

# **Examiners' Reports**

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**June 2011**

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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.

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### Sociology (J696)

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## **Chief Examiner's Report**

2011 is the second year the units of the new GCSE sociology specification have been offered and the first year the qualification will be awarded.

Entry levels for all units have been higher than in 2010 but especially so with B672 and B673 as Year 11 candidates who sat B671 last year and those studying GCSE sociology in one year completed the award. Overall there has been an increase in entry numbers. The changes in the structure and content of the qualification with unitisation and removal of the tiered papers have proved to be successful.

Papers B671 and B673 were completed within a structured answer booklet and candidates appear to have found this format beneficial, providing guidance with regard to the length of answers and in helping them to maintain a precise focus. Marking of B671 and B673 has taken place electronically and this system of marking will be extended to B672.

The quality of the sociology presented was strong and impressive. B671, 'Sociology Basics' was the most popular unit to be entered by year ten candidates. B673, 'Applying Sociological Research Techniques' had a larger entry of year 11 candidates as centres deemed the extra year to develop the skills of application would be beneficial. Similarly, B672 also had a larger entry of year 11 candidates entry and the breadth of knowledge and understanding in B672 were both very good. There were a small number of candidates who re-sat units taken last year, demonstrating the flexibility in approach available from the new specification.

Overall, candidates appeared to have been well prepared for the examinations and it is to the credit of the teachers in the centres who have embraced the new specification, worked hard to ensure their own understanding of the units and made use of the support materials available on the OCR website to enhance the performance of their own candidates.

## **B671 Sociology Basics**

This was the second year of examination for this new specification GCSE Sociology paper. The paper was untiered and so designed to cater for candidates of all ability levels and was marked out of 60. The structure of the paper means that candidates should work on a 'mark a minute' rule in order to best make use of their time – 60 marks, 60 minutes. It is hoped that centres and candidates will find this helpful.

The paper appears to have differentiated well, stretching the top end through targeted questions, yet still being accessible to the lower end. The examination paper was in a booklet format in an attempt to try and help structure candidate's responses and thus support them in achieving the best marks they were capable of. Some excellent sociology was seen by the examination team and candidates and tutors are to be congratulated for their hard work in achieving this.

### **General Comments**

This was not a tiered paper and the spread of marks appropriately reflected this fact. A wide range of responses were seen by the examining team with all candidates clearly being able to access the paper.

The question paper was thought to be clear and offered a range of formats which allowed candidates of all abilities to access marks. A minority of candidates appeared to run short of time towards the end of the examination and thus regular timed exam question practice is recommended to centres.

There was evidence that many candidates had been prepared well for this examination by their teachers and that they clearly understood the rubric implications of the different question styles. Where candidates were not as well prepared they confused different skills and often "identified" where they were required to "explain" or did not fully understand the concept or method being tested, content analysis and ethics, for example. Centres are to be reminded that all areas of the specification can be examined and it is thus essential that candidates are prepared for this.

Most candidates showed an at least basic knowledge and understanding of sociological concepts and methods, particularly around socialisation and gender. The level of critical thought was also good with the majority of candidates having at least some understanding of research techniques and their associated flaws and weaknesses. Essay technique was also generally good with few tabulated responses seen and the majority of candidates able to have a debate (at very different levels) around the issue.

Overall, it was clearly felt that the paper had done what it set out to do and had successfully tested candidates on the 'basics' of Sociology at GCSE level.

### **Comments on Individual Questions**

#### **Section A – Research Methods and Evidence**

##### **Q1**

This was a true or false question testing candidate's sociological knowledge. Most candidates scored 4 or 3 marks here, it was part 1(b) where a number of candidates were unclear what was meant by qualitative data. Centres are advised to give their candidates plenty of practice at this style of question.

## **Q2**

This question is best approached as a question about representativeness and generaliseability and candidates should therefore focus on issues of sampling and the key word 'all' in the question. The small number of magazines studied (2), the genre of the magazines (fashion), the fact only January editions were studied and the issue of generalising to the entire mass media from a study of magazines only, would have been useful to comment on.

