Qualification awaiting accreditation

CAMBRIDGE OCR

Sample assessment material

AS Level

Sociology

Cambridge OCR Level 3 Advanced Subsidiary GCE in Sociology

H183/02

Version 1.0 | November 2026

ocr.org.uk/Sociology

Introduction

This sample assessment material (SAM) is an example exam paper published alongside the specification. It's designed to show the style and structure you can expect from our question papers.

As the qualification develops, we may update the question paper template. To make sure you're working with the most up-to-date information, we recommend using the latest set of past papers where possible.

To help you get the most from this SAM, we also provide two supporting resources:

- **Assessment story** – this explains the research behind the qualification and how feedback from teachers, students and schools has shaped our assessment approach.
- **Annotated SAMs** – these guide you through the key features of the assessment and highlight the different types of questions students will encounter in the exam.

Summary of updates

Section	Change	Version	Date
-	Creation of sample assessment materials	1.0	November 2026

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Sample Question Paper

Cambridge OCR Level 3 Advanced Subsidiary GCE in Sociology

H183/02 Researching and understanding social inequalities

Time allowed: 1 hour 30 minutes

You must have:
- the OCR 12-page Answer Booklet

INSTRUCTIONS
- Use black ink.
- Write your answer to each question in the Answer Booklet. The question numbers must be clearly shown.
- Fill in the boxes on the front of the Answer Booklet.
- Answer **all** the questions.

INFORMATION
- The total mark for this paper is **50**.
- The marks for each question are shown in brackets **[ ]**.
- Quality of extended response will be assessed in questions marked with an asterisk (*).
- Synopticity will be assessed in the final question in Section B marked with a hashtag (#).
- This document has **4** pages.

ADVICE
- Read each question carefully before you start your answer.

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Section A

Answer all questions.

1 State what is meant by quota sampling.

You **must** use an example to support your answer. **[2]**

2 State what is meant by primary data.

You **must** use an example to support your answer. **[2]**

3 **Source A**

An ethnographic study of the lives of working-class young people

Two sociologists were interested in trying to understand the lives of young working-class people, especially those who were part of a culture of drinking alcohol and committing acts of violence in city centres at night-time. The researchers used an ethnographic approach which involved a combination of unstructured and semi-structured interviews together with observation to collect their evidence. Over a one-year period they spent time interviewing and observing about 40 young people (mostly aged between 18 and 25) who lived in the North-East of England. Most of these young people worked in insecure, casual jobs and spent much of their leisure time in pubs and clubs in the city centre. The findings of the study uncovered the pressures on young working-class males to be seen as masculine through drinking excessively and proving themselves through fighting. This was linked to them being able to achieve the status they were unable to get from work and employment.

Explain **two** reasons why ethnographic methods are useful for studying the lives of working-class young people.

You **must** use evidence from **Source A** to support each reason. **[8]**

4* How far do quantitative research methods produce more reliable data than qualitative research methods?

You **must** use your knowledge of sociological research methods to support your answer. **[15]**

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Section B

5 Explain **two** ways sociologists could investigate gender segregation in employment.

You **must** use your knowledge of sociological concepts, theories, evidence and research methods to support your answer. **[8]**

6# How far do functionalists view the roles of men and women as different?

You **must** use your knowledge and understanding from across the full course of study when answering this question. **[15]**

END OF QUESTION PAPER

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Sample Mark Scheme

Cambridge OCR Level 3 Advanced Subsidiary GCE in Sociology
H183/02 Component Title: Researching and understanding social inequalities

Mark Scheme

Duration: 1 hour 30 minutes

Maximum Mark: 50

Version
Sample

This document has 29 pages.

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Marking Instructions

Preparation For Marking

1. RM Assessor

- Access and complete the on-screen marking training packages: OCR Examiner Training (RMA3).
- Read the mark scheme and question paper for this component or unit.
- The mark scheme and question paper are available in RM Assessor or on your Component Page if you use the Training Platform for standardisation.
- Log in to RM Assessor and mark the **required number** of practice scripts and the **required number** of standardisation scripts.

Marking

2. General Guidance

- Mark strictly to the mark scheme.
- Marks awarded must relate directly to the marking criteria.
- If you are in any doubt about applying the mark scheme, consult your Team Leader by phone, email or via the RM Assessor messaging system.
- It is **essential** that you meet the RM Assessor 50% and 100% batch deadlines. For traditional marking this will be 40% and 100%. If you experience problems, contact your Team Leader without delay.
- Always check the pages (and additional objects if present) at the end of the response in case any answers have been continued there. If the candidate has continued an answer there, then add the annotation '**SEEN**' to confirm that the work has been seen and mark any responses using the RM annotations.

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- The RM Assessor **comments box** is used by your Team Leader to explain the marking of the practice responses. Use these comments when checking your practice responses. **Do not use the comments box for any other reason.**

- **Before the end of the marking period** send a brief report on the performance of candidates to your Team Leader via email. The report should contain notes on strengths displayed as well as common errors or weaknesses. Constructive criticism of the question paper/mark scheme is also appreciated.

3. No Response and Crossed-out Answers

Using the No Response (NR) option. Only mark as NR if:

- the answer space is blank
- there is only a comment not related to the question (e.g., 'can't do', 'don't know')
- there is only a mark (e.g., a dash, a question mark) which is not an attempt at the question.

Note: Enter 0 marks for an attempt that earns no credit (including copying out the question). Do **not** use NR.

Crossed-out answers
If a candidate has crossed out an answer and written a clear alternative, do **not** mark the crossed-out answer.

If a candidate has crossed out an answer and **not** written a clear alternative, mark the crossed-out answer if it is readable.

4. Responses with more answers than needed

- **Multiple-choice question answers**
When a multiple-choice question has only **one** correct answer and a candidate has written two or more answers (even if one of these answers is correct), do **not** award a mark.

