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GCSE in SOCIOLOGY (Short Course & Full Course) Teachers’ Guide

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1. INTRODUCTION

The WJEC GCSE Sociology specification has been modified and updated for delivery from September 2009. The first award for the short course is in June 2010. The first award for the full course is in June 2011. The specification can be delivered and assessed in centres throughout the UK.

The revised subject criteria for GCSE Sociology issued by the regulators have necessitated the need for some change to the structure and content of the specification.

It is the intention of this Guide to provide assistance to teachers delivering the specification along with the specimen papers and INSET conferences.

WJEC provides the following as part of its support for all GCSE specifications:

- Examiners' reports on each examinations series
- Free access to past question papers via the WJEC secure website
- Easy access to the specification and other key documents on the main website
- Regular INSET delivered by Chief Examiners
- Easy access to both the Subject Officer and to administrative sections

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1.1 Rationale

Sociology seeks to account for varied forms of human society and to look at the impact of culture and social organisation on individual lives. Learners should use the concepts and analytical framework developed within the discipline of sociology to reflect on their own experiences of the social world in a variety of social settings. They will apply their awareness to the understanding of a variety of human cultures.

Learners will gain the ability to use evidence and arrive at reasoned judgements based on information from a variety of sources. They will learn to organise and communicate their knowledge in a structured and organised manner.

1.2 Overview of the Specification

There are three distinct elements to the course.

1. **Understanding Social Processes**: the focus is on the significance of culture and the processes of socialisation. There is a core unit, which can be developed through the extension units.

2. **Understanding Social Structures**: the focus is on social groups and the structures of power and differentiation in society. There is a core unit, which can be developed through the extension units.

3. **Understanding the study of society**: the focus is on sociological research methods. This will be examined in Section A of each paper.
### Brief overview of the course

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unit 1</th>
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<tr>
<td>Understanding Social Processes</td>
<td>Understanding Social Structures</td>
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<tr>
<td>Compulsory Core</td>
<td>Compulsory Core</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key elements: socialisation and agencies of socialisation; research methods</td>
<td>Key elements: Differentiation and inequalities in modern Britain; research methods</td>
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<tr>
<td>Assessment: Compulsory stimulus questions which may be drawn from the options within the examination.</td>
<td>Assessment: Compulsory stimulus questions which may be drawn from the options within the examination.</td>
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<tr>
<th>Optional Topics</th>
<th>Optional topics</th>
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<tr>
<td>Candidates <strong>must</strong> answer a structured question from <strong>one</strong> of the following:</td>
<td>Candidates <strong>must</strong> answer a structured question from <strong>one</strong> of the following:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Family</td>
<td>World Sociology</td>
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<td>Education</td>
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1.3 Changes to the specification for teaching from September 2009

The new GCSE specifications of all Awarding Bodies are based on a revised set of subject criteria drawn up by the regulatory authorities.

The main changes are as follows:

- There is now a single paper which replaces the previous tiered examination papers i.e. in both units, paper 1 Foundation (C-G) and paper 2 Higher (A*-D) have been combined into a single paper which offers the full range of grades A*-G.

- There is no coursework option. Research methods have been integrated into the compulsory core for each unit.

- There are two examined units:
  Unit 1: Understanding Social Processes and Research Methods
  Unit 2: Understanding Social Structures and Research Methods

- Unit 1 can be entered individually as a short course GCSE and candidates may be entered for this without progressing to Soc 2.

- There are more options in each unit. Soc 1 now includes options on Mass Media and Sport as well as The Family and Education. Soc 2 now includes options on Global Citizenship as well as Work, Power and Participation and Crime and Deviance

Assessment of the full GCSE specification now consists of two written examinations.

The assessment of the new short course GCSE specification now consists of one written examination.

The examination paper will combine the features of the current Foundation and Higher papers.

Each examination will last for 90 minutes and will be marked out of 100.

Candidates will answer all questions on the question paper.
There are two sections in both Unit 1 and Unit 2.

**Section A:** This is a compulsory section which examines the core element. There will be a variety of stimulus items of varying length and presentation. These may be graphs, tables, newspaper articles, photographs. They may draw on the content of options within each paper.

There will be a sequence of short answer questions either based on the interpretation of the stimulus material or testing the candidate’s sociological knowledge. In some case the answers will be in the item and in others, candidates will be required to refer to the item and demonstrate their wider sociological knowledge of the core.

