



A-level SOCIOLOGY 7192/1

Paper 1 Education with theory and methods

Mark scheme

June 2026

Version: 1.0 Final

Mark schemes are prepared by the Lead Assessment Writer and considered, together with the relevant questions, by a panel of subject teachers. This mark scheme includes any amendments made at the standardisation events which all associates participate in and is the scheme which was used by them in this examination. The standardisation process ensures that the mark scheme covers the students' responses to questions and that every associate understands and applies it in the same correct way. As preparation for standardisation each associate analyses a number of students' scripts. Alternative answers not already covered by the mark scheme are discussed and legislated for. If, after the standardisation process, associates encounter unusual answers which have not been raised they are required to refer these to the Lead Examiner.

It must be stressed that a mark scheme is a working document, in many cases further developed and expanded on the basis of students' reactions to a particular paper. Assumptions about future mark schemes on the basis of one year's document should be avoided; whilst the guiding principles of assessment remain constant, details will change, depending on the content of a particular examination paper.

No student should be disadvantaged on the basis of their gender identity and/or how they refer to the gender identity of others in their exam responses.

A consistent use of 'they/them' as a singular and pronouns beyond 'she/her' or 'he/him' will be credited in exam responses in line with existing mark scheme criteria.

Further copies of this mark scheme are available from aqa.org.uk

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Level of response marking instructions

Level of response mark schemes are broken down into levels, each of which has a descriptor. The descriptor for the level shows the average performance for the level. There are marks in each level.

Before you apply the mark scheme to a student's answer read through the answer and annotate it (as instructed) to show the qualities that are being looked for. You can then apply the mark scheme.

Step 1 Determine a level

Start at the lowest level of the mark scheme and use it as a ladder to see whether the answer meets the descriptor for that level. The descriptor for the level indicates the different qualities that might be seen in the student's answer for that level. If it meets the lowest level then go to the next one and decide if it meets this level, and so on, until you have a match between the level descriptor and the answer. With practice and familiarity you will find that for better answers you will be able to quickly skip through the lower levels of the mark scheme.

When assigning a level you should look at the overall quality of the answer and not look to pick holes in small and specific parts of the answer where the student has not performed quite as well as the rest. If the answer covers different aspects of different levels of the mark scheme you should use a best fit approach for defining the level and then use the variability of the response to help decide the mark within the level, ie if the response is predominantly level 3 with a small amount of level 4 material it would be placed in level 3 but be awarded a mark near the top of the level because of the level 4 content.

Step 2 Determine a mark

Once you have assigned a level you need to decide on the mark. The descriptors on how to allocate marks can help with this. The exemplar materials used during standardisation will help. There will be an answer in the standardising materials which will correspond with each level of the mark scheme. This answer will have been awarded a mark by the Lead Examiner. You can compare the student's answer with the example to determine if it is the same standard, better or worse than the example. You can then use this to allocate a mark for the answer based on the Lead Examiner's mark on the example.

You may well need to read back through the answer as you apply the mark scheme to clarify points and assure yourself that the level and the mark are appropriate.

Indicative content in the mark scheme is provided as a guide for examiners. It is not intended to be exhaustive and you must credit other valid points. Students do not have to cover all of the points mentioned in the Indicative content to reach the highest level of the mark scheme.

An answer which contains nothing of relevance to the question must be awarded no marks.

Qu	Marking guidance	Total marks
01	Outline two ways that the education system may benefit the economy. 2 marks for each of two appropriate ways clearly outlined or 1 mark for each appropriate way partially outlined. Answers may include: • education delivers specialist skills (1 mark); occupational skills help pupils meet the needs of businesses (+1 mark) • an agency of secondary socialisation (1 mark); pupils are taught norms and values, such as punctuality, increasing productivity in the workplace (+1 mark) • role allocation (1 mark); through setting or streaming, schools filter pupils into appropriate job roles (+1 mark) • education promotes social solidarity (1 mark); a sense of belonging helps to maintain social cohesion contributing to economic stability (+1 mark) • reduces unemployment by providing qualifications (1 mark); having qualified people means fewer rely on benefits and contribute more through work and tax (+1 mark). Other relevant material should be credited. 0 marks for no relevant points.	4

Qu	Marking guidance	Total marks
02	Outline three factors outside of school that may affect gender differences in educational achievement. 2 marks for each of three appropriate reasons clearly outlined or 1 mark for each appropriate reason partially outlined. Answers may include: • socialisation at home (1 mark); girls may be given shorter curfews than boys meaning more time is spent at home studying (+1 mark) • leisure activities (1 mark); boys' involvement in activities at home, such as use of video games, may affect their literacy skills and so their achievement in school (+1 mark) • laws and social policies (1 mark); improvements to women's rights contributing to increased ambitions for girls to achieve in school (+1 mark) • feminisation of the workplace (1 mark); leading to a crisis of masculinity for boys which may affect their aspirations to achieve (+1 mark) • changes in family life (1 mark); rise in female breadwinners may motivate girls to increase their educational achievement (+1 mark). Other relevant material should be credited. 0 marks for no relevant points.	6

Qu	Marking guidance	Total marks
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03	Applying material from Item A , analyse two ways in which relationships and processes within schools may affect pupil identities.	10
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Item A

Relationships within schools include interactions that take place between peer groups. Setting and streaming of pupils by teachers is an important process within schools.