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When a multiple-choice question asks candidates to select **more than** one option the marking guidance from your Principal Examiner will ensure consistency of approach.

- **Contradictory answers in points-based questions**
  Do **not** award any marks, even if one of the answers is correct.

- **Rubric error answers – optional questions**
  Where candidates have a choice of question/s and they provide more answers than required, all responses are marked and entered into RM Assessor. The highest mark allowable within the rubric will automatically be selected.

- **Questions that ask for a set number (including 1) of short answers or points**
  Mark only the **first set number** of answers/points. (e.g. **two** reasons for something)

  First mark the answers/points against printed numbers on the answer lines. Mark the first answer/point against each printed number. **Second**, if candidates have not followed the printed numbers, mark the answers/points from left to right on each line. **Third,** mark line by line until the set number of answers/points have been marked. Do **not** mark any remaining answers/points.

  Examiners should use their own judgement to decide if a 'second answer' on the same line is adding more detail to the first answer, or if it is a completely separate answer.

- **Short Answer Questions (requiring a more developed response, worth two or more marks**)
  If the candidates are required to provide a description of, for example, three items and four items are provided, mark line by line until the set number of descriptions have been marked (it is unlikely a candidate will provide more than one response on each line in this scenario).

- **Longer Answer Questions (requiring a developed response)**
  If a candidate has written two or more answers to a question that only requires one (developed) answer, only mark the first answer (which has not been crossed out).

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5. Questions using levels of response (LOR):

To determine the **level** – start at the highest level and work down until you reach the level that matches the answer.

To determine the **mark** within the level, use the following:

Descriptor	**Award mark**
Consistently meets the criteria for this level	At top of level
Meets the criteria but with some slight inconsistency	Above middle and either below top of level or at middle of level (depending on number of marks available)
Just enough achievement on balance for this level	Above bottom and either below middle or at middle of level (depending on number of marks available)
On the borderline of this level and the one below	At bottom of level

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6. Subject-specific Marking Instructions

Introduction

Your first task is to familiarise yourself with:

- the specification, especially the assessment objectives
- the question paper and any inserts or resource booklets
- the mark scheme, including annotation requirements
- the administrative procedures related to the marking process.

The administrative procedures are set out in the Cambridge OCR booklet **Instructions for Examiners**.

If you are examining for the first time, please read **Appendix 5 Introduction to Script Marking: Notes for New Examiners**.

All relevant training materials are accessed from the Training Platform.

Please ask for help or guidance whenever you need it. Your first point of contact is your Team Leader.

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AO guide

AO1: Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of:

- sociological theories, concepts and evidence
- sociological research methods.

The focus of this AO is to assess students' ability to recall and demonstrate understanding of sociological terminology, theories, concepts, evidence, and/or research methods. Questions may focus on factual recall and require a clear explanation of a sociological concept or study. Section A in question paper 02 will focus on research methods. Section B will focus on research methods, theories, concepts and evidence as exemplified in the mark schemes. Marks are allocated for accuracy, clarity, and appropriate use of sociological language, without the need for application or contextualisation, unless the question is designed to target multiple assessment objectives.

AO2: Apply sociological theories, concepts, evidence and research methods to a range of issues;

The focus of this AO is to assess students' ability to apply sociological theories, concepts, evidence and/or research methods to a range of issues. Questions target the student's capacity to select and use relevant sociological material to address the specific demands of the question. Section A in question paper 02 will focus on research methods. Section B will focus on research methods, theories, concepts and evidence as exemplified in the mark schemes. Marks are allocated for the relevance and appropriateness of the material applied, and the extent to which it is used to support or develop a sociological response, rather than for explanation or evaluation alone. In sociology the 'issue' will either be drawn from the question and the provided source, or the issue will be the question itself, and the student will need to apply knowledge and understanding to it. This AO will never be targeted in isolation and typically responses will be applying relevant knowledge and understanding to the given issue.

AO3: Analyse and evaluate sociological theories, concepts, evidence and research methods in order to:

- present arguments
- make judgements
- draw conclusions.

The focus of this AO is to assess students' ability to analyse and evaluate sociological theories, concepts, evidence, and research methods in order to present arguments, make judgements, and draw conclusions. Questions require students to consider different viewpoints, strengths and limitations, or the significance of evidence and ideas. Section A in question paper 02 will focus on research methods. Section B will focus on research methods, theories, concepts and evidence as exemplified in the mark schemes. Marks are allocated for the clarity, coherence, and

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depth of the analysis and evaluation, as well as the ability to construct a reasoned argument or conclusion in response to the question. This should be a final verdict on the overall question rather than summarising it and does not require introducing new evidence. The conclusion should synthesise the main points and highlight the significance of what is being argued directly linked to the question.

Unless stated in the guidance, questions only focus on either sociological theories, concepts and evidence, or sociological research methods. Where questions target both, the breakdown of marks is provided.

NB: Sociological material in mark schemes refers to sociological theories, concepts and evidence.

Indicative content:

Indicative content provides ideas for content that might be covered, and this is approached in two ways.

1. A list of relevant knowledge that might be used and/or evaluated (this list is not exhaustive and any relevant information should be credited).
2. Exemplar responses, linked to assessment objectives.

It is important to note that exemplar responses are not intended to represent a full answer to any question. They are intended as a guide to examiners as to what and how students might approach the required skill in a given question. These have been designed to replicate this skill in a clear and obvious manner, without being representative of any specific level or length of response. Examiners will mark the response in line with levels of response marking criteria. The use of indicating where in the exemplar an assessment objective has been met is not intended to highlight the awarding of individual marks. Whilst there is no set amount of points a student may cover within any response, guidance is provided on what would typically be expected to ensure there is enough breadth in a given response. Examiners will mark any reasonable response, regardless of where in the specification the content is drawn from and whilst synoptic assessment is only assessed in section B of this question paper, providing the response is valid and answers the question set, the response will be awarded and indicative content may reflect this on occasion. Exemplar responses may sometimes use information or approaches that differ from the relevant knowledge provided. This is because the relevant knowledge is intended to guide the response, rather than prescribe a single fixed answer. Exemplars may draw on additional context, reasonable inference, alternative interpretations, or different ways of applying the underlying principles. All responses should be linked to the focus of the question and the weighting of the assessment objectives.

