play'.
- (c) Candidates that had been prepared for this topic were able to present two sides to the debate that social movements have been very successful in changing society. The best candidates made really good use of topical examples.
- 6 (a) The same trends found in Q5 were seen again here, however slightly more candidates answered Q6 than 5 and the quality of responses was typically better.
- (b) Those that had been taught the topic often answered with apt and lively examples to describe how protest groups achieve their aims. The best candidates distinguished between legal and illegal means and referred to specific examples.
- (c) This question produced very variable answers with some candidates finding it difficult to make a debate. Some good points about having your say and making changes were made in the 'for' arguments, however.
- 7 (a) This again was not a popular question with a clear (and expected) difference seen in the answers of those students that had been prepared for the topic and those that had not. The three reasons given tended to focus on celebrity involvement, disillusionment and the growth in ethnic minorities.
- (b) Some interesting responses were seen here that looked at a diverse range of examples and ideas. Some of these included the perception of churches being old fashioned, growth of minority religions and religion no longer being thought of as important. Some of the better candidates also considered the idea of religion now being practiced in places other than a church.

Report on the Components Taken in June 2006

- (c) Whilst some candidates failed to make a debate here the better candidates evaluated whether belief in God was necessary to be religious. The difficulties of measuring religion were also commented on.
- 8
- (a) The question asked for three types of religious movements to be described and few candidates seemed prepared for this. Expected answers include sects, churches, cults, denominations and new religious movements with appropriate explanations as outlined in the specification. Simply naming/describing religions is not acceptable here.
 - (b) Candidates did well with this question, referring to a wide range of relevant points and ideas in their answers. The better answers contained at least three different points, backed up with examples. Topical references to celebrities were often used well here.
 - (c) If the candidates had been prepared for the topic and so understood the meaning of 'secular' they produced good and topical answers. However, too many candidates clearly did not know what this term meant (presumably the non-religion candidates) and so failed to produce a relevant response. Most candidates were able to evaluate and produce a two-sided answer to engage with the debate with different degrees of success.

NB

It would be wise to remind candidates which option area they should be answering on in this section. Candidates find it extremely difficult to score well in section C if they just 'have a go' at what looks like an interesting or easy question. Perhaps encouraging them to score a line through the questions to ignore as soon as they begin the exam would help here?

1990/04 –Higher Paper

General Comments

This year, the compulsory topic in Section A dealt with the module of Education. In 2007, the Section A will deal with Work. The compulsory Section B dealt with the module Work in 2006, whilst in 2007 it will focus on the module of Education. The option units in Section C remain the same from year to year and this year the Media module was the more popular, with only a minority of candidates choosing Poverty or Contemporary Social Change.

In 2006, Paper 4 appears to have differentiated successfully. There is still a clear divide between candidates who rely on common sense for their answers; and those who have revised and used sociological evidence and terminology. Generally there seemed an improvement in the standard of achievement of some candidates, which seems to derive from being prepared for the individual requirements of each section. It was good to see some students have knowledge of Sociological studies, whilst others are reliant on conceptual knowledge and contemporary examples. Either route is to be further encouraged.

It was pleasing to see that the majority of candidates answered the correct amount of questions as in previous years they have attempted to answer all questions also on the Higher paper less students seemed to run out of time this year, apportioning the correct amount of time for each section.

However, there are still some centres entering students for the higher paper that should consider the foundation paper, thus they may not receive a grade on this tier, but they would have scored a grade E-G.

Comments on Individual Questions

SECTION A - QUESTION 1

Generally centres are preparing the students well for Section A. However, a few centres are still providing generic responses of validity, reliability and representativeness in every answer. These centres need to recognise which research issue is being discussed in each question.

