Principal examiner reports for teachers

Principal examiner reports for teachers summarise what candidates did well and what candidates needed to improve for this examination series only.

This report is to be used in conjunction with the question paper and mark scheme.

For guidance on teaching and learning we provide resources for many of our syllabuses.

Resource	Where to find it
Grade descriptions – Grade descriptions describe the level of performance typically demonstrated by candidates achieving the different grades awarded for a qualification.	School support hub Select: Subject > Resource finder > Syllabus and specimen materials
Schemes of work – Schemes of work are designed to support you in your teaching and lesson planning.	School support hub Select: Subject > Resource finder > Teaching and learning
Lesson planning – Guidance on how to plan a lesson.	Lesson planning
Resource plus – There may be additional resources such as teaching packs containing lesson plans, resources and worksheets and videos for aspects of your syllabus.	School support hub Select: Subject > Resource finder > Teaching and learning
Teaching tools	Teaching Tools
Exemplar candidate responses	School support hub Select: Subject > Resource finder > Teaching and learning
Learner guide – A guide for students to help them understand what the course involves.	School support hub Select: Subject > Resource finder > Teaching and learning
Community forums – Do you have a question or something to share? Our online forums are great way to keep up to date with your subject and the global Cambridge community.	Community forum on the school support hub
Access to scripts for this series.	Access to scripts service
Results analysis is available for some syllabuses.	Results analysis
Test maker is available for some subjects.	Test maker

Other services from Cambridge International Education

- **Digital mocks service**
- **Insight assessments**
- **Professional development**
  - Focus on assessment
  - Online marking workshops

© 2026

SOCIOLOGY

Paper 9699/12

Socialisation, Identity and Methods of Research

Key messages

What candidates did well

- Comprehensive responses showed effective use of a wide range of sociological material, including concepts, theories and research studies to support the points they made.
- Comprehensive responses had a clear focus on the specific question wording and fully addressed this.
- In the questions focusing on methods of research, accurate use of methodological approaches and concepts was a key feature of comprehensive responses.

What candidates needed to improve

- There were some generalised responses across all questions on the paper, which did not focus on the demands of the specific question set. Candidates needed to read and focus on the wording of each question and ensure their responses were relevant.
- The accuracy of methodological concepts such as reliability and validity needed to improve. Some candidates frequently put these concepts together in a sentence, with no evidence of understanding their precise meaning.
- Candidates needed to adjust the length and detail of their responses to match the requirements of each question.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Question 1

Comprehensive responses

- Many responses clearly identified two separate informal sanctions.
- Most described these briefly, for example by saying why they may be applied.
- An effective approach was to select informal sanctions from two different agents, such as disapproving comments from parents and ostracism from peers.
- The development of each of these often included writing why these sanctions might be attracted, such as due to misbehaviour or due to not fitting in.
- Some candidates wrote at considerable length, which was not required for this question. Candidates should keep their responses concise and focused on the requirements of the question.

Limited responses

- Some responses showed confusion regarding what informal sanctions are, with some stating examples of deviant behaviour or identifying different agencies of social control instead.

Question 2

(a) Comprehensive responses

- Many responses clearly identified two different reasons for the validity of group interviews.
- Some focused on the group aspect directly, mentioning the more relaxed atmosphere, or the group members feeding from each other's responses.
- Some candidates used sociological material, including a concept such as rapport, qualitative data, a theory such as interpretivism or feminism, or a study which used group interviews such as Willis or Mac an Ghaill.

© 2026

- The most comprehensive responses were able to link their sociological material to illustrate the reason identified and why it particularly applies to group interviews and enhances validity. For example, explaining why qualitative data may be gained in a group interview due to the relaxed atmosphere and potential for discussion, which may enhance validity.

Limited responses

- Some responses did not clearly link the reasons given to validity, so needed more focus on the demands of the question. For example, some mentioned issues relating to representativeness and generalisability instead.
- Some candidates wrote general points which could apply to any type of interview and either did not mention the group element or just paid lip service to it. For example, writing that group interviews give validity because they create qualitative data due to open questions. This does not link directly to the group aspect and could apply to any semi or unstructured interview.
- Though correctly identifying potentially relevant reasons, many candidates needed to include sociological material to support their points.

