

# MOJZA

**O-Level**

# **A GUIDE TO SOCIOLOGY**

2251



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# CONTENTS

**Learning Objectives -----Pg 02**

**Paper Pattern -----Pg 03**

**Answering techniques -----Pg 06**



# Learning Objectives

**The assessment objectives (AOs) are:**

**→ AO1: Knowledge and understanding**

Candidates should be able to:

- Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of appropriate sociological topics
- Understand the theoretical and practical considerations influencing the design and application of sociological enquiry
- understand and apply sociological terminology and concepts.
- Answering the question with concise yet absolute correct knowledge, knowing key terms exact meaning according to the context asked- for eg. the meaning of “crime” is deviant behaviour that violates prevailing norms, or cultural standards prescribing how humans ought to behave normally.
- Here Cambridge is asking to not just rote-learn the key terms but also exactly understand them properly and apply them in the given question (or) in real life situations. For example if the meaning of the word “crime” is being asked you should give the relevant example like “robbery”, “sexual assault.”

**→ AO2: Interpretation of evidence**

Candidates should be able to:

- Demonstrate an awareness of the main methods of sociological enquiry and their uses
- Interpret and apply relevant evidence and data
- Show an awareness of different types and sources of evidence.
- Sociology is a very tricky subject. Only knowing basics won't help one gain their desired grade. One should go through all the “case studies” and possible governmental acts and try to memorise a few so that when one is explaining their point they could refer to a case study/ Acts implemented and strengthen their answer with that, supposedly, if we were talking about equality amongst the gender we could mention “the Equality Act 2010 - legally protects people from discrimination in”

**→ AO3: Analysis and evaluation**

Candidates should be able to:

- Evaluate the strengths and limitations of particular sociological studies and methods
- Recognise limitations and bias in evidence and distinguish between fact, opinion and values
- Reach conclusions based on a reasoned consideration of available evidence
- Organise and present sociological evidence and arguments in a coherent and purposeful form.
- AO3 is very self explanatory, the candidates are expected to have developed answers with all sort of perspectives and think like a sociologist (who do not have biased opinions- they make conclusions upon research, statistics and after deeply scrutinising human behaviour)

- Additionally, AO3 asks candidates to focus on elaborating on their answer and providing a relevant number of pros and cons to the “to what extent” questions whilst keeping in mind to think logically and think rationally.
- Candidates are expected to start making reasoning for everything they write and also provide evidence from the past - simply meaning to have in-depth knowledge and understanding of human behaviour and sociological terms.

# Paper Pattern

Sociology is a relatively easy subject with simple questions. Like any subject, it consists of two papers in which there are compulsory and choice questions.

## PAPER 1

The first paper of sociology is 2 hours long in total, 15 minutes of which are for your general reading of all the questions. A total of 80 marks are awarded in the whole paper, and it is divided into three sections. All three sections contain only one question, each from separate units.

Section A consists of the only compulsory question in the whole Sociology exam which is from Unit 1: Theory and Methods. Question 1 always comes with a source which could range from text to tables to pie charts.

The table shows self-reported data on health in Great Britain from 2005 to 2011.

The data was gained from people aged 16 and over who filled in a questionnaire.

**Table 1.1**

Percentage who reported their general health was:	2005 %	2006 %	2007 %	2008 %	2009 %	2010 %	2011 %
Very Good	34	33	34	35	40	39	34
Good	41	43	43	40	39	40	43
Fair	18	17	17	16	15	15	18
Poor	6	5	5	4	5	5	5
Very Bad	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
<b>Sample size</b>	<i>18 010</i>	<i>16 720</i>	<i>15 670</i>	<i>14 720</i>	<i>13 480</i>	<i>13 330</i>	<i>13 100</i>

Adapted from source: General Lifestyle Survey, Office for National Statistics.

As shown in this example from June 2022, the given source in question 1 is used to answer the questions that carry low marks or directly imply the need of the source. Question 1 consists of seven parts from *a* to *g* which carry different marks that add up to 45. (shown below).