In this section candidates will be given the opportunity to apply knowledge and to analyse and evaluate material.

**Section B:** This section will require extended writing skills. The questions will use the same command words:

a) Describe .......... [10]
b) Explain ........... [10]
c) Using sociological knowledge, discuss ...... [20]
2. DELivering the specification

It is important that teachers delivering either the short course GCSE or the full GCSE in Sociology familiarise themselves fully with the requirements of the specification they are delivering.

A scheme of work should be devised and all staff delivering the course should have access to this. It is advisable that students have access to an overview of the course design so that they are aware of what will be required of them in the final assessment.

Many schools use resources such as textbooks but it is good practice to supplement these with other materials that are relevant to the teaching of sociology. These may be drawn from the media or from academic sociology materials in order to bring the study of sociology into spheres of contemporary debates.

As the examination is dependent on the use of stimulus materials such as written articles, tables, graphs and cartoons, it is advisable for teachers to allow their students plenty of practice in gaining the necessary analytical skills.

2.1 Pathways through the specification

- Unit 1 may be taken at the end of year 10 or both Unit 1 and Unit 2 can be taken at the end of year 11.

- Candidates may re-sit Unit 1 at the end of year 11.

- Topics may be studied in any order. Nevertheless it may be advisable to study the core first as the theme of the core is carried on into each of the options.

- Centres may choose to study more than one of the options for each paper. Although this enhances the candidates’ sociological understanding and give the candidates more choice in the examination, other centres may prefer to focus on one option in depth.

- There is no minimum requirement for the length of the course.
### SUMMARY OF ASSESSMENT

#### SHORT COURSE - ONE MANDATORY UNIT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unit 1: Understanding Social Processes (50%)</th>
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<tr>
<td>Written Paper:  1½ hours</td>
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<tr>
<td>100 marks (100 UMS)</td>
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Compulsory Core.

One multi-part compulsory question based on stimulus materials and assessing themes of socialisation, inequality and research methods. (30%)

Options:

One three-part extended writing question must be answered from one of the following: Family, Education, Mass Media, Sport. (20%)

#### FULL COURSE - UNIT 1

PLUS FOLLOWING MANDATORY UNIT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unit 2: Understanding Social Structures (50%)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Written Paper:  1½ hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100 marks (100 UMS)</td>
</tr>
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</table>

Compulsory Core.

One multi-part compulsory question based on stimulus materials and assessing themes of inequality, power, socialisation and research methods. (30%)

Options:

One three-part extended writing question must be answered from one of the following: Work, Power and Participation, Crime and Deviance, Global Citizenship. (20%)

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Note: For candidates completing the short course only, SOC 1 will be 100% of the marks.
2.2  Examples of Approaches

Teachers will have individual approaches to teaching sociology and there is no one standard approach or ideal approach to the delivery of this specification. Every teacher will adapt the specification to suit the needs and learning styles of his or her own candidates, however, both formal and informal teaching may be used to develop sociological skills in candidates.

A suggested list of tasks appropriate to the specification includes:

Investigations:
1. Application of sociological knowledge to case study materials
2. Activities based on use of website
3. Role play
4. Video analysis
5. Collage and display work
6. Mind mapping
7. Posters
8. Creating index card files
9. Flashcards
10. Providing a stimulus and asking the students to create examination questions
11. Devising their own multiple choice questions
12. Marking and assessing each other's work
13. Vocabulary games
   - Dominoes
   - Fill the gap passages
   - Cracking of codes sheets
   - Word searches
   - Twenty questions
   - Hangman
   - Miming a concept from a flashcard
   - Concept bingo
   - Splat
14. Extended writing projects and essay planning
15. Stimulus interpretations (of graphs, pictures and diagrams)
16. Examination style questions and practice
2.3 Thinking Skills and Sociology

As Sociology is a subject which lends itself to the development of thinking skills, students may be encouraged to think critically by the use of questions such as:

1. What if…?

   Males and females both could have babies?
   The pill had never been invented?
   Everyone in Britain earned exactly the same regardless of their jobs?
   We had to pay for health care?

2. Predictions for the future

   What kind of classrooms will we have in thirty years time?
   What technology will we have in thirty years time?
   What sports will people choose to watch?
   How will changing technology affect people’s ability to participate in sporting activities?

