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Student responses with examiner commentary
AS AND A-LEVEL
SOCIOLOGY
7191 AND 7192

The following student responses should be used in conjunction with the Specimen Assessment Material for AS and A-level Sociology (7191 and 7192) which are available from the AQA website.

There are 11 different question styles across the two AS papers and three A-level papers. A student response for each style of question is included in this booklet. Further student responses for all papers will be available on eAQA.

The following student responses and examiner comments provide teachers with the best opportunity to understand the application of the mark scheme.

Please note that the students' responses have been typed exactly as they were written.

Question type: "Outline 3…" [6 marks]

This type of question is found in AS Papers 1 (7191/1) and 2 (7191/2) and A-level Paper 1 (7192/1) and Paper 3 (7192/3). The following is a question and mark scheme taken from Specimen AS Paper 1 (7191/1):

Question

03   Outline three ways in which the organisation of schooling may be ethnocentric.

[6 marks]

Mark scheme

Two marks for each of **three** appropriate reasons clearly outlined or **one mark** for appropriate reasons partially outlined, such as:

- uniform or dress requirements (1 mark) may conflict with cultural norms of some minorities (+1 mark)

- timing of holidays (1 mark) may reflect Christian festivals rather than those of other faiths (+1 mark)

- teaching only European languages (1 mark) devalues linguistic heritage of some minorities (+1 mark)

- arrangements for PE/games (showers, changing etc) (1 mark) may conflict with cultural requirements for modesty (+1 mark)

- teaching history from a British perspective (1 mark) may produce a biased view of other cultures' contributions (+1 mark).

Other relevant material should be credited.

No marks for **no** relevant points.

Student response A

Ethnocentric means being focused on just one Religion or Ethnicity and a way a school does this is through the fact that schools only support black history week only in that time and not all the time. also school websites are only in English. This could be ignoring different ethnicity also the fact that School food is generally only typically english food this could mean other ethnicities may feel marginalised.

Examiner commentary

The answer needs greater explanation eg Halal. The second point made is not ethnocentric schooling.

3 marks awarded.

Student response B

The school holidays only fall in Christian festivals such as Christmas and Easter.

When students are taught history it's only ever the history of Britain not other countries.This may give a biased view and may make other cultures feel excluded.

The food sold is only suited to the British culture and not other cultures.

Those requiring a special diet due to their culture may not be catered for eg Halal.

Examiner commentary

The answer makes three clear points and explains these.

6 marks awarded.

Question type: "Applying material from Item [C] and your knowledge of research methods, evaluate the strengths and limitation of using [method] to investigate [issue in education]…"
[20 marks]

This type of method in context question is found in AS Paper 1 (7191/1) and A-level Paper 1 (7192/1). The following is a question and mark scheme taken from Specimen AS Paper 1 (7191/1).

Question

06   Read Item B below and answer the question that follows.

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Item B

Investigating unauthorised absences from school

There is a close correlation between frequent unauthorised absence from school and educational underachievement. Those pupils who are not doing well at school are more likely to truant. Similarly, those who truant regularly are likely to finish their school career with poor qualifications. Pupils may be absent without authorisation for many reasons, from caring responsibilities at home or dislike of school, to parents arranging family holidays in term time.

Sociologists may use self-completion written questionnaires to study unauthorised absences. These can be distributed easily to large numbers of pupils, parents or teachers. The findings of the questionnaires can also be used to establish patterns and trends in relation to unauthorised absences. However, self-completion questionnaires often have very low response rates, especially when they ask about sensitive issues.

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Applying material from Item B and your knowledge of research methods, evaluate the strengths and limitations of using self-completion written questionnaires to investigate unauthorised absences from school.

[20 marks]

Mark scheme

Marks	Level descriptors
17–20	Accurate, conceptually detailed knowledge and good understanding of a range of relevant material on self-completion written questionnaires.
	Material will be applied accurately to the investigation of the specific issue of unauthorised absences from school.
	Evaluation of the usefulness of self-completion written questionnaires will be explicit and relevant. Analysis will show clear explanation and may draw appropriate conclusions.
	Students will apply knowledge of a range of relevant strengths and limitations of using self-completion written questionnaires to research issues and characteristics relating to unauthorised absences from school. These may include some of the following and/or other relevant concerns, though answers do not need to include all of these, even for full marks:

