



General Certificate of Education

Sociology 6191

SC5W Theory and Methods

Mark Scheme

2005 examination – June series

Mark schemes are prepared by the Principal Examiner and considered, together with the relevant questions, by a panel of subject teachers. This mark scheme includes any amendments made at the standardisation meeting attended by all examiners and is the scheme which was used by them in this examination. The standardisation meeting ensures that the mark scheme covers the candidates' responses to questions and that every examiner understands and applies it in the same correct way. As preparation for the standardisation meeting each examiner analyses a number of candidates' scripts: alternative answers not already covered by the mark scheme are discussed at the meeting and legislated for. If, after this meeting, examiners encounter unusual answers which have not been discussed at the meeting they are required to refer these to the Principal Examiner.

It must be stressed that a mark scheme is a working document, in many cases further developed and expanded on the basis of candidates' reactions to a particular paper. Assumptions about future mark schemes on the basis of one year's document should be avoided; whilst the guiding principles of assessment remain constant, details will change, depending on the content of a particular examination paper.

**GUIDANCE NOTES IN THE USE OF GENERAL AND QUESTION SPECIFIC
MARK SCHEMES FOR UNITS 4 AND 5**

TWO RELATED MARK SCHEMES ARE PROVIDED

Examiners are required to consult and apply the two related mark schemes as follows:

A General Mark Scheme made up of two sections on:

- (i) Knowledge and Understanding;
- (ii) Identification, Analysis, Interpretation and Evaluation.

A Question Specific Mark Scheme made up of one section on:

- (i) Knowledge and Understanding. This will enable examiners to assess the knowledge and understanding requirements of particular questions.

Marking

In the process of marking a particular question, you must follow the procedure detailed below in marking the different Skill Domains:

(i) **Knowledge and Understanding**

Refer to the Question Specific Mark Scheme and the General Mark Scheme.

(ii) **Identification, Analysis, Interpretation and Evaluation**

Refer to the General Mark Scheme.

Each answer should be assessed separately for each of the two Skill Domains and the mark for each Skill Domain recorded and totalled to give an overall mark. For example in the case of an answer which was rewarded 6 marks for Knowledge And Understanding and 6 for Identification, Analysis, Interpretation and Evaluation, the total mark for this answer would be 12.

GENERAL MARK SCHEME FOR UNITS 4 AND 5

Knowledge and Understanding

0 No relevant knowledge or understanding.

1 – 5 Answers in this band will show a very limited sociological knowledge and understanding.

Lower in the band, knowledge will consist of commonsensical points. Answers will show only minimal understanding of either the question or the material offered in response to it.

Higher in the band, knowledge will consist of a few isolated quasi-sociological points, with omissions and perhaps with significant errors. Understanding both of the question and of material offered in response to it will be very simplistic and perhaps confused.

6 – 10 Answers in this band will show a somewhat limited sociological knowledge and understanding.

Lower in the band, there will be a shallow knowledge of a limited amount of sociological material, perhaps with errors. Understanding both of the question and the material presented in response to it will be superficial.

Higher in the band, there will be a reasonably accurate but rather shallow and descriptive knowledge of a still limited amount of sociological material, or alternatively a slightly deeper but very narrow knowledge. There may be a generalised understanding of the question, or one which shows a specific understanding of only a very limited aspect of the question.

11 – 15 Answers in this band will show a reasonably good sociological knowledge and understanding.

Lower in the band, there will be a reasonably accurate knowledge of a range of sociological material with some limited success in conveying conceptual detail, or alternatively a more conceptually detailed but narrowly based knowledge. Knowledge shown may be either theoretical, empirical or both. Answers will show a specific understanding of some of the demands of the question and of the material offered in response to it, but other aspects will be neglected or treated in a generalised fashion.

