

MARK SCHEME for the May/June 2008 question paper

9699 SOCIOLOGY

9699/01

Paper 1 (Essay), maximum raw mark 50

This mark scheme is published as an aid to teachers and candidates, to indicate the requirements of the examination. It shows the basis on which Examiners were instructed to award marks. It does not indicate the details of the discussions that took place at an Examiners' meeting before marking began.

All Examiners are instructed that alternative correct answers and unexpected approaches in candidates' scripts must be given marks that fairly reflect the relevant knowledge and skills demonstrated.

Mark schemes must be read in conjunction with the question papers and the report on the examination.

- CIE will not enter into discussions or correspondence in connection with these mark schemes.

CIE is publishing the mark schemes for the May/June 2008 question papers for most IGCSE, GCE Advanced Level and Advanced Subsidiary Level syllabuses and some Ordinary Level syllabuses.



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Section A

1 'The methods and procedures of the natural sciences are inappropriate for studying human behaviour.' Explain and assess this claim.

- 0–6 An answer that is confined to a few descriptive comments about scientific method with no direct links to the question would be worth a few marks within this band. Likewise, some oblique references to the positivist perspective in sociology might merit 5 or 6 marks.
- 7–12 A simple descriptive account of the positivist perspective with little or no development would trigger the lower part of the band. Some attempt to describe the methods and procedures of the natural sciences, allied to a few simple comments about the appropriateness of the scientific approach for studying human behaviour, would merit a mark towards the top of the band.
- 13–18 At this level we can expect the candidate to demonstrate a clear and accurate understanding of the methods and procedures of the natural sciences. This may be delivered through an account of the hypothetico-deductive method and/or by references to specific scientific procedures, such as laboratory experiments. Lower in the band the attempt to assess the relevance of the scientific approach for studying human behaviour will be rather limited. Higher in the band the assessment will be focused squarely on some of the issues arising from the debates about positivism in sociology.
- 19–25 Answers that merit this band will demonstrate a good understanding of the nature of science and this may include awareness that there are debates (Kuhn, Popper, Lakatos, Lynch, the Realists, etc.) about what scientific research actually entails. There will also be a sustained assessment of the positivist perspective in sociology. Lower in the band the assessment may be delivered mainly through juxtaposition of the positivist and anti-positivist arguments. Higher in the band, the analysis will be more explicit and sophisticated.

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2 'The identities associated with childhood are socially constructed.' Explain and assess this view.

- 0–6 Candidates at this level will show little understanding of the requirements of the question. However, an answer that is confined to a few basic observations about the socialisation process would be worth a mark towards the top of the band.
- 7–12 A reasonably competent account of the importance of socialisation in creating human identity (i.e. with references to feral children, etc.), could score up to 10 marks. To go higher in the band, however, there needs to be some awareness that the identities associated with childhood may vary historically and/or cross-culturally.
- 13–18 The requirements of the question will have been grasped at this level and it is likely that the work of Philip Aries will be used as the focus for the answer. Higher in the band the candidate will demonstrate a good understanding of the idea of human identities being 'socially constructed'. Lower in the band the assessment will be very limited and may, for example, be confined to a simple expression of support for the ideas of Philip Aries. The assessment will be more developed higher in the band.
- 19–25 Answers at this level will explain very clearly the notion that the identities associated with childhood are socially constructed. Good use will be made of relevant examples and/or references to studies (e.g. Aries) to support the response. Lower in the band the assessment may be confined to points that support the notion that human identities are socially constructed. To reach the top part of the band, however, the analysis needs to be more incisive in examining the claims that underpin the view expressed in the question. This may include, for example, an attempt to engage critically with Aries' thesis, or it could take the form of a more general questioning of the notion that the identities associated with childhood are socially constructed.

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Section B

3 Assess the usefulness of quantitative methods in sociological research.

- 0–6 The distinction between quantitative and qualitative methods may be confused in answers that merit this band. Alternatively, a few simple observations about questionnaires might be worth 5 or 6 marks.
- 7–12 A descriptive account of the characteristics of one quantitative method (questionnaires, structured interviews, content analysis, etc.) would trigger the lower part of the band. A descriptive account of two or more methods would reach the upper part of the band. At this level, any assessment of the usefulness of quantitative methods will be very limited. Be wary of candidates who ignore the methods and discuss the positivist perspective in general. This type of theory-based answer would merit no more than 10 marks.
- 13–18 A detailed account of the strengths and limitations of one or more quantitative methods would merit a mark in the lower-to-middle part of the band. To go higher, the answer needs to consider the usefulness of the quantitative approach overall and not just focus on the benefits and drawbacks of specific methods. One way of achieving this would be to link the choice of quantitative methods to the positivist perspective and then to consider the merits or otherwise of the scientific approach in sociology. However, the assessment at this level may lack some balance and subtlety.
- 19–25 Specific quantitative methods will be discussed in detail and conclusions drawn about the value of each method for the sociological researcher. The analysis will be sustained and include an overarching view on the usefulness of quantitative methods in general. Sophistication will be demonstrated by good use of relevant concepts, such as reliability and validity, in assessing the merits of quantitative research. Examples from relevant studies may also be used to support key points, at the top of the band; good links will be made to theory and the relevance of the positivist versus interpretivist debate for understanding the reasons why sociologists choose particular research methods.

