

Reports on the Components

June 2010

1990/R/10

OCR (Oxford Cambridge and RSA) is a leading UK awarding body, providing a wide range of qualifications to meet the needs of pupils of all ages and abilities. OCR qualifications include AS/A Levels, Diplomas, GCSEs, OCR Nationals, Functional Skills, Key Skills, Entry Level qualifications, NVQs and vocational qualifications in areas such as IT, business, languages, teaching/training, administration and secretarial skills.

It is also responsible for developing new specifications to meet national requirements and the needs of students and teachers. OCR is a not-for-profit organisation; any surplus made is invested back into the establishment to help towards the development of qualifications and support which keep pace with the changing needs of today's society.

This report on the Examination provides 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 specification content, of the operation of the scheme of assessment and of the application of assessment criteria.

Reports should be read in conjunction with the published question papers and mark schemes for the Examination.

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

© OCR 2010

Any enquiries about publications should be addressed to:

OCR Publications
PO Box 5050
Annesley
NOTTINGHAM
NG15 0DL

Telephone: 0870 770 6622
Facsimile: 01223 552610
E-mail: publications@ocr.org.uk

CONTENTS

GCSE Sociology (1990)

REPORTS ON THE COMPONENTS

Component/Content	Page
Chief Examiner's Report	1
1990/01 Paper 1	2
1990/02 Paper 2	5
1990/03 Paper 3	9
1990/04 Paper 4	12
1990/05 Paper 5	17

Chief Examiner's Report

In this final year of the legacy specification, candidates continued to perform well as teachers have passed on their sound understanding of the requirements for success.

It is to the credit of teachers that candidates have been able to apply their skills and knowledge effectively in both the examination papers and the coursework enquiry. They have worked hard and many have utilised fully the resources provided by OCR, to develop a good understanding of the structures and assessment criteria to provide support for their candidates. Teachers will be able to continue to use some of this knowledge and expertise with the new specification, as the areas which have proved successful previously have been carried forward.

The new specification has been an opportunity to improve upon any areas of the 1990 specification which lack clarity and provide a non-tiered and unitised qualification. OCR looks forward to supporting existing centres with the updated specification and welcomes new centres to this new and exciting qualification.

1990/01 Paper 1

General Comments

This year the compulsory topic in Section A dealt with Power and Citizenship. The compulsory Section B question dealt with Family and Identity and the option questions remained the same as in previous years in Section C of the paper. Crime and Deviance proved to be the most popular option question with a minority of candidates choosing to answer questions on Protest and Social Movements and Religion. It is clear that students and their teachers worked hard in preparing for this examination. Results were wide ranging and the majority of candidates were entered for the correct tier of paper. Some candidates disadvantaged themselves by answering more than one of the option questions in Section C, some attempting all questions in this section. Most candidates seemed to use their allocated time well.

Comments on individual questions

Section A

- 1a. The majority of candidates were able to select the correct data from the source but some candidates failed to answer 1a(ii) correctly and therefore lost a mark. Only a few candidates failed to achieve both marks in this question.
- 1b. Many candidates struggled to define content analysis as a research method although most of these candidates found it easier to give an example by referring to the source. A minority of candidates achieved full marks on this question.
- 1c. Candidates on the whole handled this question well by identifying two reasons why the chosen source might not be accurate, e.g. the fact that the source was adapted and written by a student. Some candidates were unclear in their explanations.
- 1d. Many candidates answered this question very well by typically referring to: the size of the sample; the age of those sampled; the location; and the school from which the sample was selected. Some candidates struggled to clearly explain the point that they had identified.
- 1e. Most candidates were able to describe at least two research methods in some detail, but the majority of candidates struggled to contextualise their answer. The stronger responses also managed to describe some secondary evidence in relation to the question.

Section B

- 2a. This question on the dark side of the family was well answered by many candidates, but some gave very generalised answers that failed to achieve full marks. It was clear that a small number of candidates had little or no knowledge of the dark side of the family.
- 2b. Many candidates illustrated a range of good knowledge and understanding on this question, although those scoring the lower marks *listed*, rather than *explained*, the changes in the family.

Reports on the Components taken in June 2010

- 2c. It is clear that many candidates struggled with their understanding of the term socialisation and on many occasions referred to children socialising with others. High scoring candidates tackled this question well though and were able to evaluate by correctly identifying alternative functions of the family that could be argued to be more important than socialisation.

