GCSE

WJEC GCSE Social Studies

Approved by Qualifications Wales

Non-Examination Assessment Handbook

Unit 2: Investigating Society and Social Issues

Teaching from 2026
For award from 2028

Version 2 - November 2026



This Qualifications Wales regulated qualification is not available to centres in England.

Made for Wales.
Ready for the world.

WJEC would like to thank the students and teachers of Fitzalan High School, Cardiff and Llanwern High School, Newport for their participation in the creation of these covers.

SUMMARY OF AMENDMENTS

Version	Description	Page number
2	The assessment release date has been updated from September to June.	2

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About this pack: information for teachers

This handbook contains assessment materials for Unit 2: Investigating Society and Social Issues.

Within this handbook, you will find:

- information for teachers on how to manage arrangements for assessment
- information for candidates which includes:
  - a detailed breakdown of each task
  - information which tells candidates about things that they must and must not do when they are completing the assessment
  - the mark scheme that will be used to assess the candidates' work.

Managing the assessment

This is a WJEC marked (external) non-examination assessment.
The following arrangements must be followed when managing the assessment.

Task setting

This assignment (tasks and NEA brief) has been produced by WJEC and cannot be changed.

Time

Candidates must be allowed **6 hours and 30 minutes** to complete this assessment.
Candidates should spend approximately:

- 1 hour 30 minutes completing task 1
- 1 hour 30 minutes completing task 2
- 1 hour completing task 3
- 1 hour completing task 4
- 1 hour 30 minutes completing task 5.

Following completion of Task 2, learners will need to collect data using their selected method. This collection of feedback is not included in the overall time for the assessment.

The time suggested for each task takes account of the contribution of the task to the overall assessment requirements. There can be no changes to the total time available for this assessment. Centres can, however, amend the suggested time available for each task.

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Resources

Candidates must have access to the NEA brief released on Portal in June each year, the information for candidates contained within this handbook and any necessary resources, as specified in the detailed task tables within the candidate pack.

For tasks 2–5 learners are allowed access to the outcomes of Tasks 1–4 and they can have these either in printed or electronic form (such as PDF documents). For Task 5, where learners are creating an artefact, they are allowed to use a pre-prepared template.

Collaboration

Group work is not allowed. Candidates must complete all tasks individually. However, an individual candidate may collect data, using the data collection device they designed in Task 2, from other candidates where appropriate.

Supervision

Candidates must be supervised by an assessor whilst completing the activities. Centres must have in place systems to ensure candidates cannot access evidence they have been developing outside of supervised activities.

Level	Assessment conditions
High	Candidates complete work under formal supervision[1] – in a classroom, (e.g. with teacher supervision) following these rules: • No communication with peers is allowed (including unrelated topics) • No assistance may be given by the teacher beyond reading the instructions • Candidates must work independently, and all work must be their own • Candidates' work must remain within the centre at all times and stored securely between timetabled sessions • Wall displays or materials that could advantage candidates must not be visible • In line with JCQ regulations for non-examination assessments, the 'Warning to Candidates' and 'Unauthorised Items Poster' must be displayed.

Authentication

Supervision must be in place to ensure the authenticity of evidence produced for summative assessment.

You should not provide input or guidance to candidates during the assessment time. This includes providing formative feedback on the evidence being produced. You can provide guidance on the requirements of the task and remind candidates of the mark bands and how they can be interpreted.

[1] There are no set requirements regarding the number of teachers/assessors required to be present during an assessment. However, the ratio must be sufficient to ensure appropriate supervision of candidates throughout. If only one teacher/assessor is present, they must be able to request assistance without needing to leave the assessment room. Under no circumstances should candidates be left unsupervised or unattended at any time.

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Candidates can review and redraft evidence independently within the time controls for the assessment.

Candidates must sign the declaration to confirm that all evidence submitted for assessment is their own work and that any sources used have been acknowledged.

Supervising teachers must sign the declaration to confirm that evidence submitted for assessment was completed under the controlled conditions set out in this assessment.

Candidate evidence

The acceptable formats for evidence of each of the tasks is summarised in the task tables. Any modified assessment must enable the candidate to generate the evidence required in the table.

A typical candidate might submit a project with the following materials:

- A fully completed '*Candidate Declaration Form'*
- Response to Task 1, including a written report and an annotated resource pack
- Response the Task 2, including a completed '*WJEC GCSE Social Studies Unit 2 Primary Research Plan'* and a blank copy of the data collection device used to collect data
- Response to Task 3, graphs and tables (hand drawn or produced through appropriate software) and a written report
- Response to Task 4, a written report
- Response to Task 5, a copy of the artefact
- Appendix 1: Table of raw data.