	• the research characteristics of potential research subjects, eg individual pupils, peer groups, parents, teachers (eg class, ethnic and gender differences; parental literacy skills; teachers' professionalism, self-interest or stereotypes of pupils) • the research contexts and settings (eg classrooms; staffrooms) • the sensitivity of researching unauthorised absences from school (eg policy and resource implications for schools; schools' market and league table position; its impact on achievement or behaviour; stigmatisation; parental consent).
13–16	Broad or deep, accurate but incomplete knowledge of the strengths and/or limitations of self-completion written questionnaires. Understands a number of significant aspects of the question; reasonable understanding of the presented material. Application of knowledge will be broadly appropriate but will be applied in a more generalised way or a more restricted way; for example: • applying the method to the study of education in general, not to the specifics of studying unauthorised absences from school, or • specific but undeveloped application to unauthorised absences from school, or • a focus on the research characteristics of unauthorised absences from school, or groups/contexts etc involved in it. There may be some limited explicit evaluation, eg of one to two features of self-completion written questionnaires as a method, and/or some appropriate analysis, eg clear explanations of some of the features of self-completion questionnaires.
9–12	Largely accurate knowledge but limited range and depth, including a broadly accurate, if basic, account of some of the strengths and/or limitations of self-completion written questionnaires. Understands some limited aspects of the question; superficial understanding of the presented material. Applying material (possibly in a list-like fashion) on self-completion written questionnaires, but with very limited or non-existent application to either the study of unauthorised absences from school in particular or of education in general. Evaluation limited at most to briefly stated points. Analysis will be limited, with answers tending towards the descriptive.
5–8	Limited undeveloped knowledge, eg two to three insubstantial points about some features of self-completion written questionnaires. Understands only very limited aspects of the question; simplistic understanding of the presented material. Very limited application of suitable material, and/or material often at a tangent to the demands of the question, eg perhaps drifting into an unfocused comparison of different methods. Minimal/no evaluation. Attempts at analysis, if any, are thin and disjointed.
1–4	Very limited knowledge, eg one to two very insubstantial points about methods in general. Very little/no understanding of the question and of the presented material. Significant errors, omissions, and/or incoherence in application of material. Some material ineffectually recycled from the Item, or some knowledge applied solely to the substantive issue of unauthorised absences from school, with very little or no reference to self-completion written questionnaires. No analysis or evaluation.
0	No relevant points.

Indicative content for strengths and limitations of the method

Strengths and limitations of self-completion written questionnaires, as applied to the particular issue in education, may include: time; cost; access; inflexibility; hypothesis-testing; factual data; quantitative data; superficiality; lack of validity; reliability; large sample size; representativeness; response rates; generalizability; ethical issues.

Student response A

Positivists like using self-completion questionnaires because they produce quantitative data. The self-completion questionnaire means that there is nobody around to influence the responses that are given and this is likely to make the data more valid as the person filling in the questionnaire will not be influenced by people around them.

School pupils are likely to be influenced by peer group pressure but if they complete the questionnaire by themselves they will not be affected by their friends. However it may be difficult to get these pupils to fill in the questionnaire. This is because if they are truanting the pupil will not be around to receive the questionnaire in the first place. It is also likely that the pupil is a member of an anti-school subculture and will see the questionnaire as something connected to the school. If this is the case the pupil will not fill the questionnaire in. In addition the sample frame for self-completion questionnaire may provide problems. This is because schools are judged on statistics about absence and they may be less willing to record absence as unauthorised. This means that any sample drawn from school register is going to be inaccurate and manipulated.

A problem may be that students who have unauthorised absence from school may also be falling behind at school. Their literacy levels may be low and this means that they will not understand the self-completion questionnaire. There is nobody around to explain difficult words to them. In addition pupils will not be able to fill in the form well. They may misspell words and their answers may not be understandable.

An advantage of using the questionnaires with adults, in particular parents, is that there is a lot of blame and stigma attached to parents who cannot get their children to attend school. They are not able to put forward their views openly and a self-completion questionnaire will allow parents the chance to explain their views. A problem is the level of parents' literacy. If these groups come from those with the poorest literacy it is likely that they will not be able to complete the questionnaire

Teachers also have careers at stake and would put on an artificial professional view if they were in front of someone as they may feel their career is at stake. In the privacy of their own room they are likely to be more honest. This would be an advantage of questionnaires.

Another advantage is that there may be very personal reasons why somebody is absent. Their family may be undergoing difficult circumstances. If research was carried out face to face this could lead to distress and be seen as unethical. Allowing somebody the chance to do this in private would reduce their suffering. However the questionnaire may be ignored due to the sensitive nature of the topic.

Another advantage is that self-completion questionnaires could be sent by post to a widespread geographical area. This means that the patterns and trends will cover a large number of people and allow generalisations to be made. This means that the differences between, classes, ethnic groups and gender can quickly be seen. If working class students are more likely to be absent this will be shown in the results.

A final problem is where the data will come from. How will the sociologist get access to the list of students who are poor attenders. Information about attendance often may be publicly available but it is unlikely a school will allow the names of individual students and parents to be given to the sociologist

without permission. The parents will not want to take part because it appears that it is their fault and the schools will not want to become associated with poor attendance.

Examiner commentary

Overall this answer has a range of points of application of the method to the specific issue of unauthorised absences from school. Not all of these are fully developed but there are enough points to make this a top band answer. It also includes a range of research characteristics of pupils, parent, teachers and schools. The sensitivity of the research issue is addressed in a number of places.

17 marks awarded.