Relationships and processes within schools may affect pupil identities.

Marks	Level descriptors
8–10	Answers in this band will show good knowledge and understanding of relevant material on two ways in which relationships and processes within schools may affect pupil identities. There will be two developed applications of material from the item, eg the formation of boys' subcultures encouraging a "macho lad" identity; negative teacher labelling of, for example, some ethnic groups, which may lead to a stigmatised pupil identity. There will be appropriate analysis/evaluation of two ways, eg the extent to which relationships and processes within schools may affect pupil identities.
4–7	<u>Answers in this band will show a basic to reasonable knowledge and understanding of one or two ways in which relationships and processes within schools may affect pupil identities.</u> There will be some successful application of material from the item, eg the formation of Nike identities amongst working class peer groups as a response to symbolic violence experienced in school. There will be some analysis/evaluation.
1–3	<u>Answers in this band will show limited knowledge and understanding of one or two ways in which relationships and processes within schools may affect pupil identities.</u> There will be limited application of material from the item. Some material may be at a tangent to the question, eg a discussion of relationships and processes within schools with no reference to pupil identities. There will be limited or no analysis/evaluation. No relevant points.
0	

Sources may include the following or other relevant ones:

Archer; Becker; Bernstein; Evans; Francis; Fuller; Gilborn and Youdell; Lacey; Mac an Ghaill; Rosenthal and Jacobsen; Sewell; Sugarman; Willis.

Qu	Marking guidance	Total marks
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04	Applying material from Item B and your knowledge, evaluate the extent to which educational policies have led to greater equality of opportunity for all pupils.	30
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Item B

Many educational policies have been introduced since the 1980s. For example, the National Curriculum attempted to create greater equality of opportunity for all pupils. There have also been compensatory educational policies to help reduce inequalities faced by some pupils in schools.

However, conflict theorists suggest that educational policies have not achieved equality of opportunity for all. For example, Marxists argue that working class children remain disadvantaged in education.

Marks	Level descriptors
25–30	Answers in this band will show sound, conceptually detailed knowledge of a range of relevant material on the view that educational policies have contributed to greater equality of opportunity for all pupils. 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 through a debate between different perspectives (eg social democrat perspective, the New Right, functionalism, Marxism, feminisms, postmodernism) or the view that educational policies have increased inequality between different social groups. Analysis will show clear explanation. Appropriate conclusions will be drawn.
19–24	~~Answers in this band will show accurate, broad or deep but incomplete knowledge of~~ educational policies contributing to greater equality of opportunity for all pupils. 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 the effectiveness of compensatory educational policies in creating greater equality of opportunity for all pupils, 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 a broadly accurate, if basic, account of the effectiveness of educational policies in creating greater equality of opportunity for all pupils. 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 or 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 or three insubstantial points about educational policies in general. 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 theories of education. 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 or two very insubstantial points about educational policies. 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. ~~No relevant points.~~
0	

Indicative content

Concepts and issues such as the following may appear: meritocracy, social inequality, class, gender, ethnicity, compulsory education, private schools, compensatory education, streaming, setting, parental choosers, covert selection methods, cream-skimming, labelling, new vocationalism, marketisation, National Curriculum, raising of school leaving age, school based education policies, coursework, assimilation, multicultural education, National Literacy Scheme, Pupil Premium, Sure Start, T-levels, Catch Up Premium, Teacher-Assessed Grades, SEND, bursary, free school meals, material deprivation, cultural deprivation, cultural capital, parentocracy, privatisation, academies, globalisation, social democrat perspective, the New Right, functionalism, Marxism, feminisms, postmodernism, New Labour, Conservative, Conservative and Liberal Democrat coalition, Labour.

Sources may include the following or other relevant ones:

Ball; Bartlett and LeGrand; Bourdieu; Chubb and Moe; David; Finn; Gewirtz; Gillborn and Youdell; Kelly; Mac an Ghaill; McKnight; Murray; Parsons; Robertson; Sewell; Trowler; Whitty.

Qu	Marking guidance	Total marks
05	Applying material from Item C and your knowledge of research methods, evaluate the strengths and limitations of using unstructured interviews to investigate the effects of cultural deprivation on educational achievement.	20

ItemC

Cultural deprivation refers to a lack of key attitudes, values and knowledge, such as undeveloped language skills or a lack of parental interest. This deprivation may affect educational achievement.

