



Sociology

GCSE

Sociology

Unit B671

Exemplar Responses and
Commentaries 2014

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The sample answers in this resource have been extracted from original candidate scripts to maintain their authenticity.

QUESTION 5: EXEMPLAR 1

LEVEL 3, 11 MARKS

5 'Young people join subcultures because they want to rebel against society.'

Explain and justify the **methods** and **evidence** you would use to investigate this hypothesis.

You **must** include the following:

- first primary method and sample
- second primary method and sample
- secondary evidence
- how your research will help you investigate the hypothesis 'Young people join subcultures because they want to rebel against society'.

[12]

Firstly I need to operationalise my hypothesis. This means turn it into aims which means turn it into questions as it enables structure to my study. An example of an aim is, 'Do young people join subcultures because they want to rebel against society?'

My first primary method will be a self completion questionnaire. This will be useful to investigate the hypothesis as it is anonymous therefore my responses will be high in validity. Also I'm able to include a range of closed and open questions which will provide me with a mixture of Quant & Qual data providing meaning & depth as well as allowing

me to identify trends + patterns + compare to my hypothesis. However in addition questionnaires are cheap and relatively easy to distribute to a large number of people increasing representativeness. My ^{frame} sample will be a school register and the research population will be young teenagers age 16-19. The sample technique I will use is random as it offers me a non biased selection meaning more representativeness. ~~But its~~

My second primary method will be a covert participant observation. This is useful for investigating my hypothesis as it being a 'secret observation' means no Hawthorne effect will occur plus as well as it allows me to have a better understanding of why youth join subcultures because I'm taking part and I get to get an insight into it therefore validity is high. However, it does contradict ethical obligations such as informed consent which may not be too pleasing for the British ^{sociological} association. My ~~Sampling frame~~ sampling ~~area~~ technique will be snowball sampling as this enables me to gain access to ~~the~~ a subculture in a more open way without them suspecting. However, I could face the drawback of it being lowⁱⁿ representativeness due to how its time consuming.

and a small group sample.

The secondary evidence which I will use is Albert Cohen's study on Status Infrustration, Teah and Gray as well as articles on Youth Subculture as this will provide me with background knowledge and qualitative in-depth data.

In conclusion my research will help me investigate my hypothesis for trial I'm using triangulation to help compensate for the weaknesses of one method i.e. the questionnaire may have a low response rate but observation allows in-depth data. Also I will use a pilot study to identify any behavioural errors.

COMMENTARY

LEVEL AND MARKS AWARDED

Level 3, 11 marks

WHY DID IT ACHIEVE THE MARKS?

Both primary methods are discussed clearly and in depth in terms of what would be done, how and why. Sociological terms are used throughout e.g. quantitative data/closed questions as well as concepts e.g. validity. Both are appropriate choices for the study. Samples are also sensibly chosen and justified for both. The secondary evidence selected is sociological and fits the context of the study brilliantly. Context (re: linking methods/evidence to subcultures and youth) gets better as the answer progresses. In a nutshell – the answer has range, detail, accuracy, sociological terms and concepts, appropriate choices and is contextualised.

HOW THE ANSWER COULD BE IMPROVED

The answer is excellent and demonstrates what can be done in exam conditions with careful timing. The reason it failed to score full marks is primarily because of the first method discussed. There is a lack of context here which leads to it being somewhat generalised. Examples of the kind of questions that might be asked on the questionnaire would also have been useful. Candidates need to ensure that their choices of methods, samples and evidence are considered within the context of the specific study – in this case, youth and subcultures.