Marks will not be awarded here for those candidates who identify and discuss accuracy issues. Centres are advised to give their candidates plenty of pieces of evidence to analyse for these types of issues and ensure a full understanding of the concepts of representativeness and generaliseability can be applied appropriately. Legacy paper source material would be ideal for this.

## **Q3(a) and Q3(b)**

The format and structure of this question seemed to work well for candidates of all abilities. Some one word answers were forthcoming from some candidates who usually referred to content analyses being 'cheap' and 'easy' as their chief advantages as a research method. One word is not a description as asked for in the question and thus did not score the 2 marks available. Part (a) was answered more successfully on the whole than part (b) and many candidates needed to be less vague within their responses. The best responses here clearly understood content analysis as a research method and were thus able to pick out two advantages and disadvantages of using it. Centres would be well advised to ensure their candidates keep a methods and evidence checklist of appropriate advantages and disadvantages to revise from.

## **Q4(a)(i)**

The majority of candidates were successfully able to identify the primary method used as either 'unstructured interviews' or 'interviews'. Teachers are advised to ensure that candidates are clear on the differences between primary methods and secondary evidence as knowledge of these will be crucial to success in several questions.

## **Q4(a)(ii)**

Many candidates were able to score the mark here with the best answers focusing on the covert nature of the research and issues of privacy and consent. A significant minority of candidates appeared to have no understanding of the concept of 'ethics' with some confusing it for 'ethnicity' and so writing that the researcher was an Asian female sociologist.

## **Q4(b)**

Here the focus of the question is on issues of accuracy / validity and it is only answers focusing on this that will score marks. Most candidates focused on the fact that the researcher wrote no notes at the time, that the study was outdated, that candidates would be unlikely to open up fully to a teacher and the possibility of interviewer bias. Centres are to be reminded that this is not a question about representativeness or generaliseability and that candidates should avoid discussion of these issues in the accuracy question.

## **Q5**

It was pleasing to see that far fewer candidates than last session seemed to misinterpret the question and answer this as an essay. Hopefully the bullet point prompts have aided in this and reinforced that it is a research and evidence report that is required here. This question was, in general, answered well with many candidates being able to supply responses which clearly identified primary methods and secondary evidence that might be used within the context of the investigation. The majority of candidates were also able to provide some description and justification for their choices, although this was typically less successful for secondary evidence. A lesser number of candidates were able to also discuss reasons for selecting an appropriate sample and contextualise the material to the hypothesis supplied and so were able to access the higher marks. The question therefore differentiated well between candidates of different abilities.

Key issues with responses were that at times candidates did not cover 2 primary methods and a piece of secondary evidence in their discussion. This immediately cost them marks. A lack of detail and depth on how the method / evidence would be used was also something noticed by the examining team. Quite a few really good responses remained at the top of Level 2 because the third method/evidence was dealt with very briefly and its inclusion in the research plan was not justified. Focusing on these issues with candidates should really help to boost the marks awarded here.

Sociological language was used well in this question – even low level responses often had clear terms such as 'non-participant observation' rather than simply 'observation' which is to be encouraged. Candidates need to be clear in the application of key concepts such as representative, valid and reliability.

There were some very good answers from candidates here and the majority were able to score in Level 2.

## **Section B – Key Concepts in Sociology**

### **Q6**

Most candidates scored 3 or 4 marks here with the most common error being the definition of 'norms'. To address this, centres may wish to consider getting their candidates to compile their own 'key concepts' glossaries based on the specification.

### **Q7(a)**

This question was generally answered well with most candidates identifying the control shown in the stimuli as 'informal'.

### **Q7(b)**

Similarly, this question was also typically well answered with candidates referring to a range of agents such as mass media, education and prison service. Candidates are advised to ensure that they use the terms found in the specification here. Again, a glossary may prove useful.

### **Q7(c)**

Some candidates responded well, focusing on the fact that we are 'born into' ascribed status and that it is difficult to change. Many offered the Royal family and celebrity families as their examples which worked well. Surprisingly few looked at gender or ethnicity.

