

NORTHGATE

High School

GCSE Sociology Exam Guide



Exam Board: AQA

Format: Two Papers – both 1 Hour and 45 Minutes

Paper One: Families and Education

Paper Two: Crime & Deviance and Social Stratification

Marks: 100 marks per paper

What do command words mean?






- **Describe:** Set out characteristics.
- **Discuss:** Present key points about different ideas or strengths and weaknesses.
- **Examine:** Investigate closely.
- **Explain:** Set out purposes or reasons.
- **Identify:** Name or otherwise characterise.


Multiple choice questions (1 mark)


You will have a question with four possible answers. To signify your answer, colour the circle in the box. If you change your mind, put a cross through the original answer.

For questions with four responses only one answer per question is allowed.

For each answer completely fill in the circle alongside the appropriate answer.

CORRECT METHOD  WRONG METHODS    

If you want to change your answer you must cross out your original answer as shown. 

If you wish to return to an answer previously crossed out, ring the answer you now wish to select as shown. 

'Describe' and 'identify and describe' questions (3 marks)

These questions are will generally ask you about key terms and concepts, so make sure your knowledge of these is strong.

Example questions:

1. Describe one example of achieved status [3 marks]
2. Describe the term Patriarchy [3 marks]

How to:

POINT: Define the key term- what is it?

EXPLAIN: Explain the term/your definition...

EXAMPLE: ...with an example

The explain and the example can also be switched around. See first example below

Model answers:

1. Describe one example of achieved status

Achieved status is status that you obtain from effort/ working hard (+1) for example in education, if you work hard you will get better grades (+1) and then this means you will be able to go into a better job in society and therefore you will have more money and higher status through your achievement (+1)

2. Describe the term patriarchy

Patriarchy means male dominance (+1) feminists argue that males demonstrate dominance over women in many areas such as the family and work place (+1), for example, in work women experience a pay gap- they get paid less than men for the same job illustrating that society sees men as more important (+1)

Sometimes the question might be 'identify and describe' for example: identify and describe one formal agent of social control. For these questions, you would do the same as the above, but you would need to state what the question is asking you first. In the above question, your identification would need to be the formal agent such as the police

'Examine one strength/ weakness' research method question (2 marks)

Item A

Despite concerns over the increase in the number of children in single-parent families, recent research has found that children raised by a single parent are no less happy than those living with two biological parents. Rather, it is the quality of relationships at home which are most strongly linked to a child's well-being.

Researchers analysed data from the Millennium Cohort Study, which was made up of 12 877 children aged seven, in 2008, from across the UK. The children came from three family types: those living with two biological parents; those living with a step-parent and a biological parent; and those with just a single parent.

The seven-year-olds were asked the question: "How often do you feel happy?" Of the children living with a lone parent, 36 per cent said they were happy "all the time" while the remaining 64 per cent reported being happy "sometimes or never".

Exactly the same percentages were recorded when the question was put to children from the other family types.

The results were largely unchanged when other factors which could influence a child's well-being were taken into account, such as their parents' social class or the affluence of the area in which they live.

From **Item A**, examine **one** strength of the research.

[2 marks]

This 'examine one' question uses the Item and is worth two marks. These are simple to get full marks on...if you know your research methods!

How to:

STRENGTH/WEAKNESS: Find and state a strength, using evidence from the item/source (1 mark).

WHY IS THIS A STRENGTH/WEAKNESS: Say why this is a strength/weakness- apply your knowledge of research methods (1 mark).

Model answer:

One strength of the research is that it used quantitative data from a large number of children (12,877). Having a large sample size is a strength because generalisations can be made to the rest of the target population.

Alternative answers:

- Data from children living in different areas of Britain, increasing the likelihood of a representative sample.
- Data from different types of family, enabling comparisons to be made.
- Findings relating to single parent families that contradict ideas about the superiority of the two-parent family.

'Identify and explain' using the Item (4 marks)

Items and sources are useful as they give you hints on what to talk about. These questions are asking you for **trends, patterns, statistics, facts, opinions and links to prior knowledge (sociologists/topics)**.

Example question 1:

Identify and explain one factor that may have led to an increase in the number of children raised in single parent families referred to in Item A as a concern.

[4 marks]

Example question 2:

Describe the type of crime survey in Item A. Identify the trend and explain one factor which may account for this trend.

[4 marks]

Although these two questions are worded slightly differently, the key elements are still there: identify and explain.

How to:

POINT: Pick out what the question has asked for - the factor, the trend, the type of data and link this to the Item.

EXPLAIN/EVIDENCE: What is the factor and how has this led to what the question is asking you?

Model answer 1:

One factor that has led to an increase in divorce as referred to as a concern in Item A is divorce. Divorce has been increasing and one of the reasons for this is the decline in stigma attached to it meaning that people are seeing divorce less negatively. This has contributed to the rise in lone parent families because breakdown has meant that one parent will have to take care of the children.

Model answer 2:

The type of statistical data shown in Item A is quantitative and therefore numerical, it is showing you amount of crime that has been recorded by the police. The trend in this source is an upward pattern which shows us that crime is increasing for example, the amount of crime started at 3000 and at the end has risen to 6000. One factor that could account the trend rising is because the definitions of crime has changed so what wasn't a crime in the past, now is.

'Identify and explain' research method linked to context (4 marks)

Same principle as above but these questions ask you about a strength or a weakness of a research method applied to a context.

Example question:

Identify and explain one advantage of using unstructured interviews to investigate relationships between family members. [4 marks]

How to:

POINT: Pick out your strength/weakness.