One way of studying the effects of cultural deprivation on achievement is by using unstructured interviews. An advantage of using unstructured interviews is that they enable the researcher to gain a detailed insight into the attitudes and values of individuals. They also enable the interviewer to build a rapport with interviewees. However, unstructured interviews can be very time consuming for pupils, parents and teachers.

Marks 17–20	Level descriptors
	Answers in this band will show accurate, conceptually detailed knowledge and sound understanding of a range of relevant material on the strengths and limitations of using unstructured interviews. Appropriate material will be applied accurately and with sensitivity to the investigation of the specific issue of the effects of cultural deprivation on educational achievement. Students will apply knowledge of a range of relevant strengths and limitations of unstructured interviews to investigate the effects of cultural deprivation on educational achievement. 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, parents, teachers, support staff (eg class and ethnic differences) - the research contexts and settings, (eg school premises, staffrooms or home settings) - the sensitivity of researching the effects of cultural deprivation, (eg teacher labelling; symbolic violence; self-esteem of pupils; stigmatisation; parental consent). Evaluation of the usefulness of unstructured interviews will be explicit and relevant. Analysis will show clear explanation. Appropriate conclusions will be drawn.

13–16	Answers in this band will show accurate, broad or deep but incomplete knowledge of the strengths and limitations of unstructured interviews. Understands a number of significant aspects of the question; good understanding of the presented material. Application of knowledge will be broadly appropriate but will tend to 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 the effects of cultural deprivation on educational achievement • specific but undeveloped application to the effects of cultural deprivation • a focus on the research characteristics of the effects of cultural deprivation, with implicit links to some features of unstructured interviews. There will be some limited explicit evaluation, eg of one or two features of unstructured interviews as a method, and/or some appropriate analysis, eg clear explanations of some of the features of unstructured interviews.
9–12	Answers in this band will show largely accurate knowledge but limited range and depth, including a broadly accurate, if basic, account of some of the strengths and/or limitations of unstructured interviews. Understands some limited but significant aspects of the question; superficial understanding of the presented material. Applying material (possibly in list-like fashion) on unstructured interviews, but with very limited or non-existent application to either the study of cultural deprivation in particular or of education in general. Evaluation limited to briefly 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 or three~~ insubstantial points about some features of unstructured interviews. 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 perhaps drifting into an unfocused comparison of different methods. Very limited or no evaluation. Attempts at analysis, if any, are thin and disjointed. ~~Answers in this band will show very limited knowledge, eg one or two very insubstantial~~
1–4	~~points about methods in general. Very little or no understanding of the question and of the presented material.~~ Significant errors and/or omissions in application of material. Some material ineffectually recycled from the item, or some knowledge applied solely to the effects of cultural deprivation on achievement, with very little or no reference to unstructured interviews. No analysis or evaluation. No relevant points.
0	

Indicative content

Strengths and limitations of unstructured interviews, as applied to the particular issue in education, may include: practical issues, ethical issues, theoretical issues, time, cost, access, qualitative data, reliability, validity, verstehen, subjectivity, interviewer effect, social desirability, interviewer bias, representativeness, rapport, generalisability, flexibility, interpretivism, interpretation of data, sensitivity, psychological harm, informed consent, positivism, methodological pluralism.

Qu	Marking guidance	Total marks
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06	Outline and explain two ethical problems when using field experiments in sociological research.	10
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Marks	Level descriptors
8–10	Answers in this band will show very good knowledge and understanding of two ethical problems when using field experiments in sociological research. There will be two applications of relevant material, eg natural setting of field experiments causing deception of participants because they are unaware of their involvement in the research; psychological harm caused to participants due to natural environment where there is a lack of protection to prevent emotional distress. There will be appropriate analysis, eg the extent to which the ethical problems of field experiments may be influenced by the subject matter. Answers in this band will show a reasonable to good knowledge and understanding of one or two ethical problems when using field experiments in sociological research.
4–7	There will be one or two applications of relevant material, eg lack of informed consent in field experiments. There will be some basic analysis. Answers in this band will show limited knowledge and little or no understanding of the question or the material.
1–3	There will be limited focus on the question, eg there may be drift into laboratory experiments. There will be limited or no analysis. No relevant points.
0	

Indicative content

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

- unable to gain fully informed consent, eg people may be studied in real life settings without agreeing to take part
- psychological harm caused to participants
- confidentiality issues, such as lack of privacy
- participants being subjected to physical harm
- difficulties offering a right to withdraw
- deception of participants, eg researchers may mislead participants about what is happening to control the situation.

Sources may include the following or other relevant ones:

Elliot, Nooh, Rosenhan, Rosenthal and Jacobson, Sissons.

Assessment Objectives

	AO1	AO2	AO3	Total
Paper 1				
Education				
Q01	4			4
Q02	3	3		6
Q03	3	4	3	10
Q04	12	9	9	30
Q05 MIC	8	8	4	20
Q06 Theory and Methods	5	3	2	10
Totals	35	27	18	80