Higher in the band there will be somewhat greater success in conveying conceptual detail, or a slightly greater breadth, of knowledge; however, answers will remain somewhat limited in range or depth. Knowledge shown will be both theoretical and empirical. There will be a specific understanding of most of the principal demands or aspects of the question, but some others will be neglected or treated in a generalised fashion.

16 – 20 Answers in this band will show a very good sociological knowledge and understanding.

Lower in the band, there will be a wide-ranging theoretical and empirical knowledge which will, with only very minor exceptions, be thorough, accurate and conceptually detailed. Accurate and explicit links will be made between some of the theoretical and empirical material. There will be a clear understanding both of the question, including its theoretical context, and of the material offered in response to it.

Higher in the band, knowledge will be comprehensive and will be thorough, accurate and conceptually detailed throughout. There will be a clear understanding of the theoretical context of the question, and there will be accurate and explicit links between the theoretical and empirical parts of the answer. Answers will show a clear, full and complex understanding of the question and the material offered.

GENERAL MARK SCHEME FOR UNITS 4 AND 5

Identification, Analysis, Interpretation and Evaluation

0 No relevant identification, analysis, interpretation or evaluation.

1 – 5 Answers in this band will show very limited skills of identification, analysis, interpretation and evaluation.

Lower in the band, identification of perspectives/arguments will be very limited and/or inaccurate. There will be little or no evidence of the ability to distinguish between facts, opinions and value judgements. Interpretation of the question and the material offered in answer to it will be minimal and/or confused. Analysis of arguments and/or methodological issues, if present, will be very limited. Evaluation may be absent or limited to one or two undeveloped examples.

Higher in the band, there will be some limited and undeveloped identification of perspectives, arguments and/or methodological issues, and some evidence of the ability to distinguish between facts, opinions and value judgements. There will be some limited interpretation of the question and/or the material offered in answer to it. Analysis, if present, will be undeveloped and possibly contain inaccuracies. Evaluation may be implicit or confined to one or two critical comments on some aspect of the question or general topic area.

6 – 10 Answers in this band will show somewhat limited skills of identification, analysis, interpretation and evaluation.

Lower in the band, identification of perspectives/arguments will be broadly accurate, although limited and undeveloped. Attempts to distinguish between facts, opinions and value judgements will show some sociological awareness. Interpretation of the question and the material offered in answer to it will be limited but broadly sociological. Examples may be undeveloped or applied to the general topic area rather than the set question. Analysis of material, if present, will be partial and poorly focused. Evaluation may take the form of a weak juxtaposition and/or brief list of criticisms of a study, concept, perspective or method.

Higher in the band, arguments/perspectives will be accurately identified, and there will be clear evidence of the ability to distinguish between facts, opinions and value judgements. Interpretation will be focused and examples will show some development and be broadly applied to the question set. There will be some, albeit limited and undeveloped, attempt to analyse material. There will be a few explicit points or criticisms raised.

11 – 15 Answers in this band will show reasonably good skills of identification, analysis, interpretation and evaluation.

Lower in the band, there will be some explicit and largely successful attempts to identify and interpret sociological arguments and perspectives. There will be a general awareness of methodological issues. Analysis may remain undeveloped and/or partial. There will be some explicit evaluation, although this may be one-sided and/or undeveloped.

Higher in the band, the use of skills will be more balanced and comprehensive. Sociological arguments, perspectives and methodological issues will be accurately identified and interpreted and examples will be generally applied to the question. Both analysis and evaluation will be explicit, though not necessarily fully developed or comprehensive.

16 – 20 Answers in this band will show very good skills of identification, analysis, interpretation and evaluation, applied to a range of sociological ideas, evidence and issues.

Lower in the band, sociological arguments and perspectives will be, with only very minor exceptions, accurately identified and successfully interpreted to meet the demands of the question. Analysis and evaluation of a wide range of material, including methodological issues, will be thorough, comprehensive and balanced.