Question type: Outline and explain two….. [10 marks]

This type of question is found is both the AS Papers (7191/1 and 7191/2) and the three A-level Papers (7192/1, 7192/2, 7192/3). The following is a question and mark scheme taken from the specimen AS Sociology Paper 1 (7191/1):

Question

04   Outline and explain two reasons for gender differences in subject choice.

[10 marks]

Mark scheme

Marks	Level descriptors
8–10	Answers in this band will show very good knowledge and understanding of two reasons for gender differences in subject choice. There will be two applications of relevant material, eg the role of gender domains in making boys and girls feel at home in different subjects; the impact of 'laddist' subcultures on boys' subject choices. There will be appropriate analysis, eg the reasoned conclusion that gender differences in subject choice are often wider in vocational subjects because of the impact of the gendered occupational structure in shaping pupils' ideas about career options.
4–7	Answers in this band will show a reasonable to good knowledge and understanding of one or two reasons for gender differences in subject choice. There will be one or two applications of relevant material, eg peer groups exerting pressure to conform to gendered expectations about subject choice. There will be some basic analysis.
1–3	Answers in this band will show limited knowledge and little or no understanding of reasons for gender differences in subject choice. There will be limited focus on the question, eg there may be some drift into outlining gender differences in achievement rather than subject choice. There will be little or no analysis.
0	No relevant points.

Indicative content

Answers may include the following and/or other relevant points:

• peer pressure
• pupils' gender identities
• primary socialisation
• gender domains
• school organisation and type (mixed vs. single-sex classes/schools)
• teacher influence/teaching styles
• gendered subject images
• stereotyping in learning materials
• career preferences/gender segregation in the labour market.

Student response A

> Boys tend to choose Computer Science, Mathematics and Physics whilst girls tend to choose subjects like MFL and English. These are gendered subject choices.
>
> One reason for gendered subject choices is that girls and boys undergo different primary socialisation parents can often act as role models to their children and in the home boys start to see reading and language as feminine activities.
>
> Primary socialisation and view of reading may lead to boys and girls choosing different tastes in reading. Boys are more likely to read factual literature and information. Girls, as found by Elwood, prefer texts about people and fiction. This may explain the difference in subject choice.
>
> The school may also be responsible for this gendered pattern of subject choice. Girls are more likely to see female teachers teaching RE, English and MFL whereas boys will see male teachers teaching Physics and Mathematics.
>
> The textbooks used in the classroom are also important. Many science books convey the image that science is a male subject by using men or boys or by relating science to examples which boys are more comfortable with.
>
> Gendered subject images may also link to future career opportunities. Girls and boys may choose those subjects which are seen as more appropriate to their future careers. This is particularly in evidence in vocational courses such and Health and Social Care and Construction.
>
> All this means that boys and girls are more likely to take different subjects, even when the National Curriculum means that they are forced, below the age of 16, to take many different subjects.
>
> It could be noted that the subjects are less 'gendered' in same sex schools.

Examiner commentary

The first few lines show a reasonable introduction to the patterns of subject choice. This answer looks at two reasons why there may be differences in subject choice between genders. The first is primary socialisation and discusses how factors in the home and wider society may impact on choices. The second point is about the gendered aspects of subjects in schools and how teachers and other resources such as textbooks may impact on choice. Both points are clearly explained with examples to illustrate. There is some appropriate analysis.

8 marks awarded.

The following is a question taken from Specimen A-level Sociology Paper 1 (7192/1):

Question

06   Outline and explain two arguments against the view that sociology is a science.

[10 marks]

Mark scheme

Marks	Level descriptors
8–10	Answers in this band will show very good knowledge and understanding of the nature of sociology and of science. There will be two applications of relevant material, eg both Kuhn's and Popper's criteria for science applied to sociology. There will be appropriate analysis, eg of why some sociological perspectives or theories are not testable/falsifiable.
4–7	Answers in this band will show a reasonable to good knowledge and understanding of the nature of sociology and of science. There will be one or two applications of relevant material, eg the interpretivist view that meanings cannot be studied objectively. There will be some basic analysis.
1–3	Answers in this band will show limited knowledge and little or no understanding of the question or the material. There will be limited focus on the question, eg there may be some drift into arguments for rather than against the view that sociology is a science. There will be limited or no analysis.
0	No relevant points.

Indicative content

Answers may include the following and/or other relevant points:

- human action as the product of free will versus science as causal explanation/determinism
- the ideological or value-laden nature of sociology versus science as objective knowledge
- empathetic methods of interpretivist sociology versus detached methods of natural science
- ethical and practical difficulties of using experimental scientific methods in sociology
- interpretivist sociologists' study of subjective meanings versus science's study of objective facts
- sociology's lack of a unified paradigm (Kuhn)/its competing perspectives
- the unfalsifiability of much sociological theory (Popper).

Student response A

Interpretivism is the view that sociology is not a science. Interpretivists argue that, because humans think and reflect, scientific methods are inappropriate as they do not allow us to truly understand and dig beneath the surface of behaviours and actions. Unlike objects, which can be analysed using

scientific methods, Interpretivists argue that human beings change their behaviour if they know they are being observed, called the Hawthorne Effect, therefore if we want to understand social action, we have to delve into meanings using qualitative, unscientific methods. Interpretivists are subjective, meaning science is not appropriate for sociology in their opinion as it gives objective results and data. Interpretivists argue that the purpose of sociology is to understand human behaviour, no quantify it using scientific methods, therefore it cannot possibly be a science.