Task marking

WJEC will mark all evidence produced by candidates.

Centres **must** ensure that a **candidate declaration form** is completed for every candidate and placed at the front of the candidate's work.

Notes on the completion of the Candidate Declaration Form

- The form must be completed and securely attached to the Candidate's work, which is then uploaded via IAMIS.
- The form can be completed electronically or manually. Electronic signatures will be accepted.

Further information

You should refer to the JCQ Instructions for conducting non-examination assessment for further information on managing assessment within our GCSE Qualifications.

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Assessment details

For this assessment learners are required to use the three sources published in the NEA Brief to explore a social issue specified in the NEA Brief.

In this assessment, learners will need to use these sources to summarise the social issue and then evaluate the credibility of these sources. They will then plan (including the completion of a 'Unit 2 Primary Research Plan') and carry out a piece of primary research to investigate the social issue. The findings from the primary research will need to be presented and analysed to draw conclusions about the data. An evaluation of the primary research conducted will need to be completed before using the three sources in the NEA Brief and the findings from the primary research to create an artefact to summarise views on the social issue.

This assessment contributes to 20% of the overall qualification grade and will take 6 hours and 30 minutes to complete. The tasks will be marked out of a total of 60 marks.

This unit will be assessed through an externally set assignment based on the NEA brief, (released on Portal) and will be set and marked by WJEC. Assessments must be submitted digitally (they may be handwritten and scanned or completed digitally).

To complete this assessment, learners will need to be given a copy of the NEA Brief.

Learners will have a total of 6 hours and 30 minutes to complete the write up of the tasks. This does not include the time needed to gather the data for the primary research (between Task 2 and Task 3).

Candidates must complete all tasks individually. However, an individual candidate may collect data, using the data collection device they design in Task 2, from other candidates.

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Information for Candidates

About this pack: information and instructions for candidates

This information is for candidates completing **Unit 2: Investigating Society and Social Issues**.

You will be provided with an NEA Brief which provides you with three sources on a social issue specified in the NEA Brief.

Within this pack, you will find:

- a detailed breakdown of each task, the evidence requirements, and the conditions (controls) under which the task is to be completed
- information which tells you about things that you must and must not do when you are completing the assessment
- the mark scheme which will be used to assess your work

You will have 6 hours and 30 minutes hours in total to complete this assessment. This does not include the time needed to gather the data for your primary research.

You should spend approximately:

- 1 hour 30 minutes completing task 1
- 1 hour 30 minutes completing task 2
- 1 hour completing task 3
- 1 hour completing task 4
- 1 hour 30 minutes completing task 5.

You will be supervised throughout the assessment.

Your teacher is allowed to help you to understand the assessment requirements and the tasks, but there are rules about the kind of help and how much they can give you. You should speak to your teacher if you have any questions about what you are and are not allowed to do as you are completing the tasks, as they will know how much help they are allowed to give you.

It is important that you work independently from other candidates and the work produced should be your own unaided work. You and your teacher will be required to sign a declaration that all work presented is your own work.

You are advised to check your work carefully to make sure that it is accurate and correct.

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Assessment

For this assessment you are required to use the sources published in the NEA Brief to explore a social issue specified in the NEA Brief.

In this assessment, you will need to use these sources to summarise the social issue and then evaluate the credibility of these sources. You will then plan (including the completion of a 'Unit 2 Primary Research Plan') and carry out a piece of primary research to investigate the social issue. The findings from your primary research will need to be presented and analysed to draw conclusions about the data. An evaluation of the primary research conducted will need to be completed before using the three sources in the NEA Brief and the findings from the primary research to create an artefact to summarise views on the social issue.

The tasks on the following pages state what **should** be included in your evidence and what **could** be included:

- where tasks use the word **should**, you will need to include what has been listed
- where tasks use the word **could**, this information is for guidance only.

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Tasks

Task		Evidence	Controls
1	(a) Summarise what the sources in the resource pack say about the social issue. [6 marks] (b) Evaluate the credibility of the sources in the resource pack. You could consider aspects such as: • accuracy • authority of author • currency • potential bias • purpose. [6 marks]	Written report Annotated resource pack	Assessment conditions: high Resources: specified: • resource pack and/or annotated resource pack • Internet/AI not allowed
You should spend approximately 1 hour 30 minutes completing this task			
2	(a) Complete a '*WJEC GCSE Social Studies – Unit 2 Primary Research Plan'* form (see Appendix A). [6 marks] (b) Create a data collection device for your primary research and use it to investigate the social issue. You could create: • a questionnaire • interview questions • a plan for an overt observation. [8 marks]	Completed '*WJEC GCSE Social Studies – Unit 2 Primary Research Plan'.* Data collection device	Assessment conditions: high Resources: specified: • outcomes from Task 1 • Internet/AI not allowed
You should spend approximately 1 hour 30 minutes completing this task. Following this task, you should collect feedback using your selected method. This is not included in the overall time for your assessment.			