Section C

- 3a. The higher achieving candidates answered this question well using correct sociological terminology. Weaker responses included common sense and generalised answers that prevented them from achieving full marks. Unfortunately, many candidates gave definitions of criminal or deviant acts, showing that they had clearly misunderstood the question.
- 3b. This question was answered very well by many candidates, although some went off on a tangent by describing how prisons could/should be made more harsh and how this would improve their effectiveness. Strong candidates used sociological terminology such as rehabilitation, reform and deterrent.
- 3c. Most candidates found it relatively straightforward to criticise the use of official statistics, but found it much more difficult to argue why they may be the most accurate way of measuring crime. This resulted in unbalanced evaluations but the candidates that clearly attempted to evaluate both sides of the quote in the question were not disadvantaged by this. Some candidates simply gave a one sided argument.
- 4a. Many candidates gave clear examples of deviant acts that differ between cultures with comparisons of what is/isn't deemed acceptable. Some candidates failed to pick up the term 'culture' and described how deviance changes in relation to time, place and person.
- 4b. This question was not answered very well on the whole, as many candidates relied upon stereotypes of the working class as a basis for their answers. Stronger candidates explained/justified their answers well and made at least three distinct points in order to score higher marks. Weaker answers just made one or two generalised comments.
- 4c. Some candidates struggled to evaluate in this question but came up with several relevant points to support the statement that the police and other formal agencies are better at reducing crime than families and other informal agencies of social control. Stronger responses included a fairly balanced argument, with some also concluding their answer effectively.
- 5a. The few candidates that answered this question did so well, clearly identifying two issues that protest groups have taken action on.
- 5b. Candidates really struggled to give a clear definition of what is meant by a 'social movement', and produced generalised answers rather than distinct, specific points which would put them in a position to achieve close to full marks.
- 5c. This question was answered well by the small number of candidates who attempted it, with some clear arguments on why legal action is better than illegal action for achieving change.

Fewer candidates attempted question 6 than question 5.

- 6a. Candidates struggled to describe two social movements and those that did so did not commonly manage to give enough detail in their explanation to achieve full marks on this answer.

Reports on the Components taken in June 2010

- 6b. Of the few candidates that answered this question, the more able gave some relevant detail after correctly identifying one or two ways that protest groups use direct action.
- 6c. Balanced evaluations were aimed for in this question but not necessarily achieved by all candidates. Some one sided answers were given which limited the chance of achieving marks for Assessment Objective 2.
- 7a. Some candidates did not explain why church membership is declining but simply described why people may not go to church. A small number of candidates answered the question well.
- 7b. Candidates answered this question very well with a range of different examples of how people can show that they are religious. The candidates achieving the higher marks put more detail into their explanations of the points that they had identified.
- 7c. Candidates found it difficult to argue against the statement that religious practice is changing but were quite clear in describing how they thought that religious practice has changed.
- 8a. This was the least popular of the two questions on religion and the candidates that attempted it did not seem well prepared to do so. Some identified religious movements correctly but then struggled to explain their points.
- 8b. This question was not answered by very many candidates at all and those that did struggled to identify and explain one or two points in describing the links between ethnicity and religion.
- 8c. Some candidates did not understand the term 'secular' and therefore did not meet the demands of the question. As in Section B, the evaluation element of this question is a crucial requirement that some candidates find difficult when they are clearly more confident on one side of the argument and may know a lot less about the opposing argument.

1990/02 Paper 2

General Comments

As this is a legacy specification, there will not be a paper in 2011. This year, the compulsory topics of Section A and B dealt with the modules of 'Education' and 'Work and Employment', respectively. The option units in Section C remained the same from previous sessions, and this year again 'Poverty' and 'Mass Media' were most popular, with only a minority of candidates choosing 'Contemporary Social Change'.

It was again pleasing to see that the majority of candidates answered the correct number of questions. Unfortunately, this year there seemed to be more candidates who were clearly entered for the wrong tier, thus limiting their final grade. Some used sociological knowledge well and it became clear that they should have been entered for the higher tier.

Comments on Individual Questions

Section A

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

Q1a. From the evidence in Source A, some students failed to gain 2 marks by misreading the data and stating inaccurately that the answer was White British for both (i) and (ii). The marks given are for showing ability to analyse data and thus candidates need to practice reading and understanding data (both quantitative and qualitative).

Q1b. Most candidates were at least able to give some description of interviews. The best responses used types of interviews as their examples (e.g. structured / unstructured). Unfortunately, this year many students did not give examples.