(b) Comprehensive responses

- Two clear strengths were often identified and clearly linked to field experiments.
- Many explained each strength to clearly show why it applies to field experiments and why it is a strength, for example related to enhancing validity.
- Many candidates successfully discussed ecological validity and the advantages of real-world research settings over laboratory experiments. Additionally, the covert element of field experiments was identified by many candidates, with responses explaining how this can help minimize the Hawthorne effect.

Limited responses

- Some responses included vague points which could also apply to other methods such as laboratory experiments. For example, writing that variables can be controlled. This is not directly related to field experiments.
- Candidates needed to show an understanding of what field experiments are. This was not always shown, for example some mentioned questioning the participants or giving out questionnaires. Some candidates confused field experiments with participant observation, suggesting that the researcher would join in and build up a rapport, showing a misunderstanding.

Question 3

(a) Comprehensive responses

- Some responses focused on both aspects of the question clearly – addressing the media and its influence on shaping class identity directly.
- The most comprehensive responses used sociological material to explain the influence of the media on class identity, often using Marxist ideas such as those of Althusser or Bourdieu, for example, describing media as part of the ideological state apparatus, and mentioning ideas such as false consciousness and agenda and boundary setting.
- Some responses contained specific examples of media representations of different social classes and considered how these might influence the identities of the consumers.
- Responses which included two detailed points, supported with evidence, took an effective approach, though some included more than this.

Limited responses

- Some candidates spent time defining what is meant by the media and what is meant by social class, which was not directly relevant to the question.
- Some candidates wrote in general terms about the influence of the media on the audience, without linking this clearly to social class identity.
- Some responses were based mainly on common-sense ideas without any link to sociological evidence. Candidates need to include sociological evidence to support their points.

(b) Comprehensive responses

- Most candidates identified a challenge to the view, with many explaining the influence of another agent of class identity, for example, family, peers or education, and some showing clearly why their chosen agent may be more influential than the media on class identity. For example, if using family as an alternative agent, making clear that this is more influential on

© 2026

class identity than media since it is the primary agent of socialisation and will instil the individual's class identity from an early age, unlike the media, which will be consumed based on the already formed sense of class identity which has come from the family.

- Candidates who challenged the influence of the media directly, for example by questioning the impact it has on individuals in a postmodern world where the audience is familiar with and critical of media content, were particularly successful in addressing the question.

Limited responses

- Many candidates identified an alternative agent, sometimes in detail, without clearly showing why this may be more influential than the media, thus not fully addressing the question. For example, some candidates stated that the family is a more important influence than media. These responses described the influence of the family on class identity without making a clear link back or comparison to the media.

Section B

Question 4

Comprehensive responses

- Many candidates showed clear understanding of the view presented and could use evidence to support both sides, creating a debate.
- A range of evidence, including theories such as sociobiology and functionalism and thinkers such as Wilson, Parsons and Lombroso, was effectively used to support the view in the question.
- Many candidates produced extended responses that challenged the view by drawing on evidence about feral children and the role of socialisation, often making relevant links to gender. The most comprehensive evaluation included detailed evidence which was then linked back to directly challenge the view in the question.

Limited responses

- Some candidates showed confusion relating to nature and nurture, getting them the wrong way round or suggesting that nature is family and primary socialisation and nurture is secondary socialisation.
- Some responses were brief and unsupported or based on very generalised ideas. Candidates need to support their arguments with evidence, especially in the higher tariff questions.
- Some candidates did not present a debate. The term 'evaluate' suggests the need for a two-sided debate, and some candidates just presented one view, either for or against that in the question.

Question 5

Comprehensive responses

- Some candidates showed an understanding of official statistics and how they may be used by sociologists, including examples of such statistics, such as population statistics, crime statistics and health statistics, and of studies which have used them, such as Durkheim's use of suicide statistics.
- Most candidates recognised the need for a debate and included strengths and limitations of the use of official statistics. Such candidates framed their response theoretically, positivists vs interpretivists, and using appropriate methodological concepts such as reliability, representativeness and objectivity to support the use of official statistics and validity, verstehen and values to challenge it.
- Specific examples, such as the strengths and weaknesses of using statistics on suicide or crime were included in some comprehensive responses, using challenges to the official statistics such as the views of Atkinson on suicide statistics and comments relating to the dark figure of crime statistics.