### **Q7(d)**

A very wide breadth of answers were seen and accepted here, as indicated by the mark scheme. The most common answers looked at education, family, money, good health, privacy and human life. Some candidates appeared to be discussing norms rather than the values that underpin them and so could not be credited.

### **Q8(a)**

This was very well answered by the vast majority of candidates who could clearly identify a traditional female stereotype and describe what they meant by it. Lots of candidates chose to discuss the idea of women as housewives and did so successfully.

### **Q8(b)**

The best responses explicitly named a process of socialisation such as canalisation or the hidden curriculum and then exemplified the concept. Others identified, for example, the 'giving of toys', and described this process well in terms of gender and so were also able to score full marks. A number of candidates wrote about stereotypes rather than gender role socialisation, for example 'women stay at home'. Answers such as this were not credited.

**Q9**

Most candidates showed good time management skills here and were thus able to finish the paper and not jeopardise this last question. The question seems to have effectively differentiated between candidates of various abilities with few one sided answers seen.

Many candidates answered this question well, using examples from family, mass media, education and most notably work. Most candidates were able to access at least bottom Level 2. Candidates that answered very well in level 3 were able to use terminology such as joint conjugal roles, symmetrical families, glass ceiling, new man, horizontal and vertical segregation and Feminism impressively and accurately. Their range of points was excellent and studies were often cited. To access level 3 marks, candidates needed to ensure their argument was not one sided, in order to enable some evaluation to be made.

Some candidates provided list like arguments whilst other candidates did not provide a range of identities and focused on common sense ideas about appearance (long and short hair) and women being able to vote. These candidates did not score highly.

**Examiner hints, tips and advice:**

- 1 Ensure candidates have regular practice at the various styles of examination question well before they sit the paper to help with familiarity and to pinpoint any issues that they may have with particular skills and time management.
- 2 Encourage candidates to keep glossaries of the key terms covered as these will always be needed as a basis for the sociological knowledge and understanding on the paper.
- 3 Understanding the command words in the questions correctly will, of course, be crucial to overall success on the paper. The differences between identify, describe, explain, justify, evaluate etc need to be covered by teachers as part of the preparation for the examination.
- 4 For Q5 ensure that candidates understand the requirements of the research plan and are able to appropriately select, describe and justify their choices of methods and evidence within the context of the hypothesis.
- 5 For Q9 a one sided answer must be avoided. Candidates should be encouraged to make a point, explain and expand upon it and give an example. A range of points should be included in the essay. Best practice is to clearly 'flag up' to the examiners when evaluation is occurring via phrases such as 'however', 'on the other hand' etc. A conclusion should be offered to sum up the points made and to make a judgement on the claim.

## **B672 Socialisation, Culture and Identity**

This was the second year of examination of the new GCSE Sociology paper. The paper remains untiered and the marks are out of 120. The larger cohort this year meant that the paper differentiated well. Most candidates seem to understand that they only needed to answer three whole sections out of the six, but again there were a minority who attempted too many sections, thus spending too little time on each section and failing to score highly.

The most popular options were Sections A, C, E and F. A smaller cohort of centres answered Section B, but only a few candidates answered Section D.

There seemed to be some centres who clearly taught 3 of the 6 sections and their candidates often had enough wide ranging knowledge with detail. Some centres seemed to have opted for teaching more than the required amount of sections. Whilst for some the candidates were still successful, there was evidence that this worked against others as they did not have enough wide ranging ideas or detail in their work. It seems preferable to only teach the necessary 3 options.

### **General Comments**

Strong candidates clearly were prepared for the paper, having sociological evidence to discuss. Some candidates relied largely on common sense which does not gain high marks. This distinction was more apparent on the essay questions. The essays being worth 24 marks allowed those who had revised extensively to use sociological evidence and develop their ideas and be awarded differently to those who only had partial knowledge and understanding. Essay structure has improved dramatically with some extremely discursive essays. The majority were able to use evidence both for and against, presenting sustained evaluative arguments. To do well, candidates always needed to offer a conclusion. There were also less candidates relying on subtitles to construct their arguments.

