

A LEVEL

Examiners' report

SOCIOLOGY

H180

For first teaching in 2015

H180/02 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 answers is also provided. The reports will also explain aspects which caused difficulty and why the difficulties arose, whether through a lack of knowledge, poor examination technique, or any other identifiable and explainable reason.

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

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

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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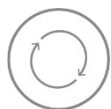
Paper 2 series overview

This series saw a mixed mark distribution with candidates not performing as well as in previous years. There was a marked deterioration in handwriting, with some scripts virtually illegible and extremely difficult to read.

The use of paragraphs for each knowledge point continues to be an issue. In some cases a “stream of consciousness” meant separate points were difficult to identify. Candidates need to be aware of the importance of structure in the essay type answers. Many candidates did not refer to the Sources when asked to in the Methods questions.

Candidates who did well on this paper generally did the following:	Candidates who did less well on this paper generally did the following:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> spent an appropriate amount of time on a question that matched the marks available wrote in paragraphs so that each point was separated out in an answer wrote essay question (Question 4 and Question 6) with balance of for and against used the sources when asked to in the Methods questions used sociological concepts, theories and studies to support their points. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> mis-timed their answer or spent too long on questions that only had a few marks wrote without separating out points into separate paragraphs did not use a structure for the essay questions Question 4 and Question 6 did not fully engage with the sources in the Methods questions did not use sociological concepts, studies and theories when answering questions- often wrote anecdotally.

Assessment for learning



During revision exercises encourage candidates to plan essays to allow them to focus on how to structure responses making clear separate points in each separate paragraph. This then focuses on Level 3 skills which is “A well-developed line of reasoning which is clear and logically structured”.

Section A overview

Section A (Methods) answers were mixed but Question 4 was answered in more depth than in previous years by many candidates. There were more responses that used correct sociological language, although there is still a lot of candidates who do not appear to understand the concept of reliability in a methods context. The biggest issue, as in previous years, is the lack of reference to the sources despite this being in the instructions for every question. All these questions differentiate between undeveloped, underdeveloped and developed so this is an area for further study.

Question 1

- 1 Using data from **Source A**, describe **two** conclusions that could be drawn about the relationship between age and attitudes to gender roles. **[4]**

This question was generally well done, with most candidates managing to achieve 4 marks. Most candidates were able to compare two statistics and identify an appropriate conclusion. However, some candidates drew a conclusion and then did not support it with statistics (hence, halving their marks as there is 1 mark for a conclusion and 1 mark for statistics to support that conclusion).

A small minority of candidates did not read the statistics accurately or referred to “approximately” – this is not acceptable as the figures have to be exact.

Some candidates did not summarise – more successful responses were able to consider an overview before beginning the response. Some found it difficult because there weren't two clear conclusions – there were many - and others may have struggled with agree/disagree as discrete points (although these were the easier ones to use). Less successful responses included long descriptions as to WHY a man's job was to earn money etc (this was not required) or did not link gender roles and age, something integral to the question.

Question 2*

- 2* With reference to **Source B**, explain the role played by gatekeepers in helping researchers to undertake ethnographic research. [9]

Overall, candidates found this question challenging. Mainly because a majority of candidates did not understand the role of a gatekeeper, although most were able to define what it was. Many responses referred to the term gatekeeper and linked it to general points about quantitative data or ethnographic research. The majority struggled to use methodological concepts, although some stronger responses discussed validity, rapport and generalisation to very good effect e.g. by linking validity to the fact that gatekeepers could interpret events in the social world of the group and thus avoid the researchers misinterpreting what they were seeing. **AO2** seemed more challenging on this question, with many candidates not linking their answer to the source in any meaningful way. A lot of the time candidates lifted lines from the sources and did not really engage with it or use it to enhance their answers. Many candidates did not refer to the source at all, this was integral to the question.