3. Make a link between two contrasting ideas

   Central heating … changes in family life
   Supermarkets … changes in the role of women
   Cars … where people live
   Sociological research … eating habits

4. Create a list of answers and ask students to create the questions.

5. Interpretation – present an image and ask a question about it.

   Why is the girl crying?
   What is the woman thinking?
   What is the man going to do next?
   What did the old lady do for a living when she was young?
3. **SUPPORT FOR TEACHERS**

Inset and reports on each examination are provided by WJEC. For further details of these and other materials, check the WJEC website. All other queries should be initially directed to the Subject Officer for GCSE Sociology at the WJEC: see page 2 of this guide for contact details.

### 3.1 Generic Resources for the Specification as a whole

Sociology at GCSE is not generally well covered by textbooks or websites and teachers may need to use their imagination to provide materials for their course delivery; however, most A level textbooks can be adapted to the delivery of this course and most GCSE text will be appropriate for the delivery of WJEC GCSE Sociology.

Centres which are delivering Citizenship as an examination may find that many materials and ideas suitable for Citizenship are also appropriate to Sociology.

**Current textbooks include:**

- Ken Browne (This is updated regularly) *An Introduction to Sociology* Polity Press
- Dave Longmate and Graham Coates (2001) *GCSE Sociology: Social Life* Hodder and Stoughton
- Townroe and Yates *Sociology for GCSE* Longman
- Stephen Moore (This is updated regularly) *Sociology Alive* Stanley Thorne
- Cotterrell and Russell *GCSE Social Science* Heinemann
- Paul Cooper *Sociology: An Introductory Course* Longman

**Stimulus materials can be provided from the following sources and strategies**

- Encourage students to bring in interesting or relevant materials.
- Use government websites for contemporary material.
- Use the term ‘fact sheet’ in a search engine.
- Go to other charity and official websites for ‘Press Releases’ that often summarise the main points in recent research.
- See the ESRC plain English summaries (enter Plain English ESRC in a search engine).
- Use video source materials, including soap operas, documentaries and films.
- Use excerpts from magazines and newspaper cuttings.
- Sign up to the Statistics newsletter, ‘Horizon’, the ESRC magazine and the Nestle Family Monitor.
- Keep a press cuttings file.
- Use the local community as a resource for students
  - send students out to research topics
  - bring visitors in to talk about their experiences.
- Pool worksheets and materials with other teachers on an informal basis.
- Use the Google images library.
- Get students to create PowerPoint summaries of key issues (six slides, 50 words each).
3.2 National Grid for Learning - Cymru

A particular source of resources and support for teachers of WJEC Sociology GCSE has been created on the National Grid for Learning Cymru by teachers of Sociology.

http://www.ngfl-cymru.org.uk/eng/vtc-home/vtc-ks4-home/vtc-ks4_sociology

Teachers will find a wide range of supporting materials including course outlines, sample lesson plans, glossaries, and white board resources.

Much of this material is intended to be downloaded so that it can be edited by teachers to suit the needs of their own candidates and centres.

The list of websites is comprehensive and the links are checked regularly to ensure that they are still live and of use to teachers. Please contact NGfL Cymru if you become aware of new and useful sites.

Please keep returning to this site as new materials become available. It is hoped that teachers will be willing to contribute their own work and ideas to this site for the benefit of colleagues in other centres.

NGfL Cymru welcomes feedback on the resources available via the website.
3.3 General Websites

The WJEC website offers recent information on courses and Inset.
www.wjec.co.uk/

Websites for GCSE Sociology

NGfL Cymru – free resources:
www.ngfl-cymru.org.uk

School Sociology – resources, worksheets and materials:
www.barrycomp.com/bhs

Sociology at Hewett – teaching content
www.hewett.norfolk.sch.uk/curric/soc/index.htm

Association for the Teaching of Social Sciences
www.atss.org.uk

Leicester University PGCE – free worksheets
www.le.ac.uk/education/resources/SocSci/

The Joseph Rowntree Foundation – recent research
www.jrf.org.uk

The BBC – especially the news pages
www.bbc.co.uk/society

Office for National Statistics
www.statistics.gov.uk

Kath Young’s revision guide – useful revision guide
www.webschool.org.uk/sociology/revguide.doc

Truetube – uploaded video clips made by students
http://www.truetube.co.uk/

Tutor 2 U – detailed notes and discussion areas
http://tutor2u.net/sociology/gcse-sociology.html

Many charities and pressure groups have excellent websites that are appropriate and accessible to candidates of GCSE Sociology

For other enquiries or information, visit
www.wjec.co.uk
4. UNIT GUIDES - GCSE UNIT 1 & SHORT COURSE ONLY

4.1 Research Methods

Sociological research methods will be examined in the core section (Section A) of both examination papers.

