

A LEVEL

Examiners' report

SOCIOLOGY

H580

For first teaching in 2015

H580/01 Summer 2022 series

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Introduction

Our examiners' reports are produced to offer constructive feedback on candidates' performance in the examinations. They provide useful guidance for future candidates.

The reports will include a general commentary on candidates' performance, identify technical aspects examined in the questions and highlight good performance and where performance could be improved. A selection of candidate responses is also provided. The reports will also explain aspects which caused difficulty and why the difficulties arose, whether through a lack of knowledge, poor examination technique, or any other identifiable and explainable reason.

Where overall performance on a question/question part was considered good, with no particular areas to highlight, these questions have not been included in the report.

A full copy of the question paper and the mark scheme can be downloaded from OCR.

Advance Information for Summer 2022 assessments

To support student revision, advance information was published about the focus of exams for Summer 2022 assessments. Advance information was available for most GCSE, AS and A Level subjects, Core Maths, FSMQ, and Cambridge Nationals Information Technologies. You can find more information on our [website](#).

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Paper 1 series overview

The standard of responses was very good. There was a range of responses, suggesting that the paper differentiated adequately.

The vast majority of candidates attempted to answer all questions on the paper and managed to time their responses reasonably well. There were very few rubric errors and candidates seemed reasonably well prepared knowing the Assessment Objectives of each question.

Some candidates attempted the higher mark questions first instead of tackling the questions in order. This strategy is perfectly acceptable and for those candidates that may struggle with time keeping, this is a good technique.

Question 2 still poses some issues in terms of knowledge and understanding and meeting the demands of the question. Two developed pieces of knowledge are required to gain full marks for knowledge and understanding alongside two developed pieces of application to the sources. The most successful candidates used a three paragraph structure for this question, firstly addressing the knowledge aspect and then a paragraph each for each source. In Section A, candidates had a good sense of timing and seemed to be writing the right amount for the corresponding marks. Section B was also done well overall with the Families and Relationships option being the most popular topic, followed closely by Youth Subcultures. In previous years, only a handful of candidates attempted the Media option, but it was clear that this decline has been reversed and there were a lot more Media responses this year.

How much knowledge?

To get the highest mark in certain questions, candidates should be aiming for the following depth and breadth in terms of knowledge:

- Question 2: two developed points of knowledge
- Question 3: three fully developed points of knowledge.
- Question 5, 8 and 11: two fully developed points of knowledge
- Question 6, 9 and 12: three fully developed points of knowledge.

Candidates who did well on this paper generally did the following:

- used sociological knowledge, studies, theory or concepts to back up their points
- made fully developed points in the higher mark questions
- gave the right amount of knowledge and evaluation for the question

Candidates who did less well on this paper generally did the following:

- wrote minimal responses and did not provide support for their points
- did not evaluate on Questions 3, 5/8/11 and 6/9/12
- only used examples and common sense for sociological knowledge.

With every question, to achieve marks in the highest mark band, candidates need to include a range of sociological evidence and to discuss these with some depth. Some responses, particularly the 20 mark questions in Section A and the 24 mark question in Section B, did not include the required range and depth of sociological evidence. "Evidence" can include studies, theories, concepts and contemporary examples, although it should be noted that responses which rely heavily of contemporary examples will not score very highly because on their own, contemporary examples are not good sociology.

Candidates should also be mindful that when marking, examiners will annotate every point made and decide whether it is developed, underdeveloped or undeveloped – this will then provide a guide for the mark given. For example, in Question 3, if a point simply said that attitudes to sexuality remained traditional due to how heterosexuality was the norm in society – this would be undeveloped; if this was added to with a brief description of compulsory heterosexuality – this would be underdeveloped; if this was further added to with depth regarding Rich's study then it would be a fully developed point.

Levels of development

For the higher mark questions, examiners will always be trying to gauge how developed each point is. This can be one of three different annotations:

- Undeveloped – the point is basic and has no concept, study or theory. May be just an example.
- Underdeveloped – the point has some sociology such as a concept or study but is a little 'thin' and in need of further development.
- Developed – the point has a full explanation using the relevant concept, studies or theory.

