

MARK SCHEME for the October/November 2006 question paper

9699 SOCIOLOGY

9699/01 Paper 1 (Essay), 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 instructed to award marks. It does not indicate the details of the discussions that took place at an Examiners' meeting before marking began.

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 grade thresholds for various grades are published in the report on the examination for most IGCSE, GCE Advanced Level and Advanced Subsidiary Level syllabuses.

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

CIE is publishing the mark schemes for the October/November 2006 question papers for most IGCSE, GCE Advanced Level and Advanced Subsidiary Level syllabuses and some Ordinary Level syllabuses.

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Section A

1 “It is inaccurate to view socialisation as a one-way process in which individuals are slotted into useful roles without any resistance or difficulty.” Explain and assess this claim.

- 0-6 A few simple observations about socialisation, with little or no unpicking of the question, would fit this band. Some evidence of sociological knowledge within this type of answer would probably elevate it to the top of the band.
- 7-12 A basic account of the functionalist theory of socialisation, with little or no direct linkage to the question, would trigger the bottom of the band. Likewise, an answer that is confined to describing the cases of so-called feral children is unlikely to merit more than seven or eight marks. A more developed treatment of the functionalist theory and/or consideration of a wider range of sociological perspectives on socialisation would merit the top of the band. At this level there may be little or no attempt to assess the issues raised by the question.
- 13-18 A basic account of the functionalist theory of socialisation with some overall assessment would fit the bottom of the band. An answer that juxtaposes the functionalist and interactionist theories of socialisation could score up to sixteen marks. To reach the top of the band, however, the issues of over-simplification and over-determinism that are raised by the question need to be addressed directly, albeit rather simply at this level.
- 19-25 Answers at this level will demonstrate knowledge of different theories of socialisation and provide a well-informed evaluation of the limitations of those theories (functionalist, Marxist) that are criticised for being over-deterministic. The interactionist perspective in particular may be used to support the point that it is too simplistic to view socialisation as a one-way process that slots individuals into socially useful roles without resistance or difficulty. Answers that draw on relevant empirical evidence to illustrate the complex nature of the socialisation process, such as references to studies of crime and deviance, are likely to feature at this level.

2 “With recent changes in the social position of women, feminist theory no longer has any relevance for understanding modern societies.” Assess this view.

- 0-6 A few disconnected observations about general inequality would fit the bottom of the band. A few simple comments about feminist theory that demonstrate some limited sociological knowledge may be worth a mark at the top of the band.
- 7-12 Descriptive accounts of feminist theory are likely to figure at this level. A basic account of feminist theory in general may be worth up to ten marks. A more developed account, perhaps including references to different stands of feminist theory, would merit the top of the band. There will be little or no attempt to address the particular issues raised by the question at this level and the responses will be overwhelmingly descriptive.
- 13-18 A sound account of feminist theory will be offered at this level, together with a basic attempt to discuss whether that theory has any relevance for understanding modern societies. The assessment may be somewhat staccato, being limited perhaps to a few well-worn observations about the limitations of feminist theory in general. At the top of the band, however, there will be some attempt to consider the implications of supposed improvements (changes) in the social position of women for the ongoing reliance of feminist theory.
- 19-25 As for the previous band, though the analysis will be more sustained and better informed. Good answers may address specific issues, such as whether the feminist concept of patriarchy still has the same relevance in a purportedly post-modern society where the traditional structure of the family and the division of labour within the home is breaking down. Evidence of out-achievement by females in areas such as education and employment may also be used to question the relevance of feminist assumptions about gender inequality. Good use of feminist theory today. Attempts within feminist theory to revise outworn notions about the nature of gender inequality might also be described in high quality answers.

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Section B

3 “Some sources of secondary data are more useful than others when carrying out sociological research.” Explain and assess this view.