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Task		Evidence	Controls
3	(a) Display data from your primary research. You could use: • bar charts • histograms • infographics • line graphs • pie charts • scatter plots • word clouds. [8 marks] (b) Explain why the display methods you selected are appropriate and what conclusions your data shows. [8 marks]	Raw data to be submitted as an appendix Written report	Assessment conditions: high Resources: specified: • resource pack • outcomes from Tasks 1–2 • findings from primary research • Internet/AI not allowed
You should spend approximately 1 hour completing this task			
4	Evaluate your primary research. You should consider the: • method • data collection device • sample: size, characteristics, sampling technique. [6 marks]	Written report	Assessment conditions: high Resources: specified: • resource pack • outcomes from Tasks 1–3 • findings from primary research • Internet/AI not allowed
You should spend approximately 1 hour completing this task.			

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Task		Evidence	Controls
5	Create an artefact that summarises the social issue. You could create: • an email • an online article/blog post • a research poster • a speech. The artefact should: • follow an appropriate layout/format • feature effective communication for the artefact type and audience • reflect the sources in the resource pack • reflect the results of the primary data collection. [12 marks]	Artefact	Assessment conditions: high Resources: specified: • resource pack • outcomes from Tasks 1–4 • findings from primary research • access to the Internet allowed but not use of AI.
You should spend approximately 1 hour 30 minutes completing this task.			

End of tasks

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Information for candidates

The following information has been taken from the JCQ *Information for candidates – non-examination assessments* and the JCQ *Artificial Intelligence (AI) Use in Assessments: Protecting the Integrity of Qualifications.* This tells you about things that you must and must not do when you are completing your assessment. If there is anything that you do not understand, you must ask your teacher.

Instructions for candidates

- When you submit your work and sign your candidate declaration form, you need to ensure that your final product reflects your own independent work and isn't copied or paraphrased from another source such as an AI tool.
- If you receive help and guidance from someone other than your teacher, you **must** tell your teacher who will then record the nature of the assistance given to you.
- Take care of your work and keep it safe. **Do not** leave it lying around where your classmates can find it or share it with anyone, including posting it on social media. You **must** always keep your work secure and confidential whilst you are preparing it; **do not** share it with your classmates. If it is stored on the computer network, keep your password secure. Collect all copies from the printer and destroy those you do not need.
- **Do not** be tempted to use pre-prepared online solutions (such as those produced by AI tools and chatbots) – this is cheating. Electronic tools used by WJEC can detect this sort of copying.
- You **must not** write inappropriate, offensive or obscene material.

Plagiarism

Plagiarism involves taking someone else's words, thoughts or ideas and trying to pass them off as your own**. It is a form of cheating which is taken very seriously**. There are many ways to detect plagiarism:

- Markers can spot changes in the style of writing and use of language.
- Markers are highly experienced subject specialists – they may have read the source you are using or even marked the work you have copied from!
- Internet search engines and specialised computer software can be used to match phrases or pieces of text with original sources and to detect changes in the grammar and style of writing or punctuation.

Penalties for breaking the regulations

If it is discovered that you have broken the regulations, you will be referred to the Malpractice panel who might impose a penalty.

WJEC will decide which penalty is appropriate.

Remember – it's your qualification so it needs to be your own work

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Marking scheme

0 marks will be awarded if there is no evidence or submitted work is not worthy of credit.

Task 1 (a) Summarise what the sources in the resource pack say about the social issue.	
Band	**AO2**
3	**5–6 marks** A convincing response that shows: • effective application of knowledge and understanding of all the main source points • clear knowledge and understanding of all the main points of the social issue.
2	**3–4 marks** A good response that demonstrates: • some effective application of knowledge and understanding of most of the main source points • some clear knowledge and understanding of most of the main points of the social issue.
1	**1–2 marks** A basic response that demonstrates: • little application of knowledge and understanding of the main source points • minimal knowledge understanding of the main points of the social issue.
0	**0 marks** Response not creditworthy or not attempted.

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Task 1 (b)

Evaluate the credibility of the sources in the resource pack.