The majority of candidates did well on the multiple choice key concept questions. Generally most candidates understood all instructions, they should be reminded that there is nothing to be gained from copying out the key concepts and all statements.

Candidates not only knew the key concepts for the matching activity, but also seemed to consistently use them throughout their answers in an improved fashion in comparison to the old specification.

Sociological knowledge has correctly been taught in a diverse set of ways with candidates confidently using concepts, but also empirical evidence, lots of studies and policies alongside contemporary examples. A minority of centres are using sociological theory. This has often been a problem for candidates who either are inaccurately using theory or generalising it. It may be an idea to only use theory to extend the learning of those who are able to confidently use other forms of evidence.

Many candidates used their time wisely spending 30 minutes on each section however some did spend far too long on their 8 mark questions and thus did not have enough time to write a developed debate for their 24 mark essays. There was also some evidence that candidates need to practice the whole paper timed as a few very good candidates did wonderful sections for their first two, some even gaining full marks for both, but then did not have time to do well on their third section which will lower their overall mark.

## Section A – Family

### Q1

Most candidates accurately identified a household task that the husband spent more time on. A minority did not follow the instruction "From the source".

*Teacher tip:*

Ensure candidates follow the instructions. In homework give them a mixture of source/wider sociological knowledge questions so they get used to reading the paper carefully.

### Q2

Most candidates could accurately match all four key concepts. A minority of candidates did not accurately copy out the concept and there was some confusion between conjugal roles and the symmetrical family.

*Teacher tip:*

Ensure that candidates are given the list of key concepts for family from the specification. They need to ensure they have a working definition for each and revise these thoroughly. There are ideas for revision games on the schemes of work available on the OCR website.

### Q3

The majority of candidates could discuss sociological reasons for an increase in divorce. However there were candidates who did not consider the actual question and gave reasons for divorce, not the increase. Those that did consider the increase often both explained and developed their ideas well.

*Teacher tip:*

Ensure candidates practise for the 8 mark question. They need a clear ability to separately identify and explain. Show candidates a clear format 'One reason for the increase is'... 'This increase has occurred because...'

### Q4

All candidates engaged with this question and it differentiated well. Those who were most successful could articulate sociologically several reasons why the family is most influential, and then evaluate with a plethora of other agents of social control / socialisation. Some very interesting and diverse answers overall with some candidates discussing feral children such as Oxana and one discussing Mischel's Marshmallow experiment wisely transferred from the B673 pre release.

*Teacher tip:*

Candidates need to plan essays ensuring sociological content. They need to use the sociological ideas learnt in class even if they cannot recall the correct sociological language. Practice essay titles can be found on the OCR website for past papers on the legacy specification.

## Section B – Education

### Q5

Most candidates were able to answer all the source based questions. Candidates must remember to take their answers directly from the source when requested. Most candidates were then able to identify other purposes of education from their wider sociological knowledge.

*Teacher tip:*

Ensure candidates follow the instructions. In homework give them a mixture of source / wider sociological knowledge questions so they get used to reading the paper carefully.

**Q6**

Most candidates were able to match the relevant concept with the appropriate statement.

*Teacher tip:*

Ensure that candidates are given the list of key concepts for education from the specification. They need to ensure they have a working definition for each and revise these thoroughly. There are ideas for revision games on the schemes of work available on the OCR website.

**Q7**

Most candidates successfully identified how class may affect educational achievement. Those candidates that did well often focussed on material deprivation and then contrasted it with labelling based on class or cultural deprivation. There were however some candidates that were very confused about the meaning of cultural deprivation.

*Teacher tip:*

Ensure candidates practise for the 8 mark question. They need a clear ability to separately identify and explain. Show candidates a clear format 'One effect is... This effect can occur when...'

Ensure candidates are aware of the meaning of cultural deprivation focussing on norms and values not material deprivation.