Exemplar 1

	The A gatekeeper is very important to the
	researcher. This allows him to gain the the trust of
	the group. This over time builds a rapport between the
	two, meaning that the ethnographic research becomes
	as honest as possible. It also allows the researcher
	further access into the night life through contacts as the
	'gatekeeper' will introduce Winlow as a trustworthy guy.
	Without Without the gatekeeper, Winlow wouldn't
	be able to get the opportunities ^{more than} available to
	him. Furthermore, this allows Winlow to conduct
	semi-structured interviews, meaning he is trusted enough
	to ask questions but there is enough trust to allow
	them both to deviate from the 'script' if you like.

An example of a developed point with a concept and a good link to the source.

Misconception

Many candidates did not understand that they were meant to show how gatekeepers were *helping* researchers i.e the good points about them.

Question 3*

- 3* With reference to **Source A**, explain how using random sampling might help in researching attitudes to gender roles by age. [12]

There were some very good responses here, a better standard overall than for Question 2. Those that did well (though very few full mark answers were seen) used some key methodological concepts such as generalisation, representativeness and increased validity due to a lack of bias. Almost all candidates knew what was meant by random sampling and some were able to link this to systematic or stratified sampling. In some cases, they compared it to non-random sampling methods and how random sampling is much better. However, many candidates did not develop their answers. The main weakness was to try and link sampling to reliability or validity, which are not linked to sampling but to methodology. This is an area (sampling) that perhaps needs to be taught separately so that there is no overlap in candidates' minds between the two. Candidates could also practise questions on different types of sampling. A minority of candidates did not read the question properly and ignored the "might help" part of it so that they gave negative points about using random sampling.

As in previous years, and as with all these 4 methods questions, the biggest weakness was not using the source to exemplify points being made or, in Question 3 for instance, making no reference as to how random sampling would help researching attitudes to gender roles by age. Very few achieved full marks for AO2 for this reason.

Misconception

Many candidates thought that the type of sampling affected reliability and validity, whereas sampling is not linked to the data being either reliable or valid.

Question 4*

- 4* Using **Source B** and your wider sociological knowledge, explain and evaluate the use of ethnographic research methods to investigate the lives of working class young people. [20]

The majority of candidates had a clear understanding of what ethnography is and that it is a qualitative method, favoured by Interpretivists. Candidates, on the whole, were able to use a wide range of methodological concepts such as verstehen, validity, rapport and qualitative data on the advantages side as well as lack of representativeness, objectivity and bias on the disadvantages side. Good answers took a logical approach and went through the various strengths and weaknesses of the ethnographic approach in relation to theory, validity, reliability, representativeness and generalisability, using the concepts frequently and accurately throughout their answers. It was also heartening to see an increased use of one paragraph per point which helps the essay to flow in a more structured way. At the lower end, there is still a lot of confusion about reliability and what this actually means with many linking it to sampling rather than the ability to repeat research and gain similar results.

In relation to AO3, many candidates did not show a clear understanding of their ideas and only provided the basic idea. For example; ethnography is detailed, this makes it more valid. This demonstrates a lack of detailed understanding of the methodological concepts that were being used and meant that although many candidates were able to move into Level 3 with these underdeveloped ideas, it prevented them from moving beyond that Level. At the top end, candidates who used a clear structure to their essay, focusing on 2 clear strengths and 2 clear disadvantages rather than pushing in as many ideas as they could, were able to fully develop their ideas. It is important that when writing these answers that candidates:

- identify a knowledge point
- explain it in detail, using an appropriate methodological concept
- link to the source.

For many candidates, once an idea was identified, they then jumped to a different idea which left ideas under or undeveloped.

To achieve Level 3 in this question in AO3, a candidate needs to discuss two developed strengths and two developed weaknesses – anything beyond this cannot achieve higher marks (although to reach the top of Level 3 in AO1, candidates must include theory). For any point to be developed, it must contain a methodological concept.

In relation to AO2, many candidates did not use the source beyond re-writing the title/stem. The instructions for Question 4 state “Using Source B...” Those that did this well, focused on the setting of interviews, sample size and selection of data from transcripts. There is a difference in the mark scheme between “lip service” (Level 1) and “relating to the context of the research” (Level 2 and 3). Candidates were able to move up to the higher levels only if they truly engaged with the research in the source i.e. “the lives of young working class people”. However, there were some really good examples of the context being used to good effect to explain a point.