- (a) From Source A identify the **two** years in which the highest number of people reported their health as 'very good'. [2]
- (b) Identify **two** primary research methods useful for studying people's health, apart from questionnaires. [2]
- (c) Using information from Source A, describe **two** problems with the data gathered on health. [4]
- (d) Describe **two** limitations of using telephone questionnaires in research. [4]
- (e) Describe **two** strengths and **two** limitations of stratified sampling in research. [8]
- (f) Explain why some sociologists prefer large-scale research. [10]
- (g) To what extent are ethical issues the most important factor when planning sociological research? [15]

The last three questions carry the most marks, hence require the most time. Question 1 always consists of two 2 mark questions, two 4 mark questions and one 8, 10 and 15 mark questions. The (f) parts require thorough explanations whilst the (g) parts always ask for two sided answers.

Apart from the compulsory Section A, Paper 1 has two other sections: B and C. Section B contains question 2 from Unit 2: Culture, Identity and Socialisation and Section C has the third question from Unit 3: Social Inequality. The choice is between these two questions and the candidate has to answer any one.

These questions too contain a small passage at their top, although it is not intended to help answer the questions but simply give a brief introduction.

### Section B: Culture, identity and socialisation

- 2 Many sociologists investigate globalisation and its impact on the world. This leads to a debate about whether increased multiculturalism is a strength or a weakness of modern industrial societies. Despite these changes all societies still need to have agents of social control and agents of socialisation.
- (a) What is meant by the term 'globalisation'? [2]
- (b) Describe **two** agents of formal social control. [4]
- (c) Explain how canalisation influences gender identity. [6]
- (d) Explain why schools are an important agent of socialisation. [8]
- (e) To what extent is multiculturalism a strength of modern industrial societies? [15]

As seen above, questions 2 and 3 consist of five parts that add up to 35. Part (a) generally asks for a definition whilst part (e) is always a 'to an extent' question.

It is important to allot time skillfully, more to Section A considering that it carries more number of questions and heavier marks.

## PAPER 2

The second paper is relatively simpler. There is 1 hour and 45 minutes given which includes the candidate's reading time. A total of 70 marks are divided amongst the four sections in this paper. Luckily out of these four the candidate only has to answer two of their choice.

Section A asks questions from Unit 4: Family  
Section B from Unit 5: Education  
Section C from Unit 6: Crime, deviance and social control  
And Section D from Unit 7: Media.

These sections contain only one question from each chapter which further has five parts. These questions are structured muchlike Section B and C in paper 1, with a short passage at the beginning. An example is shown below.

### Section C: Crime, deviance and social control

- 3 There are many explanations for crime such as labelling theory and Marxism, as well as explanations which consider age, ethnicity and gender. For example, the media often represents males as more criminal. In reality not all males have the same chance of being arrested. Due to the negative effects of crime, society focuses on different forms of crime prevention.
- (a) What is meant by the term 'crime prevention'? [2]
  - (b) Describe **two** examples of cyber crimes. [4]
  - (c) Explain how age can affect criminal behaviour. [6]
  - (d) Explain why **not** all males have the same chance of being arrested. [8]
  - (e) To what extent is labelling theory the best explanation for crime and deviance? [15]

Overall, in both papers the candidate is required to answer four questions from four different units. Many teachers suggest leaving out two units considering that you will end up not answering their questions. This will help you loosen the load and focus better on the units at hand.

Sociology is a simple subject, don't stress it and good luck!

# Answering Techniques

## General Outlook

### 2-Marker:

- Read the question carefully and identify the specific aspect you need to address.
- Provide a concise and focused response, typically in a single sentence or short paragraph.
- Be direct and to the point, avoiding unnecessary elaboration.
- Use relevant sociological terminology or concepts to strengthen your answer.
- Ensure your response directly answers the question without veering off-topic.

