**Statistical Information**

The Examiner’s Report may refer in general terms to statistical outcomes. Statistical information on candidates’ performances in all examination components (whether internally or externally assessed) is provided when results are issued.

**Annual Statistical Report**

The annual Statistical Report (issued in the second half of the Autumn Term) gives overall outcomes of all examinations administered by WJEC.

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General Comments

This is the second year of the full new specification. Most notable has been the significant improvement in the overall performance of candidates. Candidates appear to be more familiar with the format of the examination and better prepared for its demands. The standards at the upper end were very high with some candidates achieving nearly full marks for the examination.

There was clear evidence that candidates had been thoroughly prepared for the examination. Even the weakest candidates were able to display evidence of sociological knowledge. Few papers this year were marred by rubric error.

The most able candidates were able to refer to theory and to current events. Some good candidates were so anxious to write all that they knew that they lacked control over their material. A degree of selection and focus on the question is necessary for this paper, especially in section A where candidates were using technical terms and adding overmuch detail so that it was difficult to recognise whether the concepts were understood or not. The lines provided in section A are not an indication of how much should be written, merely allowance. It is not necessary to fill the allocated space.

Better candidates were able to incorporate examples and sociological concepts into their answers. The weakest answers were those related to research methods where candidates did not understand the key concepts. In particular, reliability and validity were comprehensively misunderstood. Any term that appears on the specification may be used as the basis of a question and therefore understanding of key terms should be reinforced.

Please note too, that AO3 requires candidates to apply their sociological knowledge to unfamiliar contexts, so simple knowledge of key terms is not enough for the top marks. Candidates should be trained to expect questions which will test the application of their understanding.

UNIT 1

Section A

Q.1 Most candidates gained full marks on this section.

Q.2 (c) This required candidates to explain gender. Simple biological explanations were offered, but in sociological terms, gender is a learned behaviour whereas sex refers to biology.

(d) This asked for reasons why parents would encourage daughters to attend ballet or dance. Those candidates who recognised that this is a gendered behaviour and part of the socialisation of girls achieved full marks with ease.
Q.3 Many candidates found ethnicity difficult to explain though good examples were accepted in lieu of an explanation. The key problem was that many confused the term with ethics and then wrote something about racism.

Most candidates coped well with explaining a problem a researcher might experience with investigating traditional weddings, but weaker candidates did not always recognise this as a research based question and gained no marks.

Q.4 Large numbers of candidates did not read the graph correctly and so suggested that there were only 100 male teachers in the UK in 2004/5 despite the obvious implausibility of the response. This was surprising as candidates are usually careful with graphical materials.

Most understood the term 'role model' and answered the question well.

Candidates are not responding well to the questions that ask them to identify research problems. There is confusion between reliability and validity. Other technical language is used in such a way that the answers lack clarity. Those who identify a clear problem, such as ethical issues surrounding the use of children in a sample, and then explain it, perhaps in such a way as to show children should be protected and so adult permission is required gained full marks. Many identified a problem, and then simply repeated the response a second time. This type of question is a feature of the examination and so candidates should have been prepared for it.

Many candidates struggled with (f). Those who suggested that the strengths of one method could be used to over-ride the weaknesses of another gained full marks. Many were aware of triangulation and used the term to good effect.

Q.5 There were some confusions with regard to the meaning of the term mass media. A sufficient number of examples was also credited.

Most candidates were able to explain socialisation to good effect. Given that it is a key term in the examination, in previous years there have been issues, so the understanding of this cohort is to be credited.

Question (d) was open to more than one interpretation. Any possible reading of the question was accepted, though those who explained why children were particularly vulnerable to media socialisation tended to cope better with the demands of the question.

Q.6 This generally well handled, though some struggled with the term anthropology. Note that it is on the specification and therefore a fair question. Again, candidates should be prepared to expect and to explain the meaning of any term that appears in the specification.
Section B

Question 7 was the most popular option, with a gratifying number of centres offering the new options of sport and mass media.

Q.7  
(a) Most candidates were able to write something relevant though there was not enough detail in answers for candidates to achieve the level 4 marks. Candidates struggled with the open nature of this question last year, so this year, the command was to discuss two changes only. Most wrote disciplined and clear accounts of two separately identifiable changes to childhood. A wide range of changes was deemed as acceptable because it was the quality of the evidence which was sought. Many referred to Aries or Postman, but some gained full marks without such direct theoretical references, mentioning instead, the Children Act for example. Some able candidates did not read the question and wrote discursive and disorganised answers, often referring to historical events with some considerable inaccuracy, describing 1950s children as working in coal mines.

(b) Again, this was the weakest section, with a large number of candidates unable to explain the why there has been an increase in single parenthood. Many read this as a question about reasons for divorce. There were some very opinionated and assertive responses which offered wildly inaccurate suggestions regarding binge drinking, sexual promiscuity and rising teen pregnancy rates. These answers were not highly regarded as there was little evidence used to support the claims made.

(c) This section was well handled, but often there was not enough sociological detail to achieve level 4. Weaker candidates focused on women rather than men, or disregarded the injunction to consider family roles. The best responses referred to New Men, crisis of masculinity and some were able even to evaluate the level or degree of social change.