QUESTION 5: EXEMPLAR 2

LEVEL 2, 6 MARKS

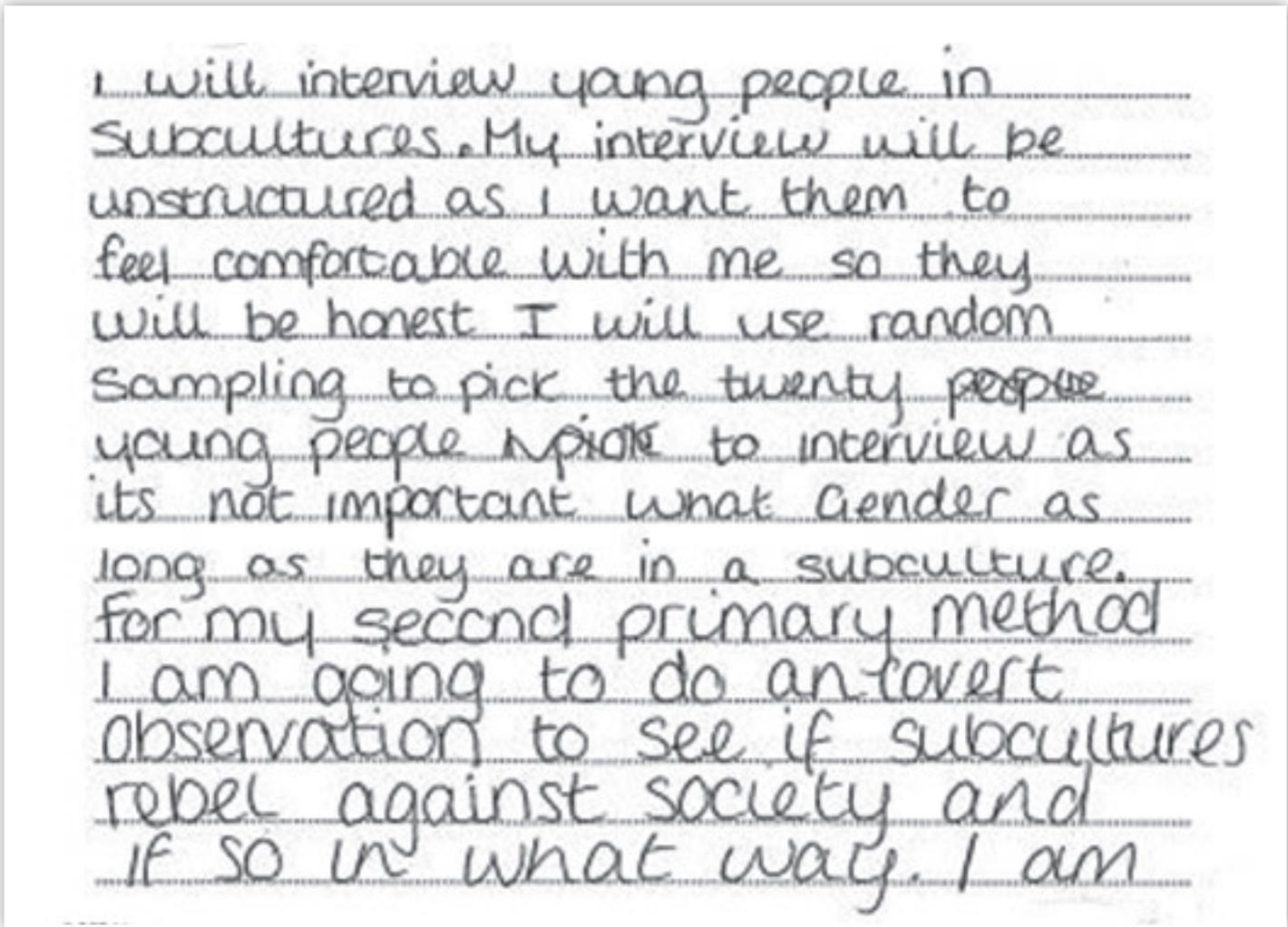
5 'Young people join subcultures because they want to rebel against society.'

Explain and justify the **methods** and **evidence** you would use to investigate this hypothesis.

You **must** include the following:

- first primary method and sample
- second primary method and sample
- secondary evidence
- how your research will help you investigate the hypothesis 'Young people join subcultures because they want to rebel against society'.

[12]



I will interview young people in subcultures. My interview will be unstructured as I want them to feel comfortable with me so they will be honest. I will use random sampling to pick the twenty people young people to interview as it's not important what gender as long as they are in a subculture. For my second primary method I am going to do an overt observation to see if subcultures rebel against society and if so in what way. I am

also observing young people who aren't in subcultures to see if they rebel against society. This will help me draw a conclusion because then I can see for myself how they behave.

I am also going to research online different kinds of subcultures and what they do to understand the task some more.

COMMENTARY

LEVEL AND MARKS AWARDED

Level 2, 6 marks

WHY DID IT ACHIEVE THE MARKS?

This is a pretty typical mid level 2 response. The candidate has tackled and addressed all of the specified bullet points by including two primary methods (interviews and observation) and secondary evidence (research online). The primary methods have samples too – random sample of young people and young people both in and not in subcultures. There is a really good point about unstructured interviews making people feel comfortable and so giving honest answers. Throughout the answer is some justification and some context. The observation section lacks detail, however, and the secondary evidence is very vague and brief.

HOW THE ANSWER COULD BE IMPROVED

The answer would have been improved by more depth and detail to the points made. The key to a Question 5 response is to say what you would do, how you would do it and why...in the context of the specific research focus. More detail about how the interviews would be conducted and the kind of questions to be asked, for example, would have been useful. The covert aspect of the observation was never discussed fully or justified with the study's aims. The secondary evidence needed to be far more specific i.e. a sociological study or a journal or a textbook, rather than just 'researching online'. This also needed justifying.

QUESTION 9: EXEMPLAR 3

LEVEL 3, 12 MARKS

9 'To make people behave in an acceptable way, negative sanctions are more effective than positive rewards.'

Evaluate the arguments **for** and **against** this claim.

[12]

Sanctions are methods used in order to make people conform to the expected norms and values of society. It has been argued that, 'to make people behave in an acceptable way, negative sanctions are more effective than positive rewards'

An argument supporting this would be the Prison System, as it's depr~~ive~~ a harsh consequence which takes away the liberties such as being a part of society and having freedom.

This shows that ~~even~~ negative sanctions are more effective than positive sanctions for that it acts as a stronger deterrent to them behaving in an unsuitable way because it takes away ^{what} ~~liberty~~ is valued to them most in society, such as seeing their relatives on a daily basis therefore supporting the claim.