### 4-Marker:

- Read the question carefully and identify the key elements or sub-questions involved.
- Plan your response by jotting down the main points or arguments you want to include.
- Start with a brief introduction that contextualises your answer.
- Develop your response in a structured manner, using clear paragraphs to address each sub-question or main point.
- Support your arguments with evidence, examples, or sociological concepts.
- Keep your answer concise, focusing on the most important information.
- Use sociological terminology appropriately and accurately.
- Conclude your answer by summarising the main points addressed.

### 6-Marker:

- Read the question carefully and identify the main elements or sub-questions involved.
- Plan your response by outlining the main points you want to cover and the evidence/examples you will use.
- Begin with a concise introduction that sets the context for your answer.
- Develop your response by addressing each sub-question or main point in separate paragraphs.
- Support your arguments with relevant evidence, examples, or sociological theories.
- Analyse and evaluate the sociological concepts or evidence provided.
- Use appropriate sociological terminology accurately.
- Conclude your answer by summarising the main points and providing a clear final statement.

### 8-Marker:

- Read the question carefully and identify the main elements or sub-questions involved.
- Plan your response by outlining the main points and evidence/examples you will use.
- Begin with a concise introduction that provides an overview of your answer.



- Develop your response by addressing each sub-question or main point in separate paragraphs.
- Support your arguments with relevant evidence, examples, or sociological theories.
- Analyse and evaluate the sociological concepts or evidence provided, considering different perspectives.
- Use appropriate sociological terminology accurately and effectively.
- Conclude your answer by summarising the main points and offering a balanced evaluation.

### **10-Marker:**

- Read the question carefully and identify the key elements or sub-questions involved.
- Plan your response by outlining the main points, evidence/examples, and arguments you will use.
- Begin with a concise introduction that introduces the main themes or issues you will address.
- Develop your response by addressing each sub-question or main point in separate paragraphs.
- Support your arguments with relevant evidence, examples, or sociological theories.
- Analyse and evaluate the sociological concepts or evidence provided, considering different perspectives and potential counterarguments.
- Use appropriate sociological terminology accurately and effectively.
- Conclude your answer by summarising the main points, evaluating the strengths and limitations of your arguments, and providing a well-rounded conclusion.

### **15-marker**

- Read the question: Carefully read the question and underline or highlight the key elements, sub-questions, or themes you need to address. Pay attention to any specific requirements or instructions.
- Plan your response: Take some time to plan your answer before you start writing. Create an outline with the main points, arguments, evidence, and examples you want to include. Consider the structure of your response and how you will develop your ideas coherently.
- Introduction: Begin your answer with an engaging introduction that provides an overview of the topic and the specific focus of your response. State your thesis or main argument clearly to guide the reader.
- Main body paragraphs: Divide your answer into several well-organised paragraphs, each addressing a specific aspect or sub-question related to the main topic. Use topic sentences to introduce each paragraph and ensure a clear flow of ideas.
- Develop your arguments: Present your arguments or points of view, supported by relevant sociological theories, concepts, or evidence. Use specific examples, case studies, or research findings to strengthen your arguments and provide concrete illustrations.
- Analyse and evaluate: Go beyond description and analysis by critically evaluating the strengths and limitations of the theories, concepts, or evidence you have presented. Consider different perspectives, counter arguments, and alternative interpretations to demonstrate a deeper understanding of the topic.

- Use sociological terminology: Incorporate appropriate sociological terminology accurately and effectively throughout your answer. This shows your understanding of key concepts and demonstrates your sociological knowledge.
- Balance and structure: Maintain a balanced approach throughout your response, considering different viewpoints, theories, and evidence. Ensure a logical structure by using clear transitions between paragraphs and ideas.
- Conclusion: Summarise your main points and arguments in a concise and coherent manner. Emphasise the significance of your findings or conclusions and make sure they directly address the question asked.
- Review and revise: Take some time at the end to review your answer. Check for clarity, coherence, grammar, and spelling errors. Make any necessary revisions to improve the overall quality of your response.