Limited responses

- Some responses focused on evaluating quantitative data more generally. This question was about official statistics, and this needed to be the focus.
- Some candidates listed different methods one by one, including official statistics. If including other methods, candidates needed to use them to directly evaluate official statistics, not simply list them.

© 2026

SOCIOLOGY

Paper 9699/22
The Family

Key messages

What candidates did well

- Many candidates demonstrated a good comprehension of functions the family performs (largely from a functionalist perspective), reasons for gender inequality in the family, as well as how the nuclear family has or has not lost its social importance.
- Responses often included relevant sociological material, such as studies and concepts, to support points.
- For essay responses in ***Section B***, most candidates examined both sides of the debate.
- Many candidates demonstrated appropriate time management.

What candidates needed to improve

- Some needed to apply relevant sociological evidence (studies, policies, concepts) to support points where required, rather than relying on common sense or anecdotal examples.
- Candidates are encouraged to match the number of points provided to the requirements of each question, especially in Question 1 and 3(b).
- Candidates should ensure when responding to **Question 4** and **5** that they address both sides of the debate and provide meaningful explanation, rather than simply juxtaposing different views. A very small number of candidates within **Question 4** only addressed how the nuclear family has lost its social importance, whilst for **Question 5** some candidates provided points on how fatherhood *had* changed, ignoring counter arguments that could be made.
- Focusing responses on the precise context of the question will improve relevance and depth, as seen in Question 2(a), 2(b), 4, and 5.
- Candidates can save time by avoiding unnecessary introductions and conclusions in ***Section A questions.***
- A very small number of candidates did not provide responses for all questions in ***Section A*** **Question 2(b)**, **3(a)**, **3(b)**.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Question 1

Comprehensive responses

- Many identified two clear functions along with appropriate descriptions of these. Most candidates took a functionalist approach to their responses, commonly:

  Primary socialisation of children – family teaches children society's norms and values needed to become functional members of society.
  Stabilisation of adult personalities – family acts as an emotional support or 'warm bath' to the breadwinner to relieve them of their stresses from work.

Limited responses

- Identified two functions without the relevant descriptions of these.
- Identified one function and description only.

© 2026

- A small number of candidates attempted descriptions that were irrelevant to the function identified or were too vague to reward. For example: *Stabilisation of adult personalities – adults have responsibilities and have to be mature.*

Question 2

(a) Comprehensive responses

- Many candidates demonstrated a good understanding of reasons for gender inequality in the family, commonly *gender socialisation, biological differences, and patriarchal ideology within families/societies.*
- Some responses clearly identified two reasons which were then explained and supported with relevant sociological material. For example:

  Men tend to be the financial provider…this gives them power as they are the main source of income for the family…Edgell… suggests that as a result, men have control over important financial decisions whilst women are left to decide the less important decisions relating to daily tasks such as food management, for example.

  Physical characteristics of women…they endure menstruation and pregnancy which men take advantage of to assert their physical dominance over them…radical feminists/Firestone… this leads to the oppression of women since their biology leaves them submissive to men.

Limited responses

- Whilst some candidates identified and explained two relevant reasons, they did not support these with sociological material/evidence. For example:

  One reason is due to religious beliefs in some societies…strongly religious societies have traditional views towards women being subordinate to men.

  This example could have been improved by applying relevant sociological material such as *patriarchy/patriarchal ideology* and linking this to how traditional religious views towards gender roles or power dynamics overwhelmingly portray men as dominant over women, giving legitimacy for them to dominate and oppress women.