In terms of Assessment Objectives, Knowledge and Understanding (AO1) remains the strongest area; the highest marked candidates were able to offer a whole range of sociological knowledge, mainly in the form of concepts and studies, but sometimes making relevant use of sociological contemporary theory. AO2 (application) continues to improve with most responses being successful in interpreting knowledge and applying it to the specific question or context. In terms of AO3 marks (analysis and evaluation), some candidates are over or under-evaluating and need to be mindful of just how much evaluation is required. In the final 24 mark question, juxtaposition remains an issue and is defined as a tangential point when a candidate strays from a question and is often when an essay becomes 'list-like'. For example, in Question 9, a candidate may stray in to juxtaposition by listing other alternatives to class (e.g. ethnicity or gender) without any mention of how it critiques, differs or compliments the question relating to how youth deviance is related to working class identity (what the question was about).

How much evaluation?

Evaluation is only relevant for certain questions and as a guide, candidates should be aiming for the following:

- Question 3: one fully developed point of evaluation or two underdeveloped points
- Question 5, 8 and 11: one fully developed point of evaluation or two underdeveloped points
- Question 6, 9 and 12: three fully developed points of evaluation.

Section A overview

This section comprised of three compulsory questions that all candidates needed to answer, with Question 2 needing both sources to be used and referenced.

Question 1

1 Explain, using examples, the concept of consumer culture.

[6]

Responses were generally mixed with examples and development being typically good but definitions being sometimes underdeveloped or unclear. The best responses articulated the definition around the goods and services we buy in society and developed this with reference to identity or how there was an increased emphasis on consumption. This was then developed further for the application marks by identifying and explaining two examples such as shopping as a leisure pursuit or debt becoming a norm. On occasion there was some confusion regarding consumer culture and other types of culture (e.g. global culture or high culture) and sometimes examples lacked development, e.g. just naming brands.

Exemplar 1

1.	Consumer culture is the increasing availability and emphasis on goods and services. Consumer culture has led to excessive consumption and having debt to be normalised. 'Conspicuous consumption' suggests that we purposely consume branded goods in an attempt to build status in the eyes of others. Pol-wski and Walters suggests that we are now defined by what we buy, not what we do. Consumer culture has been driven / encouraged by the media, more specifically celebrity culture and the advertising industry.
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In this response we can see an excellent example of what full marks looks like. The candidate begins with a definition and then further develops it. They then outline two further examples with good development for each.

Question 2

2* Using sources A and B and your wider sociological knowledge, explain how norms are relative. [12]

As previously mentioned in the general overview, knowledge and understanding seemed to be an issue with many candidates offering little or no knowledge and understanding points. A vast majority offered an undeveloped knowledge point before addressing the sources. Two developed points of knowledge are required to get the full knowledge and understanding marks. The most successful responses used knowledge relating to Plummer and situational norms or Mead and her study of tribal culture. Source 1 was generally applied better than Source 2 with candidates able to pick out the relative nature between street art and galleries and explain this in a developed way. Source 2 often demonstrated weaker application with some candidates lifting entire chunks of the text without developing how norms around smoking were relative.

Exemplar 2

2.	A	<p>Norms The concept of 'norms' refers to the shared societal expectations of behaviour that are mutually upheld in society. An example of a contemporary norm in the UK would be eating with a knife and fork. However, the idea that norms are relative. However, norms are relative for a number of different reasons. Norms are culturally relative, in the way that even something such as eating with a knife and fork is not the norm in all cultures, for example the use of chopsticks in Asia.</p> <p>Source A demonstrates this, with its juxtaposition of graffiti in the street, being done by what we can assume are 'delinquent youths', and that of artwork in a gallery that has been done by professional artists. This presents the idea that, despite both of these types of artwork, they are fundamentally the same: an</p>
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		expression of the self through an 'artistic lens', the
		culture surrounding me. different pieces of artwork
		plays a large effect on how we view them. Graffiti
		is often seen as a deviant act, being referred to as
		'vandalism', and professional artwork after being associated
		with high culture, and revered by people all over the
		world, clearly showing how the norms are relative.

