



GCE A LEVEL MARKING SCHEME

AUTUMN 2020

**A LEVEL
SOCIOLOGY – COMPONENT 2
METHODS OF SOCIOLOGICAL ENQUIRY
A200U20-1**

INTRODUCTION

This marking scheme was used by WJEC for the 2020 examination. It was finalised after detailed discussion at examiners' conferences by all the examiners involved in the assessment. The conference was held shortly after the paper was taken so that reference could be made to the full range of candidates' responses, with photocopied scripts forming the basis of discussion. The aim of the conference was to ensure that the marking scheme was interpreted and applied in the same way by all examiners.

It is hoped that this information will be of assistance to centres but it is recognised at the same time that, without the benefit of participation in the examiners' conference, teachers may have different views on certain matters of detail or interpretation.

WJEC regrets that it cannot enter into any discussion or correspondence about this marking scheme.

GCE A LEVEL SOCIOLOGY
COMPONENT 2 – METHODS OF SOCIOLOGICAL ENQUIRY
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Notes for examiners

The mark scheme for each question is in two parts.

Part 1 is advice on the specific question outlining indicative content which can be used to assess the quality of candidate responses. The content is not prescriptive nor are candidates expected to cover all the material mentioned.

Part 2 is an assessment grid advising bands and associated marks that should be given to responses which demonstrate the qualities needed in AO1, AO2 and, where appropriate, AO3. Where a response is not credit worthy or not attempted it is indicated on the grid as NRSP (no relevant sociological point).

Read the following item and answer all of the questions:

Harm reduction and smoking: interviews and focus groups

Researchers from Edinburgh University wanted to explore how e-cigarettes/vaporizers are understood and experienced by smokers and recent ex-smokers. Smokers and recent ex-smokers (quit in previous 12 months) were recruited from a range of community and interest groups in disadvantaged areas. The research involved the collection of qualitative data. Twelve focus groups were conducted with different smoker groups. Eleven individual interviews were also conducted. The project focussed particularly on groups who may benefit most from tobacco harm reduction approaches.

Adapted from: Amos, A., Rooke, C., Cunningham-Burley, S. (2016). Harm reduction and smoking: interviews and focus groups.

Answer **each** part of the following questions.

1. (a) Using material from the item and sociological knowledge, explain the meaning of the term qualitative data. [5]

AO1 band answers will contain accurate knowledge points, one of which will be an accurate definition of the term. For band 3 AO2, answers should demonstrate sound understanding through examples, one of which should be drawn from the item.

Indicative content

A definition of the term qualitative data.

- There should be reference to sociological terminology, for example:
 - validity
 - verstehen
 - meanings and motives
 - rapport
 - interpretivist
- There should be reference to the item

Band	AO1 <i>elements 2a & 2b</i>	AO2 <i>element 1b</i>
3	<p>3 marks</p> <p>Answers demonstrate detailed knowledge and understanding of sociological theories/concepts/ evidence relating to the context of the debate/question applied to research methods</p>	<p>2 marks</p> <p>Answers demonstrate accurate and relevant selection of appropriate sociological theories/concepts/ evidence applied to research methods. These are interpreted in the context of the debate/question.</p> <p>Reference will be made to the item to show the ability to select appropriate examples.</p>
2	<p>2 marks</p> <p>Answers demonstrate some knowledge and understanding of sociological theories/concepts/ evidence relating to the context of the debate/question applied to research methods</p>	<p>1 mark</p> <p>Answers demonstrate some ability to select, apply and interpret appropriate sociological theories/concepts/ evidence applied to research methods in the context of the debate/question.</p>
1	<p>1 mark</p> <p>Answers demonstrate basic knowledge and understanding of sociological theories/concepts/ evidence relating to the context of the debate/question applied to research methods</p>	
	<p>0 marks</p> <p>NRSP</p>	<p>0 marks</p> <p>NRSP</p>

- (b) Using material from the item and sociological knowledge, explain one possible reason why the researchers decided to use individual interviews in their research. [5]

For band 3 AO1 the answer will include one reason which is linked to either key methodological concepts, the characteristics of the method or the focus of the research. For band 3 AO2 there will be a clear explanation of the reason offered and this must be contextualised for full marks.

Indicative content

- To improve the validity
- To establish a rapport
- To collect qualitative data
- As it is a sensitive topic
- To clarify questions
- The item should be used to contextualize the reasons offered.

Band	AO1 <i>elements 2a & 2b</i>	AO2 <i>element 1b</i>
3	<p>2 marks</p> <p>Answers demonstrate detailed knowledge and understanding of sociological theories/ concepts/evidence relating to the context of the debate/ question applied to research methods</p>	<p>3 marks</p> <p>Answers demonstrate accurate and relevant selection of appropriate sociological theories/concepts/evidence applied to research methods. These are interpreted in the context of the debate/question</p> <p>Reference will be made to the item to show high level ability to select appropriate examples to illustrate the reason offered.</p>
2	<p>1 mark</p> <p>Answers demonstrate some knowledge and understanding of sociological theories/ concepts/evidence relating to the context of the debate/question applied to research methods</p>	<p>2 marks</p> <p>Answers demonstrate some accurate and relevant selection of appropriate sociological theories/concepts/ evidence applied to research methods, some of which are interpreted in the context of the debate/question</p> <p>Reference will be made to the item to show some ability to select appropriate examples to explain.</p>
1		<p>1 mark</p> <p>Answers demonstrate a basic ability to select, apply and interpret appropriate sociological theories/concepts/ evidence applied to research methods in the context of the debate/question</p> <p>Basic or cursory reference is made to the item.</p>
	<p>0 marks</p> <p>NRSP</p>	<p>0 marks</p> <p>NRSP</p>

- (c) With reference to the item and sociological studies, discuss the strengths and weaknesses of using focus groups in sociological research. [20]

Answers should address several strengths and several weaknesses for band 4 AO1 and include at least two studies. For band 4 AO2, the explanation of the strengths and weaknesses will be linked to at least one key concept at least one example should be drawn from the item.