Examiner Hint: Candidates need to revise clear definitions of each method.

Q1c. Candidates were divided in their responses to this question. Not all stuck to accuracy (validity) and thus did not score highly. In fact many candidates wrote exclusively about sampling and representativeness. However, far more candidates engaged with the question, discussing issues like the inappropriateness of interviewing a student during break.

Examiner Hint: Candidates need to revise the disadvantages of using methods.

Q1d. Candidates did well on this question. They had been taught well and looked for issues of representativeness. However, a minority were still looking at generic issues of validity. Weaker responses did not include a full explanation of issues of representativeness.

Examiner Hint: Candidates need to practise considering issues of representativeness and their impact on different aims.

Q1e. Candidates seemed even better prepared for the requirements of this question. Knowledge of questionnaires, interviews and observation was evident. However, a few centres' entries failed to use any secondary evidence, thus stopping the candidates gaining AO1 marks above 3, despite the question asking for methods *and evidence*.

Examiner Hint: Candidates should rehearse matching methods to aims.

Section B

Q2a. This question yielded mixed responses. Many candidates were able to discuss satisfaction in the workplace, but only the best responses could recall types of satisfaction (e.g. intrinsic and extrinsic).

Examiner Hint: Candidates need to practice the necessary format of identified answer followed by description. Candidates also need to revise their key concepts as laid out in the syllabus.

Q2b. Most candidates engaged well with this question and it was clear that some candidates had revised enough sociological ideas. The best responses discussed how strata affected paid work, looking at gender, race and disability. There were less underdeveloped answers this year, which was pleasing to see, however, a small number of candidates failed to read the question and focused on inequality *not* in paid work.

Examiner Hint: Candidates need to revise concepts in preparation of all areas of the specification.

Q2c. Candidates engaged with the statement, however not all had enough sociology to score highly when discussing it. Those who scored highly considered the sociological issues over automation, computerisation and mechanisation. Weaker responses failed to include more than one idea for and one against, often relying on assertion only.

Examiner Hint: Candidates need to ensure they revise work with an evaluative approach, always considering opposition, with sociological evidence.

Section C

Q3 and Q4: The Mass Media

This seemed a more popular module again this year. There is still a need for all centres to ensure candidates have the terminology and knowledge to discuss their answers. Due to the constant change in media technology, candidates need to have access to a recent sociological text on this subject.

Question 3

This was the less popular media choice, and less successfully answered.

Q3a. Most candidates failed to understand the requirements of this question, ignoring the necessary issues (e.g. convergence and diversification).

Examiner Hint: Candidates need access to contemporary evidence / studies.

Q3b. Candidates again were divided on this question. Strong responses discussed the accurate issues, such as newsworthiness and agenda setting. However, too many misunderstood the question, focusing instead on practical answers.

Examiner Hint: Centres need to ensure they train candidates to understand the different command words, for example the difference between “ways” and “how”.

Q3c. This question asked candidates to evaluate whether editors control the media. Candidates could discuss gatekeepers and audience factors, but often failed to use the sociological terminology to gain the highest marks. However, there were some good ideas on censorship. Weak answers were based on assertion and limited debate. Moreover, some candidates are still not ensuring they use a conclusion.

Examiner Hint: Candidates need to ensure they revise work with an evaluative approach, always considering opposition.

Q4a. This question asked about how the media stereotypes ethnic minorities. The strongest answers considered *how*, but most candidates used weak examples of stereotypes with no evidence.

Examiner hint: Candidates need to practise interpretation of questions through the use of past papers.

Q4b. Candidates engaged well with this question. They were able to discuss a plethora of uses of the media. However, often these were limited to basic responses with a lack of sociological terminology.

Examiner hint: Candidates need to revise relevant concepts.

Q4c. Candidates really struggled with this question. Hopefully, by looking at the mark scheme, teachers will be able to improve such debates for the new specification. Candidates largely relied on a practical discussion, at best with contemporary examples.

Examiner Hint: Candidates need to ensure they revise work with an evaluative approach, always considering opposition.

Q5 and Q6: Poverty

Those that attempted this section largely had sociological knowledge in their answers, although it was marginally better on Question 6.

Q5a. By and large, students could recall reasons why poverty is hard to escape. Many answers lost marks if they failed to identify and explain their ideas separately.

Examiner Hint: Candidates should rehearse identifying then explaining ideas.

Q5b. Whilst all candidates could discuss how governments can solve poverty, the responses were divided clearly by those who used sociological evidence and those who relied on common sense.

