

MARK SCHEME for the November 2005 question paper

9699 SOCIOLOGY

9699/01

Paper 1 (Principles and Methods 1) maximum raw mark 50

This mark scheme is published as an aid to teachers and students, to indicate the requirements of the examination. It shows the basis on which Examiners were initially instructed to award marks. It does not indicate the details of the discussions that took place at an Examiners' meeting before marking began. Any substantial changes to the mark scheme that arose from these discussions will be recorded in the published *Report on the Examination*.

All Examiners are instructed that alternative correct answers and unexpected approaches in candidates' scripts must be given marks that fairly reflect the relevant knowledge and skills demonstrated.

Mark schemes must be read in conjunction with the question papers and the *Report on the Examination*.

The minimum marks in these components needed for various grades were previously published with these mark schemes, but are now instead included in the Report on the Examination for this session.

- CIE will not enter into discussion or correspondence in connection with these mark schemes.

CIE is publishing the mark schemes for the November 2005 question papers for most IGCSE and GCE Advanced Level and Advanced Subsidiary Level syllabuses and some Ordinary Level syllabuses.

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Section A

1 “Greater certainty can be achieved in sociological research by using the methods favoured by positivists”. Explain and assess.

- 0-6 A few simple points loosely linked to the positivist perspective is all we may expect at this level.
- 7-12 A basic descriptive account of the positivist perspective would trigger the lower part of the band. Higher in the band the answer may also begin to explore the anti-positivist arguments, albeit still in a largely descriptive manner.
- 13-18 A sound account of the positivist perspective with a basic attempt to assess its strengths and/or limitations will feature in the lower part of the band. To go higher, the same type of response would need also to address the reference to ‘greater certainty’ in the question. There are various ways in which the methods favoured by positivists may be said to offer greater certainty and these are perhaps best explored through links with the concepts of reliability, experimental control, quantifiable data, representativeness, trends/correlations, and objectivity. Assessment may take the form of enquiring to what extent positivist methods deliver ‘greater certainty’ in relation to some or all of these concepts. Candidates could also gain credit by arguing that greater certainty is achieved using positivist methods at the expense of other desirable qualities, such as validity and depth.
- 19-25 Answers will be based on a detailed and accurate account of the positivist perspective, with a well-informed and sustained assessment that focuses directly on the issue of whether or not the methods favoured by positivists provide greater certainty. To reach the top of the band, there needs in addition to be some further indication of sophistication, such as the ability to argue that the issue of greater certainty is very much a matter of interpretation and is viewed differently from different perspectives.

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2 “As individuals we have little control over the social forces that shape our lives”. Explain and assess this view.

- 0-6 An answer based on a few commonsense observations with little or no sociological backing may feature here.
- 7-12 Answers at this level will focus primarily on explaining the view expressed in the stem. A simple functionalist account of the constraining influences of social forces, for example, may merit marks at the lower end of the band. If this is developed in some way, such as through comparisons with other structural theories (e.g. Marxist, structuralist, etc.), a mark at the top end of the band may be justified. There will be little or no attempt to assess these structural theories at this level. Simple descriptive accounts of the processes of socialisation are likely to feature in this band.
- 13-18 A sound account of the sociological theory that informs the view expressed in the stem would merit the lower part of the band if accompanied by some basic attempt at assessment. Higher in the band the assessment will be more developed and, perhaps, more explicit, though not necessarily detailed and sophisticated. Assessment may be offered through an account of alternative sociological theories that allow more play to the role of the social actor (individual or group) in shaping society (e.g. theories in the interactionist, phenomenological, and post-modernist, post-structuralist traditions). Assessment could also be made through consideration of relevant empirical evidence such as, for example, from studies of deviance and education. Likewise, a more philosophical angle may be adopted with discussion of, for instance, the determinism versus voluntarism debate, or Wrong’s ‘over-socialised’ concept of humankind argument.
- 19-25 At this level there will be a clear and accurate understanding of the view expressed in the stem, and the sociological reasoning and traditions that underpin it. The assessment of the view will be detailed and sustained, especially at the top end of the band, and there will be an attempt to reach balanced and well-reasoned conclusions. Arguments may be advanced both for and against the emphasis on social constraint that characterises structural theories, though the two sides do not need to be treated with equal consideration or respect.

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Section B

3 Assess the strengths and limitations of the different types of interview used in sociological research.

- 0-6 A few simple observations about the use of interviews in sociological research is all that we may expect at this level. Candidates who write about questionnaires rather than interviews as such should also be confined to this band.
- 7-12 Lower in the band answers are likely to focus on interviews as a generic type of research method in sociology, describing a few basic strengths and limitations. Higher in the band the range of points will be wider and/or there will be an attempt to differentiate between structured and unstructured interviews. There will be little or no assessment at this level.
- 13-18 Answers will demonstrate a sound understanding of the different types of interview used in sociological research. At the lower end of the band especially, this may be confined to structured and unstructured interviews. However, award additional credit for those who also mention semi-structured and/or group interviews. At this level there will also be some attempt at assessment, possibly by juxtaposing the strengths/limitations of the different types of interview. Reward the use of examples from studies to support key points.
- 19-25 Answers will demonstrate a detailed and accurate understanding of two or more types of interview used in sociological research. This will be complemented by a sustained and well-informed assessment of the strengths and limitations of each type of interview. Theoretical and practical points will be covered, though not necessarily with equal balance. However, the theoretical discussion must be well developed to reach the top of the band.