Candidates can be encouraged to develop their understanding of research methods in a variety of ways:

- By conducting ‘mini’ research projects. Candidates who are studying education could investigate the link between gender and educational achievement using a range of methods. They could then report back to the class and discuss the advantages and disadvantages of the various methods. As well as developing a hands-on experience of the research methods they would also develop their understanding of the topic under investigation which could be used to inform their answers in section B).

- Candidates could also study examples of recent research for example from Sociology Review or from newspapers. This would develop their understanding of ‘real’ sociological debate and again inform answers for section B).

Candidates should have a clear understanding of the concepts of validity, reliability and representativeness and how they are influenced by research methods or in the case of representativeness by the sampling method used.

Ethical issues should be centre to a study of research methods and candidates should be encouraged to engage in a discussion of ethical issues whilst developing their understanding of research methods and specific examples of research.
4.2 UNIT 1 – Core

The core is designed to awaken in candidates a sociological imagination as they come to understand the distinct nature of sociology and focus on how people develop a sense of identity.

Because of the interrelated nature of the content of the core, there are a variety of possible approaches. One approach could be to focus on identity. Candidates could be encouraged to consider the following issues:

- To what extent are you born with an identity?
- To what extent does gender influence identity?
- What do feral children tell us about identity?
- How do agencies of socialisation influence identity?
- How would your identity be different in a different culture?
- What evidence is there that ethnicity and/or class influences identity?
- How are people controlled in society?

In this paper the emphasis will be on culture and the process of socialisation rather than inequality.

Candidates should be encouraged to draw examples from many areas of social life to illustrate and develop their understanding of the content. The focus should be on contemporary British society, although references to other cultures may enhance their understanding and this is to be encouraged.

The themes encountered in the core can be developed in the chosen optional area of study.

4.3 UNIT 1 - Optional Topics

Option 1 Families

This option will focus on the family as a main agent of socialisation and the changing nature of family structure and relationships and inequalities.

A study of the family as an agent of socialisation will focus on the socialisation process and the way in which parents in particular influence children. Students could be encouraged to debate issues such as:

- The influence of other agents of socialisation e.g. peer groups, the media, child minders, education. Would this suggest that the influence of the family is decreasing?
- The nature / nurture debate. To what extent does the family influence gender roles?
- Do children also influence parents? What about pester power?

Student should be aware of the diversity of families in Britain. They could be encouraged to debate

- The reasons for family diversity. Is it a good thing?
- What are the potential advantages and disadvantage of the various family types?
Although not essential to success at this level, students who are able to use basic theory for example, referring to feminism and/or the new right will be rewarded.

A study of family relationships and inequalities could include a consideration of the following:

- How has the relationship between parents and children changed and why?
- Is there any evidence for the re-emergence of the extended family?
- To what extent are families an equal relationship between partners?
- Do class and/or ethnicity influence family life?

Candidates who can use evidence to support their debates/answers will be rewarded. This could be in the form of contemporary issues, facts and figures or sociological research. Candidates should be encouraged to develop the ability to discuss these issues sociologically rather than in a personal manner.

**Option 2 Education**

This option will focus on education as a main agent of socialisation and the changing nature of education. There will be reference to education as a source of institutionalised inequality in our society.

A study of education as an agent of socialisation will focus on the socialisation process and the way in which schools in particular influence children. Students could be encouraged to debate issues such as:

- The significance of the formal and the hidden curriculum. Are schools also an agency of ideology?
- The changing gender patterns of success. Are boys the gender of failure?

Students should be aware of the diversity of schools in Britain. They could be encouraged to debate:

- Are all schools equally good?
- Are the current changes to the education system likely to improve the chances of disadvantaged children?
- To what extent is success in school related to cultural or material deprivation?

Although not essential to success at this level, students who are able to use basic theory for example, referring to meritocracy and labelling will be rewarded.