Examiner Hint: Candidates must revise key terms comprehensively and practise using them.

Reports on the Components taken in June 2010

Q5c. Many candidates managed to discuss whether poverty's worst effect is a poor education, but too many lacked the concepts needed. The best responses discussed poverty traps and cycles, but many responses were too narrow.

Examiner Hint: Candidates must remember to include as many sociological terms as possible.

Q6a. This question was well answered with most candidates able to cite different ways poverty can be defined. However, some candidates lost marks due to repetitive ideas. Foundation candidates often confused the terminology.

Examiner Hint: Candidates should practise identifying two examples of all key areas.

Q6b. Some candidates did well to discuss the different ideas. The culture of poverty was usually cited, but often confused.

Examiner Hint: Candidates need to ensure they know their sociological terms.

Q6c. This question asked for a discussion over whether gender is the greatest factor in being poor. Best responses considered other contributory factors / strata. However, some failed to evaluate the debate.

Examiner Hint: Candidates need to practice evaluation skills.

Q7 and Q8: Contemporary Social Changes

Contemporary Social Change again remains the least popular in terms of responses and also seems to be the module that candidates are the least prepared for. This seemed to be answered by candidates who may have had knowledge from another discipline, such as Science or Geography, which led to non-sociological responses that scored little. Responses to Q8 were generally better.

Q7a. This question was not answered by many. Most responses offered practical ideas and thus only scored basic marks.

Q7b. Few answered the actual question. Again, responses showed evidence from other disciplines.

Q7c. The few candidates that tried this question answered with an assertive tone. Again, answers lacked sociology.

Q8a. Responses again focused on the practical.

Q8b. Those who answered this question did discuss several ideas, but these suffered from being anecdotal or reliant on other disciplines.

Q8c. Candidates that answered this question did not really debate the issue sociologically merely using common sense in their answers.

1990/03 Paper 3

General Comments

This year the compulsory topic in Section A dealt with Power and Citizenship. The compulsory Section B question dealt with Family and Identity and the option questions remained the same as in previous years in Section C of the paper. Crime and Deviance proved to be the most popular option question with a minority of candidates choosing to answer questions on Protest and Social Movements and Religion. It is clear that students and their teachers worked hard in preparing for this examination. Results were wide ranging and it is clear that the vast majority of candidates were entered for the correct tier of paper. Some candidates displayed excellent sociological knowledge and understanding with the minority of candidates relying on common sense in their answers (in these cases the candidates may have been borderline foundation/higher tier candidates).

Comments on Individual Questions

Section A

- 1a. The vast majority of candidates achieved the full two marks on this question, but a worrying number of candidates may have rushed through and misread the second part of the question by identifying the issue *most* important to women when the question actually asked for the issue *least* important to women.
- 1b. This question was answered very well and full marks were achieved by a high number of candidates. Those that did not achieve full marks seemed to have no problem in identifying why the source might not be accurate but failed to fully explain the points that they had identified.
- 1c. Out of all of the questions in Section A, this was the question which most candidates struggled with. Weaker answers identified a point, such as “both sources are about politics”, but then failed to explain the detail from the sources as to why they did/did not support each other. There were many factors that candidates could have picked up on, such as: differences in research method; the dates when both sources were written; the varying content of the sources; both sources being written by students; and both being adapted. A large number of candidates did this successfully and came to a conclusion as to whether the sources supported each other or not.
- 1d. Candidates were very well prepared for this question. Many candidates achieved full marks by clearly identifying two or three points as to why the source may not be useful as evidence for how all people will vote in elections, and then explaining these points in detail. A small number of candidates went into detail as to why the source was useful which minimised their chances of achieving marks on this question.
- 1e. Many candidates were prepared to describe both methods and evidence in this question, using a range of sociological terminology to support their answer. Fewer candidates were as well prepared to contextualise their answer, which prevented some from achieving full marks. Some centres seem to have revised ‘set’ answers that their candidates then wrote up for this question – this seemed to work well for the methods and evidence part of the answer but less well so for the contextualisation.