This is a very typical start of a response for this question. Here you can see that the candidate has highlighted a long (undeveloped) example of what a norm is before going on to make a fully developed application point. To get the full knowledge and understanding marks they would need to make two developed knowledge points.

Question 3

3* Outline and briefly evaluate the view that attitudes to sexuality and sexual identity remain traditional. [20]

This question was done quite well and it was clear that candidates had taken notice of the advance information. A large majority of candidates used studies by Rich, Weeks, Plummer and Reiss to support the ideas that sexual identity remained traditional. The level of development was high with many candidates able to gain full marks for knowledge and understanding. Evaluation often centred around how ideas around sexuality were no longer traditional with references to Equal Opportunities Acts or the legalisation of gay marriage. On occasion, there were a handful of candidates whose responses drifted more in to gender identity and were not rewarded.

Exemplar 3

3	A	<p>One way in that attitudes towards sexuality remain traditional is through what sociologist Rich, describes as women's sexuality being oppressed by a patriarchal society by institutions such as marriage, through sexual violence and rape. Rich argues that this socialises women into a heterosexual and subordinate role, to ensure their availability to the average man. This way</p>
		<p>much reinforces traditional attitudes towards sexuality and sexual identity, as it does not abide by the increasingly contemporary view that we should maintain freedom to expression of our sexuality.</p>

This is an example of a fully developed knowledge point (AO1). Here the candidate goes straight into the essay using the work of Rich while also demonstrating a good use of concepts. This is a developed point and to gain full marks for AO1 and AO2, candidates should typically be looking for three developed points.

Section B overview

Candidates had the option to select whether they did further questions on Families and Relationships, Youth Subcultures or the Media. Most candidates opted for the Families and Relationships option, although Youth Subcultures was also popular, with Media a distant third. It was noticeable that some candidates were also employing a strategy in answering higher mark questions first to give them the appropriate amount of time and not leave higher mark questions to the end.

Option 1 overview

Families and Relationships was the most popular option and it was clear that candidates were well prepared particularly in terms of theory and studies that they were able to recall. Some candidates were challenged by Question 4 and misinterpreted the question, while Question 6 seemed very well answered with a significant number of candidates attaining full marks.

Question 4

OPTION 1

Families and relationships

4* Outline **two** ways in which relationships between same-sex couples are more equal than relationships between heterosexual couples. [12]

The question was quite polarising with some candidates doing extremely well and others misinterpreting the question. The most successful candidates used ways such as the lack of patriarchy in lesbian relationships or the shift in roles with a same-sex dynamic, and were able to support these points with studies by Calhoun, Weeks, Stacey and Dunne. However, some candidates misinterpreted the question and simply outlined equality measures for same-sex couples such as changes to marriage laws or how same-sex families were now equal to heterosexual couples (but not more). Two developed paragraphs are needed to attain full marks on this question and no evaluation is necessary or credited.

Question 5

5* Explain and briefly evaluate the view that individuals are increasingly living alone. [16]

Overall, this question was answered well with a number of candidates using the work of Sharpe, Beck and Beck-Gernsheim and Klineberg as well as concepts such as Living Apart Together, individualism and The Cult of the Individual to construct excellent answers. A number of candidates gave too much knowledge and understanding and should be mindful that only two developed points of knowledge is needed to gain full marks for AO1. In terms of evaluation, only one developed point is needed and the more successful candidates were able to articulate how lots of other family types are increasing or how many people still aspire to be part of a nuclear family. A small handful of candidates confused living alone with single-parenthood and were not rewarded.

Question 6

6* Assess the view that the nuclear family is the most functional family type.

[24]

This question was answered very well and it was clear that candidates had made full use of the advance information. Most of the time, candidates used the Functionalist perspective as a starting point and put forth views from Murdock and Parsons while also perhaps using the New Right perspective and the work of Murray and Popenoe in support. This was then evaluated well with theories such as Marxism or Feminism or Postmodernism showing how the nuclear family was not the most functional family type. At times some candidates wrote more for knowledge than evaluation. Candidates should be encouraged to write three paragraphs for the question and three against. In addition, there were several introductions or conclusions that simply repeated what had been said in the main body of the essay and therefore did not gain any extra marks as it was just repetition.