Candidates who can use evidence to support their debates/answers will be rewarded. This could be in the form of contemporary issues, facts and figures or sociological research. Candidates should be encouraged to develop the ability to discuss these issues sociologically rather than in a personal manner.
Option 3 Mass Media

This option will focus on the mass media as a main agent of socialisation and the also changing nature of the media. There will be reference to the role of the media as a source of identity in our society.

Students could be encouraged to debate issues such as:

- To what extent is the media representative of the ownership or the consumers of media products?
- Students could be encouraged to take a critical view of the media. To what extent can we trust the media to give us an adequate or realistic view of what is happening in our society?

The media are known to create moral panics and these could be investigated with reference to modern media campaigns that are relevant to the experiences of young people.

- Current anxieties about the role of the media could be explored through a consideration of body image and the role of the media in creating unrealistic expectations for both males and females.
- Are the media able to influence people’s perceptions of their world?
- To what extent is consumerism driven by media influence.

The changing nature of the media could be considered through looking at the influence of the internet and of social networking sites as well as SFX and the impact on ‘improving’ images on our perception of reality.

Research methods could be approached by considering approaches such as content analysis of media products

Candidates who can use evidence to support their debates/ answers will be rewarded. This could be in the form of contemporary issues, facts and figures or sociological research. Candidates should be encouraged to develop the ability to discuss these issues sociologically rather than in a personal manner.

Option 4 Sport

This option will focus on sport as an agent of socialisation for young people. In addition, the commercialisation of sporting affiliation will be considered. There will be reference to the role of sporting affiliation as a source of identity in our society which affects notions of gender and nation.

Students could be encouraged to debate issues such as:

- The difference between sport as a participatory leisure activity and sport as a commercial enterprise for observation
- Ownership debates. To what extent can team be said to represent the people who are fans of that team
- What influence do sporting heroes have on the behaviour of fans?
Students should be aware of gender in sport. They could be encouraged to debate:

- The image of masculinity that is portrayed in sport. Is it a good role model?
- Why are some sports associated with violence or hooligan behaviour?

The role of sport in consolidating nationality could be considered, for example the role of rugby in Welsh identity or affiliation to Manchester United among people who do not even live in the UK.

Candidates who can use evidence to support their debates/ answers will be rewarded. This could be in the form of contemporary issues, facts and figures or sociological research. Candidates should be encouraged to develop the ability to discuss these issues sociologically rather than in a personal manner.
4.4 UNIT 2 - Core

The core in Unit 2 is designed to awaken in candidates a sociological imagination as they come to understand the distinct nature of sociology and focus on how people develop a sense of structure and process in society. The core in SOC 2 is also designed to promote an understanding of how the core themes of inequality and power permeate social structures.

Because of the interrelated nature of the content of the core, there are a variety of possible approaches. One approach could be to focus on inequality with regard to issues of class, gender, race and ethnicity and age related inequalities. Candidates could be encouraged to consider the following issues:

In this paper the emphasis will be on inequality rather than socialisation, but references to socialisation where appropriate will be rewarded.

Candidates should be encouraged to draw examples from many areas of social life to illustrate and develop their understanding of the content. The focus should be on contemporary British society, although references to other cultures may enhance their understanding and this is to be encouraged.

The themes encountered in the core can be developed in the chosen optional area of study. One approach could be:

- to consider the basic concepts in the specifications such as:
  - discrimination, prejudice, stereotyping
  - poverty and wealth
  - income inequality
  - class structures and social mobility

- to collect and study evidence relating to these concepts such as:
  - the number of people living in poverty in Britain
  - the distribution of wealth
  - contrasting salaries and life style of the very rich and the very poor
  - how life chances can be influenced by class, gender, ethnicity, age and disability

- to consider sociological explanations for these inequalities. Candidates could be encouraged to see how these explanations could link to the theories highlighted in the specifications. Reference to theory does not have to be detailed at this level. Candidates may not be questioned on specific theories but will be rewarded for appropriate reference to theories in answers such as Marxism and Functionalism or the New Right. Feminism is appropriate in consideration of gender inequality.

The themes encountered in the core can be developed in the chosen optional area of study.
4.5 Optional Topics

UNIT 2: Option 1 Work

This option will focus on the family as a major source of income inequality. It will consider the changing nature of work and its impact on culture and identity.