Section B

- 2a. Candidates that were borderline foundation/higher struggled with this question giving vague answers such as 'arguments' rather than using sociological terms such as 'domestic violence'. Stronger candidates clearly identified and described three examples of the dark side of family life.
- 2b. A wide range of answers were produced for this question. The best answers not only described how types of family were changing, but also backed up these points with sociological knowledge and understanding as to why these changes were occurring. Candidates closer to the C grade still answered the question relatively well, but provided less detail in their explanation and simply listed the changes that they believed to have occurred.
- 2c. Many candidates produced balanced arguments with clear conclusions for this question, very good knowledge and understanding of the functions of the family and the varying levels of importance that these functions had. Stronger candidates went as far as giving specific examples of cases of unsocialised children to demonstrate the importance of this function and described the other agencies of socialisation that are now taking over the socialisation function from the family.

Section C

- 3a. Many candidates answered this question very well and achieved full marks. The majority of candidates that failed to achieve full marks simply did not provide enough detail in their explanation of points correctly identified.
- 3b. This question was answered very well by the majority of candidates by giving at least three distinct points to describe how prisons reduced the amount of crime in society. The strongest responses used specific sociological terminology to support their answer.
- 3c. Impressive knowledge of the dark figure of crime, self-report studies and victimisation surveys was shown by many candidates. Balanced arguments were given in the best answers, although many answers focused heavily on the reasons why official statistics are not the most accurate way of measuring crime.
- 4a. Many candidates were well prepared for this answer with specific cultural examples of deviance and comparisons to other cultures. Some candidates were aware of the cultural differences but failed to make the comparison, therefore leaving their answer with points identified but not effectively explained.
- 4b. Weaker answers tended to rely upon stereotypes and sweeping statements, rather than sociological knowledge to answer this question. Stronger responses included clear sociological terminology to clearly identify why criminals are more likely to be working class and fully explained at least three points to give themselves the best chance of achieving full marks on this question.
- 4c. This question was generally answered quite well. Candidates had good knowledge and understanding of the formal/informal agencies of social control and explained quite effectively how useful these agencies are in reducing crime within society.

Questions 5-8 were the least popular in the option section of the paper and only Crime and Deviance was answered by centre cohorts of candidates. For the most part the candidates that answered questions 5, 6, 7 or 8 did so individually, with varying degrees of success.

Reports on the Components taken in June 2010

- 5a. The candidates that answered this question on the whole did so successfully, displaying good knowledge and understanding of three issues on which protest groups have taken action.
- 5b. This question proved to be difficult for many of the candidates that attempted it as they struggled to express distinct points clearly in order to explain exactly what is meant by a social movement.
- 5c. Candidates answered this question quite well, giving clear examples in some cases of legal/illegal action that has been taken by various groups within society. A balanced evaluation was achieved in the stronger responses.
- 6a. Very few candidates attempted Question 6. There was evidence that some candidates were simply 'having a go' without a real basis of knowledge of social movements.
- 6b. This question was handled well by the candidates that attempted it, as they had specific examples to illustrate their understanding of direct action being taken by protest groups.
- 6c. This question proved difficult for some candidates in providing a balanced argument.
- 7a. Some of the candidates that attempted this question clearly identified and explained three reasons why church membership in the UK is declining, but it seems others used guesswork and were really trying to describe reasons why people do not go to church, without referring to the issue of change.
- 7b. On the whole, this question was answered very successfully for the candidates that attempted it, with several clear points being made in describing how people show that they are religious.
- 7c. Of the small number of candidates that attempted this question, it was clear that they tended to find it easy to describe how religious practice is changing but struggled to balance their argument in explaining how religious practice has possibly remained the same.
- 8a. Of the two questions on Religion, Question 8 was the least popular. Some candidates clearly identified three religious movements/organisations, whereas others who attempted the question simply misunderstood what was being asked of them (possibly because this was not the topic taught to them in Sociology lessons).
- 8b. Very few candidates attempted this question and very few candidates answered it successfully. Stereotypes and sweeping statements were made in some instances, with little sociological knowledge and understanding of the topic area.
- 8c. Some of the candidates that attempted this question did not understand the term 'secular' and therefore struggled to achieve any credit for their answers in such cases. The stronger responses included good sociological knowledge and understanding (or possibly cross-curriculum knowledge that was put to good use) and therefore managed to produce balanced answers.

1990/04 Paper 4

General Comments

As this is a legacy specification, there will not be a paper in 2011. This year, the compulsory topics of Section A and B dealt with the modules of 'Education' and 'Work and Employment', respectively. The option units in Section C remain the same from previous sessions, and this year again 'Poverty' and 'Mass Media' were most popular, with only a minority of candidates choosing 'Contemporary Social Change'.