Option 2 overview

The Youth Subcultures section was the second most popular option and it was generally done well with good use of theory and studies. Question 8 was the most challenging with some candidates unable to provide significant evaluation.

Question 7

OPTION 2

Youth subcultures

7* Outline **two** reasons why the media create moral panics about youth deviance. [12]

The question was generally answered well. At times, some candidates did not fully signpost *why* the media created moral panics making it difficult for examiners to fully pick out the two reasons. The most successful responses used reasons such as a distraction or as a way to sell news and reinforced their points using studies by Cohen, Fawbert, Young and Hall. On occasion, some candidates became side-tracked and ventured into an explanation of Becker's labelling theory. Only two fully developed paragraphs are needed to gain full marks for this question.

Question 8

8* Explain and briefly evaluate the view that youth subcultures are no longer spectacular. [16]

There was a mixed response to this question. The most successful responses used studies by Maffesoli, Thornton and Polemus to illustrate how youth subcultures were no longer spectacular and were also able to draw on concepts such as neo-tribes and supermarket of style. However, some candidates decided to just write about spectacular subcultures or give a general theoretical overview of subcultures and were not rewarded. Evaluation, where present, took the form of how spectacular subcultures still existed (e.g. goths) or how the norms and values of spectacular subcultures still persisted, e.g. the segregation of subcultures along gendered lines.

Question 9

9* Assess the view that youth deviance is related to working class identity. [24]

This question was answered very well in terms of knowledge with most candidates able to use theories and studies to relate youth deviance to working class identity. The best candidates used studies by Albert Cohen, Cloward and Ohlin, Miller and the Neo-Marxist/CCCS position to create developed argument on the link with working class identity. Evaluation remained a little mixed with some candidates straying into juxtaposition by offering alternative viewpoints with studies relating to gender or ethnicity without articulating how it differed from social class. Responses will not score highly by offering alternative viewpoints without addressing the question. The most successful candidates either provided direct criticism or used studies related to ethnicity or gender highlighting the intersection of multiple issues as well as class or showing how they were more of an issue than class.

Option 3 overview

As stated previously, there was an increase in candidates answering questions on the Media. Question 10 proved to be the most challenging with candidates often able to access sociology regarding representations of old people but sometimes struggling with specific representations concerning the media.

Question 10

OPTION 3

Media

10* Outline **two** ways in which old people are represented in the media.

[12]

The most successful responses used studies by Landis, Cuddy and Fiske and Carrigan and Szmigin to articulate how old people were represented in the media. A common approach was to have one paragraph on positive portrayals and one paragraph on negative portrayals. On occasion, some candidates used representations in society such as Active Ageing but did not relate it to the media. Equally, some candidates only gave examples (such as from soap operas) and did not use any theories, studies or concepts to reinforce their points.

Question 11

11* Explain and briefly evaluate the feminist view that representations of gender in the media disadvantage females.

[16]

This question was very well done with studies by Mulvey, Tuchman and Wolf being most common for how representations of gender in the media disadvantaged females. A number of responses were conceptually rich using concepts such as the male gaze, symbolic annihilation and the beauty myth. Candidates often backed up their points with media examples such as the representation of particular women in film. Evaluation was good with studies by Glascock or Gauntlett the most popular, stating how representations had changed or improved. As with other 16 mark questions, only two developed points are needed for knowledge and one developed point for evaluation.

Question 12

12* Assess the view that the media amplifies deviance.

[24]

This was also answered very well. Candidates mainly used studies by Cohen, Wilkins and Bandura to discuss in detail how the media amplifies deviance. On occasion some candidates did go into different views of why moral panics come about (Goode and Ben Yehuda). Evaluation was slightly less successful with different strategies used. Some candidates used different models of the media such as the selective filter model to show how it was the about how the audience interpreted the media rather than amplification, while other candidates used Neo-Marxist or postmodern arguments for direct criticism.

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