**Q8**

Successful candidates chose diverse changes to discuss. Some focussed clearly on the 1988 Education Reform Act such as OFSTED, National Curriculum and league tables; whilst others drew upon more recent changes such as the loss of the EMA and the raising leaving age. Some candidates focussed on the tripartite system which is not post 1988 so could not be credited.

*Teacher tip:*

Centres need to ensure that candidates understand that education policy before 1988 will not be examined. Whilst centres may still wish to teach it to give candidates an understanding of the history of education they must focus on policy post 1988 only.

**Section C – Mass Media**

**Q9**

Most candidates successfully identified how the media affected behaviour. Most candidates were also able to identify other types of mass media, however a minority did not focus on "types" of media, giving examples.

*Teacher tip:*

Ensure candidates are able to give examples of behaviour, values, and norms for each agent of socialisation/control to ensure they will be able to focus on what the question asks for.

**Q10**

This divided candidates and some clearly had not revised their media concepts. Some candidates could not match the term mass media with its statement.

*Teacher tip:*

Ensure that candidates are given the list of key concepts for Mass Media from the specification. They need to ensure they have a working definition for each and revise these thoroughly. There are ideas for revision games on the schemes of work available on the OCR website.

### Q11

Many candidates were able to discuss examples of how the mass media acts as an agent of socialisation but often they could not “identify” the process. Good responses focussed on studies such as the work of Trowler or Gillespie. Successful candidates use media models such as hypodermic syringe to answer the question. Candidates needed to clearly identify two ways mixing role models and stereotyping. Understanding was needed of the sociological concept of socialisation.

*Teacher tip:*

- 1 Ensure candidates practise for the 8 mark question. They need a clear ability to separately identify and explain. Show candidates a clear format ‘One way is... The norms and values are taught through.....’
- 2 Ensure candidates practise considering norms and values whenever discussing socialisation.

### Q12

Good candidates were able to sociologically discuss assertive points such as Libel laws/ due impartiality and freedom of speech vs ideas such as censorship, exaggeration and moral panics all with some wonderful contemporary examples. Anecdotal answers claiming the news is true and media is sometimes fake because their favourite celebrity said they lie did not score highly.

*Teacher tip:*

Candidates need to plan essays ensuring sociological content. Sociological ideas learnt in class should be used even if candidates cannot recall the correct sociological language. Practice essay titles can be found on the OCR website for past papers on the legacy specification.

## Section D – Work

This section was only answered by a minority of candidates.

### Q13

Most candidates accurately identified reasons for working part time or not working and could identify which gender from the source, was more likely to not work, or work part time.

*Teacher tip:*

Candidates need to be able to use unseen sources and retrieve information from this. Teachers should ensure candidates gain practice of this skill.

### Q14

Most candidates' answers showed a good knowledge of the key concepts.

*Teacher tip:*

Ensure that candidates are given the list of key concepts for work from the specification. They need to ensure they have a working definition for each and revise these thoroughly. There are ideas for revision games on the schemes of work available on the OCR website.

### Q15

There were some very good responses. Candidates needed to explain how rather than why industrial action is taken. Candidates focused on the correct area, produced good responses with many being able to explain concepts as striking and Trade Union power effectively.

*Teacher tip:*

- 1 Ensure candidates have plenty of practice interpreting command words from past papers such as why vs how.
- 2 Ensure candidates practise for the 8 mark question. They need a clear ability to separately identify and explain. Show candidates a clear format "One way is... This is when...".

### Q16

Responses were divided between anecdotal responses that often lost focus and just explained why people should not be racist; and good responses that discussed institutional racism vs legislation and other contributory factors to getting a job such as class / gender.

*Teacher tip:*

Candidates need to plan essays ensuring sociological content. Sociological ideas learnt in class should be used even if candidates cannot recall the correct sociological language. Practice essay titles can be found on the OCR website for past papers on the legacy specification.

## Section E – Crime and Deviance

### Q17

Most candidates were successful in discussing delinquency both from the source and their own wider sociological knowledge. A minority did not know that delinquency was specific to youth and on occasion identified inappropriate acts.