- 1 (a) From the evidence in the source A the vast majority of candidates were able to identify the two functions of school.
- (b) Many candidates seemed well prepared for this answer. They understood the requirements noting that it is a question about validity, but struggled to apply their criticisms to the actual method, thus only achieving 4 out of a possible 6 marks. Many were able to give generic criticisms of representativeness but if all responses were focussing on sampling issues they did not achieve full marks as they did not show “good understanding of the method/evidence”. Students would do well to focus more closely on the problems of the method, i.e. questionnaires being closed ended, failing to achieve true validity. A minority failed to understand the question and needed more training in the actual concept of problems with validity.
- (c) This year this question asked students to compare source C and source D. In previous years it has asked for source B and C. This caused a few students to fail to achieve marks as they compared the wrong sources showing a need for students to read the question. Otherwise, candidates were differentiated by centres that seem prepared for the requirements of this question and others who did not. Good responses managed to find similarities **and** differences in the content of the sources, expanding their answers through comparison of method or type of evidence. It is not

a pre – requisite that they comment on content **and** type of evidence, but often it aided students to develop their answer. Weaker students merely copied from the items without explicit reference to support or non-support of the items.

- (d) Candidates did well on this question. They have been trained well to look for issues of representativeness. However, a minority are still looking at generic issues of validity. Candidates still need to be able to relate problems in representativeness to the aim of the research (opinions of the function of education), or at least be able to explain the issue. Thus the candidates spotted that a male head teacher from Wales may not represent all teachers, but did not say why. Weaker responses did not focus on the sample and its representativeness, generically discussing issues of validity or even evaluating the opinion in the source.
- (e) Some candidates are prepared well for the requirements of this question, however, there were still many generic rehearsed responses. Candidates seem to have knowledge of questionnaires, interviews and observation, but often justification of their use was only implicit, however, more candidates engaged with the research area of education considering the sample groups of parents; students and teachers. There were a few centres that are training candidates too thoroughly. These provided answers that were too mechanistic and unrelated to the task. Other centres seem to be preparing candidates for AS level discussing unnecessary issues of operationalisation, explicit sampling and evaluation of methods. These are good skills, but not further credited and are too time consuming. Many candidates are still not including secondary evidence in their answers, which limits their AO1 marks to 3 and below; and those that referred to secondary evidence often did so in a simplistic and generic manner. Centres would do well to discuss secondary evidence i.e. what statistics and studies are available for different areas. Good candidates considered school records that state what a students goes on to do next (i.e. which job) or work experience reports. Only a minority of candidates did not understand this question and wrote an evaluate essay on whether schools prepare students for work.

SECTION B – QUESTION 2

- 2 (a) The majority of candidates managed some responses to changes to way people work. There were some who did not clearly give three changes i.e. discussing the industrial revolution at length. Others that were not successful in achieving 6 marks did not give an idea and then discuss it. Centres that prepare their students well had three clear changes succinctly explained i.e. “computerisation: this has led to improvements such as being able to work at home.” Some students spent far too long on this question.
- (b) Candidates engaged with this question well. Here clear differentiation in answers is shown. Those who scored highly used the correct sociological terminology (intrinsic and extrinsic satisfaction) explaining terms and giving examples. Middle range candidates used the ideas without the sociological language, whilst low achieving candidates gave largely practical responses such as having a nice office.
- (c) Candidates were asked to evaluate the usefulness of technological advancement. Most students were able to provide some positive responses to this. Again answers differed in sociological content, with best answers discussing reskilling, deskilling, redundancy and alienation. Some candidates still failed to evaluate their responses at all. Centres need to remind students to conclude their argument to achieve full marks on their A02 evaluation.

SECTION C – QUESTIONS 3 & 4

MEDIA MODULE

Whilst being the most popular module, weaker candidates on the Higher Paper often engage with the question but give largely non-sociological answers. All centres need to ensure students have the terminology and knowledge to discuss their answers. Again this year centres still need to note that due to the constant change in media technology students need to have access to recent sociological text on this subject.

By far, question 3 was the most popular.

- 3 (a) Most candidates were able to identify 3 types of mass media although some struggled to describe all three without being repetitive. Best answers began sociologically with “broadcast, print and communicative media.”
- (b) There seemed to be a real split on the answers given. Some could not rise above common sense, whilst others considered the sociological basis of the uses and gratifications model. Some candidates offered the differing models i.e. hypodermic syringe for this answer and part c, and as was logical, this was credited for both.
- (c) Most candidates could discuss the idea that the media does influence people’s lives, however the weaker candidates could not rise above common sense evaluation. This showed a lack of preparation for the debate. Best responses included the models of hypodermic syringe and cultural effects, vs. uses and gratifications and pluralist approaches. Again there were students who did not evaluate their ideas at all.