This year, again, Paper 4 appears to have differentiated successfully. As always there remains a clear divide between candidates who rely on common sense for their answers - possibly having been entered for the wrong tier - and those who have revised and used sociological evidence, relevant contemporary examples and terminology. Again, there seemed an improvement in the standard of achievement of some candidates, especially in reference to Section A: Question 1e, which seems to derive from being prepared. However, some centres still have missing knowledge in certain areas; teachers need to continue to ensure comprehensive teaching of all areas of the syllabus. (To be discussed later.)

It was pleasing to see that the majority of candidates answered the correct number of questions. As previously, where time is an issue, it appears that candidates are writing too much for answers to Section A 1e and Section B and C part (a).

Again, this year there were a number of centres that had some candidates responding to the Mass Media questions and others responding to the Poverty questions. Whilst teaching extra topics may be a good idea, there was some evidence of gaps in sociological knowledge. (See the Mass Media section comments.)

Comments on Individual Questions

Section A

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

Q1a. From the evidence in Source A some students failed to gain 2 marks by misreading the data and stating inaccurately that the answer was White British for both (i) and (ii). The marks given are for showing ability to analyse data and thus candidates need to practise reading and understanding data (both quantitative and qualitative).

Q1b. Candidates were divided by the responses to this question. Not all stuck to accuracy (validity) and thus they did not score highly. In fact, many candidates again wrote exclusively about sampling and representativeness. However, far more candidates engaged with the question, discussing issues like the inappropriateness of interviewing a student during break.

Examiner Hint: Candidates need to revise the disadvantages of using methods.

Q1c. It was pleasing to see that centres had prepared candidates for this question this year. However, weaker answers copied from the sources without explicit reference as to whether Source B supports or doesn't support Source C. Some even compared the wrong sources. Some candidates did not refer to the content of the sources at all, and instead

described the different methods used. Strong responses looked at areas of similarity and of difference, with some overall conclusion of support. More candidates this year discussed the validity / reliability or representativeness of the sources. In some cases this was well done, but many got confused - especially over whether the data in each was quantitative or qualitative - and made the task more complicated. Some students failed to totally understand the content and inaccurately saw similarities in reference to the treatment of ethnic minorities.

Examiner Hint: Candidates must practise the format of this type of question.

Q1d. Candidates did well on this question. They have been taught well to look for issues of representativeness. However, a minority are still looking at generic issues of validity. Candidates need to be able to relate problems in representativeness to the aim of the research. Weaker responses did not include a full explanation of issues of representativeness.

Examiner Hint: Candidates need to practise considering issues of representativeness and their impact on different aims.

Q1e. Candidates seemed even better prepared for the requirements of this question, although there were many partly generic and rehearsed responses. Candidates seem to have knowledge of questionnaires, interviews and observation and some had clearly been trained to discuss issues that are not of GCSE level (e.g. quantitative and qualitative methods). However, they did not always understand the terms, further highlighting rote learning. Often these candidates failed to use any secondary evidence, thus preventing them from gaining AO1 marks above 3, despite the question asking for methods *and evidence*. The best responses considered evidence, such as government statistics on GCSE results looking at social class and area.

Examiner Hint: Candidates should rehearse matching methods to aims.

Section B

Q2a. This question yielded mixed responses. Many candidates were able to discuss satisfaction in the workplace, but only the best responses could recall types of satisfaction (e.g. intrinsic and extrinsic).

Examiner Hint: Candidates need to practise the necessary format of identified answer followed by description. Candidates also need to revise their key concepts as laid out in the syllabus.

Q2b. Most candidates engaged well with this question and it was clear that candidates had revised enough sociological ideas. The best responses discussed how strata affected paid work, looking at gender, race and disability. There were less underdeveloped answers this year, which was pleasing to see, however a small number of candidates failed to read the question and focused on inequality *not* in paid work.

Examiner Hint: Candidates need to revise concepts in preparation of all areas of the specification.

Q2c. Candidates engaged with the statement, however not all had enough sociology to score highly when discussing it. Those who scored highly considered the sociological issues over automation, computerisation and mechanisation. Weaker responses failed to include more than one idea for and one against, often relying on assertion only.

Examiner Hint: Candidates need to ensure they revise work with an evaluative approach, always considering opposition and relevant sociological evidence.

Section C

Q3 and Q4: The Mass Media

This seemed a more popular module again this year. There is still a need for all centres to ensure candidates have the terminology and knowledge to discuss their answers. Due to the constant change in media technology, candidates need to have access to recent sociological text on this subject.

