

**MARK SCHEME for the May/June 2011 question paper
for the guidance of teachers**

9699 SOCIOLOGY

9699/11

Paper 1 (Essay), maximum raw mark 50

This mark scheme is published as an aid to teachers and candidates, to indicate the requirements of the examination. It shows the basis on which Examiners were instructed to award marks. It does not indicate the details of the discussions that took place at an Examiners' meeting before marking began, which would have considered the acceptability of alternative answers.

Mark schemes must be read in conjunction with the question papers and the report on the examination.

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Section A: The Sociological Perspective

1 “Socialisation is the most significant factor in shaping human behaviour.” Explain and assess this view. [25]

- (0–6) A few simple remarks about human behaviour, or about different ways of studying humans, might be worth two or three marks. Higher in the band, answers will contain a few basic observations about socialisation and may offer some assertions about the part it plays in shaping human behaviour. There will be little or no reference to appropriate sociological evidence and arguments at this level.
- (7–12) Answers here are likely to be descriptive and confined to an account of the ways in which socialisation may influence human behaviour. At the lower end of the band, the answer may be limited to an account of the agencies of socialisation and/or the stages of socialisation. A more developed answer will begin to consider the evidence that socialisation plays a major part in shaping human behaviour, perhaps through an account of the cases of feral children. However, the range of evidence considered may be limited and any analysis will be superficial. Alternatively, to merit the top of the band the answer may outline the functionalist or interactionist theory of socialisation.
- (13–18) Answers that fit the lower part of the band may be confined to an account of different sociological perspectives (most likely functionalist and interactionist) on socialisation. To go higher in the band, there needs to be some focus on the evidence that socialisation plays a major part in shaping human behaviour. The evidence cited may include, for example: the cases of children exposed to little or no human socialisation; Durkheim’s study of suicide; cross-cultural differences in human behaviour; studies of gender divisions; and the sociological critique of biological accounts of human behaviour. Any assessment of the evidence and issues surrounding the role of socialisation in shaping human behaviour will be fairly basic at this level.
- (19–25) As for the previous band, except that the assessment will be more developed and better informed. The assessment may be in terms of questioning the oversocialised concept of humans implicit in many sociological perspectives. References to appropriate material from socio-biological accounts should also be credited. Alternatively, candidates may use a range of evidence to support the view that socialisation plays a major part in shaping human behaviour, and if this is linked to well-reasoned arguments and conclusions the answer is likely to reach the top of the band. Good use might also be made of the post-modernist perspective to question over-deterministic views of the factors influencing human behaviour.

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2 “In order to understand the factors that shape human behaviour, sociologists should base their research on the methods of the natural sciences.” Explain and assess this view. [25]

- (0–6) Some general assertions about the study of human behaviour or research methods, might be worth two or three marks. A few simple points about scientific methods/procedures would trigger the top of the band.
- (7–12) A simple 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, together with some reference to the anti-positivist position, would merit the lower part of the band. To go higher, the treatment of the anti-positivist perspective would need to be more developed. The assessment at this level is likely to rely on the juxtaposition of the two main perspectives. Explicit evaluation of the view expressed in the question is likely to be confined to a few simple observations only. Reward candidates who note the possible contradictions between the high ideals of scientific methods and the way that scientists actually carry out their work. However, this type of material should not dominate the answer.
- (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 a satisfactory way of understanding the factors that shape human behaviour. To reach the top of the band, there needs in addition to be some further indication of sophistication, such as the ability to recognise limitations in both the positivist and the anti-positivist positions, or some well-informed application of the post-modernist critique of science.

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Section B: Sociological Methods

3 “Sociological studies can be and should be value free.” Explain and assess this view. [25]

- (0–6) An answer that contains no more than a few general points about sociological research, with no direct links to the question, would fit the lower part of the band. Higher in the band, there may be a few appropriate references to objectivity and the role of values in sociological research, but the answer will lack overall coherence and detail.
- (7–12) At this level, there will be a basic attempt to explain the proposition in the question. This may take the form of a description of the positivist and interpretivist perspectives on the scientific status of sociology. At the top of the band, a limited attempt will be made to explain why it might be difficult for sociologists to achieve value freedom in their research.
- (13–18) The proposition in the question will be explained and this may be supported by references to perspectives and/or thinkers who have supported the idea of a value-free sociology. To reach the top half of the band, there must also be an attempt to assess whether an objective, value-neutral sociology is possible. This may be in terms of a defence or critique of one or more of the main perspectives, e.g. positivist, interpretivist, feminist, postmodernist. However, for this band the assessment need be no more than quite basic.
- (19–25) As for the previous band, except that the assessment will be more developed and better informed. A good assessment of the part that values may play in sociological research is likely to trigger this band. Similarly, an answer that discusses the difficulties in achieving objectivity/value freedom in relation to different research methods could make this level if done very well. Note that references to the problems of achieving value freedom in the natural sciences may be worthy of credit, but should not dominate the answer. To reach the top of the band, the response must address both the 'can' and the 'should' elements of the question.