- A few responses were simplistic and undeveloped. For example: *The man is stronger so can force the woman to do what he says.*

- A small number of candidates described examples of gender inequality in the family rather than identify the *reason* for it and therefore were not rewarded. For example: *Women perform more domestic labour/women perform a triple shift* and, *Men have more decision-making power.*

(b) Comprehensive responses

- Many candidates were able to identify a relevant strength, commonly that *radical feminists highlight/bring attention to the significance of patriarchy in oppressing women in the family/highlight the dark side of the family…* and relevant limitation, commonly that *radical feminists exaggerate the extent of oppression women face in the family/fail to recognise that there are women who adopt the expressive through choice not patriarchal oppression.*
- A small number of candidates demonstrated a solid comprehension of the different requirements of the question, that is: a relevant strength/limitation, what it is about the approach that leads it to have this strength/limitation, and why it is a strength/limitation. For example:

  Strength: *Radical feminists draw attention to power inequality and the oppression of women in families…they examine how the family is a key institution that maintains patriarchy…challenges traditional power dynamics that forces recognition of how familial structures, particularly nuclear, perpetuate and normalise male dominance critiquing the conventional view of the family as a safe haven.*

  Limitation: *radical feminist views of the family are outdated and less relevant today…because they focus on the traditional nuclear family and how it exploits and oppresses women who are*

© 2026

trapped in it…this limits our awareness of the fact that family life today is more diverse and that the notion of the traditional oppressive nuclear family is less common.

Limited responses

- Some candidates gave answers that were not specific or clear about how their identified strength or limitation related to the family, so it was sometimes difficult to tell if they were addressing the question directly. For example: *They only focus on patriarchy as the sole problem.*
- Many responses needed to address the element of what it is about the approach that leads it to have the identified strength/limitation.
- Some responses needed to ensure they focused on radical feminist views of the family and not discuss possible consequences of adopting a radical feminist approach such as, *single parents are a bad thing as they cannot socialise children properly, especially boys who become deviant as a consequence.*
- A small number of candidates needed to focus responses on the context of the family, as they incorrectly discussed society (for example, *patriarchy is the cause of wars*), work, and education.
- A few candidates confused radical feminism with liberal feminism and postmodernism.

Question 3

(a) Comprehensive responses

- Most candidates showed a good understanding of how the distinction between childhood and adulthood is demonstrated, commonly discussing the *impact of age restrictive laws* (*drinking alcohol, voting, driving*), *lack of responsibility for children* (*not financially responsible for the family*), and *how children's lives are seen as vulnerable and innocent and therefore protected in comparison to adults.*
- Some candidates supported points with relevant evidence, commonly examples of legal reform aimed at protecting childhood, and concepts such as *age patriarchy* and *child centredness*.
- Most candidates provided at least two points and some development of discussion moving beyond simple statements.

Limited responses

- Whilst some candidates were able to provide relevant points, they needed to demonstrate greater sociological awareness and apply relevant evidence to support their discussion.
- A small number of candidates needed to provide some development of the point made, rather than rely on such simple statements as, *children cannot vote and adults can* and, *children and adults consume different types of media.*
- A very small number of candidates provided one point, when they should at least provide two.
- A very small number of candidates discussed how childhood used to be or how it has changed, without demonstrating a clear distinction between childhood and adulthood.
- Candidates needed to avoid assertions such as, *children can do whatever they want…children are now properly socialised…children are associated with vibrant colours whilst old people are boring.*
- A very small number of candidates incorrectly discussed how there is *not* a clear distinction between childhood and adulthood. This was the requirement for **Question 3(b)**.

(b) Comprehensive responses

- Many candidates demonstrated a reasonable understanding of how there is no distinction between childhood and adulthood today, most commonly discussing how *developments in media have given children access to adult content and this is blurring the boundary between the two as it erodes the innocence associated with childhood,* with some candidates correctly citing *Postman* as evidence in support. Occasionally, the work of *Palmer* (*toxic childhood*) was referred to, or cross-cultural references of children as financial providers, such as *Hecht's study of Brazilian street children*.

Limited responses

- Some candidates needed to develop their point and move beyond such simple statements as, *children can now access adult media content* and, *in some countries, children are forced to work to support the family.*

© 2026

- A very small number of candidates incorrectly discussed how there *is* a clear distinction. This was the requirement for **Question 3(a)**.

Section B

Question 4

More candidates chose this question over **Question 5**.