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Quality of Extended Response

Quality of extended response is included as part of AO3 in non-synoptic 15-mark questions. Wording in italics within the marking grids highlights the expectation:

Level	Marking Criteria (AO3)
4	*There is a well-developed and sustained line of reasoning which is clear, coherent and logically structured. Information presented is relevant/appropriate and substantiated/supported by evidence.*
3	*There is a line of reasoning presented which is reasonably coherent with some structure. Information presented is mostly relevant/ appropriate and mostly substantiated/supported by evidence.*
2	*The response has limited structure. Information presented is sometimes relevant/appropriate and sometimes substantiated/supported by evidence.*
1	*The response is poorly structured. Information presented is rarely relevant/appropriate and unlikely to be substantiated/supported by evidence.*

How examiners award quality of extended response

Level 4: At this level, the answer shows a well-developed and sustained line of reasoning that is clear, coherent and logically structured throughout. The argument flows logically from one point to the next, with each paragraph building on the previous one. The response stays focused on the question at all times. Information is relevant and appropriate, and points are supported with accurate sociological evidence, studies, concepts or examples. Evidence is used to strengthen the argument rather than simply being added on. Overall, the writing demonstrates strong organisation, clarity and control, with a convincing and well-supported line of reasoning.

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Level 3: At this level, the answer presents a line of reasoning that is reasonably coherent and shows some clear structure. The argument makes sense overall, although it may not be fully sustained or consistently developed. Most of the information included is relevant to the question and is mostly supported by appropriate sociological evidence or examples. There may be some points that are less clearly linked or less fully evidenced. The response shows logical thinking, but with less consistency and depth than Level 4.

Level 2: At this level, the response has limited structure and may feel uneven or loosely organised. A line of reasoning may be present, but it is not clearly sustained or logically developed. Information is sometimes relevant to the question, but there may be sections that drift away from the focus. Evidence is used inconsistently – some points may be supported, while others are not clearly substantiated. The overall argument lacks clarity and development.

Level 1: At this level, the response is poorly structured and lacks a clear line of reasoning. Ideas may be listed rather than developed into a logical argument. Information included is rarely relevant to the question and is unlikely to be supported by appropriate sociological evidence. There is little organisation or coherence, and the argument, if present, is unclear or unsupported. Overall, the quality of extended response is very limited.

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Synoptic Questions

Synoptic assessment will always be the final question in this question paper. It is the students' understanding of the connections between different elements of the subject. It draws together the knowledge, understanding and skills learnt through study across the A Level Sociology course.

Synoptic assessment includes the explicit assessment of understanding of the connections between the nature of sociological thought; methods of sociological enquiry; and the two core themes using higher order skills.

Synoptic learning in sociology engages students in theoretical debate while encouraging an active involvement in the research process. It fosters a critical awareness of contemporary social processes and change.

Students will be able to draw upon their knowledge gained throughout the course of study and apply it to a given context. The focus should also be on the evidence used by sociologists and how effective this is as part of their evaluation.

Synoptic assessment in AS Sociology requires students to construct extended responses that demonstrate integrated understanding across the course. Students must use relevant sociological theories, concepts and evidence to address the question, ensuring that their knowledge is accurate, applied appropriately and clearly explained. This includes drawing on key perspectives, debates and empirical studies from the specification to support arguments. This may also include the evaluation of how sociologists have researched the evidence being used. This may involve discussing issues such as validity, reliability, representativeness, ethics or researcher bias, drawing explicitly on their knowledge from the Research Methods component. In doing so, students demonstrate an understanding of how sociological knowledge is produced and how methodological choices shape findings and interpretations.

Students must also make clear synoptic links to other areas of sociology they have studied. This means connecting ideas across at least two components of the course. These links should be purposeful and analytical rather than superficial, showing how theories, concepts or patterns in one area help to explain, challenge or deepen understanding in another. Synoptic assessment does not require students to cover all themes in one answer, but it does require meaningful connections across two or more.

Finally, students must come to a reasoned conclusion. This should weigh up the arguments presented, reflect on the strength of the evidence and its methodological foundations, and directly answer the question set. A strong conclusion demonstrates synthesis: it brings together theory, evidence, methodological evaluation and synoptic links to present a clear, justified overall judgement.

These questions will always use the stem 'How far'.

All three assessment objectives are targeted in this question type.

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Students are required to use their knowledge and understanding of sociological theories, concepts and evidence, applied to a given issue, before considering the strengths and weaknesses and coming to a conclusion, using knowledge and understanding drawn from across the full course of study.

Assessment Objectives should be marked at each level independently. For example, it is possible that a student can attain a Level 4 response for AO1 knowledge and understanding, but only a Level 2 response for AO2 application.

Marks should be awarded in line with the qualitative descriptors in the marking criteria to reflect the depth of knowledge and understanding.

No set amount of points are required, though as a guide, to reflect the range of their knowledge, a student would typically provide at least three discussion points.

At the highest level, students will be rewarded for their ability to draw together relevant knowledge skills and understanding.

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Marking Grids and Indicative Content

Section A

Q1 State what is meant by quota sampling. You must use an example to support your answer. [2]
AO1 Knowledge and Understanding (AO1 x 2)
1 mark – Brief statement given. **1 mark – An accurate example is provided.**
Guidance • Award 1 mark for an appropriate statement. • Award 1 mark for an appropriate example. • The example must be relevant to the statement to be awarded a mark.
• Quota sampling is a non-random method of selecting participants when researchers want to ensure certain groups are represented. (1) • For example, market researchers may stop and survey a sample of 100 males to meet the quota sampling required, or 100 individuals aged between 30–40 years old (1). • Any other reasonable response.