Kuhn stated that science is paradigmatic, meaning there is a fixed set of rules and principles which science uses. It is like a set of norms and values and is accepted by all scientists. Therefore, according to Kuhn, sociology is pre-paradigmatic and hasn't reached the stage where there is a general paradigm shared by most social scientists. This is seen by the fact that sociology has a range of views and theoretical perspectives and there is no agreed set of norms and values. Feminists will always disagree with functionalists. Sociological perspectives may also have internal disagreements such as Merton's criticism of other functionalists. Those who criticise Kuhn, however, would question whether science itself has a paradigm. Many sciences exist with different sets of paradigms such as psychology

Examiner commentary

The answer gives two relevant points against the view that sociology is a science. The second point also includes an evaluative point at the end. The answer covers points on the nature of sociology and also the nature of science.

The first paragraph comments on the disagreement in sociology about whether sociology should be a science and use scientific methods, using the perspective of interpretivism.

The second paragraph focusses on questioning the nature of science itself and then applying this is whether sociology can be a science.

10 marks awarded.

Question type: Applying material from Item [A] and your knowledge, evaluate….. [20 marks]

This type of question is found in both AS Paper 1 (7191/1) and AS Paper 2 (7191/2) and also A-level Paper 2 (7192/2) and A-level Paper 3 (7192/3). The following is a question and mark scheme on the families and households topic taken from specimen A-level Paper 2 (7192/2):

Question

06   Read Item B below and answer the question that follows.

Item B

Some sociologists argue that changes within the family and in wider society have led to more equality in modern family life. The way in which domestic tasks are allocated is more equal and both partners are likely to be in paid employment. This sharing of responsibilities has led to more equal power relationships.

Applying material from Item B and your knowledge, evaluate the view that the division of labour and power relationships in couples are equal in modern family life.

[20 marks]

Mark scheme

Marks	Level descriptors
17–20	Answers in this band will show sound, conceptually detailed knowledge of a range of relevant material on power relationships and the division of labour among couples in modern family life. Sophisticated understanding of the question and of the presented material will be shown. Appropriate material will be applied accurately and with sensitivity to the issues raised by the question. Analysis and evaluation will be explicit and relevant. Evaluation may be developed, for instance through discussing the extent of equality of, or by locating the debate between, different perspectives (eg Marxist, functionalist, feminist, postmodernist etc). Analysis will show clear explanation. Appropriate conclusions will be drawn.
13–16	Answers in this band will show accurate, broader and/or deeper but incomplete knowledge of both power relationships and the division of labour. Understands a number of significant aspects of the question; good understanding of the presented material. Application of material is largely explicitly relevant to the question, though some material may be inadequately focused. Some limited explicit evaluation, eg the debate about the symmetrical family, and/or some appropriate analysis, eg clear explanations of some of the presented material.
9–12	Answers in this band will show largely accurate knowledge but limited range and depth, eg a basic account of Young and Willmott. Understands some limited but significant aspects of the question; superficial understanding of the presented material.

	Applying listed material from the general topic area but with limited regard for its relevance to the issues raised by the question, or applying a narrow range of more relevant material. Evaluation will take the form of a juxtaposition of competing positions or one to two isolated stated points. Analysis will be limited, with answers tending towards the descriptive.
5–8	Answers in this band will show limited undeveloped knowledge, eg two to three insubstantial points about joint conjugal roles and/or power relationships. Understands only limited aspects of the question; simplistic understanding of the presented material. Limited application of suitable material, and/or material often at a tangent to the demands of the question. Very limited or no evaluation. Attempts at analysis, if any, are thin and disjointed.
1–4	Answers in this band will show very limited knowledge, eg one to two very insubstantial points about housework. Very little/no understanding of the question and of the presented material. Significant errors and/or omissions in application of material. There will be no analysis or evaluation.
0	No relevant points.

Indicative content

Concepts and issues such as the following may appear: domestic violence; decision-making; control over finance; women's paid employment; the impact of feminism; legislation/policies (divorce, education, childcare, discrimination, etc); childlessness; family size; class and ethnic variations; same sex couples; conjugal roles; kinship relationships; confluent love.

Student response A

The division of labour refers to the roles that men and women play in relation to housework, child care and paid work. Parsons claims that in the traditional nuclear family there was a clear division of labour between spouses. Due to women being more biologically suited to the nurturing role, they would play the expressive role looking after children and doing most of the housework. Parsons claimed men played the instrumental role for example, they would be the wage earner. Furthermore in a traditional nuclear family men took control over finances and made all of the important decisions.

Young and Willmott claim the family is now becoming more equal and democratic in modern society. They argue the family is becoming more symmetrical. Their evidence is that women go out to work, men help more with the housework and children and finally couples spend leisure time together. Young and Willmott argue that this is because of the change in women's position and also geographical mobility. However feminist sociologists reject this view and argue little has changed, stemming from the fact that family and society are patriarchal. Despite working outside of the home, feminists see women as taking a dual burden as they are still responsible for domestic roles and childcare. Young and Willmott's methodology has also been criticised.

Ann Oakley, a feminist, argues that Young and Willmott's claims are exaggerated. For example in her research she found only 15% of husbands had a high level of participation in housework. Furthermore husbands in the modern family are more likely to participate in childcare than housework, but only in the more pleasurable aspects, such as playing with children. However a criticism of Oakley's findings is that most of the women in the study were full-time housewives, whereas in the modern family life there is a second income from the wife's paid work.

