



INTERNATIONAL AS SOCIOLOGY SCL1

Unit 1 Introducing Sociology

Mark scheme

Additional specimen

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.

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

Copyright information

OxfordAQA retains the copyright on all its publications. However, registered schools/colleges for OxfordAQA are permitted to copy material from this booklet for their own internal use, with the following important exception: OxfordAQA cannot give permission to schools/colleges to photocopy any material that is acknowledged to a third party even for internal use within the centre.

Copyright © 2026 OxfordAQA International Examinations and its licensors. All rights reserved.

Section A
Families

Question	Answer	Total marks
01	Define what is meant by a 'commune'. 2 marks: Accurate and precise definition of a commune, including a clear characteristic, e.g. a group of people who live together and share resources and responsibilities, often as an alternative to the traditional family structure. 1 mark: Partial or underdeveloped definition, showing some understanding but lacking clarity or detail, e.g. people living together in a shared household. 0 marks: No relevant points. Note: this indicative content is not exhaustive. Other creditworthy responses should be awarded marks as appropriate.	2 AO1 = 2

Question	Answer	Total marks
02	Outline one feature of a monogamous marriage. 2 marks: Clear and accurate outline of a feature way, including a key detail. 1 mark: Partial or underdeveloped outline, showing some understanding but lacking clarity of detail. 0 marks: No relevant points. Possible answers include: • one partner at a time (1 mark); a monogamous marriage involves being married to only one person at any one time (+1 mark) • exclusivity (1 mark); partners are expected to remain faithful and not have other intimate partners (+1 mark) • two-person union (1 mark); a monogamous marriage consists of only two spouses rather than multiple partners (+1 mark) • absence of multiple spouses (1 mark); individuals cannot be married to more than one person simultaneously (+1 mark) Note: this indicative content is not exhaustive. Other creditworthy responses should be awarded marks as appropriate.	2 AO1 = 2

Question	Answer	Total marks
03	Identify and briefly explain two types of family structure. 1 mark for each type of family structure identified. +1 mark for each type that is briefly explained. Possible answers include: • nuclear family (1 mark); a family structure consisting of two parents and their children living together in one household (+1 mark) • extended family (1 mark); a family structure that includes relatives beyond the immediate parents and children, such as grandparents or aunts (+1 mark) • single-parent family (1 mark); a family structure where one parent lives with and raises one or more children (+1 mark) • reconstituted (blended) family (1 mark); a family formed when parents bring children from previous relationships into a new household (+1 mark) • child-free family (1 mark); a family structure consisting of a couple without children, either by choice or due to circumstances (+1 mark) 0 marks: No relevant points. Note: this indicative content is not exhaustive. Other creditworthy responses should be awarded marks as appropriate.	4 AO1 = 2 AO3 = 2

Question	Answer	Total marks
04	Identify and briefly explain two functions of the family. 1 mark for each function of the family identified. +1 mark for each function briefly explained. Possible answers include: • primary socialisation (1 mark); the family teaches children norms, values and acceptable behaviour (+1 mark) • economic support (1 mark); the family provides financial support, housing and material needs for its members (+1 mark) • emotional support (1 mark); the family offers care, comfort and emotional security (+1 mark) • reproduction (1 mark); the family is responsible for producing and the next generation (+1 mark) • regulation of behaviour (1 mark); the family provides guidance, supervision and discipline (+1 mark) • maintenance of inequality (1 mark); the family may reinforce unequal roles, power relationships or expectations between members, reproduces capitalism, reinforces patriarchy (+1 mark) 0 marks: No relevant points. Note: this indicative content is not exhaustive. Other creditworthy responses should be awarded marks as appropriate.	4 AO1 = 2 AO3 = 2