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Q2 State what is meant by primary data. You must use an example to support your answer. [2]
AO1 Knowledge and Understanding (AO1 x 2)
1 mark – Brief outline given. **1 mark – The example given is detailed.**
Guidance • Award 1 mark for an appropriate statement. • Award 1 mark for an appropriate example. • The example must be relevant to the statement to be awarded a mark.
• Primary data is the collection of first-hand information through methods such as surveys, questionnaires and interviews (1). • For example, a researcher may send out online questionnaires to university students to gauge their satisfaction with student lectures and tuition (1). • Any other reasonable response.

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Q3 Explain two reasons why ethnographic methods are useful for studying the lives of working-class young people. You must use evidence from Source A to support each reason. [8]		
Level	**AO1 Knowledge and Understanding (AO1 x 4)**	**AO2 Application (AO2 x 4)**
4	**4 marks** Responses demonstrate clear, accurate and detailed knowledge of sociological research methods. Both points are developed, with each explained fully and consistently.	**4 marks** Sociological research methods from the source are applied directly, precisely and consistently to the demands of the question, addressing both points effectively.
3	**3 marks** Responses demonstrate generally accurate and relevant knowledge of sociological research methods, with some detail. Both points are covered, though development may be uneven, with one point explained more effectively than the other.	**3 marks** Sociological research methods from the source are applied appropriately to the question, with clear relevance to both points, though precision and consistency will be less secure than at Level 4.
2	**2 marks** Responses show limited knowledge of sociological research methods, which may include inaccuracies and little detail. Both points are identified, though they are underdeveloped and unevenly explained. Or one point might be well explained, but the other absent.	**2 marks** There is an attempt to apply sociological research methods from the source, but application is weak, inconsistent or only partially relevant across both points. One point may be applied more effectively but the other absent.
1	**1 mark** Responses demonstrate basic or inconsistent knowledge of sociological research methods, which is often unclear or inaccurate. One point may be identified but is weakly or minimally addressed.	**1 mark** Application of sociological research methods from the source/item is minimal, tangential or largely irrelevant, with little clear connection to the question.
0	**0 marks** No creditworthy response.	**0 marks** No creditworthy response.

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Q3 Explain two reasons why ethnographic methods are useful for studying the lives of working-class young people. You must use evidence from Source A to support each reason. [8]

AO1 (4 marks): Students should show knowledge and understanding of relevant sociological research methods dealing with the issue of using of ethnographic methods to study the lives of working-class young people.

AO2 (4 marks): Students should be using knowledge and understanding to explicitly address the issue of using of ethnographic methods to study the lives of working-class young people.

Marks should be awarded in line with the qualitative descriptors in the marking criteria to reflect the depth of knowledge and understanding. Assessment Objectives should be marked at each level independently. For example, it is possible that a student can attain a Level 4 response for AO1 knowledge and understanding, but only a Level 2 response for AO2 application.

Candidates who only provide one reason (and therefore don't fully respond to the demands of the question) are limited to Level 2 (for both AO1 and AO2).

NB: Marks for AO2 can only be awarded for explicit use of the source material.

Relevant knowledge, understanding and evidence students might use in their answer includes:

- Ethnography allows the researcher to immerse themselves within the environment of the subject matter and gain a greater understanding of the experiences of young, working-class participants.
- Interpretivists prefer ethnographic approaches – builds rapport and verstehen with participants and gains more valid data.
- Ethnography produces qualitative data - rich data which may provide new insights.
- Meaning behind behaviours may be uncovered – young working-class men trying to prove their masculinity.

Exemplar response

- One reason ethnographic methods are useful for studying the lives of working-class young people is that they allow researchers to gain an in-depth understanding of their behaviour, values and experiences within their everyday social context. Ethnography involves researchers immersing themselves in a group or community, often using participant observation and informal interviews. This produces rich, qualitative data and can help researchers understand the meanings behind people's actions, rather than simply recording what they do (AO1). This is supported by Source A, in which researchers studied 40 working-class people aged 18–25 over the course of a year. By spending time with the group, they were able to observe drinking and violence and understand how these behaviours were connected to displays of masculinity and attempts to gain status. The research revealed that some young men used these behaviours to achieve respect and a sense of identity that they felt was unavailable through work and employment. This demonstrates the usefulness of ethnography because the researchers were able to uncover the social meanings and motivations behind behaviour that participants might not have explained fully in a questionnaire or structured interview. It therefore provides a deeper understanding of the lived experiences of working-class young people (AO2).

- Any other reasonable response.