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4 Assess the strengths and limitations of the different types of interview that are used in sociological research. [25]

- (0–6) Answers at this level may be characterised by a few elementary observations about interviews in general. Mention of a couple of relevant strengths and/or limitations may justify a mark at the top of the band.
- (7–12) Lower in the band, some relevant strengths and/or limitations will be described, though the account may fail to differentiate between different types of interview. At the top of the band, reference will be made to more than one type of interview and both strengths and limitations will be identified, though not necessarily with equal emphasis.
- (13–18) Answers will provide an accurate and balanced account of the strengths and limitations of at least two types of interview, e.g. structured, semi-structured, unstructured, and group interviews. Theoretical and practical points will be considered, though not necessarily with equal emphasis. Higher in the band, there will also be a basic attempt to assess the usefulness of the different types of interview. Reward references to relevant studies, though it would be possible to answer the question fully without referring to studies.
- (19–25) At this level answers will provide an accurate, detailed and balanced account of the theoretical and practical strengths and limitations of different types of interview. The assessment will be explicit and, at the top of the band, will provide coherent and incisive conclusions about the relative merits of the types of interview discussed. A distinguishing feature of answers at this level may also be the ability to identify appropriate links between the different types of interview and the theoretical perspectives that endorse their use, e.g. structured interviews and positivism, unstructured interviews and interpretivism.

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Section C: Social Differentiation and Stratification

5 “Social barriers exist that make it very difficult for people in poverty to move up the social ladder.” Explain and assess this view. [25]

- (0–6) A few poorly-developed points about poverty may characterise answers that fit the lower half of the band. Better responses at this level will identify some possible explanations of poverty, but will lack extension and links to relevant sociological evidence and arguments.
- (7–12) A sketchy account of two or more sociological explanations of poverty would trigger the lower part of the band. A more developed account would go higher, but to reach the top of the band the discussion needs to be linked directly to the idea that social barriers prevent the poor achieving upward social mobility. Answers at this level will be largely or wholly descriptive.
- (13–18) At this level, different sociological explanations of poverty will be described accurately and there may be some reference to appropriate studies. The distinction between cultural and structural accounts of the causes of poverty may be utilised, particularly in answers at the top of the band. The idea that social barriers prevent the poor achieving upward social mobility will be interpreted appropriately (i.e. in contrast to theories that view poverty as emanating from the individual failings of the poor), though the analysis may be basic.
- (19–25) As for the previous band, except that the discussion will include a well-informed assessment of the view expressed in the question. The assessment will be sustained and incisive at the top of the band. A feature of answers at this level will be the ability of the candidate to demonstrate clearly understanding of the idea that the causes of poverty emanate not so much from the poor, but from features of the wider society that limit the opportunities for people to break out of poverty. At the top of the band, good use may be made of the structural versus cultural explanations of poverty to develop a sustained assessment of the view expressed in the question.

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6 “Feminist theories provide the best explanations of why females continue to experience inequality in employment.” Explain and assess this claim. [25]

- (0–6) Lower in the band answers may be restricted to a few assertions about the reasons for sexual inequality, or perhaps a few general points about the nature of sexual inequality in employment. Better answers at this level may identify some relevant explanations, though these will be based more on common sense than on references to appropriate sociological evidence and arguments.
- (7–12) At the lower end of the band, there may be a general account of feminist theory, perhaps with only limited links to the issue of gender inequality in employment. Higher in the band, the focus may still be on feminist theory in general, though the account will be more accurate and/or detailed and will be better linked to gender inequality in employment. There will be little or no evidence of assessment at this level.
- (13–18) At this level, answers must distinguish between different feminist theories, though lower in the band the distinctions between different strands of feminism may be only poorly understood. Higher in the band, the discussion of the theories will be clearly linked to the issue of gender inequality in employment. There may also be references to other (non-feminist) explanations. Links to appropriate studies could be another feature of answers that merit the top of the band. There will be some attempt to assess the explanations offered, though this may be largely implicit, i.e. through the juxtaposition of different theories and arguments.
- (19–25) As for the previous band, except that the assessment will be developed and well-informed. Lower in the band, the assessment may take the form of a critique of each of the explanations offered. Higher in the band, this may be combined with an attempt to reach a balanced and reasoned conclusion about the reasons why women continue to experience inequality in employment.