

Specimen Paper Answers

Paper 3 – Education

Cambridge International AS & A Level Sociology 9699

For examination from 2021



In order to help us develop the highest quality resources, we are undertaking a continuous programme of review; not only to measure the success of our resources but also to highlight areas for improvement and to identify new development needs.

We invite you to complete our survey by visiting the website below. Your comments on the quality and relevance of our resources are very important to us.

www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/GL6ZNJB

Would you like to become a Cambridge International consultant and help us develop support materials?

Please follow the link below to register your interest.

www.cambridgeinternational.org/cambridge-for/teachers/teacherconsultants/

Copyright © UCLES 2020

Cambridge Assessment International Education is part of the Cambridge Assessment Group. Cambridge Assessment is the brand name of the University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate (UCLES), which itself is a department of the University of Cambridge.

UCLES retains the copyright on all its publications. Registered Centres are permitted to copy material from this booklet for their own internal use. However, we cannot give permission to Centres to photocopy any material that is acknowledged to a third party, even for internal use within a Centre.

Contents

Introduction	4
Assessment overview	5
Question 1	6
Question 2	7
Question 3	8
Question 4	10

Introduction

The main aim of this booklet is to exemplify standards for those teaching Cambridge International AS & A Level Sociology for examination from 2021. In this booklet, we have provided high grade answers for all of the questions in Specimen Paper 3, questions 1, 2, 3 and 4.

Each response is accompanied by a brief commentary explaining the strengths and weaknesses of the answers. Comments are given to indicate where and why marks were awarded, and how additional marks could have been obtained. In this way, it is possible to understand what candidates have done to gain their marks and how they could improve.

The mark schemes for the specimen papers are available to download from the School Support Hub at www.cambridgeinternational.org/support

9699 Sociology 2021 Specimen Paper 03
9699 Sociology 2021 Specimen Paper Mark Scheme 03

Past exam resources and other teaching and learning resources are available on the School Support Hub www.cambridgeinternational.org/support

Assessment overview

Paper 1

Socialisation, identity and methods of research 1 hour 30 minutes
 60 marks
 Candidates answer four questions.
 Section A: three compulsory questions
 Section B: one essay (26 marks) from a choice of two
 Externally assessed
 50% of the AS Level
 25% of the A Level

Paper 3

Education 1 hour 15 minutes
 50 marks
 Candidates answer four compulsory questions.
 Question 4 is an essay (26 marks).
 Externally assessed
 20% of the A Level

Paper 2

The Family 1 hour 30 minutes
 60 marks
 Candidates answer four questions.
 Section A: three compulsory questions
 Section B: one essay (26 marks) from a choice of two
 Externally assessed
 50% of the AS Level
 25% of the A Level

Paper 4

Globalisation, Media and Religion 1 hour 45 minutes
 70 marks
 Candidates answer two essay questions (35 marks each).
 Section A: Globalisation
 Section B: Media
 Section C: Religion
 Each section has two essay questions.
 Candidates select one question from two different sections.
 Externally assessed
 30% of the A Level

Assessment objectives as a percentage of Paper 3

AO1 Knowledge and understanding	36%
AO2 Interpretation and application	28%
AO3 Analysis and evaluation	36%

Question 1

1 Describe two examples of how material deprivation may affect educational achievement

[4]

Specimen answer

One example of material deprivation is living in accommodation that is cold and damp. This type of accommodation can lead to illness and this may mean time away from school. Missing lessons due to illness is likely to lead to educational underachievement.

Another example of material deprivation is not having money to pay for things that support education, such as textbooks or private tuition. Students who can afford these things are likely to achieve more in school as they have additional help and resources to draw upon.

Mark awarded = 4 out of 4

Examiner comment

The candidate describes two examples of material deprivation and for each one has shown an understanding of how it may affect educational achievement. Full marks are awarded.

Question 2

- 2 Explain two reasons why females are outperforming males in many education systems today. [8]

Specimen answer

Females may be outperforming males in education due to the feminisation of schools. With increased numbers of both female classroom teachers and head teachers, girls have role models to aspire to. Boys get left behind due to the lack of male role models in schools. Additionally, Sewell found that schools celebrate characteristics more closely associated with girls such as being attentive in class.

Another reason is the decline of manual work and the crisis of masculinity. Due to the decline of manual work in some societies, working-class boys feel less secure and their traditional male identity is under threat, particularly in a world of increasing service sector and office jobs that require 'feminine' skills. Some working-class boys have responded to this 'crisis of masculinity' with laddish behaviour in school as an effort to restore their sense of masculinity. However, this laddish behaviour is largely counter-school and so leads to educational underperformance.

Mark awarded = 8 out of 8

Examiner comment

Two reasons are identified. Each is clearly explained, and in each case relevant sociological material is included and shown to support the point.

Two lots of 4 marks are therefore awarded. The feminisation of schools point could gain the three additional marks for "*schools celebrate characteristics more closely associated with girls*" supported by Sewell's example "*such as being attentive in class*". Alternatively, marks are given for the role model explanation and the link of the sociological concept to evidence, but this does not quite explain why "*boys get left behind*".