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Q4* How far do quantitative research methods produce more reliable data than qualitative research methods? You must use your knowledge of sociological research methods to support your answer. [15]			
Level	**AO1 Knowledge and Understanding (AO1 x 6)**	**AO2 Application (AO2 x 4)**	**AO3 Analysis and Evaluation (AO3 x 5)**
4	**5-6 marks** Responses demonstrate clear, accurate and detailed knowledge of sociological research methods. A range of points from both sides of the view are developed, with each explained fully and consistently.	**4 marks** Sociological research methods are applied directly, precisely and consistently to the demands of the question, addressing all points effectively.	**4-5 marks** A range of points from both sides are analysed and evaluated in full. Sociological research methods are used to construct a coherent and sustained argument, weighing strengths and weaknesses, comparing perspectives and/or evidence in making sound judgements and leading to a clear, logical and well-supported conclusion. *There is a well-developed and sustained line of reasoning which is clear, coherent and logically structured. Information presented is relevant/appropriate and substantiated/supported by evidence.*
3	**3-4 marks** Responses demonstrate generally accurate and relevant knowledge of sociological research methods, with some detail. A range of points from both sides of view are covered. At this level development may be uneven, with some points explained more effectively than others compared with level 4 responses.	**3 marks** Sociological research methods are applied appropriately to the question, with clear relevance to the points made, though precision and consistency will be less secure than at Level 4.	**3 marks** A range of points from both sides are analysed and evaluated. Sociological research methods are used to develop a reasoned argument, considering strengths and weaknesses and making some comparison of perspectives and/or evidence in making a reasonable judgement, leading to a partially developed conclusion. Arguments made at this level will lack the development of level 4 responses or provide an uneven treatment of the points raised. *There is a line of reasoning presented which is reasonably coherent with some structure. Information presented is mostly relevant/appropriate and mostly substantiated/supported by evidence.*
2	**2 marks** Responses show limited knowledge of sociological research methods, which may include inaccuracies and little detail. More than one point is included, though these are underdeveloped and unevenly explained.	**2 marks** There is an attempt to apply sociological research methods, but application is weak, inconsistent or only partially relevant across more than one point. Precision and consistency will be limited at this level.	**2 marks** Points are limited in analysis and evaluation. Sociological research methods are used to construct arguments is sometimes relevant but may be descriptive and/or superficial. Judgements may rely on assertion and may not compare both sides of arguments. Conclusions, if present, are unclear, unsupported or illogical. Arguments at this level will lack the more consistent analysis and depth of level 3 responses. *The response has limited structure. Information presented is sometimes relevant/appropriate and sometimes substantiated/supported by evidence.*
1	**1 mark** Responses demonstrate basic knowledge of sociological research methods, which is often unclear or inaccurate. One or more points may be identified but are weakly or minimally addressed.	**1 mark** Application of sociological research methods is minimal, tangential or largely irrelevant, with little clear connection to the question.	**1 mark** Points demonstrate limited or no effective evaluation of sociological research methods. If present, evidence will be anecdotal and/or common sense and lack relevance. Comments are typically assertive or unsupported, with little or no analysis. Conclusions, if present, are brief, unclear and unsupported. Arguments at this level will lack appropriate structure and evidence of level 2 responses. *The response is poorly structured. Information presented is rarely relevant/appropriate and unlikely to be substantiated/ supported by evidence.*
0	**0 marks** No creditworthy response.	**0 marks** No creditworthy response.	**0 marks** No creditworthy response.

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Q4*How far do quantitative research methods produce more reliable data than qualitative research methods? You must use your knowledge of sociological research methods to support your answer. [15]

AO1 (6 marks): Students should show knowledge and understanding of relevant sociological research methods dealing with quantitative methods producing more reliable data than qualitative methods.
AO2 (4 marks): Students should be using knowledge and understanding to explicitly address the issue of quantitative methods producing more reliable data than qualitative methods.
AO3 (5 marks): Students should analyse and evaluate the selected theories, concepts and evidence to present arguments, make judgements and draw conclusions to address the issue of quantitative methods producing more reliable data than qualitative methods.

Assessment Objectives should be marked at each level independently. For example, it is possible that a student can attain a Level 4 response for AO1 knowledge and understanding, but only a Level 2 response for AO2 application.

No set amount of points are required, though as a guide, to reflect the range of their knowledge, a student would typically provide at least three discussion points.

Students should show they understand the relevant material (AO1) and apply it correctly to the issue in the question (AO2) before demonstrating analysis and evaluation (AO3).

A student would be expected to focus most of their answer on AO1 because it carries the highest marks.

Student responses must move beyond describing ideas and show critical thinking throughout, because this is where the 5 AO3 marks are awarded.
Total marks for AO3 are broken down as follows:

- present arguments = 2 marks
- make judgements = 2 marks
- draw conclusions = 1 marks.

Examiners will use a best fit approach when deciding which level a student response falls into based on the level descriptors, but to be awarded in the top levels, all three elements must be present.

In addition, these questions will target quality of extended response, which is indicated in the question paper with an asterisk (*) and in the marking grids using italicised wording.

NB: for AO2 marks to be awarded answers must be applied to the issue in the question.

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Relevant Knowledge, understanding and evidence students might use in their answer includes:

- Quantitative methods – structured interviews, surveys, are more reliable.
- Standardised procedures in quantitative methods – easily replicated by other researchers and likely to produce consistent results.
- Reliability is important to Positivists who wish to conduct scientific research.
- Quantitative methods produce numerical data which can be displayed on graphs and charts.
- Quantitative data is easy to compare and identify patterns and trends over time for comparison.
- Quantitative research methods are free from interviewer bias such as the Hawthorne effect.
- Larger sample sizes can be researched using quantitative methods; sampling and research design must be considered accordingly.

Exemplar response

- Quantitative methods generally produce numerical data that can be measured, compared and analysed to identify patterns and trends. Positivists favour these methods because they believe sociology should be scientific, using objective and systematic procedures. Methods such as questionnaires and structured interviews use standardised questions, allowing research to be repeated by other sociologists. This is known as replicability and is an important feature of reliable research (AO1). This suggests that quantitative methods are more reliable because standardised procedures make it more likely that the same research will produce consistent findings when repeated. For example, a sociologist investigating crime among young people could use the same questionnaire with different samples over time. Comparing the results would help establish whether similar patterns emerge, increasing confidence in the findings (AO2). However, reliability does not necessarily mean validity. Closed questions may restrict respondents to predetermined answers, preventing them from explaining their experiences or expressing opinions that do not fit the available options. For example, young people may have different reasons for offending that cannot be captured by a simple questionnaire. Qualitative methods, such as unstructured interviews, may therefore provide more valid data by exploring participants' experiences in greater depth. Quantitative methods may be more reliable because of their standardisation, but this can come at the expense of understanding the meanings behind social behaviour (AO3).