You could consider aspects such as:

- accuracy
- authority of author
- currency
- potential bias
- purpose.

Band	AO3
3	**5–6 marks** A convincing evaluation that demonstrates: • effective analysis of all sources • informed judgments made clearly linked to the sources • effective use of relevant examples to support argument • a clear and coherent response that is well organised and well structured.
2	**3–4 marks** A good evaluation that demonstrates: • clear analysis of most of the sources • clear judgements made mostly linked to the sources • mostly relevant examples used to support argument • a generally clear and coherent response that is organised and structured.
1	**1–2 marks** A basic evaluation that demonstrates: • little relevant analysis of the sources • few judgements made which are not always linked to the sources • minimal use of relevant examples • an overall poor response that lacks control over clarity, coherence organisation and structure.
0	**0 marks** Response not creditworthy or not attempted.

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Task 2 (a) Complete a '*WJEC GCSE Social Studies – Unit 2 Primary Research Plan'* form (see Appendix A).	
Band	**AO2**
3	**5–6 marks** The completed form is clear and detailed and shows: • a suitable plan with a clear focus on the social issue that will result in gathering of valid attitudes • application of clear knowledge and understanding of appropriate methods • application of clear knowledge and understanding of suitable sample techniques • application of clear knowledge and understanding of relevant ethical issues/management of risk.
2	**3–4 marks** The completed form is mostly clear with some detail and shows: • a generally suitable plan with a focus on the social issue that will result in gathering of some valid attitudes • some application of clear knowledge and understanding of appropriate methods • some application of clear knowledge and understanding of suitable sample techniques • some application of clear knowledge and understanding of relevant ethical issues/management of risk.
1	**1–2 marks** The completed form is basic and shows: • a plan with some omissions that lacks focus on the social issue so is likely to result in gathering of limited valid attitudes • minimal application of knowledge and understanding of appropriate methods • minimal application of knowledge and understanding of suitable sample techniques • minimal application of knowledge and understanding of relevant ethical issues/management of risk.
0	**0 marks** Response not creditworthy or not attempted

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Task 2 (b)

Create a data collection device for your primary research and use it to investigate the social issue.

You could create:

- a questionnaire
- interview questions
- a plan for an overt observation.

Band	AO4
4	**7–8 marks** The collection device demonstrates comprehensive skills and techniques by: • having a design that allows for a well-focused investigation of the social issue • enabling collection of data that is clearly relevant to the social issue • being clear and coherent, well organised and well structured.
3	**5–6 marks** The collection device demonstrates effective skills and techniques by: • having a design that allows for relevant investigation of the social issue • enabling collection of data that is mostly relevant to the social issue • being mostly clear and coherent, organised and structured.
2	**3–4 marks** The data collection device demonstrates relevant skills and techniques by: • having a design that allows for some relevant investigation of the social issue • enabling the collection of data that has some relevance to the social issue • being generally clear and coherent, organised and structured, though may have lapses.
1	**1–2 marks** The data collection device demonstrates basic skills and techniques by: • having a design that allows for minimal investigation of the social issue • enabling the collection of data that may not always be relevant to the social issue • lacking overall control in terms of clarity, coherence, organisation and structure.
0	**0 marks** Response not creditworthy or not attempted.

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Task 3 (a)

Display data from your primary research.

You could use:

- bar charts
- histograms
- infographics draw
- line graphs
- pie charts
- scatter plots
- word clouds.

Band	AO4
4	**7–8 marks** Demonstration of comprehensive skills and techniques that: • shows accurate and clearly expressed presentation of all research data using appropriate method(s) • uses appropriate data presentation features • has a well organised layout that is easy to understand.
3	**5–6 marks** Demonstration of effective skills and techniques that: • shows mainly accurate and clearly expressed presentation of all/most research data using appropriate method(s) • uses mostly appropriate data presentation features • has an organised layout that is mostly easy to understand.
2	**3–4 marks** Demonstration of some clear skills and techniques that: • shows some accurate and clearly expressed presentation of selected research data using some appropriate method(s) • uses some appropriate data presentation features • has some clearly organised layout that is easy to understand though may have lapses.
1	**1–2 marks** Demonstration of basic skills and techniques that: • shows minimal accurate and clearly expressed presentation of selected research data using little appropriate method(s) • uses few appropriate data presentation features • has a poorly organised layout that is not always easy to understand.
0	**0 marks** Response not creditworthy or not attempted.