### Q18

An exceptionally well answered question. Most candidates were able to accurately match the concept and the statement.

*Teacher tip:*

Ensure that candidates are given the list of key concepts for crime and deviance from the specification. They need to ensure they have a working definition for each and revise these thoroughly. There are ideas for revision games on the schemes of work available on the OCR website.

### Q19

Candidates did well to understand what formal agents of social control were. Only a minority inaccurately identified informal agents, which was an improvement on past papers. The strongest responses managed briefly to identify an agent, explain what they do and develop their response with examples or discussion over the success of that agent as a controlling agency.

*Teacher tip:*

Ensure candidates practise for the 8 mark question. They need a clear ability to separately identify and explain. Show candidates a clear format 'One formal agent is...They keep control by.....'.

**Q20**

This was answered extremely well in regards to sociological evidence. A large number of candidates offered different explanations of relative deviance, with lengthy discussions of the different types of deviance. In regards to evaluation, good candidates were offering examples such as standardisation through the UN and EU which were extremely well developed. Other candidates were picking up on a variety of 'interesting' topics as examples of absolute deviance/moral definitive such as incest, necrophilia and cannibalism.

*Teacher tip:*

Candidates need to plan essays ensuring sociological content. Sociological ideas learnt in class should be used even if candidates cannot recall the correct sociological language. Practice essay titles can be found on the OCR website for past papers on the legacy specification.

Candidates need to be prepared for **all** parts of the syllabus. They could be given a note version of the syllabus content and concepts to use a tick list for revision to ensure there are no gaps.

**Section F – Youth**

**Q21**

Candidates largely interpreted the data / source accurately. Some candidates needed to focus on agents of socialisation from their wider source.

**Q22**

Largely candidates successfully matched their concepts to the right statements.

*Teacher tip:*

Ensure that candidates are given the list of key concepts for youth from the specification. They need to ensure they have a working definition for each and revise these thoroughly. There are ideas for revision games on the schemes of work available on the OCR website.

**Q23**

There were many perfect responses to this question with candidates focussing on examples of how youth is socially constructed ie through rites of passage. Candidates needed to develop their answers to show understanding of what socially constructed actually means ie showing that rites of passage are relative to differing cultures.

**Q24**

Candidates were extremely well engaged with the question and it was clear that they understood the area well with clear and sociological evaluation. A large number of candidates used contemporary examples such as documentaries e.g. Kemp and also of specific gangs. A large number were also mentioning Cohen and Miller and even compared to subcultural groups and mentioning Hodkinson. Candidates answering this essay explicitly used sociological studies which was needed to obtain higher marks rather than including implied sociological learning throughout.

*Teacher tip:*

The format will not change and thus it is important for candidates to gain lots of practice, especially timed. Centres need to ensure they have sociological evidence to improve candidates work. Some need to work on developing ideas using examples and showing how their evidence answers the question.

# B673 Applying Sociological Research Techniques

## General Comments

This was the second time this examination paper has been offered as part of the new GCSE specification. As part of a modular structure, this paper will contribute 25% of the overall GCSE qualification with first award in 2011.

This paper is weighted towards the testing of skills. Candidates are examined on their knowledge and understanding of sociological research techniques but they also need to demonstrate their ability to apply their knowledge, understanding and skills of interpretation to the pre-release investigations made available in January of the year of the examination. Candidates are expected to have studied the pre-release material prior to the examination and to have gained a sound knowledge of it. A copy is made available to them for reference during the exam.

As the J696 specification does not have tiered assessment papers, the B673 examination has questions structured to test the ability range from A\* to G grade candidates. It is therefore anticipated that some candidates will find particular questions eg. question 13, to be challenging. Conversely, all candidates should find some parts of the examination paper to be accessible.

### Q1

This was a straight forward question and the overwhelming majority of candidates achieved the mark. It required that the hypothesis would be copied exactly from the investigation.

### Q2(a)

Most candidates were awarded the mark as any reference to technical recording of behaviour was accepted. Candidates needed to read the question carefully.