Question 3

This was the less popular media choice, and less successfully answered.

Q3a. Most candidates failed to understand the requirements of this question ignoring the necessary issues (e.g. convergence and diversification).

Examiner Hint: Candidates need access to contemporary evidence / studies.

Q3b. Candidates again were divided on this question. Strong responses discussed the accurate issues, such as newsworthiness and agenda setting. However, too many misunderstood the question, focusing instead on practical answers.

Examiner Hint: Centres need to ensure they train candidates to understand the different command words, for example the difference between “ways” and “how”.

Q3c. This question asked candidates to evaluate whether editors control the media. Candidates could discuss gatekeepers and audience factors, but often failed to use the sociological terminology to gain the highest marks. However, there were some good ideas on censorship. Weak answers were based on assertion and limited debate. Moreover, some candidates are still not ensuring they use a conclusion.

Examiner Hint: Candidates need to ensure they revise work with an evaluative approach, always considering opposition.

Q4a. This question asked about how the media stereotypes ethnic minorities. The strongest answers considered *how*, but most candidates used weak examples of stereotypes with no evidence.

Examiner hint: Candidates need to practise interpretation of questions through the use of past papers.

Q4b. Candidates engaged well with this question. They were able to discuss a plethora of uses of the media. However, often these were limited to basic responses with a lack of sociological terminology.

Examiner hint: Candidates need to revise relevant concepts.

Q4c. Candidates really struggled with this question. Hopefully, by looking at the mark scheme, teachers will be able to improve such debates for the new specification. Candidates largely relied on a practical discussion, at best with contemporary examples.

Examiner Hint: Candidates need to ensure they revise work with an evaluative approach, always considering opposition.

Q5 and Q6: Poverty

Those that attempted this section largely had sociological knowledge in their answers, although it was marginally better on Question 6.

Q5a. By and large, students could recall reasons why poverty is hard to escape. Many answers lost marks if they failed to identify and explain their ideas separately.

Examiner Hint: Candidates should rehearse identifying then explaining ideas.

Q5b. Whilst all candidates could discuss how governments can solve poverty, the responses were divided clearly by those who used sociological evidence and those who relied on common sense.

Examiner Hint: Candidates must revise key terms comprehensively and practice using them.

Q5c. Many candidates managed to discuss whether poverty's worst effect is a poor education, but too many lacked the concepts needed. The best responses discussed the poverty traps and cycles, but many responses were too narrow.

Examiner Hint: Candidates must remember to include as many sociological terms as possible.

Q6a. This question was well answered with most candidates able to cite three different ways poverty can be defined. However, some candidates lost marks due to repetitive ideas.

Examiner Hint: Candidates should practise identifying three examples of all key areas.

Q6b. Some candidates did well to discuss the different issues, but again some candidates failed to use any terminology.

Examiner Hint: Candidates need to ensure they know their sociological terms.

Q6c. This question asked for a discussion over whether gender is the greatest factor in being poor. Best responses considered other contributory factors / strata. However, some failed to evaluate the debate.

Examiner Hint: Candidates need to practise evaluation skills.

Q7 and Q8: Contemporary Social Changes

Contemporary Social Change remains the least popular in terms of responses and also seems to be the module that candidates are the least prepared for. This seemed to be answered by candidates who may have had knowledge from another discipline, such as Science or Geography, which led to non-sociological responses that scored little.

Responses to Q8 were generally better.

Q7a. This question was not answered by many. Most responses offered practical ideas and thus only scored basic marks.

Reports on the Components taken in June 2010

- Q7b. Few answered the actual question. Again, responses showed evidence from other disciplines.
- Q7c. The few candidates that tried this question answered with an assertive tone. Again, answers lacked sociology.
- Q8a. Responses again focused on the practical.
- Q8b. Those who answered this question did discuss several ideas, but these suffered from being anecdotal or reliant on other disciplines.
- Q8c. Candidates that answered this question did not really debate the issue sociologically merely using common sense in their answers. Although the odd good answer did consider third world and UK examples.

1990/05 Paper 5

General comments

In this, the last year of the coursework component, candidates continued to produce enquiries of a high standard. Those at the very top who gained full marks demonstrated excellent practical research skills and sophisticated critical analysis, often with originality. At all levels in the range, candidates were able to demonstrate the ability to collect data and recognise that Sociology is a fluid and exciting discipline with practical application to the 'real' world and the candidates' own personal life experiences.