Higher in the band, all the skills will be demonstrated in a thorough, accurate and comprehensive manner throughout. There will be clear evidence that identification, interpretation, analysis and evaluation follow a clear rationale and are applied with sensitivity and sophistication. Evaluative comparisons and contrasts may be made between different areas of sociology, and analysis and argument may be applied to wider and possibly more complex issues than those raised by the set question.

QUALITY OF WRITTEN COMMUNICATION

Where candidates are required to produce extended written material in English, the scheme of assessment must make specific reference to the assessment of the quality of written communication. Candidates must be required to:

- select and use a form and style of writing appropriate to purpose and complex subject matter;
- organise relevant information clearly and coherently, using specialist vocabulary when appropriate;
- ensure text is legible, and spelling, grammar and punctuation are accurate, so that meaning is clear.

The assessment criteria for quality of written communication apply to the assessment of Question 1 (d) and Questions 2 and 3. The following criteria should be applied in conjunction with the mark schemes (the general mark scheme and the question specific mark scheme).

The quality of written communication bands must be regarded as integral to the appropriate mark scheme band even though they are listed separately in the mark scheme. Examiners should note that, in the assessment of candidates' sociological knowledge and skills, the assessment of the Quality of Written Communication will be judged through the assessment of the clarity and appropriateness of the sociological material presented.

Question 1 (d)

In the 1 – 3 band, candidates' answers are likely to be characterised by the poor logical expression of ideas and the use of a limited range of conceptual terms, perhaps often used imprecisely and/or inaccurately. Spelling, punctuation and grammar may show serious deficiencies and frequent errors, perhaps impairing the intelligibility of significant parts of the answer.

In the 4 – 7 band, candidates' answers are likely to be characterised by the fair to good logical expression of ideas and the competent use of a reasonable range of conceptual terms. Spelling, punctuation and grammar will be of a reasonable standard. Commonly used words and sociological terms will generally be spelt correctly. There may be minor errors of punctuation and grammar, but these will not seriously impair the intelligibility of the answer.

In the 8 – 10 band, candidates' answers are likely to be characterised by the very good to excellent logical expression of ideas and the precise use of a broad range of conceptual terms. Spelling, punctuation and grammar will be of a very good to excellent standard. Commonly and less commonly used words and sociological terms will almost always be spelt correctly. Punctuation and grammar will be used correctly throughout to facilitate the intelligibility of the answer.

Questions 2 and 3

In the 1 – 5 band, candidates' answers are likely to be characterised by the very poor logical expression of ideas and the use of a very limited range of conceptual terms, perhaps often used imprecisely and/or inaccurately. Spelling, punctuation and grammar may show serious deficiencies and frequent errors, impairing the intelligibility of significant parts of the answer.

In the 6 – 10 band, candidates' answers are likely to be characterised by the generally fair logical expression of ideas, though perhaps with some occasional flaws, and the use of a somewhat limited range of conceptual terms, perhaps sometimes used imprecisely and/or inaccurately. Spelling, punctuation and grammar will be fair. Commonly used words and sociological terms will mostly be spelt correctly. There may be some errors in punctuation and grammar which impair the intelligibility of some parts of the answer.

In the 11 – 15 band, candidates' answers are likely to be characterised by the reasonable to good logical expression of ideas and the competent use of a reasonable range of conceptual terms. Spelling, punctuation and grammar will be of a good standard. Commonly used words and sociological terms will be spelt correctly. Punctuation and grammar will be of a good standard facilitating a competent expression of ideas.

In the 16 – 20 band, candidates' answers are likely to be characterised by the very good to excellent logical expression of ideas and the precise use of a broad range of conceptual terms. Spelling, punctuation and grammar will be of a very good to excellent standard, with commonly and less commonly used words and sociological terms almost always spelt correctly. Meaning will be clear throughout.

SECTION A – THEORY AND METHODS

Answer **all** parts of this Section.