### Q2(b)

Most candidates were awarded the mark as any reference to a non-technical way of recording the behaviour was credited.

### Q2(c)

Most candidates demonstrated understanding of non-participant observation. Both aspects of the method ie watching and the researcher not being involved, needed to be explained for two marks. Candidates who alluded to watching eg 'fly on the wall' were credited. Some candidates mistakenly described covert instead of non-participant.

### Q3(a) and 3(b)

There were candidates who did this well and many were aware that it referred to follow up research. Candidates who misunderstand the nature of the question and responded with the specific issues (eg. ethics) raised from the first research method used were not credited. Others who were not credited considered the advantages and disadvantages of using unstructured interviews rather than the advantages and disadvantages of returning to the same sample at a later date.

Candidates need to relate their answer specifically to the investigation.

**Q4(a)**

Most candidates showed some understanding of validity as accurate / correct / real / truthful etc and if they related this to research / data / results etc they were credited with both marks. Those who related to any other areas of life were credited with only one mark.

Some candidates who did not score marks either made no response or confused validity with reliability. Some candidates explained validity as being up to date.

**Q4(b)**

This was answered well. Candidates were able to relate to the investigation in the pre-release and so often gained the application mark when they were correct in identifying a reason. Candidates commonly referred to the children's lack of knowledge about parent's employment as a reason for inaccuracy. Other popular responses were the weaknesses with the sample and the use of toffees to test the children's self control.

**Q5(a)**

This was answered well and many scored both marks. Most candidates demonstrated understanding of primary research but there were some who defined it as the first piece of research. The clearest answers referred to a method but any reference to the collection of data / results / a study / investigation scored marks. The candidates who simply made reference to 'carrying it out themselves' or 'first hand' without relating in any way to investigating society, scored only one mark.

**Q5(b)**

This was answered very well. The higher scoring candidates used appropriate terminology eg informed consent, confidentiality etc and went beyond simple identification of the shortcomings of the research to explain why these made it unethical. There were some full mark responses which identified issues wider than lack of consent eg the potential effects on the career of the teacher friend and the reputation of the school.

A number of candidates confused ethics with validity. The nature of the investigation in the pre-release was very obviously highly unethical and candidates who had been prepared well for this question scored highly.

**Q6**

This was a straight forward question and the majority of candidates answered it correctly. Those who were not credited tended to cite the hypothesis or the title of the investigation rather than the aim.

**Q7**

Candidates who gave a question for their answer rather than a hypothesis were credited with one mark if the question related to the topic of the investigation. Those who gave an aim were not credited. A candidate who correctly identified a hypothesis ie a statement, and related this to the topic, was credited with both marks. There is a need for candidates to be clear about the difference between a hypothesis, aim and question.

**Q8(a) and (b)**

The majority of candidates were able to identify appropriate advantages and disadvantages of quantitative data but advantages were better identified than disadvantages. The large number of candidates who did not relate this to studying pupil behaviour did not gain the application marks.

A minority of candidates confused quantitative and qualitative data.

**Q9**

Many candidates did not gain marks here as they seemed to be unfamiliar with the term objectivity which was a term included in the pre-release material. Candidates benefit when they learn all the terminology stated in the specification and have considered carefully any concepts used specifically in the pre-release.

Many candidates did not attempt an explanation and most of those who did not score marks referred to issues relating to the main aims (objectives) of the research.

**Q10**

This question was generally done well and most candidates scored some marks with many scoring all four available marks. Candidates needed to develop their answers to describe the negative consequences of the disadvantages identified. Most candidates who scored marks focused on the categories of pupils and the range of behaviours identified.

**Q11(a), (b) and (c)**

These were answered well. It is clear that candidates have been taught the skill of interpreting statistical data.

**Q11(d)**

Most candidates gained the mark. Candidates must be clear that identifying from the source means it should be taken directly. Responses were considered with leniency and if it was clear which part of the source was being used, the answer was credited.

The most common response from those not credited was to state £30 as being a benefit ie what the EMA actually is rather than what it can do.