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4 'Participant observation produces the most useful results when the researcher is able to conceal his or her identity from the group.' Explain and assess this view.

- 0–6 Answers at this level will probably fail to pick up the link in the question to *covert* participant observation. Hence, a few simple remarks about participant observation in general may be worth 5 or 6 marks.
- 7–12 To reach this level, the candidate must demonstrate some awareness of the distinction between overt and covert participant observation. A basic descriptive account of the differences between the two approaches to participant observation would trigger the lower part of the band. If the answer also identifies some of the strengths and limitations of covert participant observation, then a mark higher in the band would be merited.
- 13–18 An accurate and detailed account of the strengths and limitations of covert participant observation, perhaps with some references to relevant studies, would fit the lower part of the band. To go higher, there must be an attempt to assess the view expressed in the question that covert investigation, as opposed to overt research, produces the more useful results. However, at this level the assessment may lack subtlety and detail.
- 19–25 As for the previous band, but now the assessment will be explicit and sustained. The comparative strengths and limitations of both approaches to participant observation will be considered, though more emphasis may be given to evaluating the covert method. The assessment will cover both practical and theoretical issues. Higher in the band, further evidence of sophistication will be demonstrated by, for example, questioning what 'usefulness' means in the context of sociological research.

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Section C

5 'Affluent manual workers now form part of the middle class in modern industrial societies.'
Explain and assess this claim.

- 0–6 The implications of the question will go largely unrecognised at this level. A few general observations about social class divisions in modern industrial societies might be worth a mark towards the top of the band.
- 7–12 Lower in the band answers may be limited to a descriptive account of some of the main sociological perspectives on social class e.g. Marxist, functionalist, Weberian, etc. A better answer would focus on the embourgeoisement thesis, albeit without providing a detailed account of the ideas and findings of the classic study by Goldthorpe and Lockwood. At this level, there will be little or no attempt to assess the claim on which the question is based.
- 13–18 A reasonably accurate summary of the embourgeoisement thesis with some limited assessment would trigger the lower part of the band. A more sustained assessment would be required to gain higher marks. This might be achieved by, for example, highlighting some of the nuances in the findings from *The Affluent Worker* study that question how far embourgeoisement was taking place among the study group of manual workers. Similarly, juxtaposing the embourgeoisement thesis with the arguments about proletarianisation would be another way of expanding the evaluative content of the answer.
- 19–25 At this level, a detailed and accurate account of the embourgeoisement thesis will be accompanied by well-chosen references to the *The Affluent Worker* study and subsequent research findings reflecting on the class position of manual workers. One requirement to reach the top of the band is that the analysis is brought up-to-date by, for example, referring to studies post-1980 and/or highlighting social developments that may have affected the nature of class divisions since the time of the initial research by Goldthorpe and Lockwood. Candidates who make good use of post-modernist contributions to the debate about social class divisions are also likely to score highly within this level.

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6 Assess Marxist explanations for the existence of ethnic inequality in employment.

- 0–6 A few general remarks about social inequality with no direct links to the question would be worth 2 or 3 marks. An answer that is confined simply to highlighting a few characteristics of ethnic inequality in employment or other areas of social life, could reach the top of the band.
- 7–12 A sound descriptive account of the main features of ethnic inequality in employment in a particular society or in general, would trigger the lower part of the band. To go higher, the response must demonstrate some understanding of the Marxist perspective on racial/ethnic inequality. However, at this level there will be little or no attempt to assess the Marxist theory, nor need there be any recognition of different strands in Marxist thinking.
- 13–18 To merit the lower part of the band, the answer must include a sound account of the Marxist perspective on ethnic inequality allied to a few evaluative comments and/or a summary of at least one other sociological explanation for ethnic inequality. Higher in the band, the evaluative content will be more developed, though it could still be delivered by juxtaposing Marxist explanations with relevant contributions from other theoretical perspectives e.g. functionalist, Weberian, post-modernist, etc. At the top of the band, the focus should be on employment rather than ethnic inequality in general
- 19–25 As for the top of the previous band, though now the assessment of Marxist explanations must be explicit and go beyond simple juxtaposition of different sociological accounts of ethnic inequality. To reach the top of the band, the analysis must demonstrate some element of sophistication. This might be achieved by, for example, highlighting different strands of Marxist thinking about ethnic inequality and/or by emphasising the importance of cultural and historical factors in understanding the different dimensions of ethnic inequality in employment. Reward candidates who question the relevance of general, over-arching explanations of ethnic inequality.