Indicative content

- Definition of focus groups.
- There should be a reference to the item.
- There should be reference to appropriate sociological examples.

Strengths:

- Sharing of ideas
- Ability to establish a group rapport
- Can be high in validity
- Saves time and cost
- Can discover meanings and motives
- Appropriate methods for sensitive topics
- Favoured by interpretivists

Weaknesses:

- Lack of reliability
- Hard to generalise as often small scale
- Subjectivity
- Interviewer effect and social desirability
- Hard to represent data collected
- An individual can dominate the group.

All relevant examples and explanations will be credited. Direct reference to relevant studies is necessary for answers to gain the top mark band.

Band	AO1 elements 2a & 2b	AO2 element 1b
4	<p>12-14 marks</p> <p>Answers demonstrate detailed knowledge and understanding of sociological theories/concepts/evidence relating to the context of the debate/question applied to research methods</p>	<p>6 marks</p> <p>Answers demonstrate accurate and relevant selection of appropriate sociological theories/concepts/evidence applied to research methods. These are applied interpreted in the context of the debate/question</p> <p>Reference will be made to the item to show high level ability to select appropriate examples.</p>
3	<p>8-11 marks</p> <p>Answers demonstrate some knowledge and understanding of sociological theories/ concepts/evidence relating to the context of the debate/question applied to research methods</p>	<p>4-5 marks</p> <p>Answers demonstrate some accurate and relevant selection of appropriate sociological theories/ concepts/ evidence applied to research methods, some of which are interpreted in the context of the debate/question</p> <p>Reference will be made to the item to show some ability to select appropriate examples.</p>
2	<p>4-7 marks</p> <p>Answers demonstrate basic knowledge and understanding of sociological theories/ concepts/evidence relating to the context of the debate/question applied to research methods</p>	<p>2-3 marks</p> <p>Answers demonstrate a basic ability to select, apply and interpret appropriate sociological theories/concepts/ evidence applied to research methods in the context of the debate/question</p>
1	<p>1-3 marks</p> <p>Answers demonstrate limited knowledge and understanding of sociological theories/ concepts/evidence relating to the context of the debate/question applied to research methods</p>	<p>1 mark</p> <p>Answers demonstrate limited ability to select and/or interpret and/or apply sociological theories/concepts/ evidence applied to research methods in the context of the debate/question</p>
	<p>0 marks</p> <p>NRSP</p>	<p>0 marks</p> <p>NRSP</p>

2. As an A Level Sociology student you have been asked to design a research project to collect data on mobile phone use amongst a sample of young people in your area. [30]

- (i) Describe each stage of your research design, justifying the reasons for your choices at each stage.
- (ii) Discuss problems that may occur and the impact of these problems on the quality of the data collected.

The research design should be ethical, achievable and appropriate to the theme of the proposed study. Candidates should make their choices, justify their research approach and design in the context of the research problem.

Expect to see the following stages addressed in the proposed design:

- Operationalisation of key terms in the brief
- Sampling:
 - population
 - sampling technique
 - access
- Research method
- Ethical issues
- Practical considerations.

Expect to see the research design justified and potential problems identified in relation to key methodological concepts and other relevant issues such as:

- Ethics
- Validity
- Reliability
- Practical considerations
- Generalisability
- Representativeness
- Operationalisation.

Band	AO1 elements 2a & 2b	AO2 element 1b	AO3 strands 1-3
4	7-8 marks Answers demonstrate detailed knowledge and understanding of sociological theories/ concepts/evidence relating to the context of the debate/question applied to research methods	9-10 marks Answers demonstrate detailed, accurate and relevant selection of appropriate sociological theories/concepts/ evidence applied to research methods. These are interpreted in the context of the debate/ question	10-12 marks Answers demonstrate detailed, well organised and logical arguments. Logical judgements and conclusions will be offered based on explicit evaluation of the relevant theories/ concepts/evidence as applied to research methods
3	5-6 marks Answers demonstrate some knowledge and understanding of sociological theories/ concepts/evidence relating to the context of the debate/question applied to research methods	6-8 marks Answers demonstrate some accurate and relevant selection of appropriate sociological theories/ concepts/ evidence as applied to research methods, some of which are interpreted in the context of the debate/question	7-9 marks Answers demonstrate some, well organised and logical arguments. Judgements and conclusions offered will show some evaluation of the relevant theories/ concepts/evidence as applied to research methods examined
2	3-4 marks Answers demonstrate basic knowledge and understanding of sociological theories/ concepts/evidence relating to the context of the debate/question applied to research methods	3-5 marks Answers demonstrate a basic ability to select, apply and interpret appropriate sociological theories/ concepts/ evidence as applied to research methods in the context of the debate/ question	4-6 marks Answers demonstrate basic arguments. Judgements and conclusions offered will show basic evaluation of the theories/concepts/ evidence as applied to research methods examined
1	1-2 marks Answers demonstrate limited knowledge and understanding of sociological theories/ concepts/evidence relating to the context of the debate/question applied to research methods	1-2 marks Answers demonstrate limited ability to select and/or interpret and/ or apply sociological theories/concepts/ evidence as applied to research methods in the context of the debate/ question	1-3 marks Answers demonstrate limited argument. Any judgements and conclusions offered will show limited evaluation of any theories/ concepts/evidence as applied to research methods examined
	0 marks NRSP	0 marks NRSP	0 marks NRSP