Question	Answer	Total marks																		
05	Explain how age may influence the experience of family life. <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Level</th><th>Marks</th><th>Level descriptors</th></tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>4</td><td>7 - 8</td><td> Comprehensive and detailed knowledge of the issue in the question, showing clear understanding of key concepts (AO1). Well-developed analysis which is supported and directed to the issue in the question (AO3). </td></tr> <tr> <td>3</td><td>5 - 6</td><td> Reasonable knowledge of the issue in the question, showing some understanding of key concepts but lacking clarity of detail or depth in places (AO1). Relevant analysis, but not fully developed or lacking depth in places (AO3). </td></tr> <tr> <td>2</td><td>3 - 4</td><td> Some knowledge of the issue in the question, showing limited depth. May state or identify key concepts with little development (AO1). Some attempt at analysis, but it may be vague or generalised (AO3). </td></tr> <tr> <td>1</td><td>1 - 2</td><td> Limited knowledge, with minimal reference to the issue in the question or understanding of key concepts (AO1). Little or no analysis (AO3). </td></tr> <tr> <td>0</td><td>0</td><td>Nothing worth of credit.</td></tr> </tbody> </table> Possible answers include: • children experiencing family life as a period of dependence and socialisation • young people experiencing negotiation or conflict over independence within the family • parents experiencing family life through responsibilities such as childcare, paid work and decision-making • older people experiencing changes in family roles, such as becoming grandparents • ageing increasing reliance on family members for care and support • family relationships and roles changing across the life course Note: this indicative content is not exhaustive. Other creditworthy responses should be awarded marks as appropriate	Level	Marks	Level descriptors	4	7 - 8	Comprehensive and detailed knowledge of the issue in the question, showing clear understanding of key concepts (AO1). Well-developed analysis which is supported and directed to the issue in the question (AO3).	3	5 - 6	Reasonable knowledge of the issue in the question, showing some understanding of key concepts but lacking clarity of detail or depth in places (AO1). Relevant analysis, but not fully developed or lacking depth in places (AO3).	2	3 - 4	Some knowledge of the issue in the question, showing limited depth. May state or identify key concepts with little development (AO1). Some attempt at analysis, but it may be vague or generalised (AO3).	1	1 - 2	Limited knowledge, with minimal reference to the issue in the question or understanding of key concepts (AO1). Little or no analysis (AO3).	0	0	Nothing worth of credit.	8 AO1 = 4 AO3 = 4
Level	Marks	Level descriptors																		
4	7 - 8	Comprehensive and detailed knowledge of the issue in the question, showing clear understanding of key concepts (AO1). Well-developed analysis which is supported and directed to the issue in the question (AO3).																		
3	5 - 6	Reasonable knowledge of the issue in the question, showing some understanding of key concepts but lacking clarity of detail or depth in places (AO1). Relevant analysis, but not fully developed or lacking depth in places (AO3).																		
2	3 - 4	Some knowledge of the issue in the question, showing limited depth. May state or identify key concepts with little development (AO1). Some attempt at analysis, but it may be vague or generalised (AO3).																		
1	1 - 2	Limited knowledge, with minimal reference to the issue in the question or understanding of key concepts (AO1). Little or no analysis (AO3).																		
0	0	Nothing worth of credit.																		

Question	Answer	Total marks
----------	--------	-------------

06	Evaluate sociological explanations for changes in family life.			20
In your answer, use examples from your society or any society you know about.				
				AO1 = 6 AO2 = 7 AO3 = 7

	AO1: Sociological explanations for changes in family life Functionalist explanations • family change as a response to wider social changes • adaptation of family functions (e.g. loss of economic and educational roles) • emergence of more specialised roles within the family Marxist explanations • changes in family life linked to the needs of capitalism • family adapting to reproduce labour power and support consumption • ideology shaping family norms and expectations Feminist explanations • changes in gender roles within the family • impact of feminism on family relationships and expectations • increased female employment and greater equality • challenges to patriarchal family structures Postmodern / late modern explanations • increased individual choice and personal freedom • growth of family diversity • decline of traditional norms • emphasis on individualisation and negotiated relationships Other explanations • influence of social policy on family roles and arrangements • changes in work patterns and education AO2: Application • examples such as: ◦ dual-earner families ◦ rise in divorce rates ◦ increase in lone-parent families ◦ changing gender roles in the household ◦ same-sex relationships and family diversity ◦ impact of policies (e.g. divorce law, childcare support) AO3: Evaluation of explanations • functionalist limitations: may present changes as positive and ignore conflict or inequality • Marxist critique: highlights economic factors but may underestimate individual choice and diversity • feminist strengths and limitations: highlights gender inequality but may overstate progress or assume all women benefit equally • postmodern critique: emphasises choice, but may ignore structural constraints such as class or gender • extent of change debate: family life may not have changed as much as suggested • choice vs constraint: question of whether changes reflect freedom or continued structural pressures • differences between groups: changes vary by class, ethnicity, culture and society • comparison of structural vs individual explanations: debate between structure (e.g. economy, patriarchy) and agency (choice, lifestyle) Note: this indicative content is not exhaustive. Other creditworthy responses should be awarded marks as appropriate.	
--	--	--

Section B

Research Methods

Question	Marking guidance	Total marks
7	Define what is meant by ‘reliability’ in sociological research. 2 marks: Accurate and precise definition of reliability, including a clear characteristic , e.g. research is reliable if it can be repeated and produce consistent results. 1 mark: Partial or underdeveloped definition showing some understanding, e.g. research that gives similar results. 0 marks: No relevant points. <i>Note: This indicative content is not exhaustive. Other creditworthy responses should be awarded marks as appropriate.</i>	2 AO1 = 2