## **Sample Answers:**

### **(a) What is meant by formal social control? [2]**

Ans: Formal social control refers to the official and recognised way of keeping order in society by making people follow rules/norms/laws. Agencies of formal social control include the government and police.

### **(b) Suggest two reasons why official statistics may contain bias. [4]**

Ans: Official statistics are usually government sponsored and so in order to present the data in a "good light" the result may be biased to reduce or increase the public's perception of the results e.g. crime figures may have a bias to show that crime is falling but it may be the way the crime figures are collected that influence the figures - reported or recorded crime

Bias may also be used for political gain in other ways e.g. hospital waiting lists to show that the government is doing a good job.

Bias may also be used to defuse potential problems. for example immigration or asylum figures may be biased to show that the problem is really not that bad contrary to public opinion or media hype.

### **(c) Describe two problems that might arise when seeking to use historical documents in sociological research.[4]**

Ans: Historical figures may be inaccurate as the technology was not available to validate the figures. For example, we know fairly accurately how many cars are on our roads today, but 60 years ago there were perhaps no real records held.

Historical figures may also be interpreted differently to how we interpret figures today. So when comparisons are drawn, the results are misleading. Crime figures calculated in the 1950's will be different to how they are calculated today for example

### **(f)Identify and explain two advantages and two disadvantages of quantitative research. [6]**

Ans: Quantitative research is favoured by positivist sociologists who prefer a scientific approach, using empirical evidence, experiments & questionnaires etc. for data gathering. An advantage of this is that a wider audience (sample cross section) can be used for gathering data. A larger sample size should give greater accuracy in results. This type of research allows for better graphical representation. A further advantage would be the reliability and validity of the data, the research results are generally laid down in definitive terms for example a questionnaire may require a "yes" or "no" answer, this leaves no interpretation requirement and so provides a consistency in the research. A disadvantage could be in the rigidity of the questions i.e. an answer to a question may not be as simple as "yes" or "no" and so the depth and knowledge is not brought out as well as it would be using a qualitative approach. A further disadvantage could be the lack of "feel" for the subject area. There is no scope to delve deeper into the research. With certain types of quantitative data gathering, the respondent may not fully understand the question being asked of them and so may be interpreted wrongly whereas with a qualitative technique such as a survey, the question could be better explained and a more thorough answer obtained.

**Q. To what extent do ethical issues influence the way sociological research is carried out? [10]**

Ans. Ethical issues are the moral problems faced when conducting sociological research. Even though researchers try their best to ensure that there is not a breach of ethics when researching a person or a number of people, sometimes their research might involve elements that may be ethically wrong.

One such ethical issue is deception. This is faced usually in covert participant/non-participant observation, when the person being observed by the researcher is not informed about it, which can lead to an invasion of privacy for the person. Research participants can also be deceived if they are not told about the purpose of research. However, when criminals are being studied, sometimes it is best to study their behaviour using covert participation in order to ensure the researcher's own safety. Additionally, researchers involved in covert observation may face the dilemma of having to report illegal activity (e.g. drug dealing, theft).

Another way in which research can be affected by the presence of ethical issues is when informed consent is not taken by the research participant when including them as a part of the research. Informed consent means that the research participants need to be informed what the research is about and what taking part in it would involve. Participants have a right to not give their consent or to withdraw their consent at any time. An ethical issue would arise if the researcher did not fully explain their research to the participants (meaning that they did not have informed consent), or if the researcher uses the results after consent has been withdrawn.

Furthermore, the anonymity of the research participants must be ensured, which means that their names must not be published in the research. If their names or photographs are revealed, it can cause an invasion of privacy, emotional harm, physical danger (in some cases) or other emotional issues for them.

Closely related to anonymity is confidentiality, which means that all the information provided by participants should be kept confidential. However, this is not always easy to follow. For instance, in their book 'Violence Against Wives', Dobash and Dobash (1979) conducted unstructured interviews with female victims of domestic violence, and although the women's names were kept anonymous, their responses provided in their own words were published in the book. A reason for this could be to let those women be heard and to allow others to know the extent of violence they faced at the hands of their husbands.