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4 “The choice of research method is influenced mainly by the sociologist’s theoretical perspective.” Explain and assess this view.

- 0-6 Answers at this level are likely to show little or no understanding of the question. Conversely, a few simple points about what may influence choice of research method may deserve 5 or 6 marks.
- 7-12 A basic explanation of the idea that theoretical perspective is a major influence on choice of research method, with no further development, would merit the lower part of the band. Higher in the band there will be some recognition that choice of research method may also be affected by other factors, including various practical considerations such as time, money, location, size of sample, funding, nature of the study group, researcher’s skill set, etc., together with a range of theoretical concerns such as the researcher’s aims, values, interests, and attitude to key issues such as validity, reliability, representativeness, and objectivity. There will be little or no assessment at this level.
- 13-18 Answers will identify a range of factors that may influence choice of research method and show a sound understanding of the part that theoretical perspective may play in this process. There will also be a concerted attempt at assessment, though this may be rather shallow at the lower end of the band. At the top of the band the analysis will be sharper, though the conclusions drawn may still lack some depth.
- 19-25 At this level we should expect an accurate and detailed treatment of the role that theoretical perspective may play in the choice of research method. Other factors, both practical and theoretical, will also be considered, though perhaps in less depth. The assessment will be explicit and sustained and, at the top end, clear and incisive conclusions will be reached about the relative importance of theoretical perspective as an influence on selection of research method.

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Section C

5 “Class divisions are breaking down in modern societies”. Explain and assess.

- 0-6 An answer based on a few commonsense observations with little or no sociological backing may feature here.
- 7-12 A limited attempt will be made to explain the idea that class divisions are breaking down, perhaps through reference to related social changes such as increased social mobility, impact of the welfare state, and decline in traditional manual employment, etc. At the higher end, there may also be an attempt to assess the claim, though this will be rather limited in both range and depth; for example, it may be limited to a basic account of the arguments for and against the embourgeoisement thesis.
- 13-18 A good range of points will be made to explain the idea that class divisions are breaking down, and at the higher end of the band especially the discussion may be very contemporary, perhaps with references to post-modernist theory and the impact of consumerism in possibly blurring class boundaries. There will also be a concerted attempt to assess the claim, though this will lack sophistication and may rely on rather basic, one-dimensional arguments.
- 19-25 Answers will demonstrate a clear and detailed understanding of the strands of sociological thought that underpin the idea that class divisions are breaking down. The assessment will be coherent and sustained, avoiding simple conclusions and recognising different sides to the debate about the relevance of class analysis to modern societies. At the top of the band, there should be clear evidence of sophistication, such as the candidate who can appreciate that ‘social class’ may be defined in different ways and the implications that this has for the question; and/or the answer that demonstrates a good understanding of the issues raised by the post-modernist critique of class analysis.

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6 “Ownership of property is still the main source of economic and political power in modern societies.” Explain and assess.

- 0-6 A few disjointed points about where power lies in modern societies may be all we can expect at this level. A very limited account of the Marxist theory of class with no further development may justify 5 or 6 marks.
- 7-12 Answers will demonstrate some awareness of the sociological theory that underpins the idea that property ownership is a key source of power, and higher in the band there will also be some recognition that there may be other sources of power and/or that property ownership may be less important than it was in the past. The response will be confined primarily to explaining the statement in the stem, and there will be little or no attempt at assessment.
- 13-18 It is likely that at this level answers will identify an appropriate theoretical framework for addressing the question. This might take the form of a critique of traditional Marxist theory, or it may focus more specifically on the managerial revolution thesis advanced in different ways by Bell, Burnham, Dahrendorf, etc. And, of course, there may be other equally appropriate approaches. Lower in the band the response will still be largely descriptive, though there will be some attempt at assessment. Higher in the band the assessment will be more developed, though possibly lacking some sharpness and sophistication.
- 19-25 Answers will demonstrate a good understanding of the issues raised by the question and there will be a sustained and well-informed assessment. Theoretical and/or empirical material may be used to explore the issues, though a good mix of the two may be one feature to look for in answers that justify marks at the top of the band. Assessment that relies over-much on material from the 1950s and 1960s, e.g. the managerial revolution thesis, would have to be very well done to trigger this band and even then should be restricted to the bottom of the band. Higher in the band, there will be some use of more contemporary material, including possibly the contributions of post-modernist writers. While it is not essential to distinguish between economic and political power in answering the question, candidates who make good use of this distinction should be highly rewarded and it may be a feature to look for in answers at the top of the band.