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Task 3 (b) Explain why the display methods you selected are appropriate and what conclusions your data shows.	
Band	**AO4**
4	**7–8 marks** A response that demonstrates comprehensive skills and techniques by: • providing a detailed, coherent and logical explanation of appropriate display methods • providing convincing conclusions that are appropriately and effectively drawn from the data displayed • being clear and coherent, well organised and well structured.
3	**5–6 marks** A response that demonstrates effective skills and techniques by: • providing a clear explanation of appropriate display methods that is mainly coherent and logical • providing clear conclusions that are mostly appropriately and effectively drawn from the data displayed • being mostly clear and coherent, organised and structured.
2	**3–4 marks** A response that demonstrates good skills and techniques by: • providing some clear explanation of appropriate display methods that has some coherence and logic • providing some clear conclusions that are generally appropriately and effectively drawn from the data displayed • being generally clear and coherent, organised and structured though may have lapses.
1	**1–2 marks** A response that demonstrates basic skills and techniques by: • providing little clear explanation of appropriate display methods that overall lacks coherence and logic • providing limited conclusions that are not always appropriately and effectively drawn from the data displayed • having overall lack of control in terms of clarity, coherence, organisation and structure.
0	**0 marks** Response not creditworthy or not attempted.

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Task 4

Evaluate your primary research.

You should consider the:

- method
- the data collection device
- sample: size, characteristics, sampling technique.

Band	AO3
3	**5–6 marks** A convincing analysis and evaluation that demonstrates: • clear and even coverage of all aspects: method, data collection device and sample • clear and mostly informed judgements made from the primary research • effective use of relevant examples • a coherent and logical response that is well organised and well structured.
2	**3–4 marks** A good analysis and evaluation that demonstrates: • some clear coverage of most aspects: method, data collection device and sample • some clear judgements made from the primary research • some use of relevant examples • a generally coherent and logical response that is organised and structured.
1	**1–2 marks** A basic analysis and evaluation that demonstrates: • limited and uneven coverage of aspects: method, data collection device and sample • few judgements made from the primary research • little or no use of relevant examples • a response that lacks overall control in terms of coherence, logical process, organisation and structure.
0	**0 marks** Response not creditworthy or not attempted.

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Task 5

Create an artefact that summarises the social issue.

You could create:

- an email
- an online article/blog post
- a research poster
- a speech.

The artefact should:

- follow an appropriate layout/format
- feature effective communication for the artefact type and audience
- reflect the sources in the resource pack
- reflect the results of the primary data collection.

Band	AO4
4	**10–12 marks** The artefact demonstrates comprehensive skills and techniques by: • effective summarising of the social issue • use of appropriate layout and format features and images (if required) • use of effective communication that is suitable for the type and audience • reflecting sources and primary data collection results both clearly and coherently • being clear and coherent, well organised and well structured.
3	**7–9 marks** The artefact demonstrates effective skills and techniques by: • mostly effective summarising of the social issue • use of mostly appropriate layout and format features and images (if required) • use of mostly effective communication that is mainly suitable for the type and audience • reflecting sources and primary data collection results clearly • being mostly clear and coherent, organised and structured.
2	**4–6 marks** The artefact demonstrates relevant skills and techniques by: • some clear summarising of the social issue • use of some appropriate layout and format features and images (if required) • use of some effective communication that may not always suitable for the type and audience • reflecting sources and primary data collection results with some clarity • being generally clear and coherent, organised and structured though may have lapses.

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1	**1–3 marks** The artefact demonstrates basic summary skills and techniques by: • minimal summarising of the social issue • use of occasional appropriate layout and format features and images (if required) • use of limited effective communication suitable for the type and audience • reflecting sources and primary data collection results with limited clarity. • having overall lack of control in terms of clarity, coherence, organisation and structure.
0	**0 marks** Response not creditworthy or not attempted.

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Appendix A - WJEC GCSE Social Studies – Unit 2 Primary Research Plan

Centre No:									**Centre Name:**	

Candidate No:									**Candidate Name:**	

Social issue being investigated:	

Method you will be using to gather attitudes about this social issue:
1. Explain why this **method** is appropriate to use when investigating attitudes towards this social issue.

Data collection device you will be using to gather attitudes about this social issue:
2. Explain why this **data collection device** is appropriate to use when investigating attitudes towards this social issue.

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Sampling technique you will be using to gather attitudes about this social issue:

3. Explain why this **sample technique** is appropriate to use when investigating attitudes towards this social issue.

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4. Consider the **ethical issues** below and explain what **strategies** you will employ to manage the risks of each when investigating your social issue.	
(a) Confidentiality	
(b) Harm to participants	
(c) Valid consent	
(d) Privacy	

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Additional space for completing answers, if required. Please add the question number that the additional material relates to.

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