Comprehensive responses

- Many candidates showed a good understanding of the question, focusing on the context of the social importance of the nuclear family, and presented arguments on both sides of the debate.
  Commonly acknowledged supporting arguments were:
  - *the growth in family diversity (examining social reasons for this such as the impact of secularisation, policy reform that encouraged alternative family forms and, growth of individualism and its impact on social norms and expectations)*
  - *how functions of the nuclear family have been taken over by other institution*
  - *occasional reference made to the impact of feminism in leading to the rejection of the nuclear family.*

Arguments against commonly referred to:

- *functionalist and New Right views on the social importance of the functions the nuclear family continues to carry out (such as its role of primary socialisation in preventing deviancy and dysfunction)*
- *the exaggerated decline of the nuclear family as it continues to be ideologically and culturally significant*
- *how the nuclear family has adapted rather than declined (Chester/neo-conventional nuclear family)*
- Some candidates developed points well, unpacking the point made rather than relying on description or simple explanation, applying relevant sociological evidence that engaged the question directly.
- A small number of candidates provided meaningful evaluation rather than relying on juxtaposition.

Limited Responses

- Whilst most candidates provided relevant arguments, these at times needed development rather than relying on simple, unsubstantiated statements or brief descriptions.
- A small number of candidates needed to focus more on the lost social importance of the nuclear family, and less on the decline of marriage. Whilst the two topics are linked, some responses overlooked the context of the question (*social importance of the nuclear family*) and instead focused on why marriage is declining/not important rather than addressing the social significance of the nuclear family itself.
- Candidates needed to understand that being married does not automatically mean being in a nuclear family (can be married whilst childless for example).
- Some candidates incorrectly assumed that cohabiting, reconstituted and mixed-race families are not nuclear in form, when they can be.
- A few candidates neglected to examine both sides of the debate.
- A very small number of candidates did not provide responses that addressed the question set, instead provided responses that compared the role of the family from functionalist, Marxist and feminist perspectives. Whilst some relevant link could have been made to the question (the nuclear family is socially important to the value consensus in society, or socially important due to its role in ensuring the survival of capitalism, for example), this was not done.

Question 5

Fewer candidates chose this question over **Question 4**.

Comprehensive responses

- Some candidates showed a good understanding of the question, focusing on the context of fatherhood and presented arguments on both sides of the debate. Commonly acknowledged supporting arguments were:
- *the rise in new men who are more involved in childcare (*note, new fathers would have been more appropriate here*)*
- *changes in traditional notions of masculinity that has led to a greater acceptance of involved parenting by fathers (including the impact of paternity leave)*
- *changes in the role of women creating opportunities for more stay-at-home dads*

© 2026

Arguments against commonly referred to:

- *cultural/religious examples that emphasise patriarchy and hegemonic masculinity in enforcing traditional notions of fatherhood (breadwinner, disciplinarian)*
- *fathers may want to engage more directly with childcare, however work commitments/role as financial provider prevent this.*
- A small number of candidates developed points, unpacking the argument made rather than relying on description or simple explanation, applying relevant sociological evidence that engaged the question directly.

Limited responses

- Candidates needed to apply relevant sociological material to evidence and support points made. Often, common sense and anecdotal evidence was over relied upon.
- Some candidates needed to focus more on the context of fatherhood, rather than discussing men and domestic labour or, how women perform more domestic than men.
- Arguments against tended be juxtaposition of points rather than meaningful evaluation.
- A few candidates neglected to examine both sides of the debate.

© 2026

SOCIOLOGY

Paper 9699/32
Education

Key messages

What candidates did well

- Comprehensive responses met the requirements of each question by using accurate sociological concepts and presenting logical, well-structured answers. Candidates included appropriate examples from relevant studies when required and demonstrated effective application of sociological knowledge to support their arguments.
- Comprehensive responses showed an awareness of the differences in education systems between different countries and how the experience of education varies between social groups and over time.

What candidates needed to improve

- Candidates should engage directly with the command words of questions and make more explicit links between the information they provide and the question asked.
- Candidates should present the findings of studies accurately, showing the context of the evidence in terms of time and place.
- Candidates should be familiar with a range of up-to-date studies across the whole syllabus and be able to show variations between different societies.
- Candidates should be able to demonstrate a clear understanding of the relevant sociological concepts and theories, explaining and applying them rather than only stating them.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

Comprehensive responses

- Many candidates could give two examples of a school process, such as assemblies, examinations, respect for teachers or school rules.
- Full answers made a clear link to how each of these relates to value consensus, such as by referring to patriotism, universalistic values or respect for authority.