The crisis of masculinity point gains the 3 additional marks as it shows clearly how the changes in occupational opportunities is linked to laddish behaviour which is used to explain male underperformance.

Question 3

3 'The main role of schools is to promote social equality.'

Using sociological material, give two arguments against this view.

[12]

Specimen answer

One perspective which would argue against this view is Marxism. Marxists would argue that the main role of schools is really to produce the next generation of workers. Marxists, Bowles and Gintis claimed that meritocracy was a myth. Believing you could achieve based on your efforts masked the truth that the working-class would remain oppressed by the capitalists. For Bowles and Gintis, school mirrors work, a theory known as the correspondence principle. Schools are set up like work with hierarchies, fragmented tasks and little control over time. This prepares working-class children for their future roles as workers for the capitalists. Schools also train students to be motivated by external rewards – learning to endure tedious work in school for future rewards (qualifications) trains students to endure tedious work in the workplace for future rewards (wages). This shows that the education system is designed to prepare students for future exploitation, not to promote social equality.

Another argument against the view that schools promote social equality is that schools reflect and reinforce wider social inequalities, such as ethnic and gender inequalities. In the UK Black Caribbean boys begin school performing at least as well as the majority ethnic group but by the time they reach GCSE their academic performance is below most other groups. One reason for this is that Black Caribbean boys are more frequently excluded than any other ethnic group. Gillborn claims that teachers generally underrate the abilities of black youngsters due to stereotypes about ability, intelligence and effort. This leads to them being assigned to low ability groups and restricted to lower-level exams. Although girls outperform boys in school, schools can still reinforce gender inequality. Francis found that classrooms were dominated by boys and that girls get less attention from teachers. As these examples show, the education system does not promote equality and instead reinforces existing inequalities.

Mark awarded = 12 out of 12

Examiner comment

Both arguments are clear and developed and are supported by relevant sociological concepts and evidence, so each gain their full allocation of 6 marks.

The Marxist argument is very well explained and supported with specific points from Bowles and Gintis' study. It is used to explicitly challenge the quote in the question.

The argument that schools reflect wider inequalities uses evidence on ethnicity, sufficiently well to gain 6 marks. It not only includes relevant evidence and concepts, but shows sociological understanding by clearly outlining social processes involved.

The material on gender is not as well developed or as clear in disputing the view in the question, so on its own would not get above 4 marks. To gain full marks using this material, the candidate would need to make it clearer which aspects of gender inequality in society are reinforced by schools and which are not.

Question 4

- 4 Evaluate the view that cultural capital is the main factor influencing educational achievement. [26]

Specimen answer

Most sociologists recognise that social class has a clear impact on educational achievement. However, there are different explanations for why it has such an impact. For some, including Bourdieu, culture is the key factor. Other sociologists disagree with Bourdieu and see factors such as material deprivation or factors within school as the main causes of differences in educational achievement between different social classes.

The term capital is often used in relation to wealth, but for Bourdieu 'capital' means resources that determine your place in society. Bourdieu suggested that there are different types of capital and all of these influence how successful a person is in society. Economic capital is the most obvious resource a person can draw on. Social capital is a further resource which includes networks of family, friends and acquaintances. Bourdieu also recognised symbolic capital which refers to honour, prestige, or reputation and cultural capital which refers to manners, tastes, interests, and knowledge of artistic aspects of a culture. Just like economic capital, Bourdieu saw cultural capital as a resource that the dominant class in society possess and use to maintain their position of dominance.

Bourdieu used the concept of 'habitus' to explain how cultural capital influenced achievement in education. The habitus refers to the ways that different classes understand and perceive the world and the sorts of tastes and preferences that they have. A habitus will influence all aspects of lifestyle such as leisure pursuits, food, TV preferences, and so on. The habitus that middle-class children are socialised into is rewarded by the education system and therefore makes it easier for them to achieve success. 'High culture' such as the arts, which are part of the middle-class habitus are given status by the education system in a way that 'popular culture' associated with the working-class habitus is not. In addition, the education system itself is organised around the middle-class habitus. This includes the manners and ways of speaking in

Specimen answer, continued

addition to the curriculum content. In this way, middle-class students have an advantage right from the beginning as school feels comfortable and natural to them and working-class students are immediately disadvantaged because their interests, beliefs, values and norms are not only different but actively conflict with those of teachers and the education system.

Bourdieu believed that cultural capital is central to social reproduction as it maintains inequality from generation to generation. Working-class children are socialised into the working-class habitus and this makes it harder for them to achieve in school and thus maintains their class position. In addition, educational success legitimates social reproduction. It makes the class system seem fair as it appears that working-class and middle-class students have the same opportunities, but the middle-class children are more successful due to talent and ability. The process of cultural reproduction is hidden within families and this prevents any criticism and challenge of the advantages that it brings.

One strength of Bourdieu's view that cultural capital is the main factor influencing educational achievement is the influence it has had on other sociologists. For example, Charlesworth used Bourdieu's concepts of cultural capital and the habitus in his study of working-class life in Rotherham in the UK. Charlesworth concluded that it is in the education system that the working class learn to devalue themselves and restrict their ambitions. He also argued that the main reason the working-class do not thrive in the education system is because their way of talking and their use of language are devalued by the education system.