- A further reason quantitative methods may produce more reliable data is that they can use large samples, making it easier to identify consistent patterns across a population. Positivists favour surveys and official statistics because they can collect data from large numbers of people and produce findings that can be compared. For example, Official Crime Statistics (OCS) are collected using standardised procedures, allowing comparisons between different regions and over time (AO1). Large samples can improve reliability because individual unusual responses are less likely to distort the overall findings. For example, a survey of 1,000 employees investigating experiences of social class inequality in the workplace may reveal more consistent patterns than interviews with only 20 participants. If the sample is representative, the findings may also provide a more dependable picture of wider society (AO2). However, a large sample does not automatically produce reliable or representative data. If the sampling method is biased, the findings may be misleading. For example, surveying only university students about workplace inequality would exclude the experiences of many people who have not attended university. Qualitative methods may also provide more valid findings by exploring how individuals experience inequality in their everyday working lives. Therefore, sample size can strengthen reliability, but the way participants are selected is equally important (AO3).

Draft

- Quantitative methods may also be more reliable because their structured approach can reduce the influence of the researcher on participants' responses. Positivists argue that research should be objective, with standardised questions and procedures limiting the possibility of researcher bias. In contrast, qualitative methods such as participant observation involve greater interaction between the researcher and participants. The Hawthorne effect suggests that people may change their behaviour because they know they are being observed, potentially affecting the reliability of findings (AO1). For example, a researcher using a structured questionnaire to investigate students' attitudes towards education is less likely to influence responses through their tone of voice, personal opinions or follow-up questions. All participants receive the same questions, making the findings more consistent and easier to compare (AO2). However, quantitative methods are not completely free from researcher bias. Researchers may use leading questions, select categories or interpret numerical findings in ways that support their own assumptions. Qualitative researchers may also establish rapport and develop verstehen, encouraging participants to provide more honest and detailed accounts of their experiences (AO3).

- In conclusion, quantitative methods generally produce more reliable data than qualitative methods because they use standardised procedures, can involve larger samples and are easier to replicate. These features make findings more consistent and allow sociologists to identify and compare social patterns. However, reliability should not be confused with validity: producing consistent results does not guarantee that research accurately represents people's experiences or the meanings behind their behaviour. Qualitative methods may therefore be more effective for understanding complex social issues, even if their findings are harder to replicate. Ultimately, quantitative methods are more reliable to a considerable extent when the aim is to measure and compare social patterns, but they are not necessarily superior for understanding social behaviour (AO3).

- Any other reasonable response.

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Section B

Q5 Explain two ways sociologists could investigate gender segregation in employment. You must use your knowledge of sociological concepts, theories, evidence and research methods to support your answer. [8]		
Level	**AO1 Knowledge and Understanding (AO1 x 4)**	**AO2 Application (AO2 x 4)**
4	**4 marks** Responses demonstrate clear, accurate and detailed knowledge of sociological research methods. Both points are developed, with each explained fully and consistently.	**4 marks** Sociological research methods are applied directly, precisely and consistently to the issue in the question, addressing both points effectively.
3	**3 marks** Responses demonstrate generally accurate and relevant knowledge of sociological research methods, with some detail. Both points are covered, though development may be uneven, with one point explained more effectively than the other.	**3 marks** Sociological research methods are applied appropriately to the issue in the question, with clear relevance to both points, though precision and consistency will be less secure than at Level 4.
2	**2 marks** Responses show limited knowledge of sociological research methods, which may include inaccuracies and little detail. Both points are identified, though they are underdeveloped and unevenly explained. Or one point might be well explained, but the other absent.	**2 marks** There is an attempt to apply sociological research methods from the source, but application is weak, inconsistent or only partially relevant across both points. One point may be applied more effectively but the other absent.
1	**1 mark** Responses demonstrate basic or inconsistent knowledge of sociological research methods, which is often unclear or inaccurate. One point may be identified but is weakly or minimally addressed.	**1 mark** Application of sociological research methods is minimal, tangential or largely irrelevant, with little clear connection to the issue in the question.
0	**0 marks** No creditworthy response.	**0 marks** No creditworthy response.

Draft

Q5 Explain two ways sociologists could investigate gender segregation in employment. You must use your knowledge of sociological concepts, theories, evidence and research methods to support your answer. [8]

AO1 (4 marks): Students should show knowledge and understanding of relevant sociological concepts, theories, evidence and research methods addressing the issue of how sociologists could investigate gender segregation in employment.
AO2 (4 marks): Students should be using knowledge and understanding of relevant sociological concepts, theories, evidence and research methods to explicitly address the issue of how sociologists could investigate gender segregation in employment.

Chosen methods should demonstrate an appropriate choice of research method when investigating how sociologists could investigate gender segregation in employment.

The primary focus of this question is on demonstrating knowledge and understanding of sociological concepts, theories and evidence. Some credit will be awarded for responses that show knowledge and understanding of research methods. Student should use sociological research methods and apply their knowledge and understanding of these to the issue in the question. Some credit will be awarded for responses that apply knowledge and understanding of sociological concepts, theories and evidence to the issue in the question.

Marks are broken down as follows:
AO1 Knowledge and understanding of sociological theories, concepts and evidence – 3 marks
AO1 Knowledge and understanding of sociological research methods – 1 mark
AO2 Application of sociological theories, concepts and evidence to an issue – 1 mark
AO2 Application of sociological research methods to an issue – 3 marks.

Marks should be awarded in line with the qualitative descriptors in the marking criteria to reflect the depth of knowledge and understanding. Assessment Objectives should be marked at each level independently. For example, it is possible that a student can attain a Level 4 response for AO1 knowledge and understanding, but only a Level 2 response for AO2 application.

Candidates who only provide one reason (and therefore don't fully respond to the demands of the question) are limited to Level 2 (for both AO1 and AO2).

NB: Marks for AO2 can only be awarded for application of knowledge and understanding to the issue in the question.