This was less popular as a choice of media question, and those weaker students who attempted it, did so poorly.

- 4 (a) Some candidates did not understand this question at all focussing on groups prevalent in the media, not in its’ control. Successful candidates gave succinct answers noting editors, owners and audience with a simple description of each groups influence.
- (b) Weaker candidates struggled to go beyond common sense with their answers. Good answers referred to the differing areas of ownership, representation and sports coverage. These answers included contemporary examples, but were not based on them.
- (c) Again the weaker candidates struggled to go beyond common sense and offer an evaluation. Better responses considered how ethnic minorities were presented considering distortion, repetitive images, association to terrorism and crime vs. specific programming, positive images and often popularity through sport and music.

SECTION C – QUESTIONS 5 & 6

POVERTY

Those that attempted this section had sociological knowledge in their answers. Candidates were split between those that understood the question and those that did not and centres need to prepare the students carefully for the terminology that is necessary in this module.

- 5 (a) Candidates were largely able to discuss three groups who were more likely to be poor and give some description of why.
- (b) Candidates understood this question and were able to offer some response. Weaker candidates were often answering from a practical non-sociological stance i.e. you could give out questionnaires. Others were highly prepared and discussed government responses i.e. below half average income, alongside sociological measurements such as Townsend's' deprivation index.
- (c) This question divided candidates. Some did not understand the term "culture of poverty" often relating it to "culture" and thus ethnicity and thus their essay made little sense, others engaged well with the debate understanding it to be a cultural vs. structural debate on the explanations of poverty.
- 6 (a) This question was misunderstood by some candidates. The question required explanations, yet some offered definitions or measurements, which often meant they failed to score any marks. Successful candidates could offer the different reasons people were poor and easily describe them.
- (b) This question was well answered by the majority who considered the different ways poverty could be reduced. Best responses considered the place of the government as well as the individual, charities and even private industry. Success for A02 marks comes from having enough / a range of ideas.
- (c) Most candidates could engage with this question however, failed to be able to evaluate the claim. They needed to consider the non-monetary effects of poverty such as cultural effects. The best responses often recognised the complicated link between financial effects and others. Again weaker students failed to evaluate the claim.

SECTION C – QUESTIONS 7 & 8

CONTEMPORARY SOCIAL CHANGE

Contemporary Social Change is the least popular in terms of responses and also seems to be the module the students are the least prepared for. This still seems to be answered by students who may have had knowledge from another discipline i.e. Science or Geography, which led to non-sociological responses that scored little. As is often the case with new modules, as materials are being published currently it is hopeful that the module will be more popularly taught.

Question 8 was more popularly answered than Question 7.

- 7 (a) Candidates could respond either nationally or internationally.
- (b) Candidates needed to ensure a range of causes i.e. not three natural disasters.
- (c) Candidates again needed to think about their evaluation of this. Responses needed to show a range of technological changes to be successful.

Report on the Components Taken in June 2006

- 8 (a) Responses often were Geographical or based on Leisure and Tourism studies. Good responses were able to discuss problems in relation to either a growth or a decline in population. Popularly answers just consisted of a lack of three different types of resources i.e. housing, food and jobs.
- (b) Following on from 8a weaker candidates called for houses, food and jobs, without looking at solutions as outlined in sociological material, i.e. government aid, individual aid, international aid, charity etc.
- (c) Generally this was poorly answered especially in reference to the evaluation. Many answers were reliant on litter vs. pollution and little terminology or development.

NB

In total agreement with the report on paper 3, the candidates that do least well in Section C seem to make their choice of question on what they think is interesting, not that which their centre has prepared them for, resulting in non sociological answers.

1990/05 – Coursework

General comments

There were some excellent pieces of coursework this year and again, the standard overall was high. Most centres have directed candidates to adopt the structure suggested in the specification and in general, the work submitted was well organized. However, this can result in the studies becoming somewhat formulaic and whilst this has benefited weaker candidates; it may be that some of the most able candidates felt constrained by this. Good sociology should always be rewarded and the Assessment Objectives interpreted with some flexibility and applied throughout the study to accommodate this. Annotation of where AOs have been credited and comment by centre staff on the awarding of marks is always appreciated in moderation.