Another argument by feminists is that despite women working there is no evidence of a 'new man'. For example Ferri and Smith found that from a sample of 1589 33 year olds the father took responsibility for childcare in less than 4% of families. However a criticism is that it doesn't take into account the fact that in middle class families the dual burden is eased by the commercialisation of housework. This means that the burden of housework is eased by having devices to make it easier.

In addition to domestic labour, power relationships in couples could be said to be more equal in family life. For example Vogler found a large increase in pooling and a sharp decline in the allowance system between younger couples in relationships. This means an increasing amount of young couples have joint access and responsibility for expenditure. However Edgell criticises this view and state relationships are not equal. Edgell found that men usually make the very important decisions as they are the main wage earners. For example men decide about moving house or changing job. Women tend to make the less important decisions such as the choice of food or child's clothes. A criticism is that this ignores other types of family such as homosexual or lone parents.

Domestic violence is a key area when examining the different power relationships in the family. Statistics on domestic violence show power relationships are still unequal. For example Black found that most victims of domestic violence are women and 99% of these are committed by men. Some argue that these incidents could be set off by a man seeing a challenge to his authority. However a criticism is that statistics do not include all incidents of domestic violence especially against men. This is because men feel too ashamed to admit a woman is beating them as it may be viewed as a challenge to their masculinity.

In conclusion, although some argue the division of labour is becoming more equal, while others refute this claim. With the diversity of family life and the difference experiences that family members may face it is difficult to make an overall conclusion about the extent of equality between couples in modern day life. From a feminist perspective, patriarchal ideology is still relevant in analysing conjugal roles. Also women are often part-time workers fitting in work outside the home around children and schooling. This often leads to them having less power in the family.

Examiner commentary

Sound conceptually detailed range of relevant material. The answer covers a range of points on both the division of labour and power relationships. Decision-making, financial control and domestic violence are all considered in relation to power.

Material is appropriately applied to the question and uses relevant points from the item.

There is clear analysis of points and some explicit evaluation of perspectives.

The first paragraph gives a clear outline of how gender roles are viewed by Parsons and the need for different roles for the genders.

Question type: Define the term….. [2 marks]

This type of question is found on both AS Papers (7191/1 and 7191/2). The following is a question and mark scheme taken from Specimen AS Paper 1 (7191/1):

Question

01   Define the term 'self-fulfilling prophecy'.

[2 marks]

Mark scheme

Two marks for a satisfactory definition such as: a prediction that comes true simply as a result of being made, an individual living up to a label that they've been given or similar.

One mark for partial definition such as: labelling by teachers or only an example given.

0 marks for no/an unsatisfactory definition.

Student response A

> The self-fulfilling prophecy is when a teacher may give a student a positive or negative label which the student takes on board and accepts. This label will come true which could lead to the student failing if it is a negative label.

Examiner commentary

Satisfactory definition.

2 marks awarded.

Student response B

> When someone is labelled by someone, and they then live up to and achieve this label.

Examiner commentary

Satisfactory definition although very brief.

2 marks awarded.

Question type: Using one example, briefly explain….. [2 marks]

This type of question is found on both AS Papers (7191/1 and 7191/2). The following is a question and mark scheme taken from AS Paper 2 (7191/2):

Question

09   Using **one** example, briefly explain how migration may affect family diversity.

[2 marks]

Mark scheme

Two marks for a clearly explained example or **one mark** for a partially explained example, such as:

- the number of extended families (1 mark) many ethnic groups coming to the United Kingdom have a tradition of living in an extended family (+1 mark)

- the number of children in a family (1 mark) many migrating families have a greater than average number of children (+1 mark)

- attitudes to marriage (1 mark) some ethnic groups may uphold traditional attitudes to marriage and are reluctant to divorce (+1 mark).

No marks for **no** relevant points.

Student response A

> Migration could affect organisational diversity in families, for example Essex University found that African Caribbean women are more likely to more likely to be members of matrifocal single parent families.

Examiner commentary

This is a clearly explained answer.

2 marks awarded.

Student response B

> More African-Caribbean people moving to the UK so more SPF's in the UK.

Examiner commentary

This answer provides no explanation.

1 mark awarded.

Question type: Evaluate….. [16 marks]

This type of question is found on Section A of AS Paper 2 (7191/2) with regard to research methods. The following is a question and mark scheme taken from specimen AS Sociology Paper 2 (7192/2):

Question

02   Evaluate the problems of using participant observation in sociological research.

[16 marks]

Mark scheme

Marks	Level descriptors
13–16	Sound, conceptually detailed knowledge of a range of relevant material on some of the problems of using participant observation (PO). Good understanding of the question and of the presented material. Appropriate material applied accurately to the issues raised by the question. There will be some reasonable evaluation or analysis.
10–12	Broad or deep, accurate but incomplete knowledge of a range of problems of PO. Understands a number of significant aspects of the question; reasonable understanding of the presented material. Application of material is largely explicitly relevant to the question, though some material may be inadequately focused. There will be some limited evaluation or analysis, eg of reasons for loss of objectivity in PO.
7–9	Largely accurate knowledge but limited range and depth, eg a basic account of a few practical problems of using PO. Understands some aspects of the question; superficial understanding of the presented material. Applying listed material from the general topic area but with limited regard for its relevance to the issues raised by the question, or applying a narrow range of more relevant material. Answers are unlikely to have any evaluation but may have some limited analysis within a largely descriptive account.
4–6	Limited undeveloped knowledge, eg two to three insubstantial points about some features of PO. Understands only very limited aspects of the question; simplistic understanding of the presented material. Limited application of suitable material, and/or material often at a tangent to the demands of the question, eg drifting into advantages of using PO. Very limited or no evaluation. Attempts at analysis, if any, are thin and disjointed.
1–3	Very limited knowledge, eg one to two very insubstantial points about PO or about methods in general. Very little/no understanding of the question and of the presented material. Significant errors, omissions, and/or incoherence in application of material. No analysis or evaluation.