However, it could be argued that positive rewards by agents such as the family is more effective ~~to say~~ as the family are the first authoritative role models in the ages of 0-5 meaning through positive sanctions they have more of influence on your behaviour ~~to say~~ for example, by praising you and providing encouragement for completing your homework you're more likely to continue to complete your other homeworks as your family provide positive rewards for such behaviour and you have the tendency to impress them. Showing that positive sanctions are a more effective.

Another argument supporting the claim is that the Peer Peer group. The peer group are a very influential agent of social control as we feel the need to fit in and be accepted by them due to the ways in which we share the similar age and status and if we do not conform to the norms and ~~our~~ values of the group, to ensure we do they provide negative sanctions such as bullying, rejection, etc. Therefore ~~to say~~ showing that negative sanctions are more effective because we are afraid of being rejected.

on the other hand positive sanctions could be argued to be more effective ~~for~~ ~~lex~~ through the mass media for example, the media presents ~~for~~ ~~consequences for~~ gives good publicity towards those

COMMENTARY

LEVEL AND MARKS AWARDED

Level 3, 12 marks

WHY DID IT ACHIEVE THE MARKS?

The candidate starts well by explaining the key terms in the question and thus setting up the debate well. This is then followed by two substantial points for (peer group and fitting in and family role models) and against (media imitation and prison as a deterrent) the claim, all developed fully with examples and concepts and are well focused on specific agents of social control. Evaluation is sustained throughout the answer. The final judgement made is sophisticated through the idea of it being relative to the individual. All Level 3 criteria fulfilled and great links to the question throughout.

HOW THE ANSWER COULD BE IMPROVED

It would be hard to see how, in exam conditions, we could expect more of a candidate than this. However, perhaps a greater range of ideas could have been looked at as the points about role models and imitation could have been too similar. In this candidate's case, however, it is fine because the examples and explanations used are so different. The ideas in the conclusion are excellent but these could potentially have been unpacked and discussed more explicitly.

QUESTION 9: EXEMPLAR 4

LEVEL 2, 8 MARKS

9 'To make people behave in an acceptable way, negative sanctions are more effective than positive rewards.'

Evaluate the arguments **for** and **against** this claim.

[12]

I am going to evaluate the arguments for and against this claim. When we are socialised depending on what act we carry out, whether it's good or bad we are given sanctions. Positive sanctions are when you reward someone for what they are doing eg giving a prize and negative sanctions are a way of encouraging someone to stop something they are doing that's bad eg. If a student was disrupting a lesson the teacher would give the student a detention in hopes that the student may learn to not do that again. Some people argue that negative sanctions may be more effective than positive sanctions. Firstly an example of a negative sanction would be sending someone to prison after they have committed a crime. This sort of sanction is effective because the person who has committed the crime is less likely to commit it again and the people who are thinking of committing the same crime may stop what they are doing because they fear that the same thing will happen to them. However, positive rewards are very

effective because they encourage a person to do better and keep going. For example if a teacher has a student that doesn't listen in class and misbehaves, rather than giving the student a detention, and causing the student to get angry or upset, the teacher may decide to sit down and talk to the student to help them understand that what they are doing isn't right, and once they have understood and behaved then the teacher can reward the student. This makes the student want to be good and will encourage the student to behave in the future so that they can receive more rewards. Furthermore, negative sanctions work better because it makes a person think that they need to change things around. It makes them think about what they need to do in order to do better and how they should stop receiving ~~bad~~ ^{negative} sanctions. This is useful because the person is able to fully understand where they went wrong and how they should fix it and never go back to that again. However positive sanctions are effective because praising someone makes them want to strive more and do better. Instead of the person feeling upset they can learn to understand what they have done wrong. If someone has tried hard and done something really well and then received a positive sanction it encourages them to want to continue and do better.

In conclusion from ~~the~~ what i have gathered both positive and negative sanctions are equally effective as both help a person reflect on their actions and help them to do better, to successfully ~~to~~ make someone behave a certain way you need to use both positive and negative sanctions.

COMMENTARY

LEVEL AND MARKS AWARDED

Level 2, 8 marks

WHY DID IT ACHIEVE THE MARKS?

The answer starts well with clear definitions provided of the key terms in the question. This understanding and clarity then runs throughout the answer. There are a good range of points made, both for (prison and thinking about change) and against (teachers and praise) the claim. All points made are well developed with examples and explicit links to the question ensure everything discussed is made relevant. The written style is clear and discursive and the range and detail is good. Points are then well tied together at the end of the response with a focused conclusion. This allows the answer to be marked at the top end of the level.

HOW THE ANSWER COULD BE IMPROVED

The answer lacks conceptual engagement throughout and thus is unable to score within Level 3. It is important that candidates develop their points with sociological evidence and concepts. So, for example, when discussing the prisons the candidate could have discussed loss of freedom/the deterrent function etc. And when considering the role of teachers and positive rewards perhaps ideas about role models and imitation could have been used. The answer would also have benefited with more focus on specific agents of social control rather than, at times, quite general points. Doing this would have made it easier for the candidate to link the points they were making with focused examples and associated sociological concepts and/or terms.



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