

SOCIOLOGY COMPREHENSIVE MARK SCHEME

MAXIMUM COMPREHENSIVE MARK: 60

SECTION A

Question	Marking Guidance and Core Content Requirements	Marks
1	<p>Describe two informal social sanctions.</p> <p>Award 1 mark for identifying/naming an informal sanction, and 1 mark for an accurate description (Up to 2 x 2 = 4 marks).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ostracism / Social Exclusion (1 mark): Deliberately ignoring or freezing someone out of a social peer group to show disapproval for non-conformist behavior (1 mark). • Verbal Rebukes / Criticism (1 mark): Direct verbal disapproval or mocking remarks from parents, friends, or strangers when an individual violates unwritten societal norms (1 mark). • <i>Other valid responses include: rolling eyes/negative body language, praise/approval (positive sanction), or gossip.</i> 	4
2(a)	<p>Explain two reasons why group interviews are high in validity.</p> <p>Award marks across a 3-level tier per reason explained (Up to 4 marks per reason, maximum 8 total):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Level 1 (1 mark): Identification of a point. • Level 2 (2–3 marks): Explanation showing general understanding. • Level 3 (4 marks): Full sociological explanation explicitly linking group mechanics to validity (the generation of true, meaningful data). <p>Indicative Points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Peer Group Interaction Stimulation: In a group setting, participants talk to and bounce ideas off one another rather than just answering a researcher. This interactive environment can make them feel more comfortable, prompting them to share deeper, more authentic opinions, which increases validity. • Sparking and Challenging Ideas: Group members can safely challenge or build upon each other's statements during the discussion. This process filters out 	8

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	superficial or dishonest answers, encouraging participants to reflect more deeply and reveal truer underlying viewpoints.	
2(b)	<p data-bbox="288 338 1310 394">Explain two strengths of field experiments as a research method.</p> <p data-bbox="288 400 1310 434">Award up to 3 marks per strength explained (Up to 2 x 3 = 6 marks).</p> <ul data-bbox="288 441 1310 519" style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="288 441 1310 474">• 1 mark: Naming/identifying a valid methodological strength. <li data-bbox="288 481 1310 519">• 2–3 marks: Full development and contextual explanation of the strength. <p data-bbox="288 568 1310 602">Indicative Points:</p> <ul data-bbox="288 609 1310 958" style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="288 609 1310 777">• High Ecological Validity: Because field experiments take place in participants' natural, everyday environments (such as schools, workplaces, or city streets), their behaviors are more authentic and realistic than they would be in an artificial laboratory setting. <li data-bbox="288 784 1310 958">• Reduction of the Hawthorne Effect: Participants are typically unaware that they are taking part in a sociological study. As a result, they do not consciously alter their actions or try to please the researcher, allowing for the collection of more objective behavioral data. 	6

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3(a) **'The media is the most important influence in shaping class identity.'** – **10**
Explain this view.

Award marks using a holistic, progressive levels framework (Maximum 10 marks):

Level	Marks	Description
Level 4	8–10	Excellent explanation. Shows a deep, sophisticated understanding of how media representations reinforce or create class identities. Uses strong sociological terminology and references relevant theories (e.g., Marxism, Postmodernism).
Level 3	5–7	Good response. Identifies a few key ways the media influences identity, but lacks theoretical depth or relies on generic descriptions.
Level 2	3–4	Basic response. Offers simple descriptive points about media or class, with limited sociological analysis.
Level 1	1–2	Fragmented or isolated assertions with substantial conceptual gaps.

Indicative Content:

- Neo-Marxist views emphasize that media representations socialize individuals into class hierarchies by normalizing inequality. For example, the working class is often stereotyped as lazy or comical ("chav" caricatures), while upper-class lifestyles are celebrated, shaping how people view their own status.
- Postmodernist perspectives highlight that the media drives consumer culture. Individuals construct fluid class identities based on the lifestyle images, brands, and digital status symbols they consume in media spaces.

3(b) **Using sociological material, give one argument against this view.** **6**

Award marks across a holistic tier framework (Maximum 6 marks):

- 1–2 marks: Basic identification of an alternative agency/factor (e.g., family or workplace).
- 3–4 marks: Good use of sociological concepts or studies to show how another factor competes with the media.
- 5–6 marks: A clear, well-structured counter-argument demonstrating that class identity is rooted primarily in material conditions or primary socialisation.

Indicative Content:

- Traditional Marxist frameworks argue that class identity is fundamentally rooted in the economic structure of society (the relations of production) rather than media imagery. An individual's day-to-day experience of work, exploitation, and material reality shapes class consciousness far more directly than passive media intake.

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Socialisation arguments highlight the family as a more vital influence. Through primary socialisation, parents pass down distinct class-based forms of cultural and social capital (such as speech patterns, values, and expectations), forming an identity baseline that persists long before media exposure.	

SECTION B

Question	Marking Guidance and Core Content Requirements	Marks
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4 or 5 **Essay Evaluation Tasks (Question 4: Nature vs Nurture | Question 5: Official Statistics).** **26**

Essays are graded holistically out of 26 marks using five assessment objectives (Knowledge, Application, Analysis, Evaluation, and Essay Structure):

Level	Marks	Description
Level 5	22–26	Outstanding response. Demonstrates clear, comprehensive knowledge alongside balanced, deep evaluation. Explicitly links concepts to broader sociological perspectives and maintains a sharp focus on the question throughout.
Level 4	17–21	Good essay. Shows strong sociological knowledge and clear evaluative arguments, though it may lack conceptual balance or depth in some sections.
Level 3	11–16	Mainly descriptive account. Outlines relevant arguments or methods but contains weak analytical synthesis or limited critical evaluation.
Level 2	6–10	Basic, simplistic answer. Relies on common-sense generalizations with few sociological terms or structured references.
Level 1	1–5	Fragmented or largely irrelevant response. Minimal engagement with the task.

Indicative Content for Question 4 (Nature vs Nurture):

- **Arguments for Nature:** Sociobiology and genetic deterministic views suggest that core human behaviors, roles, and structural patterns stem from innate biological programming and evolutionary drives.
- **Arguments for Nurture (Sociological Case):** Socialisation models, cross-cultural studies (e.g., Margaret Mead), and examples of feral children demonstrate that without human social interaction and language acquisition, basic identity cannot develop. Behavior is overwhelmingly shaped by environmental values, norms, and social contexts.

Indicative Content for Question 5 (Official Statistics):

- **Strengths / Positivist view:** Highly reliable, standardized, easily accessible, and collected on a large scale. This allows for macroscopic generalisation, cross-temporal comparison, and the identification of structural correlation patterns.

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Weaknesses / Interpretivist view: Lacks depth and qualitative insight. Critics highlight statistics as social constructs (e.g., the "dark figure" of unreported crime or subjective tracking methods), which fail to capture the true meanings behind social actions.	