0	No relevant points.

Indicative content

Concepts and issues such as the following may appear: practical, ethical and theoretical issues, including reliability, validity, representativeness, bias/subjectivity, qualitative data, interpretivism, positivism; time, cost, getting in, staying in, getting out, nature of the group under study, researcher's personal characteristics; deceit, informed consent, anonymity, harm; overt versus covert research.

Student response A

Participant observation is a form of sociological research were the researcher observes a group of people and will take part (participate) in their way of life. It can be done covertly, this is where the researcher is undercover, or overtly, when the group is aware that they are being researched. There are many issues that can occur when using this method to research.

A practical issue with participant observation is that it can be very time consuming, and researcher characteristics are very important; for example if a researcher wanted to do covert participant observation on gang crime the researcher would have to appear as though they fit in with the gang. Gender, dress, etc. would be very important here.

An ethical issue with participant observation would be that it can become very dangerous for the researcher and participants. For example, McIntyre conducted covert participant observation of a group of football hooligans, he experienced multiple fights/riots that put him in danger. Another ethical issue would be deception, whether the observation was covert or semi-overt (where one person knows that the researcher is there to research) participants would be unaware that this person is carrying out sociological research.

A theoretical issue of participant observation would be that it mostly only obtains qualitative data, positivists would say that this means the research is unreliable, it could not easily be replicated by another researcher.

Overall there are many problems that can occur when using participant observation, the many ethical issues are the ones to take most care with when conducting sociological research.

Examiner commentary

The student answer is a brief account of practical ethical and theoretical problems. There is some confusion on ethical issues. It lacks depth. There is also a lack of evaluation and only limited analysis.

8 marks awarded

Question type: Outline two problems….. [4 marks]

This type of question is found on Section A of AS Paper 2 (7191/2) with regard to research methods. The following is question and mark scheme taken from Specimen AS Sociology Paper 2 (7191/2):

Question

01   Outline **two** problems of using structured interviews in sociological research.

[4 marks]

Mark scheme

> **Two marks** for each of **two** appropriate problems clearly outlined or **one mark** for appropriate problems partially outlined, such as:
> - inflexible wording of questions (1 mark) may result in the interviewee misunderstanding questions (+1 mark)
> - unsuitability for studying sensitive/personal topics (1 mark) because rapport and trust cannot easily be established (+1 mark)
> - questions are decided in advance (1 mark), so they reflect the researcher's priorities and not the interviewee's (+1 mark)
> - status differences between interviewee and interviewer (1 mark) may lead to interviewee seeking to impress rather than answer honestly (+1 mark).
>
> Other relevant material should be credited.
>
> **No marks** for **no** relevant points.

Student response A

> - Questions are closed and inflexible, respondents cannot expand on their answers.
>
> - Lacks validity as they cannot obtain a true life insight.

Examiner commentary

The first point obtained the full 2 marks. The second point is a partial answer. The student needed to explain why the second point might be the case eg closed answers.

3 marks awarded.

Student response B

> - Participants will have to give restricted answers which may not be true.
>
> - If something interesting is said, it cannot be elaborated on.

Examiner commentary

The students answer provides two partial points. The first point needs to explain why answers would be restricted. The second point also needs to explain why the point made is a problem.

2 marks awarded.

Question type: Applying material from Item A, analyse two….. [10 marks]

This type of question is found in all three A-level papers (7192/1, 7192/2 and 7192/3). The following question and mark scheme is taken from specimen A-level Sociology Paper 3 (7192/3):

Question

03   Read Item A below and answer the question that follows.

Item A

Situational crime prevention strategies aim to reduce the opportunity for crime. These strategies assume that the criminal makes a rational decision to commit crime based on perceived risks and benefits. One prevention strategy is to install a burglar alarm to reduce the risk of being burgled.

Applying material from Item A, analyse two reasons why situational crime prevention strategies may not be effective in reducing crime.

[10 marks]

Mark scheme

Marks	Level descriptors
8–10	Answers in this band will show good knowledge and understanding of relevant material on two reasons why situational crime prevention strategies may not be effective in reducing crime. There will be two developed applications of material from the Item, eg target hardening causing displacement, crime not being a rational choice, not being effective for corporate or white collar crime, ignores causes of crime, discussion of different types of situational crime prevention. There will be appropriate analysis/evaluation of two reasons, eg of how far rational choice may determine decisions to commit crime and how far situational crime prevention measures may impact on decisions.
4–7	Answers in this band will show a basic to reasonable knowledge and understanding of one or two reasons why situational crime prevention strategies may not be effective in reducing crime. There will be some successful application of material from the Item, eg the fact that target hardening may cause displacement rather than a reduction in crime. There will be some analysis/evaluation.
1–3	Answers in this band will show limited knowledge and understanding of one or two reasons why situational crime prevention strategies may not be effective in reducing crime. There will be limited or no application of material from the Item. Some material may be at a tangent to the question, eg there may be some drift into material of other crime

	prevention strategies. There will be limited or no analysis/evaluation.
0	No relevant points.