On the other hand, asking the research participant leading questions can also be considered an ethical problem. This is because it would make the participant answer according to what they think are the researcher's expectations, which in turn would make the research findings less valid.

Additionally, if the research is going to cause physical or emotional harm to the participant in any way, then perhaps it is not a good idea to carry out that study in the first place. However, when interviewing victims of trauma, harassment or domestic violence, it is likely that the researcher will probe into the participant's feelings to get an accurate account of their experience and hence get valid research findings.

Hence, keeping the above mentioned arguments in mind, it can be said that ethical issues impact sociological research but not in all cases.

**Q. What are the implications of the rise of single-parent families? (15 marks)**

Ans: Single-parent families suffer from multiple problems including the decline in income and educational level, which consequently lead to economic, social and psychological complications (Essa, 1995). According to Al-Zufairi (2000), children of single-parent families suffer from a decline in the level of educational achievement in 44% of the 180 total samples. This later study has also shown that children who live in an intact family are less likely to abandon school at the highschool level when compared to children who live in a single-parent family. In fact, it was shown in other studies that children of single-parent families were twice as likely to abandon their school at some level compared to other children (Waite, 1995).

Children from single-parent families are more likely later to take jobs at the bottom of the occupational grade with the lower income, and they have high rate unemployment. Some studies show that children raised in single parent families are more likely to live and grow in insolvent economic conditions. Also that these children not only suffer from deprivation at the economic level, but also suffer from a lack of parental care and high rate of change of address, which could negatively affect their development (Smock et al., 1999). Social science shows that the primary cause of poverty and income disparity correlates to marriage status. Broken families earn less income, and suffer from low educational attainment. To worsen the situation, such families pass these conditions to their children, which would exuberate these effects through generations (Fagan, 1999).

In 1981, a study by Clay regarding single-parent families, which took place in 47 states in the US and included a sample of 1200 cases, had shown that 62% of parents believe that their children are not perceived as being normal by their teachers in school. Moreover, most single-parent families suffer from the inability to provide proper experienced guidance to their children to face and solve any social or psychological complications (Al-Zufairi, 2000).

Additionally, single-mother families can face some issues in the upbringing of male children, especially when some side-factors contribute to a decline in the educational success of children such as the emergence of tensions and conflicts within home, and the inability of the mother to manage the family. Such difficulties can be multiplied due to the presence of some external and internal factors such as the presence of young children, lack of good income, in addition to the negative community standing towards the family (Anthony, 1987).

A single caregiver will usually develop a sense of loneliness and tension, especially when he/she needs to make important and decisive decisions to the family or one of its members. Certain conditions can increase the worry about raising the children, and the feeling of guilt due to the inability to meet all family demands. Examples of these conditions are the presence of children with special needs, such as disabilities, mental disorders, permanent physiological conditions, or children who are in critical stages of adolescence or at the age of marriage, or an increased number of children within the family (Al-Rashidi, 1994). Anthony, in 1987, confirmed such facts in his study about stress and anxiety on 147 children, which estimated the existence of this tension and anxiety to about 65.5% compared to normal children. The Al-Zufairi (2000) also found that the widowed women live in a state of guilt toward their children being deprived of the presence of the father, and this feeling resulted in maternal care based on pampering treatment and provision, or sometimes the excess of cruel punishment as a reaction to the fear of loss of control.

The general system theory is based on that the system parts are related to each other organically in the sense that if the change is considered in one part of the system, this change inevitably will affect the interaction between all other parts. This assumption can be applied to whether the system of family or the community as a whole. For the family as a social system, this means that the vulnerability of its personnel to any event will positively or negatively affect the rest of its members since family members are closely linked to each other. Consequently, the problems faced by the family are also reflected on society, and with the increased number of single-parent families, we would expect to find an increased number of these problems in the community (Olson and DeFrain 2000).