A study of the work as an agent of socialisation will focus on the socialisation process and the way in which behaviours are appropriate to work situations. Students could be encouraged to debate issues such as:

- the feminisation of work and its impact on gender relationships and income inequality.

Student should be aware of the changing nature of work in our culture. They could be encouraged to debate

- How is work changing? They could compare and contrast industrial and post industrial work and the development of the service sector
- What are the potential advantages and disadvantage of various types of work, with reference to class and occupation?

A study of the changing nature or work could include a consideration of the following:

- Reference to MacDonaldisation and globalisation of markets
- Is the minimum wage legislation good for society?
- Are employers racist?

Candidates who can use evidence to support their debates/ answers will be rewarded. This could be in the form of contemporary issues, facts and figures or sociological research. Candidates should be encouraged to develop the ability to discuss these issues sociologically rather than in a personal manner.

Option 2 Power and Participation

This option will focus on politics as a source of inequality. Students will look at the changing nature of politics. There will be reference to participation in government as a major source of democratic power which contrasts with totalitarian states where participation is not a feature of society.

A study of participation will focus on the democratic process and the way in which people may influence decision making. Students could be encouraged to debate issues such as:

- The role of the state in a democracy. What are people's democratic rights?
- Why are rights so important in our culture? Are some of our democratic rights being eroded?
- The changing gender patterns of participation. Are women and ethnic minorities under-represented in the corridors of power?
Student should be aware of the diversity of interest groups in Britain. They could be encouraged to debate

- Are interest and pressure groups necessary in our society?
- Do all interest groups have equal access to power and representation?
- To what extent are minority groups allowed to participate?
- To what extent are voting systems simply legitimising processes or do political parties genuinely reflect the interests of the electorate

Although not essential to success at this level, students who are able to use basic theory for example, referring to elites or pluralism will be rewarded.

Candidates who can use evidence to support their debates/ answers will be rewarded. This could be in the form of contemporary issues, facts and figures or sociological research. Candidates should be encouraged to develop the ability to discuss these issues sociologically rather than in a personal manner.

**Option 3 Crime and Deviance**

In this optional area, there is a natural progression from the core themes of inequality and power to the study of crime and deviance. This option will focus on the role of the law in enforcing social control and also notions of power in terms of law creation and enforcement.

Students could be encouraged to debate issues such as:

- How crime and deviance are socially constructed.
- Students could be encouraged to study research methods through investigation of notions of the Dark Figure of Crime.
- To what extent is illegal behaviour also normal behaviour?

Social issues in terms of inequality can be investigated through analysis of conviction and victimisation rates in terms of gender, ethnicity, class and age.

Case studies of famous criminal cases that illustrate issues of power and social control, for example the Stephen Lawrence case or cases of violations of civil liberties might be a useful source of stimulus material.

- The role of deprivation and inequality in the incidence of crime might be investigated.
- The role of the media in creating moral panics and folk devils is a source of debate. To what extent are young people demonised in the media?

Candidates who can use evidence to support their debates/ answers will be rewarded. This could be in the form of contemporary issues, facts and figures or sociological research. Candidates should be encouraged to develop the ability to discuss these issues sociologically rather than in a personal manner.
Option 4 World Sociology

This option will focus world poverty and economic development. The relationship between wealth in Westernised nations and poverty in LEDC countries will be explored to investigate issues of equality and power. Conceptually, globalisation and consumerism will form a core component of study.

Students could be encouraged to debate issues such as:

- What is the cause of world poverty and inequality?
- How can issues of poverty and underdevelopment be investigated?
- How can underdevelopment be addressed by powerful nations

Students should be aware of specific inequalities such as the role of gender inequality in the continuation of world inequality. They could be encouraged to debate:

- The role of religious and cultural belief in equality issues
- How can sustainability and fair trade be encouraged by Western consumers?
- What can ordinary citizens do to support world equality?
- Can the world sustain western levels of consumerism and use of resources?
- To what extent is western consumerism exploitative of the poorest and least educated?

Candidates who can use evidence to support their debates/ answers will be rewarded. This could be in the form of contemporary issues, facts and figures or sociological research. Candidates should be encouraged to develop the ability to discuss these issues sociologically rather than in a personal manner.
5. ASSESSMENT GUIDANCE

- Marking is always positive.

- Candidates are advised to ensure that there are answers to all parts of the question to ensure the highest possible marks.