Student response

Situational crime prevention strategies aim to reduce the opportunity of crime using strategies such as target hardening. This is to have objects such as burglar alarms to reduce the risk of being burgled. However, it believes that the criminal makes rational decision to commit crime based on risks and benefits. Yet it doesn't take in account that the criminal may be under the influence of drugs and alcohol so they may not be able to make a rational choice at that time.

Target hardening strategies such as improving street lighting was found to reduce the rate of Burglary's. However, these strategies may have only been placed in a certain area which will move the crime to another place rather than just reduce it. This was found in Chaiken's research on the crackdown of robbers on the New York subway station. This research revealed that it had moved the robberies to the streets.

Examiner commentary

This is a middle band answer. There is limited application from the item. The first part of the answer identifies the concept of target hardening but does not add any further examples, or develop this point.

There is a limited application of the concept of rational choice but this point is not fully developed.

The final point discusses displacement but without identifying the concept. It shows some limited application.

Overall, the answer is basic and shows some application with only limited development. There was some limited analysis of a study in New York. There was only a limited evaluation point about rational choice.

4 marks awarded.

Question type: Applying material from Item B and your knowledge, evaluate….. [30 marks]

This type of question is found in A-level paper 1 (7192/1) and A-level Paper 3 (7192/3). The following is a question and mark scheme taken from specimen A-level Paper 3 (7192/3):

Question

04   Read Item B below and answer the question that follows.

Item B
Some functionalist sociologists argue that crime and deviance are caused by the inability of some people to gain the rewards of society, for example because of educational underachievement. Those members of society whose opportunities are blocked cannot achieve the goals of society by socially approved means.

Applying material from Item B and your knowledge, evaluate the usefulness of functionalist approaches in understanding crime and deviance.

[30 marks]

Mark scheme

Marks	Level descriptors
25–30	Answers in this band will show sound, conceptually detailed knowledge of a range of relevant material of functionalist approaches to crime. Sophisticated understanding of the question and of the presented material will be shown.
	Appropriate material will be applied accurately and with sensitivity to the issues raised by the question.
	Analysis and evaluation will be explicit and relevant. Evaluation may be developed for example by locating the discussion within a debate between perspectives (eg functionalist, Marxist, postmodernism) or different subcultural theories, or considering methodological issues.
	Analysis will show clear explanation. Appropriate conclusions will be drawn.
19–24	Answers in this band will show accurate, broad and/or deep but incomplete knowledge. Understands a number of significant aspects of the question; good understanding of the presented material.
	Application of material is largely explicitly relevant to the question, though some material may be inadequately focused.
	Some limited explicit evaluation, for example of strain theory and/or some appropriate analysis, eg clear explanations of some of the presented material.
13–18	Answers in this band will show largely accurate knowledge but limited range and depth, eg an accurate account of strain theory. Understands some limited but significant aspects

	of the question; superficial understanding of the presented material. Applying listed material from the general topic area but with limited regard for its relevance to the issues raised by the question, or applying a narrow range of more relevant material. Evaluation will take the form of juxtaposition of competing positions or one to two isolated stated points. Analysis will be limited, with answers tending towards the descriptive.
7–12	Answers in this band will show limited undeveloped knowledge, eg two to three insubstantial points about subcultures. Understands only limited aspects of the question; simplistic understanding of the presented material. Limited application of suitable material, and/or material often at a tangent to the demands of the question, eg drifting into a 'class and achievement' answer. Very limited or no evaluation. Attempts at analysis, if any, are thin and disjointed.
1–6	Answers in this band will show very limited knowledge, eg one to two very insubstantial points about crime and deviance in general. Very little/no understanding of the question and of the presented material. Significant errors and/or omissions in application of material. No analysis or evaluation.
0	No relevant points.

Indicative content

Concepts and issues such as the following may appear: social cohesion; collective conscience; boundary maintenance; adaptation and change; social control; structural and cultural factors; strain theory; conformity; innovation; ritualism; retreatism; rebellion; anomie; social bonds; formal social control; informal social control; tension management; criminal subcultures; conflict subcultures; retreatist subcultures; alternative status hierarchy.

Student response A

Functionalists see a stable society being based on shared norms and values and social solidarity through socialisation and social control. So crime could disrupt this even though functionalists see crime as being functional. They believe it provides a boundary between right and wrong, as Durkheim calls it – 'Boundary maintenance'. Functionalists also see crime as being inevitable so that because of increased diversity and less adequate socialisation there is going to be more conflict. Finally, functionalists see crime as being normal because it exists everywhere over the world.