Very good support of candidates by centre staff was apparent again this year and the centres new to OCR have sought advice and information where required, usually by e-mail direct to the Principal Moderator. This is available to all centre staff, for issues ranging from administration procedures to completion and assessment of work. Centres should use this if they have any queries about the interpretation of the AOs.

Administration

The moderators have appreciated the efficiency of the many centres whose staff has executed the administration tasks in accordance with the procedures and dates stipulated by OCR. There were some centres that did not send the MS1 and this may be due to some confusion regarding the electronic processes. Centres must send the marks to the moderator, by the 15th May, independently of the electronic data sent directly to OCR. It is appreciated that some centres were not given the details of the moderator and understandable they could not meet the 15th May deadline.

Few centres failed to send the Authentication Form (CCS160) with the sample and those who did were usually efficient in forwarding this when requested to do so. The incidence of centres recording absent candidates with '0' instead of 'A' has increased and it has been time consuming for moderators to request amend forms and in some cases have had to follow up the non return of these forms. To help with this, contact details of relevant centre staff should be sent with the MS1.

Whilst a minority, there are some centres who send multiple copies of candidates' questionnaires and their work in large ring binders. There are also some who send the work in sets of loose sheets and without candidate numbers. It would be appreciated if all these could be avoided.

Marking

Many centre staff demonstrated excellent understanding of the AOs and the application of these. It is of note that staff who have attended the OCR training sessions held in the Autumn term were able to apply these with particular success.

Where marks were adjusted in moderation, they tended to be downward with over-marking noticeable for AO1:1 and AO1:2. However, few were adjusted significantly.

There was some pattern of under-marking at the bottom end of the range with a few centres still not recognizing that marks can be awarded for AO1:2 even without overt justification of methods, as long as an appropriate method has been applied. However, these should be marks in the lower levels. There were also some centres that awarded low marks across the entire range and they tended to be the smaller centres whose candidates produce work of a high standard. Teachers in these centres may benefit from seeing the work of less able candidates in order to better judge how much extra credit their own candidates merit.

Some centre staff applied the marks for AO1:4 in a rather uniform way so that it became a poor discriminator.

Comments on the work moderated

Topics, Approach, Aims and Hypotheses

There was a wide range of topic areas researched with many centres giving their candidates a 'free rein' in selection. Whilst it is understandable and acceptable for centres to restrict the focus, centres which allow only one title must ensure that candidates who collect data communally do produce independent analysis.

It is commendable that recognition of ethical issues in topic selection and the research process has been reinforced by centre staff. Nevertheless, there are still some candidates who are allowed to research unsuitable topics in a potentially insensitive way such as the questioning of their peer group about child abuse or suicide.

Other inappropriate titles were those which had limited sociological relevance and centre staff should ensure the title chosen relates to the specification. There seems to be an increasing trend for candidates to explore appropriate topics but to marginalize the sociological context. These tended to be simple attitude surveys on issues such as smoking or body image with no links made in the background information or analysis, to societal concerns, changes or influences.

Most candidates now produce a set of identifiable aims but there are still centres which need to guide candidates away from a general question and toward research which has a specific hypothesis and clear focus.

Methods and Sources

Most candidates tend towards the use of the survey method to provide qualitative primary data. The use of qualitative data this year seems to have reduced and the notion of triangulation declined. Some candidates were encouraged to use observation and this is commendable. However, the standard of this may have been increased if candidates were encouraged to plan this more fully and (where appropriate) produce an observation schedule.

Fewer candidates are demonstrating a detailed knowledge of, and justification for their selection of sampling methods. This reduces marks for AO1:2 and also reduces possibilities for evaluation of evidence (AO2:2b).

Few candidates this year included large amounts of internet data used uncritically and without justification. However, the trend to 'forget' about the secondary data to produce conclusions was apparent again this year and the ease of the internet to gain material seems to have led to a reduction in the use of published sociological studies.

A minority of centre staff direct all their candidates to the use of specific material and it is important that candidates do undertake some individual research of secondary data, the selection of which is then justified.