Q.8  
(a) Most candidates were able to write something relevant and most were able to discuss both labelling and SFP with accurate and sociological detail. The process was understood, even if not always well explained.

(b) The best candidates were able to explain four or five functions of the education system to gain marks for breadth or to go into detail regarding two or three functions for depth. References to meritocracy or to social control were well regarded.

(c) There is no requirement in the specification to consider the Tripartite system except as a context to consider later change. It would seem from the quality of response that this area has been significantly over-taught at the expense of the last forty years. Long and detailed criticisms of grammar schools were offered, but no reference to National Curriculum, testing, marketisation, GCSEs or anything related to educational change since the 1970s. Examiners rewarded essays that focussed on cultural changes such as the loss of corporal punishment but levels of misunderstanding were significant. Margaret Thatcher was credited with comprehensivisation, increased equality in education, feminism and Marxism. Few candidates referred to specialist schools, free schools or to Academies, despite the number of such institutions among centres taking the WJEC GCSE specification.
Q.9 (a) Generally this was very poorly understood. Answers showed considerable confusion between private ownership and public ownership. Most understood private ownership and referred to Murdoch; few recognised that public ownership referred to the BBC and licence payment. Many did not even attempt this or wrote overly long and complex responses that could not be credited. The ‘describe’ question is not intended to be hugely challenging and long theoretical discussions of media ownership are out of place.

(b) Those who understood the question and were able to explain changes in media technology with some social references did well.

(c) This was generally well handled, but often at a simple level. Those who handled it best were those who focused on audience theory and moral panics. Bandura was ill-understood by some. There is a possibility that some able candidates were so anxious to show off their knowledge that they did not look hard at the command.

Q.10 (a) Increasing numbers of centres are offering this option and teaching to it. They are to be commended as there are fewer resources available than for the more familiar topics. Those candidates who understood the question were highly successful. Others simply referred back to question 2 on this paper and gained few marks.

(b) These answers tended towards the personal, sometimes with anecdotal references. Those who referred to theory were well rewarded, but those who tried to use their own general knowledge were less efficient in their responses.

(c) Those who had studied the topic were able to refer to a range of reasons and explain them were able to do well. There were a number of creditable responses referring to popularity of some sports, moral panics, media alarms, historical debates such as the Hillsborough disaster, racism in football, social class, gender and ethnicity.

UNIT 2

Section A

Q.1 Most candidates gained full marks on this section.

Q.2 Most candidates were able to read and extract information from the text. Most gained full marks for (c) though some tried to explain adult poverty and the cycle of poverty. Those who did it well gained full marks, but simpler accounts of single income, childcare issues, female workforce were more likely to do well.

Q.3 Generally this was handled well though many struggled with the concept of wealth. It was often confused with high income.
Q.4 The first parts of this question were handled well in general. Questions (d), not well handled, despite this being a very similar question to one in the sample materials and in all papers so far. Responses were weak in terms of technical language and contextualisation. Many wrote in very general terms or just used technical language with no understanding. The examination team offered additional context in order to provide cues for problems. The best candidates were able to offer simple responses such as 'Christmas is a busy time of year, therefore there will be non-response leading to unrepresentative results'. Others did not understand the question and wrote answers that showed limited or no understanding that this was a research question.

Q.5 This was generally handled well. It was an attempt to offer unfamiliar context (AO3) and succeeded in differentiating between those who understood discrimination and those who did not.

Q.6 This generally well handled.

**Section B**

Question 9 was the most popular option.

Q.7 (a) Most candidates were able to write something relevant. There were those who wrote about class rather than sectors of the economy and they were generally weaker throughout their responses.

(b) Again, this was handled well. Many referred to Marxism with considerable clarity and precision. Others took a more instrumental approach and discussed education and skills as well as meritocracy.

(c) This section was well handled by those who had studied the topic. Many answers were vague and referred to the Industrial Revolution without much consideration of very recent history. Those who referred to conditions of work did well. Many suggested that women did not have jobs outside the home in the 1950s. This may have been true for middle class women, but working class women have always worked in domestic labour, piecework in the home or in childcare. The issue is that their work was often casual labour and not valued.

Q.8 (a) Most candidates answered this question well. Some passed strong political opinions about their chosen parties and this was not well regarded.

(b) This was generally well answered, where candidates were aware of the topic

(c) This was generally well handled.
Q.9  (a) Generally this was well handled, if it was understood. There were those who had little or no understanding of the term and who offered long guesswork answers. This underlines the significance of preparing candidates in terms of emphasising the terms in the specification and in the language of terminology.

(b) This was generally well handled. Many different reasons were offered and some even referred the politicisation of the police, including references to the London Riots, control theory, Marxism and targeting.

(c) Candidates who understood the terms of the question did very well and large numbers gained full marks for this answer. Others misunderstood the question and wrote accounts of why some people committed crime with no evidence that they understood that conviction rates may not be related to the amount or nature of crime that takes place.

Q.10  (a) Increasing numbers of centres are offering this option and teaching to it. They are to be commended as there are fewer resources available than for the more familiar topics. Those candidates who understood the question were highly successful.

(b) This was not generally well understood.

(c) Those who had studied the topic were able to refer to a range of reasons and explain them were able to do well.

We would like to take the opportunity to thank centres for their hard work in preparing candidates.