Many centres have expressed their regret that practical research in this format will no longer be examined. These centres have embraced the challenge of encouraging their candidates to investigate with individuality and grapple with the obstacles which are an inevitable part of applying practical research techniques as a way to understand society. Coursework from these centres in this last year has been well organised and candidates supported and guided appropriately to develop and apply their skills. They have proved beyond doubt that coursework can be an excellent learning tool.

However, new specifications are about progress with new ways of testing skills and knowledge. The replacement for the 05 component (B673) is a unique exam, different in structure from any current or previous OCR GCSE Sociology exam. However, it still tests the candidate's knowledge and skills in applying practical research methods, but without the need for the time consuming task of collecting data. This year, as previously, there are centres that have been less successful in motivating their candidates to apply the time and organisation skills to produce a high standard in their coursework and these centres will no doubt welcome the change to this component becoming an examination.

Administration

As in previous years, many centres were well organised and provided the necessary forms and samples promptly. However, the moderation process was made lengthy and more onerous when centres either did not total the AOs accurately, or inaccurately transcribed marks, resulting in a large number of amend forms being sent.

Most centres sent candidates' work securely fastened and labelled and with removal of multiple copies of questionnaires and this was appreciated.

There is a special thank you to the many centres which every year could be relied on to conduct the process with efficiency and according to the instructions given.

Marking

Overall, centre staff showed good understanding of the AOs and applied this effectively, making use of the comment boxes or with additional feedback sheets to explain why marks had been allocated.

Marking was generally accurate, consistent and within the tolerance allowed. Centres whose marks were adjusted tended to move down but in only a few cases was this a significant change. There was also a small number of centres whose candidates had been marked harshly and adjustment was upwards.

Comments on the work moderated

Topics, Approach, Aims and Hypotheses

There were some original and very interesting research pieces addressing highly topical and contentious issues such as terrorism, gang behaviour and police-black community. Those proactive and imaginative in choosing their topic are to be congratulated. There was some move away from the more traditional areas such as conjugal roles and the recent trend of studying body image, although 'size zero' did still remain popular. As in past years, the learning outcome of the task appeared to be greatest for candidates who had choice of topic and were not 'given' the hypothesis and sources by their teachers.

Some candidates made little use of concepts or did refer to them but without demonstrating a full understanding. It will be necessary for concepts such as hypothesis, validity, reliability etc. to be understood fully for success in the new exam as these can be tested specifically.

As in previous years, the most successful candidates commenced their study with a set of clearly identified and manageable aims which informed their studies and to which they referred throughout the enquiry. Most centres encouraged their candidates to do this but there are still some which allow their candidates to produce vague or over-wide and unmanageable aims which produce poor results. Reference back to these aims and the linking of the results from the primary data and secondary sources is needed to develop conclusions and candidates for B673 will need to develop these skills as they are tested in the exam.

As in previous years, there was some evidence that candidates were making ethical considerations in their research but this was limited overall. Whilst this was not a specific AO, in B673 knowledge and understanding of ethical concerns is examined specifically.

Methods and Sources

Questionnaires were again the most common method used to acquire primary data and although often applied well, candidates will need to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of a wide range of techniques in B673.

In particular, sampling is an area in which the focus by some candidates has been sparse.

The use of secondary sources ranged from brief reference to extracts from GCSE textbooks and unjustified inclusion of celebrity images to extensive consideration of sociological studies and articles from respected journals. All sources are of potential use and for the B673 exam, candidates will need to apply the skills of interpretation and evaluation of a wide range of sources of differing qualities.

Using Evidence

As in previous years, candidates demonstrated skills in the collection of data and scored well on AO1:2 and 2:1. However, gaining marks for analysis, interpretation and evaluation of data proved more challenging for some and candidates for B673 will need to develop these higher level skills.

Overall

Overall, the candidates' work was of a high quality. Through the course of this specification, centre staff have worked hard to develop a good understanding of the criteria for production and assessment of the work. Over the years, the coursework investigations have become more focused, streamlined and effective in demonstrating the skill of the candidates in conducting practical research.

Moderating the coursework has at times been an exciting experience when a piece of original research has gripped the interest of a candidate and their learning has been transparent and extensive.

The support of the centres has been much appreciated and we look forward to continuing to work with them to develop and assess the skills of young sociologists.

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

OCR Customer Contact Centre

14 – 19 Qualifications (General)

Telephone: 01223 553998

Facsimile: 01223 552627

Email: general.qualifications@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 2010

