



AS

Sociology

7191/2 Education with methods in context

Report on the Examination

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General comment:

The majority of students wrote answers of an appropriate length and managed their time well. The exam paper was fair whilst offering an appropriate level of challenge.

There was still a significant number of rubric infringements, mostly comprising students answering more than one section B topic, either answering all the questions from all the topics in section B or a random selection of them.

Overall, students coped with the examination well, though there are some generic areas that could be a focus for improvement:

The ‘outline and explain’ 10-mark question. Here students would benefit more if an explicit identification of a way / reason / factor was made then leading to an explanation of it. So, making the student’s answer more cogent.

The ‘outline three ...’ 6-mark question. Students could easily improve outcomes on this question by realising the need to provide a line or so outlining the criticism / feature etc they have identified.

Section A: Research Methods**Question 1**

Most students could suggest two characteristics of field experiments such as taking place in real world settings or that the participant often does not know they are being observed. Students who claimed that field experiments were valid; reliable; representative were required to explain how this was the case to gain credit because such qualities could equally be a feature of other types of experiment or methods of research.

Question 2

This question for most students was one they could answer with a varied range of material. The students who were more successful managed to link the basic preferences of the positivist choice of method (quantitative / reliable / representative and techniques of investigation such as Laboratory experiments etc) to the wider aims of positivism. The aims of trying to show sociology to be a science, to produce social facts to attempt an objective understanding of society; what might be loosely termed the positivist method. A small minority of students did not know what was meant by positivism and could not answer the question effectively.

Section B

Topic B1 Culture and identity

This topic was answered by more students than last year and remains the second most popular topic.

Question 3

This question was drawn directly from the specification where the term high culture is listed. A significant minority of students did not appear to know the term and could not answer the question. Successful answers often made reference to the elite nature of high culture and paired it with an example of high culture such as opera / ballet / polo.

Question 4

This question was successfully answered by most students. Popular approaches involved using aspects of interactionist theory backstage / frontstage for example. Choice of leisure activities and clothes / fashion were also popular and successful approaches.

Question 5

Many students found gaining more than two marks for this question difficult. This was because answers often gave an example of a cultural expectation (for example that men maybe expected to engage in lifting weights in the gym whereas women might be expected to do Pilates) which was then repeated using an example of a different cultural expectation which capped the mark at two.

Question 6

This question proved to be straightforward. Generally, students managed to identify two agencies of socialisation and suggest a way in which they could shape identity. Where students found the question more challenging was in developing the identified way to include wider sociological material and include analysis. For example, the notion of the media stereotyping young people could be developed via use of moral panics or the view that stereotypes might be challenged through the more open access of social media. Students who developed their answers in ways like these produced more creditworthy response.

Question 7

Most students found this question to be straightforward. Use of the item to structure responses was common, though some students found it challenging to focus on the role of culture in society rather than present general theories of society. Marxism juxtaposed with functionalism featured heavily alongside feminism which was offered as further evaluation. Few students used interactionism or postmodernism in debates between perspectives but those that did were rewarded accordingly.

Topic B2 Families and Households

This topic was answered by the majority of students.

Question 8

For both marks students needed to identify that the matrifocal family was female led and that power in the matrifocal family rested with the woman leading it.

Question 9

Most students had little difficulty in answering this question and as a result gained both marks. There were many reasons to explain a fall in infant mortality over the last 100 years. The majority of answers focussed on improvements in the nature of health care and provision.

Question 10

This question was answered very well and extensive reasons for an increase in cohabitation were given. Some students identified communal household sharing as cohabitation, which could not be credited. The other main reason students did not gain full marks for this question was by not adding some development of the reason in order to gain the second mark.

Question 11

This question required students to identify a change in the organisation of paid work and suggest a way in which that change might impact on gender relationships in the family. This question proved more challenging for students. Answers sometimes spent a long time describing changes without connecting them to an impact on gender relationships. A sizeable minority did not refer to changes in the organisation of paid work except to say women now work. Analysis was often developed by reflecting on the response of various perspectives to the change for example functionalism and the new right.

Question 12

This was a question most students found themselves well prepared for and were able to offer responses which covered many of the debates around childhood. The item was well used in general and helped guide students into the debate about the nature of childhood and in particular whether childhood is a “golden time” or not. Many students were able to move through a range of contributors to the debate, Palmer, Postman, Firestone, Pilcher etc showing this topic area to be a familiar one. Where answers were less effective was often due to a drift in the response into all aspects of childhood. Two common examples of this were overlong accounts of what parents buy for children and how divorce may affect them. Many answers attempted to locate the debate about childhood within the theoretical framework of Marxism, feminisms, functionalism and the new right. This was a legitimate approach but needed to keep the focus on child centredness and not move into general views of the perspectives on the family.

Topic B3 Health

This topic was answered by more students than last year which may suggest that the popularity of Health as a topic is increasing.

Question 13

Most students who answered this question gained full credit and could find a synonym for impairment.

Question 14

This question was broad in nature and in general answered well. Students could select any aspect of society and how it might impact on any type of mental illness. Popular answers featured gender inequality and stress, and racism and its impact on stress / anxiety / depression.

Question 15

Students seemed confident in answering this question. Popular approaches focussed on lack of access to buildings and discrimination and employment opportunities. Answers that were less successful often only identified two ways or the ways suggested overlapped.

Question 16

This question was not answered well, and many students did not seem clear on what the question wanted them to do. Some students talked about health chances rather than health care – which limited the amount of credit they could be given. Popular approaches to the question focussed on language barriers and racism / ethnocentrism amongst some health care professionals.

Question 17

There were some well-structured, detailed and analytical responses to this question. Better answers offered juxtaposition between cultural and behavioural explanations and structural explanations for inequalities in health and illness in society. Less successful responses tended to merge together cultural and behavioural factors or simply listed factors explaining differences in health and illness amongst different groups in society. Some responses focussed on patterns of behaviour in different social groups in relation to smoking and diet with little if any focus on culture.

Topic B4 Work, Poverty and Welfare

This topic was answered by very few students.

Question 18

Many answers were unable to give a definition of the culture of poverty and so could not get credit, though some managed to give a feature of the culture of poverty such as a present time orientation or a focus on immediate gratification and so could gain partial credit.

Question 19

Many students did not understand what “informal” welfare was as opposed to other types such as public etc. As a result, finding examples of how informal welfare might provide day to day support proved difficult. “Voluntary” examples of welfare such as food banks were often presented in answers as a type of informal welfare but could not be credited.

Question 20

Students found this question straight forward and frequently used examples from education relating to different ethnic groups to provide effective answers. Discrimination in the workplace and levels of unemployment also featured as popular ways of answering the question.

Question 21

Responses to this question often used levels of education and accumulated money as their starting point. For example, higher levels of education of the middle class making it easier for them to avoid long periods of unemployment and to be able to find work again quickly. Answers that used money focussed on money providing the middle class with a cushion not available to the working class so making unemployment more significant for the working class. Less effective answers talked about material or educational differences between the working and middle class without bringing them back to bear on how they might affect the significance of unemployment.

Question 22

The item for this question was helpful in guiding students towards an effective structure for the answer. These answers considered the standard ways of measuring and defining poverty, absolute and relative, the poverty line and then went on to consider the suggestions made by the item, social exclusion and different types of deprivation. Answers that did not include the ways of measuring poverty but concentrated on the “wider aspects ... of deprivation and social exclusion” only were less effective.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

Grade boundaries and cumulative percentage grades are available on the [Results Statistics](#) page of the AQA Website.