EXPLAIN: Explain the method applying to the strength or weakness you have discussed.

EXAMPLE/EVIDENCE: Apply to the context.

Model answer:

One advantage of using unstructured interviews is that you can ask questions to different family members based on the answers given by other family members. By doing this you can achieve a more detailed and wider range of valid information about family life. For example, you can compare the responses of a husband and wife to a question about who does the housework or who looks after the children.

'Identify and explain' research method and/or sociological perspective (4 marks)

This table appears in a paper by the sociologists Robert and Rhona Rapoport published in 1982, they have used a variety of sources to identify class based differences in relationships within marriage and child rearing.

Sources: Bott (1971), Goldthorpe (1969), Newson and Newson (1970).

Social class differences		
	Middle class	Working class
Marital relations	More emphasis on sharing, equality, communication. More 'joint' division of labour. More planning.	More emphasis on 'the place' of women and men, less verbal communication. More 'segregated' division of labour. Less planning.
Child rearing practices	High value placed on reasoning, self-direction, initiative. Emphasis on ambition. Discipline by reasoning and withholding of reward/love.	High value placed on obedience. Emphasis on conforming, obeying authority. Discipline more physical.

Example question:

From Item B, identify and describe the research method used by the Rapoport's including what you know of their perspective on the family. [4 marks]

How to:

POINT: Pick out and state the method or the factor that the question has asked.

EXPLAIN/EVIDENCE: How is the method used? Explain what you know of the theory.

Model answer:

The research method used is a secondary source. The Rapoport's are key sociologists who focused their work on family diversity. They have used the work of other sociologists to show the effect of social class on family life e.g. comparing attitudes towards relationships and child rearing. They were able to show that there were five different types of family diversity which reflected the choice and freedom that individuals had.

'Identify and explain' knowledge of research methods (4 marks)

The key to this question is having good knowledge of your research methods.

You will be asked for a strength or a weakness and you will have to apply this to a context (something you will have learnt in your other topics such as families, education, social stratification or crime).

Example question:

Identify and explain one disadvantage of using questionnaires to investigate the literacy skills of parents. [4 marks]

How to:

POINT: What is the strength or weakness of the method?

EXPLAIN: Why this is a weakness of the method?

EXAMPLE: Use the example of the context you have been given to illustrate this.

LINK: Link back to the question to show that you understand it.

Model answer:

One disadvantage of using questionnaires to investigate the literacy skills of parents is that the respondents may not be able to read the questions, as there is no researcher present, the respondent cannot ask for clarification. Therefore, parents may miss out questions they do not understand or guess the answers which will mean that your data lacks validity. Using a method like unstructured interviews would be better as any questions can be fully explained.

'Discuss how far sociologists would agree' essay question (12 marks)

How to:

- **INTRODUCTION:** Define the key terms in the question and lay out the focus of the essay; who agrees and who disagrees with the question?
Your introduction should be approximately two sentences in length.
- **MAIN BODY:** Two or three (depending how quickly/in-depth you write) following the PEELE structure (point, explain, example, link, explicit evaluate).
Pack these paragraphs with key terms, examples, theories, sociologists and research.
Always start with a paragraph that agrees with the question.
- **CONCLUSION:** Answer the question! Do you agree or not? Why?

Example 12 mark essay questions:

- Discuss how far sociologists would agree that living in a nuclear family tends to benefit men more than women.
- Discuss how far sociologists would agree that changes in social attitudes have been responsible for the increase in the divorce rate since the 1960s.
- Discuss how far sociologists would agree that a pupil's social class is the most important influence on his or her educational achievements.
- Discuss how far sociologists would agree that the main function of the education system is to serve the needs of the economy and capitalism.
- Discuss how far sociologists would agree that gender differences in educational achievement are mainly due to factors inside of schools.
- Discuss how far sociologists would agree that official statistics of crime do not accurately reflect the true level of middle-class criminal behaviour.
- Discuss how far sociologists would agree that the level of youth crime reflects how well parents control their children.
- Discuss how far sociologists would agree that a breakdown of the traditional family is one of the most important reasons that child poverty exists in modern Britain.

Further Help, Support and Resources

- **Northgate Learning Portal**

Screencast question guide, example exam questions, model answers, past papers.

<https://northgatehigh.sharepoint.com/:f:/s/Learning/EnNHG8Mw7xRlnG7JFKSj5-EBeiYRn-jGaw07pR Mp67AQ?e=hyntHh>

- **Student Workbooks**

<https://northgatehigh.sharepoint.com/:f:/s/Learning/EsiEyqqe8u9LnRdOZDDTgcQBrJwYsCl76p6atM7CgogfWA?e=Ji7bfr>

- **Past Papers and Mark Schemes**

<https://www.aqa.org.uk/subjects/sociology/gcse/sociology-8192/assessment-resources>

- **Key Sociologists Guide**

<https://www.aqa.org.uk/subjects/sociology/gcse/sociology-8192/appendix-b-texts-and-summaries>

- **Key Terms**

<https://www.aqa.org.uk/subjects/sociology/gcse/sociology-8192/appendix-a-key-terms-and-concepts>

- **Quizlet**

<https://quizlet.com/subject/gcse-sociology/>

- **Seneca Learning**

Create a log in and search 'AQA GCSE Sociology'.

<https://senecalearning.com/en-GB/>

- **GCSE Sociology Electronic Textbook**

https://northgatehigh.sharepoint.com/:f:/s/Learning/EpRQb63rKp9GlAh9Aytu5zsBH06X_0P33WL8ka0yZjD8TQ?e=RqiCAa

