Grade Boundaries

Grade boundary information for this subject is available on the WJEC public website at: https://www.wjecservices.co.uk/MarkToUMS/default.aspx?l=en

Online results analysis

WJEC provides information to examination centres via the WJEC secure website. This is restricted to centre staff only. Access is granted to centre staff by the Examinations Officer at the centre.

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. This will be available at: http://www.wjec.co.uk/index.php?nav=51
Chief Examiner comments

General issues

More than enough lines are provided for candidates in section A, even those with large writing, so they should be discouraged from writing too much additional detail on extra sheets of paper. These rarely make a difference to the overall mark.

Those using computers to write their examination responses should be using double spacing and a size 12 font.

Q.1 Few issues

Q.2 (a) Some vagueness over role.
       (b) Many just copied directly from the text.
       (c) Some confusion over role – most gave an example, but not many could define it.

Q.3 (b) Examiners generous to answers that did not mention the item as specified.
       (c) High % age were correct.
       (d) Formal and informal socialisation often not understood, despite being on NGfL and WJEC materials and in many books - Formal socialisation is the process of deliberately changing behaviour (schools). Informal socialisation is when people pick up behaviours as they move through life (media). Both forms of socialisation can take place in most socialising environments but formal is organised. Many candidates did know it and answered very well.
       (f) Sampling not well understood. Random sampling in particular caused problems.

Q.4 (a) Some misreading of graph despite the answer being obvious.
       (b) Weaker candidates not able to recognise a ratio.
(d) Some candidates not addressing question of how socialisation can affect behaviour, particularly with regard to success in school.

Q.5 (a) Done well.

(b) Some surprisingly weak explanations of gender stereotypes, even when the examples were correctly identified.

(c) This is a regular question and refers to processes of socialisation. Too many candidates are choosing two agencies of socialisation and then repeating the process e.g. watching television and copying, watching parents and copying. This is marked as one way in which socialisation takes place e.g. seeing and imitating behaviours. Equally, many referred to sport and boys in description 1 and sport and girls in description 2, thus limiting the marks available to 3. Too few answered using sociological language such as canalisation, manipulation and appellation.

(d) Value often described in monetary terms by weaker candidates.

(e) Often the examples offered were norms and not values e.g. eating with a knife and fork.

(f) Lots of candidates talked of ‘observating’. Few candidates gained full marks as answers were not developed and some points were just repeated.

(g) Still incorrect on validity and reliability. It helps if they recall that validity involves lies.

(h) Ethics and ethnics confused by some.

Q.6 (b) Best candidates correctly identified war, war gaming, boxing, wrestling and self-defence.

(c) Many referred to feral children as an example.

(d) Some weakness on social control here. Knew the terms but could not apply to a new or unfamiliar situation which is part of the assessment objectives for sociology. Many read social control as ‘self-control’. Where this was described using sociological language, such as internalisation, it could be credited.

Options

Parts (a) and (b) often use theory badly. It is not really necessary until part (c) questions. The commands are ‘describe’, ‘explain’ and ‘discuss’. Some very good candidates are over-writing parts (a) and (b) and simply not addressing the commands.

Lots of use of studies and contemporary evidence – excellent.

Large numbers of rubric errors this year – please train candidates to put options in correct places.
Q.7 A popular topic.

In all sections, many conflated New Man with househusband concept – not quite the same as New Man is a 70s concept of a less aggressively masculine man who helps in the house sometimes and a househusband is a newer phenomenon related to the loss of male jobs and the rise of the female breadwinner.

(a) Lots of confusion between structure and role even when they appeared to understand the meaning of the question. This is a describe question, so analysis is not specifically required.

Many described four or five family structures with accuracy and added sociological detail about family structure and gained excellent marks. Some used up to date terminology, so the boomerang family was understood and described with clarity.

Many historical accounts of the change from pre-industrial extended households to nucleation in new cities followed by growth of working class industrial extended families developing. It was hard to find marks in material that was so dated and which clearly does not reflect modern families and the growth of structures such as gay family, single parent, reconstituted, beanpole and boomerang families.

(b) Similar answers to 7a, not much focus on reasons for change, and sometimes not even identifying changes to discuss. Good ones, very good – identify and explain four or five changes and offer reasons for those changes. Weak ones descriptive. Some excellent answers and I saw more 10/10 here than 7a.

Huge numbers referring to secularisation without mentioning other dynamics of family change such as the emergence of women from the home.

The industrial revolution, dating as it does from the 1750s, cannot be seen as a reason for family change. It is probably not necessary to teach this far back in history.

Q.9 (a) Seemed to present an astonishing level of challenge. We were willing to accept social change (for example representation of women) or technical change (internet) or usage change (TVs in each bedroom). Despite that, large numbers of candidates made no relevant comments.

(b) Surprisingly few thought to mention that the media are an agency of socialisation! Those who did and referred to gender socialisation and representation wrote with relevance. Some used ‘uses and gratifications’ theory to great effect here and did very well.

(c) Confusing ownership and control and writing ownership essays as a result. Richard Branson being cited as a working class hero – not exactly true.

Q.10 (a) (b) and (c) Universally weak and based on common sense answers. Few responses, fewer than in previous years, often part of rubric errors.
SECTION A

Q.1 Very few candidates failed to achieve top marks for this question.

Q.2 (a) Very few candidates failed to achieve the mark for this question.

(b) Very few candidates failed to achieve the mark for this question.

(c) Most students had a reasonably good understanding of the term stereotype and often included an example to reinforce this.