Durkheim argues crime can provide two positive functions the first being boundary maintenance distinguishing right and wrong behaviour and secondly adaption and changes where crime could lead to society pulling together influencing social change and new laws. However, some sociologists would argue that crime cannot be positive for everyone such as the victim. For example, Nelson Mandela helped towards the end to racial segregation at the cost of him going to prison. As it states in Item B, some opportunities are blocked for some people and therefore cannot achieve goals of society legitimately. This links to Merton's strain theory who argues that disadvantaged groups may not be able achieve the American Dream legitimately in a meritocratic society. However, they will try to

achieve it illegitimately because of the emphasis on achieving the American Dream in society rather than the emphasis on how to achieve it – this is known as strain to anomie. Merton proposes 5 adaptations. Innovation is the key adaptation that links to this theory meaning mostly working classes will accept the goal illegitimately. E G: through theft. Therefore Merton does explain why working class crime rates are higher but does fail to explain non-utilitarian crime such as violence.

Although, Cohen developed this theory and formed a subcultural theory. Cohen argues that, as it also states in Item B, crime can be caused by those who fail legitimately because of blocked opportunities and educational underachievement. Cohen argues that working class boys are culturally deprived within a middle-class education system so are at the bottom of the official status hierarchy. Therefore they suffer from status frustration and turn to form subcultures to release this frustration as it provides an illegitimate opportunity structure.

This shows Cohen's theory offers an explanation for non-utilitarian crime such as vandalism however his theory is based on assumptions. For example, he assumes that working class share the same goals as middle class - to achieve legitimately through education to earn good job and living. Whereas, working-class may not have shared the same goals to start with so his theory may not be accurate.

Claward and Ohlin developed this theory even further and provided a theory of three subculture categories: professional, conflict and retreatist. They argued 'mafia' professional subcultures offered many opportunities on the criminal career ladder and was stable where conflict subcultures had high population turnover, were loosely connected and didn't provide many legitimate or illegitimate opportunities. Whilst retreatist subcultures failed to achieve legitimately and illegitimately. However, Claward and Ohlin are critised by Matza by arguing not many are committed to their subculture as Cloward and Ohlin claim. Matza agrees there is 'delinquency drift' where individuals drift in and out of subcultures. South also argues that in reality the boundaries are more blurred between subcultures for example drug dealing can occur in all three types of subcultures that C&O propose. However, C&O do try to explain different types of crime through different subcultures that could help sociologists improve the way crime is tackled.

Overall, functionalists provide a wide view in understanding crime and deviance showing positive and negative functions as well as trying to explain both utilitarian and non-utilitarian crime. However, other theorists such as feminists and Marxists would argue there are other factors to causing crime and deviance including patriarchy and capitalism. They would argue, without these being overthrown, crime and deviance will still continue.

Examiner commentary

This is a thorough account of a range of functionalist studies. There is sophisticated understanding of the material presented.

Analysis is clear and the material is well explained using appropriate concepts. This conceptual detail in some evaluation is shown, although this is limited to internal evaluation between the various functionalist perspectives. Other perspectives are only briefly mentioned in the final paragraph. This could be developed further to show a clear debate between perspectives. The answer shows application of material from the item and also from the student's knowledge. This is accurately applied to the question.

The final concluding paragraph could be more developed. The brief points on Marxism and feminism could be developed throughout the answer rather then simply stated at the end.

Analysis is explicit and relevant.

25 marks awarded.

Question type: Outline two….. [4 marks]

This type of question is found on A-level Paper 1 (7192/1) and A-level Paper 3 (7192/3). The following is a question and mark scheme taken from specimen A-level Paper 3 (7192/3):

Question

01   Outline **two** ways in which the media give a distorted view of crime.

[4 marks]

Mark scheme

Two marks for each of **two** appropriate ways clearly outlined or **one mark** for appropriate ways partially outlined, such as:

- over-representation of violent and sexual crime (1 mark). A far greater proportion of reports on crimes of this nature despite their more limited occurrence (+1 mark)
- over-exaggeration of police success (1 mark). Police often give the media their crime reports and so highlight their own successes (+1 mark)
- romanticising the criminal (1 mark). For example, criminals are shown to be daring and clever (+1 mark)
- media will create a moral panic about an issue (1 mark). For example, by representing a group in a negative light and exaggerating their criminality. Media will create a moral panic (+1 mark)
- the media may exaggerate the chances of becoming a victim of crime (1 mark). For example, women may fear being a victim of crime due to media representation of female victims (+1 mark).

Other relevant material should be credited.

No marks for **no** relevant points.

Student response A

> The media give a distorted view of crime by over-representing violent and sexual crimes and making it seem as though these types of crimes are more common than they actually are, which doesn't coincide with the official statistics. The media also exaggerate police success and give the impression that the police are more successful than the criminal, which is not always true, as many cases go unsolved and are less clear-cut than a 'win' or a 'lose'.

Examiner commentary

The answer provides two appropriate ways which are both fully explained

4 marks awarded.

Student response B

> The media over represent violent and sexual crime. Evidence of this is that 46% of the media reports about violent and sexual crime though they actually account for 3% of recorded crime.

> The media also protrays criminals and victims as older and more middle class.

Examiner commentary

The answer identifies bullet point 1 in the mark scheme ie over-represent violent and sexual crime. The answer provides an expansion for this point ie development with statistics to show greater proportion.

The answer identifies another point ie portrayed or older & middle class as criminals and victims. However, there is no further explanation.

3 marks awarded.