Other sociologists have criticised Bourdieu's work on cultural capital for being overly deterministic. His theory, and particularly the concept of the habitus, suggests a high degree of reproduction from generation to generation. The importance of individual choice and agency are ignored by the theory. Bourdieu's theory could also be criticised for being out-dated. Postmodernists would highlight that in contemporary society there is much more choice in terms of lifestyles, activities, and influences on identity. They argue that class has much less of an influence on lifestyle these days and through the internet and globalisation, working-class children have a much wider set of influences upon their habitus.

Specimen answer, continued

Other sociologists would reject Bourdieu's argument that cultural capital is the main factor affecting achievement. Material deprivation theorists such as Marilyn Howard would argue that children from poorer homes underachieve because of lack of money. Specifically, Howard looked at the impact of diet and concluded that many poorer children had inadequate diets with low levels of vitamins and minerals. This deficient diet meant children may become ill and miss school. The impact would be lower educational achievement. Poor diet may also mean behavioural problems in school. Wilkinson studied this and concluded that children from lower class families were more likely to have hyperactivity and behavioural problems. This would cause lower achievement as children would not concentrate on work in class and so fall behind. Therefore, it is not cultural capital that explains educational achievement, but rather material conditions and economic capital.

Other sociologists would highlight the importance of in-school factors, such as labelling and ability grouping, to explain educational achievement. For example, Gillborn and Youdell found that teachers have a common sense of understanding of students' ability and they use this to allocate students to different sets. However, they found that working-class students were more likely to be seen as disruptive and lacking motivation. Because of this, it is harder for them to convince teachers that they have 'ability' and they are more likely to be placed in lower sets. This shows that it is the labels that are placed on working-class students and subsequent action by teachers because of these labels that influences educational attainment, rather than their lack of cultural capital. However, it could alternatively be argued that in-school factors such as labelling and ability grouping reinforce rather than dispute the importance of cultural capital. Bourdieu would probably argue that it is the habitus of working-class students that results in the labelling and setting and so in-school explanations actually reinforce the importance of cultural capital in explaining educational achievement.

In conclusion, there is a strong argument to suggest that a person's values, knowledge and cultural background advantage them once they enter the education system.

Specimen answer, continued

While some sociologists stress the importance of material and in-school factors in influencing educational achievement, these do not necessarily dispute the importance of cultural capital. Indeed, Bourdieu himself stressed that different forms of capital, including cultural and economic, interact with each other to reproduce the class system. While postmodernists may argue that class no longer influences identity and culture in the way it used to, it is clear from statistics on educational achievement that social class does still have a strong impact on educational attainment. Cultural capital clearly remains a very important concept in understanding why this is the case.

Mark awarded = 26 out of 26

Examiner comment

The candidate defines and explains the concept of cultural capital very clearly, (AO1). It is put in the context of wider debate about educational achievement and distinguished from other kinds of capital, (AO2).

The concepts of habitus and social reproduction are well applied to show the processes by which cultural capital can affect educational achievement. This is also illustrated by an empirical study, (AO1 and AO2).

There is a thorough evaluation of Bourdieu's theory, both in terms of being over-deterministic and of undervaluing material and in-school influences on achievement, (AO3). This evaluation is supported with details of two empirical studies, (AO1, AO2 and AO3).

The candidate achieves a higher level of more nuanced evaluation by showing that this empirical material can be interpreted as, in part, supporting Bourdieu's theory, (AO2 and AO3). There is a clear and balanced concluding paragraph, (AO3).

How the candidate could have improved the answer

To improve this answer, the candidate could have used more studies to show the direct impact of cultural capital on achievement, e.g. Otsuka, Crozier et al, Mariaye.

There could also have been some discussion of cultural capital explanations as a rejoinder to cultural deprivation theory.

Although the answer draws well on Bourdieu's theory, this could also have been placed in a wider context of theoretical debate ranging from structural inequalities to innate intelligence.

Advice for candidates (Paper 3)

- As with all papers candidates need to pay attention to the precise wording of each question (Describe, Explain, Evaluate, etc.), and the time allowed to answer it, in order to get maximum credit for the sociology they have learned.
- Answers will tend to get higher marks where it is clear that candidates are thinking about the question as they write as opposed to writing down what they can remember which might be relevant to the question.
- Credit is given for explicitly showing how theories, concepts and empirical studies relate to the arguments being developed.
- Analysis, whether summarising other sociologists or presenting one's own evaluation, should come across as making sense to the writer, attempting to explain social processes rather than listing remembered facts and concepts.
- Candidates should be encouraged to remember that everything can be evaluated, the logic of a theory, relevance and methodology of empirical studies, the limitations of a view that ignores other perspectives or other evidence.

Cambridge Assessment International Education
The Triangle Building, Shaftesbury Road, Cambridge, CB2 8EA, United Kingdom
t: +44 1223 553554
e: info@cambridgeinternational.org www.cambridgeinternational.org

Copyright © UCLES June 2020