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Relevant knowledge, understanding and evidence students might use in their answer includes:
• (Ann) Oakley: Gender socialisation reinforces stereotypes, influencing career aspirations and occupational segregation. • (Heidi) Hartmann: Capitalism and patriarchy maintain women's disadvantaged position within employment. • (Catherine) Hakim: Lifestyle preferences influence women's career choices and contribute to occupational segregation. • Official statistics: Employment data identifies patterns of horizontal and vertical gender segregation.
Exemplar response
• One-way sociologists could investigate gender segregation in employment is by examining how capitalism and patriarchy contribute to women's unequal distribution across occupations. Marxist sociologists argue that capitalism contributes to gender inequality in employment because employers' benefit from a flexible and cheaper workforce. Heidi Hartmann argues that capitalism and patriarchy work together to maintain women's disadvantaged position in society. Through historical analysis of data on the development of gender based segregation in jobs and the relationship between employment and domestic labour, Hartmann argued that male workers have historically helped maintain women's subordinate position. In part this is through the exclusion of women from certain occupations. Women are often concentrated in lower-paid, less secure employment and may experience a 'reserve army of labour', allowing employers to benefit from a flexible workforce. This can reinforce gender inequality because women's employment opportunities and progression may be restricted by their responsibilities for unpaid domestic labour, contributing to both horizontal and vertical gender segregation (AO1). Sociologists could investigate these experiences using semi-structured interviews women working in different occupations. For example, they could interview female employees in male-dominated industries to explore whether they have experienced discrimination, barriers to promotion or expectations around childcare. They could also investigate whether women in lower-paid occupations feel their career choices have been influenced by domestic responsibilities. The flexibility of semi-structured interviews would allow researchers to explore how far capitalist structures and gender inequalities influence occupational choices and career progression, providing insight into the reasons behind gender segregation (AO2). • Any other reasonable response.

Draft

Q6# How far do functionalists view the roles of men and women as different? You must use your knowledge and understanding from across the full course of study when answering this question. [15]			
Level	**AO1 Knowledge and Understanding (AO1 x 6)**	**AO2 Application (AO2 x 4)**	**AO3 Analysis and Evaluation (AO3 x 5)**
4	**5-6 marks** Responses demonstrate clear, accurate and detailed knowledge of sociological material and/or research methods **drawn from across the full course of study**. A range of points from both sides of the view are developed, with each explained fully and consistently.	**4 marks** Sociological material and/or research methods **drawn from across the full course of study**, is applied directly, precisely and consistently to the demands of the question, addressing all points effectively.	**4-5 marks** A range of points **drawn from across the full course of study** from both sides are analysed and evaluated in full. Sociological material and/or research methods is used to construct a coherent and sustained argument, weighing strengths and weaknesses, comparing perspectives and/or evidence in making sound judgements and leading to a clear, logical and well-supported conclusion. *There is a well-developed and sustained line of reasoning which is clear, coherent and logically structured. Information presented is relevant/appropriate and substantiated/supported by evidence.*
3	**3-4 marks** Responses demonstrate generally accurate and relevant knowledge of sociological material and/or research methods, with some detail. A range of points from both sides of view are covered. At this level, though development may be uneven, with some points explained more effectively than others compared with level 4 responses.	**3 marks** Sociological material and/or research methods is applied appropriately to the question, with clear relevance to the points made, though precision and consistency will be less secure than at Level 4.	**3 marks** A range of points from both sides are analysed and evaluated. Sociological material and/or research methods are used to develop a reasoned argument, considering strengths and weaknesses and making some comparison of perspectives and/or evidence in making a reasonable judgement, leading to a partially developed conclusion. Arguments made at this level will lack the development of level 4 responses or provide an uneven treatment of the points raised. *There is a line of reasoning presented which is reasonably coherent with some structure. Information presented is mostly relevant/appropriate and mostly substantiated/supported by evidence.*
2	**2 marks** Responses show limited knowledge of sociological material and/or research methods, which may include inaccuracies and little detail. More than one point is included, though these are underdeveloped and unevenly explained.	**2 marks** There is an attempt to apply sociological material and/or research methods, but application is weak, inconsistent or only partially relevant across more than one point. Precision and consistency will be limited at this level.	**2 marks** Points are limited in analysis and evaluation. Sociological material and/or research methods are used to construct arguments is sometimes relevant but may be descriptive and/or superficial. Judgements may rely on assertion and may not compare both sides of arguments. Conclusions, if present, are unclear, unsupported or illogical. Arguments at this level will lack the more consistent analysis and depth of level 3 responses. *The response has limited structure. Information presented is sometimes relevant/appropriate and sometimes substantiated/supported by evidence.*
1	**1 mark** Responses demonstrate basic knowledge of sociological material and/or research methods, which is often unclear or inaccurate. One or more points may be identified but are weakly or minimally addressed.	**1 mark** Application of sociological material and/or research methods is minimal, tangential or largely irrelevant, with little clear connection to the question.	**1 mark** Points demonstrate limited or no effective evaluation of sociological material and/or research methods. If present, evidence will be anecdotal and/or common sense and lack relevance. Comments are typically assertive or unsupported, with little or no analysis. Conclusions, if present, are brief, unclear and unsupported. Arguments at this level will lack appropriate structure and evidence of level 2 responses. *The response is poorly structured. Information presented is rarely relevant/appropriate and unlikely to be substantiated/ supported by evidence.*
0	**0 marks** No creditworthy response.	**0 marks** No creditworthy response.	**0 marks** No creditworthy response.