Total for this Section: 20 marks

1 (a) Explain briefly what is meant by the term “pilot studies” (Item A , line 1). (2 marks)

Two marks for a correct explanation, such as:

- smaller-scale pieces of research to test methodologies before larger research;
- preliminary pieces of research which trial some of the ideas for the main study.

One mark for a partial explanation such as one that has the notion of preliminary or small-scale but without the link or context to larger research or a main study.

(b) Identify and briefly explain two advantages for the researcher in using a pilot study. (4 marks)

One mark for each of two advantages identified, such as:

- can save time later by finding out what methods work in getting results;
- can help establish priorities for research in the main study to follow;
- can save expensive mistakes by testing research instruments;
- allows a researcher to test questions for meaning, ambiguities, etc;
- helps the researcher to clarify thinking on the whole piece of research;
- helps to clarify thoughts on appropriate population samples.

One further mark for each brief explanation, such as:

- Establishing whether or not a method is getting the desired or expected kind of results will mean that when it comes to the main study the researcher will be able to focus on managing the research process, confident that they will get useful and relevant results, rather than wasting their efforts.
- By using a pilot study as a research instrument, a researcher will be able to clarify the priorities for the research so that energies are not wasted on peripheral issues. This could be linked to savings on time, money or the use of personnel in the research.

(c) Identify and briefly explain two problems that are specific to conducting longitudinal research. (4 marks)

One mark for each of two problems identified, such as:

- panel attrition, or loss of subjects over time;
- funding issues may cause problems in sustaining the research;
- loss of research team over time;
- research priorities change;
- panel conditioning.

One further mark for each of two explanations, such as:

- Panel attrition, or loss of subjects over time: tracking subjects in a longitudinal study is difficult. It is often not possible to keep track of everyone so your sample may get smaller over time. Alternatively, some people may choose not to participate after a while and thus again your sample deteriorates.

- Funding issues may cause problems in sustaining the research: Obtaining funding for long-term research is always going to be difficult. With longitudinal research it is possible that the original body which funds the research might later withdraw funding or alter the amounts available making it difficult to complete the research as originally intended.

(d) Briefly examine the advantages of using longitudinal research in sociological investigations.
(10 marks)

0 No relevant points.

1 – 3 Answers in this band will have only limited success in identifying, interpreting, analysing and evaluating material to meet the requirements of the question. There will be little evidence of relevant knowledge or understanding.

Lower in the band, one or two points may be made on research in general. Alternatively, there may be a tendency to recycle material from the Items without identifying specific advantages or analysing possible explanations.

Higher in the band, one or two factors related to longitudinal research may be mentioned with some limited attempt to address the question. Evaluation will be limited or non-existent. Understanding will be partial.

4 – 7 Answers in this band will be reasonably successful in identifying, interpreting, analysing and/or evaluating material to meet the requirements of the question.

Lower in the band this may be confined to a competent, if basic, account, for example listing a number of advantages of longitudinal research, but with limited development. Answers will show a reasonable underlying knowledge and understanding. Some limited explicit analysis or evaluation may be offered.

Higher in the band answers will be more developed and focused. Knowledge and understanding will be broader and/or deeper and will begin to identify a wider range of material. There may still be a tendency to present the material in a rather list-like manner, for example briefly listing material from a number of different studies. Knowledge and understanding may extend to an awareness of some theoretical or ethical aspects but these are likely to be undeveloped.

8 – 10 Answers in this band will be successful in identifying, interpreting, analysing and evaluating material to meet the requirements of the question. Analysis and evaluation will be explicit and relevant, though not developed. Sociological knowledge will be more detailed, showing an understanding of a range of sociological material, possibly drawn from the Item and elsewhere.

Lower in the band, interpretation may be less selective or analysis and evaluation less developed and more list-like.

Higher in the band, interpretation will be more focused and analysis and evaluation more thorough and explicit.