Using Evidence

Candidates continue to find the analysis and application of the evidence to draw conclusions to be the most challenging part of the work. Having a simple hypothesis and clear aims is always an advantage. Candidate who choose to study media effects (an increasing number) seem to have the most difficulty with this.

Report on the Components Taken in June 2006

Overall

Again there appears to be many dedicated centre staff who have guided their candidates successfully through a challenging process and in some cases to produce exceptional work. In general the learning outcomes from this component continue to be high with most candidates demonstrating a good understanding of the processes involved in practical research.

Support and advice, on any aspect of the production, assessment and administration of the coursework, is always available for centre staff if needed

General Certificate of Secondary Education (Sociology) (Aggregation Code 1990)

June 2006 Assessment Series

Component Threshold Marks

Component	Max Mark	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
1990 1 Written Paper	80	n/a	n/a	54	45	36	28	20
1990 2 Written Paper	80	n/a	n/a	51	40	32	23	14
1990 3 Written Paper	80	58	49	40	31	N/A	N/A	N/A
1990 4 Written Paper	80	58	48	38	28	N/A	N/A	N/A
1990 5 Coursework	40	32	27	23	18	13	9	5

Syllabus Options

Foundation Tier – Paper 1

	Max Mark	C	D	E	F	G
Overall Threshold Marks	80	54	45	36	28	20
Percentage in Grade		20.7	24.3	24.1	15.4	8.5
Cumulative Percentage in Grade		20.7	45.0	69.1	84.5	93.0

The total entry for the examination was 1520

Foundation Tier – Paper 2

	Max Mark	C	D	E	F	G
Overall Threshold Marks	80	51	40	32	23	14
Percentage in Grade		19.8	27.2	39.6	16.4	12.0
Cumulative Percentage in Grade		19.8	47.0	66.8	83.2	95.2

The total entry for the examination was 1520

Higher Tier – Paper 3

	Max Mark	A	B	C	D
Overall Threshold Marks	80	58	49	40	31
Percentage in Grade		24.6	25.8	50.0	15.6
Cumulative Percentage in Grade		24.6	50.4	75.8	91.4

The total entry for the examination was 3228

Higher Tier – Paper 4

	Max Mark	A	B	C	D
Overall Threshold Marks	80	58	48	38	28
Percentage in Grade		24.4	26.9	24.2	16.3
Cumulative Percentage in Grade		24.4	51.3	75.5	91.8

The total entry for the examination was 3228

Report on the Components Taken in June 2006

Coursework

	Max Mark	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
Overall Threshold Marks	40	32	27	23	18	13	9	5
Percentage in Grade		24.0	19.9	17.3	17.9	10.1	5.9	3.0
Cumulative Percentage in Grade		24.0	43.9	61.2	79.1	89.2	95.1	98.1

The total entry for the examination was 4748

Overall – Foundation Papers 1, 2 and Coursework

	Max Weighted Mark	C	D	E	F	G
	200	123	102	81	60	39
Percentage in Grade		22.4	27.8	22.8	17.1	6.6
Cumulative Percentage in Grade		22.4	50.2	73.0	90.1	96.7

The total entry for the examination was 1520

Overall – Higher Papers 3, 4 and Coursework

	Max Weighted Mark	A*	A	B	C	D	E
	200	164	143	122	101	71	56
Percentage in Grade		7.1	19.5	27.6	52.7	16.7	2.3
Cumulative Percentage in Grade		7.1	26.6	54.2	80.3	97.0	99.3

The total entry for the examination was 3228

OCR (Oxford Cambridge and RSA Examinations)
1 Hills Road
Cambridge
CB1 2EU

OCR Information Bureau

(General Qualifications)

Telephone: 01223 553998

Facsimile: 01223 552627

Email: helpdesk@ocr.org.uk

www.ocr.org.uk

For staff training purposes and as part of our quality assurance programme your call may be recorded or monitored

Oxford Cambridge and RSA Examinations
is a Company Limited by Guarantee
Registered in England
Registered Office; 1 Hills Road, Cambridge, CB1 2EU
Registered Company Number: 3484466
OCR is an exempt Charity

OCR (Oxford Cambridge and RSA Examinations)
Head office
Telephone: 01223 552552
Facsimile: 01223 552553

© OCR 2006