Some of the characteristics of the weaker responses included

- long introductions which repeated what was said in the source, especially in relation to the findings
- Short list-like answers that just made a point and left it at that
- No use of methodological concepts (hence, answer does not move above the bottom of level 2)
- Leaving behind methodological issues and going into the explanations for the results of the research e.g. “Marxists say....”

Exemplar 2

Ethnographic research methods are useful ~~on~~ when investigating the lives of working class young people because it can allow you to build a rapport. We can see how 'unstructured interviews' were used when researching working class (WC) young people. Unstructured interviews are a formal, guided conversation between the participant and the researcher. This allows for a rapport to be built as an unstructured interview will put the participant at ease and will allow them to open up more as they build a trusting relationship with the ~~res~~ researcher while conversating*. This is ~~parti~~ particularly useful to investigate the lives of working class young people as they are more likely to open up about things they would keep hidden to themselves such as ~~at~~ the 'culture of drink and violence in cities at night'. This allows for a more in depth explanation which aids the research. Therefore, ethnographic research methods are useful as they allow for a rapport to be built, which aids research as a more in depth ~~understanding~~ ^{results} are produced.

This is a very good example of a developed paragraph because it introduces the concept of how rapport is used in ethnography to good effect. It does not simply drop in the word 'rapport' but develops how the rapport leads to a trusting relationship which encourages the research subjects to talk honestly and openly about their lives. The paragraph also links in to Interpretivist theory. The other developed part of this paragraph is that it links to the source and the actual research rather than making the point in theory – so it says that the young people would have kept their activities to themselves if they hadn't trusted the researchers and built up a rapport with them.

Section B overview

Both questions in this inequalities section were answered reasonably well. Question 5 was very general and this was an advantage as candidates could choose which area of social inequalities they wished to write about. There was a range of different examples chosen but the favourite choices were gender and class. Gender is always a popular choice for Question 6 and there were very few candidates who did not make some attempt to provide evidence on both sides of this debate. Responses were not always well structured or logically presented but many were. As always, many candidates answered these questions first, recognising that they carried the most marks – a good plan.

Question 5*

5* Outline **two** examples of social inequalities in the workplace in the UK.

[10]

This question was answered more fully than in previous years; many candidates provided actual sociological evidence rather than anecdotal or general common sense points about social inequalities in the workplace. It is important to note that ALL of the marks in this question are knowledge and understanding marks (AO1) so there is no need to evaluate at all (which some candidates did). It was a general question which allowed the candidates to use any area of social inequality and many did use, to good effect, not just class and gender but also age and ethnicity. There was some good detail, often focused on the workplace, although not all candidates did this but simply referred to inequalities in general. The weaker responses gave some contemporary examples without naming any studies, theories or concepts.

This question had only a few excellent responses or full marks, although there was a small number that did achieve high level marks. Those that did were characterised by a clearly structured response which covered 2 examples of social inequalities in the workplace. 10 out of the 10 possible marks on this question come from solid empirical knowledge which can be in various forms such as studies e.g. such as ONS data on the gender pay gap; or concepts such as the glass ceiling; or theories such as the Marxist view on the reserve army of labour. Each example needs at least two pieces of evidence which both need to be developed.

However, again, structure was an issue for this question. Candidates need to clearly identify two examples of social inequalities and then to fully develop two pieces of evidence for each. In many cases, candidates only introduced two knowledge points overall or listed evidence but failed to explain why it was relevant. The most successful answers focused on areas such as gender, class, ethnicity or age and then used sociological studies or relevant statistics to fully develop their ideas. Due to the lack of range of ideas, many candidates were stuck in Level 3.

Weaker answers tended to be vague and general e.g. women tend to get paid less than men without any reference to statistics or any of the numerous studies that have found this out and theorised as to why this is the case. Some candidates tried to “bend” studies on crime or education to the area of work needed for the question. Weaker answers also tended to write about many areas and write a brief outline of a concept in each- rather than going into detail on two studies in each of two areas. Answers that only use contemporary examples cannot go above Level 2.