**Q11(e)**

Most candidates scored at least one of the two marks. Many were able to state a conclusion but did not explain it by either reference to the statistics or wealth levels of the parents.

There were some excellent answers linking clearly performance to some form of financial or class based difference. Candidates without this knowledge were able to score both marks by reference to the statistical data.

**Q12**

Most candidates were able to identify at least two advantages of questionnaires but few were able to relate their usefulness specifically to the investigation or to studying pupil success. Some top level candidates lost marks despite excellent generic explanation of the advantages of questionnaires.

Some very good candidates supported each point with detailed explanation but if this did not relate back to the investigation they were credited with one mark for each way; the same as candidates who identified only briefly a correct way.

**Q13**

This question is designed to be a discriminator and proved to be a challenge to candidates at the lower end.

Some candidates discussed the uses of the primary data, consequently gaining no marks.

Most could attempt some evaluation of the secondary sources but a few candidates responded with a generic answer relating to secondary sources but unrelated to the investigation. More common was the candidate who simply described the sources in the pre-release. Both of these types of responses remained in the lower band level.

More frequent were responses that detailed age, location, sample size for the sources, but failed to analyse adequately these flaws or find other flaws to discuss. Many candidates referred to how well the sources met the aims or hypothesis but without evaluation of the sources in depth they consequently lost out on valuable marks. Some candidates used the concepts of reliability and validity together but without really applying or understanding them.

The most common type of response was from candidates who produced a very one sided argument for each of the sources and failed to consider that even though some of the sources may contain bias they may have been very useful in terms of reliability etc. These candidates were part of the majority who were placed in level two.

At the top of level two, arguments were more balanced but with a focus on each individual source being useful or otherwise. Responses credited in level three demonstrated good evaluation with consideration of how the individual sources had both strengths and weaknesses.

High in level three, candidates provided a balanced argument with detailed analysis of the sources in both investigations. There were some superb answers which debated each source, compared the sources to each other and related to the aims of the investigation. At this level, candidates demonstrated the ability to consider all aspects of the sources ie their origin, how they were produced and their content. They also applied appropriate sociological concepts to a high standard.

This question was successful as a discriminator and the top level candidates were able to demonstrate their knowledge, understanding and evaluation skills. At the same time it was possible for lower end candidates to achieve some marks.

### **Overall Comments**

Most candidates were familiar with the two pre-release investigations. Centres must ensure this is the case and that any concepts used specifically in the investigations are understood fully by the candidates. Similarly, where there are detailed secondary sources (or any other area covered in depth) it is likely the candidates will be examined on them.

Most candidates were able to respond to questions effectively, demonstrating some sound sociological examples and key terms to support their answers.

Centres have, on the whole, taught candidates to be able to identify and interpret issues in sociological research with some proficiency. In particular, candidates demonstrated the ability to interpret statistical data with competence. Most candidates knew the strengths and weaknesses of primary research methods.

Overall candidates performed well, broadly showing a good understanding of research techniques and issues of pertinence to sociologists carrying out research. In particular the difficult and new area of ethics in research introduced into the GCSE specification and which has not been examined previously.

The main reason for candidates not scoring marks was through not making explicit links to the pre-release investigations. There was a noticeable difference in the final marks between those candidates who had applied their answers to the investigation and those who had answered in general terms.

The majority of candidates attempted to answer each question and there was a range of marks; suggesting that the paper was successful in being accessible to candidates from A\*-G grades.

Most candidates were able to plan their time well and complete all the questions. There were candidates who did not complete question 13 but this may have been due to finding the question challenging rather than an issue of time. Many candidates used additional sheets to complete question 13 and particularly at the top end, some candidates produced very extensive answers to question 13.

### **Guidance**

Candidates must be familiar with all aspects of the pre-release and in particular any concepts used within it.

Candidates must be aware that if the question concludes with, 'as used in Investigation 1 / 2, they must relate to some aspect of the investigation in their answer. This Unit is Applying Sociological Research Techniques and therefore a large number of application marks are available.

Candidates must be very clear about the difference between primary and secondary research.

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