Draft

Q6# How far do functionalists view the roles of men and women as different? You must use your knowledge and understanding from across the full course of study when answering this question. [15]
AO1 (6 marks): Students should show knowledge and understanding of relevant sociological material and research methods on how functionalists view the roles of men and women. AO2 (4 marks): Students should be using knowledge and understanding to explicitly address the issue of how functionalists view the roles of men and women. AO3 (5 marks): Students should analyse and evaluate the selected theories, concepts and evidence to present arguments, make judgements and draw conclusions to address the issue of how functionalists view the roles of men and women. Assessment Objectives should be marked at each level independently. For example, it is possible that a student can attain a Level 4 response for AO1 knowledge and understanding, but only a Level 2 response for AO2 application. No set amount of points are required, though as a guide, to reflect the range of their knowledge, a student would typically provide at least three discussion points. Responses should primarily be focused on sociological theories, concepts and evidence, though they should be showing knowledge and understanding of sociological research methods and applying them to the issue in the question. Marks are broken down for AO1 and AO2 as follows: AO1 Knowledge and understanding of sociological theories, concepts and evidence – 4 marks AO1 Knowledge and understanding of sociological research methods – 2 marks AO2 Application of sociological theories, concepts and evidence to an issue – 3 marks AO2 Application of sociological research methods to an issue – 1 mark. A student would be expected to focus most of their answer on AO1 because it carries the highest marks. This means that after showing they understand the relevant material (AO1) and applying it correctly to the issue in the question (AO2), they must demonstrate analysis and evaluation (AO3). Student responses must move beyond describing ideas and show critical thinking throughout, because this is where the 5 AO3 marks are awarded. Total marks for AO3 are broken down as follows: • present arguments = 2 marks • make judgements = 2 marks • draw conclusions = 1 mark.

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Examiners will use a best fit approach when deciding which level a student response falls into based on the level descriptors, but to be awarded in the top levels, all three elements must be present.

All points can be supported with any appropriate knowledge and understanding that a student may have learned whilst studying the course.

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Relevant Knowledge, understanding and evidence students might use in their answer includes:

- (George) Murdock: functionalist explanations of empirical data comparing nuclear families across society.
- New Right-influenced by functionalist ideology and traditional families being the most stable arrangement with distinct gender roles.
- (Talcott) Parsons and (Robert) Bales: functionalist explanations on biological impact on male and female roles.
- (Peter) Willmot and (Michael) Young: functionalist explanations about symmetrical family changing roles.
- (Margaret) Mead: research on biological and cultural factors.
- Postmodernism – diversity of families has changed traditional roles of men and women.
- (Phyllis) Schlafly: New Right explanations arguing gender roles are most suitable for stability of family and society.

Exemplar response

- Functionalists view the roles of men and women as significantly different, arguing that they perform complementary roles that contribute to family stability. Parsons argues that the nuclear family functions most effectively when men perform the instrumental role, acting as the breadwinner and providing financial support, while women perform the expressive role, caring for family members, managing the household and socialising children. Parsons believes this division of labour allows each parent to specialise in their responsibilities, making the family more effective (AO1). This demonstrates that functionalists believe men and women have distinct but equally important responsibilities within the family. Parsons argues that these complementary roles help maintain stability because men provide economic security while women provide emotional support and ensure children learn society's norms and values. This contributes to the effective functioning of the family and wider society by promoting social order and preventing anomie (AO2). However, Parsons' view has been criticised for being outdated and exaggerating gender differences. Willmott and Young identified the development of symmetrical families, where men and women increasingly share domestic responsibilities and decision-making. The growth of female employment and greater male involvement in childcare challenge the idea that men and women have separate family roles. This suggests that gender roles are changing and may be more equal than functionalists originally suggested (AO3).

- The New Right also emphasises the importance of traditional gender roles, arguing that men and women have different responsibilities that benefit family life. Phyllis Schlafly defended traditional family values, believing that men should act as providers while women should prioritise motherhood and domestic responsibilities. She criticised feminism for challenging these traditional expectations, arguing that changes to gender roles could undermine the stability of the family (AO1). This supports the view that men and women should perform distinct roles because Schlafly believes that each gender has particular responsibilities that contribute to family stability. Similar to functionalists, the New Right argues that children benefit from growing up in a traditional nuclear family with clearly defined parental roles. The father provides financial security, while the mother offers care and emotional support (AO2). However, Schlafly's views can be criticised for reflecting ideological beliefs rather than providing strong empirical evidence that traditional gender roles are necessary. Feminists argue that gender roles are socially constructed rather than naturally determined and that traditional expectations can reinforce women's inequality. Furthermore, the growth of dual-earner households, single-parent families and same-sex families demonstrates that successful family life does not depend on a traditional division of labour. Therefore, the New Right may exaggerate the importance of separate gender roles (AO3).

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- Margaret Mead's research suggests that gender roles vary between cultures, challenging the idea that men and women naturally have different responsibilities. In Male and Female, Mead used anthropological research to investigate differences in masculinity and femininity across societies. Her earlier research into societies in Papua New Guinea, particularly the Arapesh, Mundugumor and Tchambuli, found significant cultural variations in behaviours associated with men and women. This suggested that gender roles are shaped by cultural expectations rather than simply determined by biology (AO1). This is relevant to functionalism because it suggests that although men and women may perform different roles within particular societies, these differences are not necessarily universal. Functionalists may argue that different gender roles can contribute to family organisation and stability, but Mead's findings suggest that societies can organise gender responsibilities in different ways (AO2). However, Mead's research challenges the assumption that separate gender roles are natural or essential for society to function. If expectations of masculinity and femininity vary between cultures, then men and women are not necessarily destined to perform different roles. Nevertheless, her research was based on a limited number of societies, so its findings cannot automatically be generalised to all cultures (AO3).

- In conclusion, functionalists clearly view the roles of men and women as different, particularly through Parsons' instrumental and expressive roles. However, this division of labour is increasingly challenged by changing family structures, greater gender equality and evidence that gender roles vary between cultures. Although traditional expectations may still influence some families, it is difficult to argue that separate gender roles are essential for family stability. Therefore, functionalists explain traditional gender roles, but their view is less convincing when applied to the diversity of modern family life (AO3).

- Any other reasonable response.

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Assessment Objectives Grid

	Question	AO1	AO2	AO3	Total mark for question
Section A (27)	1	2	-	-	**2**
	2	2	-	-	**2**
	3	4	4	-	**8**
	4	6	4	5	**15**
Section B (23)	5	4	4	-	**8**
	6	6	4	5	**15**

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