- Candidates are advised to plan their time according to the mark weightings for each question. Where a large number of marks are allocated to a question, then it is expected that candidates should develop their answers with examples and further knowledge.

- Rubric errors where candidates answer all of the questions will be self-penalising. It is unlikely that the answers will be in enough detail. In this instance only one question will be awarded marks.

- Candidates are advised against copying out the wording of questions, as this is not an effective use of time.

- There is a considerable amount of additional sociological information on the examination paper and candidates are advised to read and make note of it. It may be that information used as stimulus material in one question could be used by the candidate as supporting evidence in another. This is viewed as good practice and is acceptable.

- Appropriate use of sociological concepts throughout the answer paper will always be rewarded highly.

- Under examination conditions, candidates sometimes write about their personal experiences. Although this can be useful to illustrate sociological understanding it must be linked to the question and an overview of what is happening in British society.

- Candidates sometime offer their own personal views. Although this can be acceptable, candidates should avoid doing this in a prejudiced or politically incorrect way.

- For the higher mark questions the following acronym (SEE) may be useful to candidates.

  Statement (what is under discussion)
  Explanation (further development)
  Example (to demonstrate understanding)
Key Examination Command Words

A variety of command words will be used in the compulsory core of each examination in the full course and in the Soc 1 short course GCSE. It is important that candidates should understand what is required of them.

The following command words may be used in the questions.

Define: give a brief statement which explains the meaning, e.g. Define the meaning of the term nuclear family.

Describe: provide a detailed account e.g. Describe the role of the family as an agent of socialisation. The level of detail will depend on mark allocation.

Give reasons for: explain how or why something is the way it is, e.g. give reasons for the way in which work has changed.

Identify: select relevant information from the stimulus material e.g. Identify the group least likely to own a home computer’ or recall information

Outline: provide a brief description concentrating on the main areas of a topic, e.g. outline reasons why a sociological group you have studied is more likely to experience poverty than other people.

Suggest: give brief facts or examples, e.g. suggest one reason why we have an equal pay act.

State: an alternative to Suggest.

Name: an alternative to State.

Discuss: put arguments for and against and reach a conclusion, e.g. discuss reasons why the role of women in families in Britain has changed since 1945.

Evaluate: make points for and against and reach a conclusion, e.g. evaluate the usefulness of questionnaires.

Select: make a choice, e.g. select the group most likely to fail in education.

To what extent: explain one side of an argument and then qualify the points made or develop alternative arguments, e.g. to what extent is the media representation of sport male dominated?

Explain: give reasons for something happening, e.g. ‘explain why women have fewer children’.

Please note: ‘How’ and ‘Why’

Questions sometimes depend on a careful reading of ‘how’ and ‘why’. Many candidates are unable to differentiate between the two command words.

‘Explain how the family has changed.’ refers to a description of family changes.

‘Explain why the family has changed.’ refers to reasons for family change.
Preparing for Examinations

The Assessment Objectives are

- **AO1** Knowledge and understanding. This refers to knowledge and understanding of concepts, trends, patterns, structures, processes and debates related to the content.
- **AO2** Application of knowledge and understanding. This refers to applying knowledge and understanding in a range of contexts both familiar and unfamiliar.
- **AO3** Interpretation, analysis and evaluation.

Most answers are banded (see mark scheme) and it will help candidates if they are aware of the skills demonstrated in each band.

The extended answers in Section B of both papers will be placed in one of four bands/levels.

Level 4 will require breadth and depth of knowledge and understanding and the use of sociological language (AO1); appropriate and developed use of evidence and examples (AO2) and when necessary an awareness of the sociological debate relevant to the question (AO3).

Level 3 will require either some breadth or some depth.

Level 2 answers will be basic with some focus on the question.

Level 1 answers will be limited in terms of both knowledge and understanding and may lack focus on the question.

See mark schemes for further details. Mark schemes are available on the WJEC website.

Strategies for success

- Familiarity with the format of the examination
- Familiarity with the type of questions that are likely to be asked
- Familiarity with the language and content of the specification
- Use of evidence and examples to support answers
- Reference to specific knowledge e.g. studies, current events
- Use of sociological language and ideas
- Direct reference to the question, especially in Section B.
- Well planned and structured answers
- For the higher mark questions, evidence of analysis and evaluation
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