Limited responses

- Some candidates needed to identify a specific school process as a way of promoting value consensus, rather than making only general references to concepts such as secondary socialisation or the hidden curriculum.
- Some candidates needed to explain how their example, such as punctuality or obeying authority, promoted value consensus.

Question 2

Comprehensive responses

- The majority of candidates were able to identify two ways in which the interests of the powerful can influence the curriculum.
- Common responses related to academic knowledge being given higher status, cultural capital, and the correspondence principle.
- Most candidates were able to provide relevant sociological material to support these, such as Young, Bowles and Gintis, and Bourdieu.
- Less common responses related to the ethnocentric curriculum or the gendered curriculum.

Limited responses

© 2026

- Some candidates explained a way in which the interests of the powerful can influence the curriculum. These responses were not always supported with relevant material, such as actual studies or examples for the ethnocentric curriculum.
- Generally, candidates need to explicitly make the link of how the material specifically supports the way identified.

Question 3

Comprehensive responses
- Full answers explained how inequalities in opportunity within the education system related to access to important roles in society. These could be related, for example, through the concept of social closure, or through how some pupils are defined as unsuitable for some roles or may be discouraged from aspiring to them though types of school, streaming or subject allocation.
- These could be effectively demonstrated in terms of class, ethnicity or gender. The most common responses related to under-attainment being related to material and cultural factors and Marxist arguments in relation to education legitimating and reproducing inequality. Less common responses related to feminist arguments and the inaccuracy of assessments in schools such as IQ.
- Many candidates demonstrated a good knowledge of relevant studies and sociological concepts, particularly in relation to cultural and material deprivation.

Limited responses
- Some candidates listed studies of aspects of inequality in schools without relating to the question asked. Others outlined the correspondence theory without explaining how this might limit the opportunities of the talented.
- A few candidates were presented the arguments of Tumin. These responses needed further development, for example by showing how some capable people may be diverted from arguably important jobs which do not have high pay or status.
- A small minority of candidates included an ‘introduction’ that provided a functionalist account of how the education system contributes to meritocracy. These responses would have been improved by focusing more directly on the requirement of the question.

Question 4

Comprehensive responses
- Well-balanced essays included clear arguments for class being an important influence on educational attainment. They also included evidence that ethnicity and gender are important and explained how individual characteristics and hard work can affect outcomes.
- Candidates were particularly successful in terms of applying relevant sociological material on cultural factors such as Sugarman, Douglas and Bernstein. Similarly, candidates were generally able to outline the Marxist arguments of Bowles and Gintis, Althusser and Bourdieu and apply these successfully to the question.
- Some arguments showed a deeper understanding of theory, such as examining class as an aspect of the structure of society rather than just a statistical variable, or by showing a clear awareness of cultural capital as related to power in the education system rather than just being the opposite of cultural deprivation.
- Thorough evaluation recognised the range of arguments presented. Some responses attempted to assess which arguments were most convincing and provided a conclusion about whether class is the most important factor.
- There were some good attempts at incorporating social change into the evaluation, for example the influence of compensatory educational policies and other social democratic reforms.
- Very few candidates were able to apply more sophisticated evaluation points such as reference to the postmodern view or the intersectionality of class, gender and ethnicity.

Limited responses
- Some candidates limited their evaluation to only one alternative influence, while others juxtaposed a list of studies of influences on educational attainment without engaging with the debate.
- If gender was selected as a comparative influence, it was often not well developed, either only focusing on either male or female disadvantage, showing little awareness of differences over time or between societies, or identifying changes without indicating whether these gave support to the view being evaluated.
- Marxist or functionalist models were sometimes outlined with little argument or evidence as to why or why not they might be considered convincing in relation to the question.

© 2026

- In-school factors were sometimes presented as if they were an alternative influence rather than being linked to how they might indicate the importance of class, ethnicity or gender.
- Some candidates did not include a conclusion that addressed the question. Responses would be improved by ensuring that time is allocated for a clear, relevant conclusion.