Exemplar 3

One example of social inequality in the workplace in the UK is shown in Barron and Norris's Weberian study of the Dual Labour Market Theory. They discovered that there was a large difference in the number of males and females in certain jobs - ~~eng~~ the engineering and

architecture were dominated by males and primary school teachers and healthcare were dominated by women (in 2018, 89% of healthcare workers were female). This is known as ~~web~~ horizontal segregation. Vertical segregation shows inequality in the workplace, as men dominate the most successful, well-paid jobs - women struggle to access these due to the glass ceiling effect. This is supported by Barron and Norris's view of the Dual Labour Market - the primary sector, full of well-paid jobs, is dominated by males, and the secondary sector, with low-paid jobs, is dominated by females.

This is an example of a good, developed paragraph.

Question 6*

6* Assess the view that it is natural and necessary that women and men perform different roles in society. [20]

This question was, on the whole, the most successfully answered. Many candidates were aware that the view in the question was a Functionalist view and many of them used Parsons, Murdoch, the New Right and even Human Capital theory to support the view. Many candidates were able to structure this essay with clear for and against arguments. To support arguments against the view, it was mainly Marxism that was used, with socialisation and Oakley as a good second in popularity. Post modernity was also deployed to good effect. Feminism was used as a counter argument, but not as frequently as would be expected.

To achieve the top levels on this question, whether for AO1 or AO3, a candidate needs to write 3 developed points for each side. There were many candidates who only offered 2 points for and 2 points against, thus limiting themselves to the level below (Level 2 for AO1 and Level 3 for AO3). Several candidates did a summary of the Functionalist view with instrumental and expressive roles and left it at that, without going into any other theories that would also support the view or writing about other Functionalists who would support Parsons.

In AO3, there was a greater variety of theories but less successful responses simply juxtaposed these instead of linking them to the question asked or comparing and contrasting them with the Functionalist views. So, the view they were using simply became a description of what that view believed rather than an opposite interpretation of male and female roles to the Functionalist view.

There were many candidates who showed a very good knowledge of the Functionalist views on men and women's roles and so they achieved good marks on AO1. Lower marks were awarded when the knowledge did not include the appropriate Functionalist concepts or theoretical points such as a gendered division of labour, instrumental and expressive roles and so on. The inclusion of the correct terminology can push a relevant point up into a higher band. For instance, if a candidate referred to Parsons believing that women should do the domestic role and men should go out to work, this would leave the point underdeveloped rather than developed. Similarly, on the opposing views, candidates need to use sociological concepts to develop their points e.g. human capital, meritocracy, preference theory.

To achieve good marks on AO2, the candidate needs to take an evaluative tone throughout so that the essay is structured in a balanced way with links as often as possible to the words of the question. Candidates will benefit from planning, structuring and executing this type of debate, using paragraphs to separate out these arguments into different paragraphs.

To achieve good marks on AO3, the candidate needs to link the paragraphs together rather than just making a list of different theories that have something to say on whether it is natural and necessary that women and men perform different roles in society. This question was not limited to the UK so cross-cultural material could have been used, although very few did refer to cultural differences. When they did, there were some really interesting examples of practices within ethnic minority cultures in the UK. The main weakness in this AO, was simply juxtaposing another view with the Functionalist view, This limits the marks to Level 2 if it is done throughout.

Exemplar 4

	Furthermore, Oakley would argue that gender roles aren't natural, but a product of socialisation. Boys and girls are treated differently. Boys are pushed into STEM careers, whereas girls are limited to hair and care jobs (socialisation). Boys are taught to be leaders, but girls are called bossy for
	doing the same (manipulation). Boys are 'heroes' and 'brave' and girls are 'little princesses' (verbal appellation). This difference in treatment means that boys are socialised to dominate whereas girls are being pushed into areas with little pay or negotiation possibilities. Gender roles aren't natural, but they're made up and perpetuated by agencies of socialisation.

This is an example of a good evaluative point.

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