(d) Some students failed to include sufficient detail for 2 marks, but most were able to identify a stereotype. A minority were very clumsy and were not really able to describe a stereotype of older people in common use.

(e) Students found it difficult to explain why age discrimination is a problem for British society. They identified a type of age discrimination easily. Better answers focussed on the problems created, such as unemployment and crime.

Q.3 (a) Very few candidates failed to achieve the mark for this question.

(b) This question caused problems for many who used the more common sense notion of being the best, such as an elite sports player, rather than the notion of privilege, wealth and power. Some had success using the item and used it for examples.

(c) Most candidates achieved both marks for this question.

(d) A range of responses were given. Better answers identified assets or property and suggested what these might be.

(e) (i) Many failed to identify a sampling method but included a research method scoring zero marks.

(ii) Candidates who failed on the first part of this also failed to identify the problems. Successful answers spoke about representativeness, unfair samples, refusing to take part etc.

Q.4 (a) Generally ok, with some having problems reading the graph accurately.

(b) Generally answered well with examples drawn from the data.
Students found this difficult to pin down. Answers tended to repeat the terms of the question. Better answers gave examples and talked about differences of opportunity, resources and life chances.

Most students picked up the idea of education giving a better job. Better answers articulated the nature of the improvements that a better paid job could make and talked about better quality of life, lifestyle or other specific ideas.

Students were familiar with this style of question and almost all were able to offer responses at a basic or more advanced level. Less students seemed to be using validity and reliability in an interchangeable way.

Q. 5
(a) Very few candidates failed to achieve the mark for this question.
(b) Very few candidates failed to achieve the mark for this question.
(c) Answered very well. There was a tendency for weaker answers to rely on the term prejudice as their main way to explain this.
(d) Mostly answered well. A few students explained as an action based on prejudice but merely repeated the word discrimination to explain what the person discriminating actually did. Better answers gave examples of employment or housing.
(e) A sizeable minority made the mistake of using disabled to answer this which was not technically allowed by the question. Some also wrote about two different groups and so were only credited for one way. Otherwise this was tackled well. Better answers used technical language, such as discrimination, stereotyping, glass ceiling.

Q. 6
(a) Very few candidates failed to achieve the mark for this question.
(b) Poverty was explained well. Students found it more difficult to refer to the item.
(c) Examples helped to gain both marks for this.
(d) A question which most found difficult to tackle in a non-repetitive way. Many talked about life chances or opportunities. Better answers outlined where these opportunities could lead.

SECTION B

Work

Q. 7
(a) Work was the second most popular option after crime. The question on alienation was tackled with varying degrees of success. Most who did it had a basic understanding of the nature of it and explained it as a Marxist term. Better answers talked about isolation, lack of control and the conditions of work. A small number of responses mentioned Blauner and/or linked it more closely to Marxist ideas of class conflict.
There were a small minority of responses which did not grasp the term at all. Some weaker responses wrote about being left out of society in a more general way, but made little reference to work.

Q.7  (b) The question on trade unions was tackled reasonably well. Some answers were a little general and lacked examples. Better responses linked trade unions to Marxism and class conflict. Also useful were examples and case studies, such as the miner’s strike.

(c) Most students grasped the idea of the question on technology. They were able to link this to unemployment, automation and deskilling. However, many candidates did not use the technical terms making it read as less sociological.

Better responses grasped the full range of ways that technology has impacted on workers, both positive and negative and were able to use specialist terminology to improve their answer.

Power and Participation

Q.8  (a) The difference between democracy and totalitarianism was almost always tackled well and with understanding. Better responses included examples and were rigorous in their identification of the key features of both political systems.

(b) Lobbying was understood at a basic level by most, although there were a few very good responses that recognised fully the impact of lobbying and its importance to democracy. A small number of candidates appeared to misunderstand the question entirely.

(c) The question was understood by all candidates who attempted it. Stronger answers compared the impact of class on voting to other factors, such as gender and ethnicity staying relevant to the question. They also tended to include subject specific terminology, such as partisan de-alignment. However, some candidates wrote about gender and other factors but did not refer back to the terms of the question. Some weaker answers stayed focussed on social class and tended to be repetitive.

Crime and Deviance

Q.9  (a) Some candidates did not know the term deviancy amplification and were fortunate to pick up any marks. Candidates who knew the term fared well and included a range of related concepts and terms. Some lacked examples and felt a little empty. Others included a range of arguments and insights.

(b) The best responses to the corporate crime question had a wealth of examples and a range of reasons for the non-reporting of corporate crime. There was a tendency for some answers to be unfocussed and drift away from the subject.

A sizeable group of students confused the term with white collar crime and lost marks because of this. A smaller number treated the question as if it was about official statistics and crime, largely unsuccessfully.
All candidates were able to address this question successfully. Some answers were common sense and lacked sociology but most were able to apply at least one or two key concepts. Better answers included a range of theories and concepts. Some answers included the perspectives, but not always applied in a focussed way. There was a tendency for candidates to write all they knew about youth crime and not address the question. Others became side tracked into writing about crime generally.

Global Citizenship

Q.10 (a) Only a small number of responses to this. Multinationals were tackled in a reasonable fashion although answers lacked sociological insight.

(b) The fair trade movement was understood by most candidates. However, they tended to write all about it rather than focussing on the arguments for supporting it.

(c) Answers tended to be common sense and lacked sociological insight. Most gave arguments for and against aid that tended to be common sense based. Very few candidates did this option.

A full version of the report will be available in September 2013