# SOCIOLOGY PREPARATION GUIDE

Sociology is a fairly simple subject to prepare. Your preparation revolves around your understanding of the concepts rather than what you have memorised, meaning that a lot of hard work and commitment is required to excel in the subject.

## Resources

What matters most in any subject are the resources you are using to study it. The Cambridge Sociology Course Book by Jonathon Blundell is a good medium to learn from. Otherwise 'An Introduction to Sociology' by Ken Browne provides extensive detail about the subject. The latter is an outdated book, however it is recommended to use the book to simply grab the core concepts of the topic, rather than diving into the complexities. This will allow you to have a solid idea which will show in your answers.

## Preparation

It is crucial that you go through the books and read them well. Afterwards, you are to refer to precise notes. Mojza's Sociology Team has compiled a list of websites that provide short and clear notes for you to study from. Going through these after every chapter will help you retain the information as well as allow you to be more clear about the content. Reading notes and going through youtube videos will allow you to solidify your concept. Otherwise if you have time to spare, writing your own notes from what you have studied may also be beneficial, since writing down helps some people study better. However, referring to already made notes afterwards is a good idea, just so you have not left anything out.

## Things to focus on

It is important to know every key term and definition that is mentioned. A 2 mark question can easily come on the meaning of a term, hence secure yourself those marks. These will also be incorporated into your big answers that carry many marks as integrating important key words into your answers will show depth to the examiner. (E.g Ostracism, Values, Canalisation etc)

Focusing on the different case studies that are mentioned in each chapter and referred to in your resources is crucial. These case studies are what make you stand out, hence go through each one. It is important to know what the study was about, who was involved and what was the result. Again these will add depth to your answer and tier revision will help you gain a better understanding of how concepts and ideas work in the real world.

Do not skip over the researchers, they are what matter most in an A\* answer. Make sure to know the names of the researchers involved in each concept. Each idea discussed and every important concept has names of at least one researcher, hence you should know what they did and who they were. (You can refer to our notes to gather their names and work). Try to

embed the names into your answers and make significant links. No extensive knowledge of the researcher is required, save time and be clear on how they contributed to Sociology.

### **Past Paper Revision**

Once you have grasped the concepts and know all the content, it is time for you to attempt the past papers. Going from recent to previous ones is ideal and it is important to attempt all questions in each year (if you lack time then revising up to 2013 is a good save). In order to save time, going through the questions and orally answering them is helpful, however for the bigger 10 and 15 mark questions it is important to make small mind maps or notes during preparation. Pay attention to these large questions and spend time on the past papers so that you are able to construct answers.

Set yourself in an exam-like situation and answer a past paper within the time limit. Preparation does not only mean for the content, but also for time management. Practice continuously on how to tackle smaller questions in a short amount of time so you can give more time to the larger ones. Plan out how much time you will give to each question and meet that limit while practising past papers.

### **Other Advice**

The examiner wants to know if you understand the subject and you have to show that you are able to comprehend all concepts and ideas. Make your answers better by using expressions and adding real life incidents apart from case studies as well. Modern day societal incidents occur everyday and are shown in the media, you can see such incidents smartly to put in your answers. Construct a great conclusion in your long answers after using important key terms and popular sociological ideas by popular sociologists.

Sociology is not too hard to manage, all it requires is to know how to answer the questions and a clear idea of key concepts in each chapter. You can also refer to our provided resources at Mojza to help you out with your preparation!

### **A Note from Mojza**

These notes for Sociology(2251) have been prepared by Team Mojza, covering the content for O Level 2022-24 syllabus. The content of these notes has been prepared with utmost care. We apologise for any issues overlooked; factual, grammatical or otherwise. We hope that you benefit from these and find them useful towards achieving your goals for your Cambridge examinations.

If you find any issues within these notes or have any feedback, please contact us at [support@mojza.org](mailto:support@mojza.org).

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