© 2026

SOCIOLOGY

Paper 9699/42
Globalisation, Media, Religion

Key messages

What candidates did well
- Candidates showed clear knowledge of the topics studied and many wrote fluently and at length.
- Relevant sociological material was used to support arguments in essays. This included studies, theories, concepts and relevant examples.
- Candidates were able to answer the required number of questions.
- In many cases, a clear debate was presented between the view in the question and other views that would offer a critique. In the most comprehensive answers, there was a clear debate and some reasoned conclusions as to which view was most convincing.

What candidates needed to improve
- Candidates should read the question carefully and check that they have answered the set questions rather than a pre-prepared question.
- Sociological material including concepts, theories, studies and empirical evidence should be used to support points both for and against the view in the question.
- Candidates should demonstrate debate in their answers rather than just giving one side of an argument and then the other.
- Candidates could benefit from producing a brief essay plan, outlining three or four key points on each side of the debate, which can then be developed into a structured response. This plan could also make clear links between the points on either side to give more explicit evaluation.
- Some candidates started with an opposing view to that in the question, suggesting they were producing a pre-prepared debate rather than using their knowledge to respond to the essay set.
- Candidates should aim to develop a balanced discussion by directly engaging with opposing viewpoints, rather than simply presenting arguments for one side followed by arguments for the other.

Comments on specific questions

Section A: Globalisation

Question 1

Comprehensive responses
- A thorough understanding of the impact of globalisation on groups, generally focused on more economically developed countries versus less economically developed countries.
- Use of sociological perspectives to explain aspects of globalisation and its differential effects for countries at different stages of development. Reference made to dependency theory, Marxism and world systems theory.
- Candidates used clear examples of differential effects of globalisation such as migration and brain drain or the impacts of climate change.
- Evaluation is demonstrated through discussion of the positive impacts of globalisation for all groups, with clear reference to modernisation theory.
- Candidates provide evaluative examples of how globalisation can enhance cultural experiences, such as through the concept of a global village.

Limited responses
- Some candidates provided general accounts of globalisation, with limited focus on how different groups benefit from these processes.
- Many candidates discussed the benefits and limitations of globalisation, although further explanation was needed regarding which groups benefit from these changes and which are disadvantaged.

© 2026

- A number of responses did not include a suitable range of material, which resulted in answers that were limited in scope.
- In some cases, candidates did not refer to relevant sociological perspectives to develop their points about the different benefits of globalisation.

Question 2

Comprehensive responses
- An understanding of the issues faced by national governments in relation to rising global crime such as detecting and deterrence.
- Responses showed a clear understanding of the nature of global crime and included examples of different types, such as green crime and cybercrime.
- Candidates analyzed crimes that cross national borders and explained why these require international cooperation rather than just national policing.
- Examples were used to illustrate how globalisation has enabled international crime networks to operate in ways similar to legitimate businesses, making it difficult for national governments to intervene; for instance, references were made to McMafia and the concept of the network society.
- Marxist views highlight the criminogenic nature of global capitalism and emphasize that national governments often have limited power when confronting international illegal networks.
- Evaluation was demonstrated by considering the role and effectiveness of international crime agencies, such as Interpol, with relevant examples.
- Some responses included alternative views, noting that despite the global nature of some criminal activities, such as global gangs, these activities can still be subject to national laws.

Limited responses
- Some candidates focused on analysis of global crime and its causes, without considering the role of national governments in preventing crime.
- A limited range of specific examples was provided to show the nature of global crime and the challenges it presents for national governments.
- Answers included a range of crimes, such as people trafficking and drug smuggling. These responses were descriptive rather than analytical or directly relevant to the debate in the question.
- Some candidates did not include evaluation of the view, resulting in a one-sided essay that focused only on national governments being unable to prevent global crime.