- 0-6 An answer that is confined to a few general observations about sociological research methods would fit this band. If within this type of answer there is some indication that the candidate understands what is meant by secondary data, a mark at the top of this band may be justified.
- 7-12 A simple descriptive account of a few sources of secondary data would be worth up to ten marks. A more detailed account along these lines may reach the top of the band. There will be little or no attempt to address the issues raised by the question directly at this level.
- 13-18 At this level there will be a basic attempt to explain why some sources of secondary data may be more useful than others when carrying out sociological research. This may involve, for example, showing that some sources of data are more limited than others in terms of reliability and validity. At the top of the band an attempt will be made to assess whether some sources of secondary data are more useful than others, though any conclusions reached are likely to be rather simple.
- 19-25 As for the previous band, though the assessment will be more developed and incisive. For example, candidates may note that the usefulness of particular sources of secondary data may vary depending on a range of factors such as the perspective of the researcher, the aims of the research and the topic under investigation. References to relevant studies may be a feature that helps to distinguish the highest quality answers. A commanding use of appropriate theoretical terms, such as reliability and validity, in the context of the question may be another qualification for answers reaching the top of the band.

4 “Whatever research method is used, it is likely that the researcher will influence the outcome of the study.” Explain and assess this claim.

- 0-6 Answers that are confined to a few simple observations about research methods, with little or no linkage to the question, will fit this band. Any reference to researcher bias or demand characteristics would elevate such a scant answer to the top of the band.
- 7-12 A simple description of the main features of a few research methods would merit a mark at the lower end of the band. This type of answer may also include a rudimentary attempt to explain some of the ways in which a researcher may influence the outcome of a study. At the top of the band there will also be an attempt to assess the claim that it is difficult for the researcher to avoid contaminating his or her research. However, the assessment will probably lack depth and/or detail.
- 13-18 At this level the candidate will demonstrate a sound understanding of different sociological research methods and provide several examples of the ways in which the researcher may influence the outcome of a study. At the top of the band there will also be an attempt to assess the claim that it is difficult for the researcher to avoid contaminating his or her research. However, the assessment will probably lack depth and/or detail.
- 19-25 As for the previous band, though the assessment will be more developed and better informed. The candidate may, for example, attempt to rank the different research methods in terms of how likely it is that researcher bias may occur. Conversely, the evaluative content of the answer may focus on supporting the claim that there is little difference between research methods in terms of how likely it is for the researcher to influence the outcome of the study. At the top of the band the candidate will demonstrate a good understanding of a range of ways in which study findings may be influenced by the researcher and will have assessed a number of research methods in relation to the issues raised by the question.

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Section C

5 “Poverty is a way of life for the poor that is passed down from generation to generation through the family.” Explain and assess this view.

- 0-6 An answer that is confined to a few commonsense observations about poverty would fit the lower half of the band. At the top of the band the candidate may demonstrate some relevant knowledge, but with little or no development in relation to the question.
- 7-12 A general discussion of the nature of poverty that has some sociological relevance, but without relating to the question directly, may fit the bottom of the band. A basic account of the culture of poverty thesis or another theory of poverty would merit a mark at the top of the band.
- 13-18 An accurate and detailed account of the culture of poverty thesis would justify a mark at the lower end of the band. If there were also a basic attempt to assess the culture of poverty thesis, such as through juxtaposition with another relevant theory of poverty, or through explicit evaluation, a mark at the top of the band would be merited.
- 19-25 Different theories or explanations of poverty will be discussed in some detail at this level and a concerted effort will be made to link the material to the issues raised by the question. The assessment will be explicit and sustained. A feature of the highest quality answers may be a clear understanding that there is a tension between cultural and structural explanations of poverty, and that to see poverty primarily as a cultural phenomenon may be misconceived.

6 “Marxist theory is of little use in understanding social class divisions today.” Explain and assess this view.

- 0-6 Answers that are confined to a few observations about social class divisions may fit the lower half of the band. If there is also some rudimentary comment about Marxist theory, a mark at the top of the band may be justified.
- 7-12 A basic account of the Marxist theory of class would merit the lower part of the band. If this were supplemented by a discussion of at least one other theory of class, a mark at the top of the band may be justified. At this level there will be little or no attempt to explain or assess the statement on which the question is based.
- 13-18 Answers at this level will move beyond a descriptive account of the Marxist theory of class, to explain why that theory might be considered to be of little use in understanding social class divisions today. If the answer also contains some relevant assessment, albeit at a basic level, a mark at the top of the band may be justified.
- 19-25 As for the previous band, though the assessment will be more developed and incisive. The assessment may be based on a mix of theoretical argument and empirical evidence, with useful references to contemporary developments such as the disappearance of the traditional working class and the increasing influence of consumerism in the formation of social identities. A clear and well-supported conclusion will emerge, especially in answers at the top of the band.