Question	Marking guidance	Total marks
8	Outline one ethical issue sociologists may face when carrying out research. 2 marks: Clear and accurate outline of one ethical issue, including a key detail 1 mark: Partial or underdeveloped outline, showing some understanding 0 marks: No relevant points Possible answers include: • lack of informed consent (1 mark); participants may not fully understand the purpose of the research before agreeing to take part (+1 mark) • deception of participants (1 mark); researchers may mislead participants about the true aims of the study (+1 mark) • risk of psychological harm (1 mark); participants may experience stress, embarrassment or distress during the research (+1 mark) • right to withdraw (1 mark); participants should have the right to withdraw from the research (+1 mark) • confidentiality issues (1 mark); personal information may be disclosed or participants may be identifiable in the findings (+1 mark) • invasion of privacy (1 mark); researchers may observe or access private behaviour without permission (+1 mark) <i>Note: This indicative content is not exhaustive. Other creditworthy responses should be awarded marks as appropriate.</i>	2 AO1 = 2

Question	Marking guidance	Total marks
9	Identify and briefly explain two advantages of using triangulation in sociological research. 1 marks for each of two valid advantages identified +1 mark for each advantage that is briefly explained Possible answers include: - improves validity (1 mark); using different methods allows researchers to compare findings and gain a more accurate picture (+1 mark) - reduces bias (1 mark); combining methods can balance out the weaknesses of any single method (+1 mark) - provides more complete data (1 mark); different methods produce different types of data, providing more 'verstehen' (empathetic understanding) of the topic (+1 mark) - allows cross-checking of results (1 mark); findings can be compared to see if they are consistent across methods (+1 mark) - combines strengths of methods (1 mark); for example, quantitative data can provide patterns while qualitative data gives detailed explanations (+1 mark) 0 marks: No relevant points. Note: This indicative content is not exhaustive. Other creditworthy responses should be awarded marks as appropriate.	4 AO1 = 2 AO3 = 2

Question	Marking guidance	Total marks
10	Identify and briefly explain two reasons why sociologists may operationalise concepts in their research. 1 marks for each of two valid reasons identified +1 mark for each reason that is briefly explained Possible answers include: - to make abstract concepts measurable (1 mark); this allows researchers to collect data on ideas such as social class or achievement (+1 mark) - to ensure clarity and consistency in data collection (1 mark); clear definitions help different researchers measure concepts in the same way (+1 mark) - to improve the reliability of research (1 mark); clearly defined measures can be repeated and checked by other researchers (+1 mark) - to allow comparisons between studies (1 mark); shared definitions make it easier to compare findings across different research projects (+1 mark) 0 marks: No relevant points.	4 AO1 = 2 AO3 = 2

	Note: This indicative content is not exhaustive. Other creditworthy responses should be awarded marks as appropriate.	
--	--	--

Question	Part		Total marks
11	1	Identify one limitation of the sample used in the research shown in item 1. 2 marks: Accurate and precise identification of one limitation of the sample, including a clear supporting detail, e.g. the sample only includes ten students from one school, so it may not reflect the views of students elsewhere. 1 mark: Partial or underdeveloped identification, showing some understanding but lacking clarity or detail, e.g. the sample is small. 0 marks: No relevant points. Possible answers may include: • small sample size • only one school studied • students from one subject area • limited age group • over-representation of certain characteristics	2 AO2 = 2

Question	Part		Total marks
11	2	Identify one practical issue that may have affected the research shown in item 1. 2 marks: Accurate and precise identification of one practical issue, including a clear supporting detail, e.g. interviews took place during lunch breaks, which may limit the depth of responses. 1 mark: Partial or underdeveloped identification, showing some understanding but lacking clarity or detail, e.g. lack of time. 0 marks: No relevant points. Possible answers may include: • time constraints • limited access to participants • interruptions during interviews • reliance on a gatekeeper (teacher)	2 AO2 = 2

Question	Part		Total marks
11	3	Identify one strength of using unstructured interviews for the research shown in Item 1. 2 marks: Accurate and precise identification of one strength, including a clear supporting detail, e.g. unstructured interviews allow students to speak freely and provide detailed responses about their experiences. 1 mark: Partial or underdeveloped identification, showing some understanding but lacking clarity or detail, e.g. detailed answers. 0 marks: No relevant points. Possible answers may include: • detailed qualitative data • opportunity to explore feelings • flexibility in questioning • greater rapport with participants	2 AO2 = 2

Question	Part		Total marks
11	4	Identify one reason why the data collected in Item 1 may lack validity. 2 marks: Accurate and precise identification of one reason, including a clear supporting detail, e.g. students may exaggerate their experiences due to social desirability in a school setting. 1 mark: Partial or underdeveloped identification, showing some understanding but lacking clarity or detail, e.g. students may not be honest. 0 marks: No relevant points. Possible answers may include: • social desirability bias • interviewer influence • lack of anonymity • pressure from school context	2 AO2 = 2