***Section B*: Media**

Question 3

Comprehensive responses
- Candidates demonstrate a clear understanding of how media owners can influence content, using accurate and relevant media terminology.
- Responses integrate sociological perspectives, such as Marxist views and the propaganda model, to support the argument that owners have control over media content.
- Well-chosen examples, such as the Murdoch family and their extensive media ownership, are used to illustrate the power and reach of media owners.
- Evaluation is shown by considering the influence of other parties, including journalists and editors, and by discussing how these agents may support or challenge the views of owners.
- Responses compare traditional and new media, exploring how owner control may differ across these forms.
  Candidates evaluate the role of citizen journalism and the impact of algorithms in shaping media content

Limited responses
- Some candidates present a range of basic points about media ownership, without consistently linking these to control over content.
- Different perspectives, such as Marxist and pluralist views on ownership and control, are mentioned but are not fully developed or directly related to the question.
- General statements are made about media content, with limited reference to the role of owners, resulting in a less focused discussion of content control.
  Some responses focus on the impact of content on audiences rather than addressing who has control over the content

© 2026

Question 4

Comprehensive responses

- Candidates demonstrate a thorough understanding of mass manipulation by referencing Marxist theory and providing relevant examples to illustrate the concept.
- Responses use the propaganda model to explain how media is employed during wartime to influence public behaviour.
- The hypodermic syringe model is clearly explained as a framework for understanding mass manipulation, likening the injection of media messages to the effect of a drug.
- Well-chosen examples, such as the 'War of the Worlds' broadcast and Bandura's Bobo doll experiment, are used to show the impact of mass manipulation.
- Evaluation is evident through discussion of how audience behaviour has changed and by considering the pluralist perspective, which argues that media serves audience needs rather than manipulating them.
- Alternative views are presented, suggesting that audiences are active, make their own choices about media consumption, and are not easily manipulated.
- The range of available media is considered, highlighting that no single message can manipulate all audiences.

Limited responses

- Some candidates show limited understanding of the term mass manipulation.
- Some candidates were confused about which views would support mass manipulation, trying to link these to audience effects models rather than to the Marxist perspectives.
- Some candidates gave an account of mass manipulation without evaluating the view or presenting a counterargument, resulting in a one-sided essay.
- Some candidates described a range of audience models without making links to the view in the question.

***Section C*: Religion**

Question 5

Comprehensive responses

- Candidates demonstrated thorough knowledge of how religion may serve the interests of men rather than women, with specific reference to worship practices, dress codes, and the composition of the clergy.
- Responses applied relevant sociological perspectives, including different branches of feminism, to analyze women's roles within religion.
- Candidates analyzed the connections between gender socialization, gender roles, and the allocation of religious roles.
- Some responses explored the argument that patriarchy is a feature of wider society rather than inherent to religion itself.
- Evaluation was shown by referencing examples of religions that support gender equality or feature goddess worship.
- Candidates considered perspectives such as functionalism, evaluating the view that religion can promote social cohesion and solidarity rather than gender division.
- Some responses evaluated how religion intersects with other social groupings, such as ethnicity and age, rather than focusing solely on gender.

Limited responses

- Some responses described the roles of men and women in religion without providing analysis or explanation of their significance.
- Some candidates could not explain why practices in religion served the interests of men.
- Some candidates gave only basic accounts of feminist views of religion, suggesting it is patriarchal, without providing any supporting evidence.
- Some candidates gave a one-sided account, not giving a counter to the view in the question.

© 2026

Question 6

Comprehensive responses

- Candidates demonstrated a wide-ranging understanding of the debate surrounding religious renewal, presenting balanced arguments on both sides.
- Responses showed clear understanding of the emergence of fundamentalism as evidence for a revival in religious belief, supported by relevant examples.
- Candidates discussed postmodernist views, such as 'believing without belonging,' to illustrate contemporary forms of religious revival.
- Arguments against secularisation theory were presented, including reference to the growth of new religious movements and increased religious participation.
- Evaluation was evident through discussion of secularisation theory, with examples from European countries to illustrate the decline in religious influence.
- Some candidates provided alternative evaluation by using evidence from countries, such as Italy, where religious belief has remained consistently high, suggesting continuity rather than revival.

Limited responses

- Some candidates gave a general account of secularisation without specific reference to religious revival.
- Some candidates used general views to suggest there was religious revival without giving specific evidence or examples to support the view.
- Some candidates discussed the role of religion in society rather than whether there was religious revival.
- A number of answers focused on differences in religiosity between groups within societies, rather than considering the overall religiosity of the society as a whole.

© 2026