Answers will address the central issues of the question, such as identifying the kinds of research topics for which longitudinal research might be appropriate. Most answers may take as a starting point practical factors such as the ability to monitor and research real life as it happens, the facility to use a variety of methods on a sample group over time, the evolutionary nature of research issues developed through this type of research, getting insights into social change, the facility to introduce new aspects and themes to research. Issues relating to the comparability and validity of data are likely to be discussed. Examples cited by candidates might include the 'Seven Up' television series or the National Child Development Survey. Whilst some awareness of practical and theoretical issues should be expected to get to the top of the band, full marks are possible for an answer with the focus significantly more on one aspect than the other.

SECTION B – THEORY AND METHODS

Answer **one** question from this Section.

Total for this Section: 40 marks

<p>2 “Sociology is not, cannot be, and should not be a science.”</p>

<p>To what extent do sociological arguments and evidence support this view?</p>

<p>(40 marks)</p>

Knowledge and Understanding

20 marks

0 No knowledge or understanding relevant to the set question.

1 – 5 Answers in this band will show very limited sociological knowledge and understanding.

Lower in the band candidates will present an answer based on a common sense understanding of research methods rather than sociological arguments or evidence. There will be only a peripheral link to the question, with little evidence that the candidate has understood either the question or the material offered in response to it.

Higher in the band candidates may present a flawed account of knowledge on science or sociology in general. The answer is likely to be characterised by isolated or disjointed points that show very little understanding. The material is still likely to lack a clear focus and is unlikely to raise issues stemming from the question set. Conceptual terms will tend to be used imprecisely or inaccurately and meaning will be unclear.

At this level possible answers might include:

- some isolated points about science or,
- some flawed material from different perspectives.

6 – 10 Answers in this band will show limited sociological knowledge and understanding.

Lower in the band candidates will present knowledge on the set question that is likely to contain inaccuracies and some confusion in understanding. Knowledge is likely to be stronger than understanding. Answers at this level may contain significant amounts of irrelevant material.

At this level possible answers might include:

- a brief list of factors related to science or,
- some disjointed but basically accurate material from one or more perspective(s) or,
- a list of examples of research or studies from different perspectives.

Higher in the band candidates will present an essentially descriptive account of sociological knowledge on the question. Answers will display a basic understanding of the material presented, although a few inaccuracies may still be present. There will be a limited understanding of the demands of the question set.

At this level possible answers might include:

- outlines of one or two arguments about science or scientific method, for instance Popper or Kuhn;
- a more extensive list of factors related to choices of different research methods or,
- more coherent and accurate material from one or more perspective(s) but lacking detail on the implications for the scientificity of sociology.

11 – 15 Answers in this band will show reasonably good sociological knowledge and understanding.

Lower in the band candidates may present accounts that are still somewhat generalised and descriptive and often narrowly focused.

At this level possible answers might include:

- more detailed arguments about the nature of science and sociology described rather than focused on the question set, possibly Popper, Kuhn, Feyerabend, Comte or similar and with the question largely implicit or,
- a more extensive list of factors related to choices of different research methods and with a limited theoretical structure or,
- coherent and broadly accurate material from two or more perspectives but with only limited development on the implications for the scientificity of sociology. At this level it is likely that the question will be seen as having one main issue.

Higher in the band candidates' answers will present an increased amount of appropriate empirical and/or theoretical detail, and will be increasingly accurate and organised. There will be evidence that the theoretical debate is understood. Candidates will display a clear understanding of the demands of the set question.

At this level possible answers might include:

- more detailed descriptions of arguments focused on the question set, but with a limited theoretical structure or,
- fuller and more accurate descriptions of factors related to choices of different research methods but still with a fairly limited theoretical structure or,
- coherent and broadly accurate material from two or more perspectives and with more development on the implications for the scientificity of sociology. At this level the question should be seen in greater complexity, probably with a focus on whether sociology is or can be a science.

16 – 20 Answers in this band will show very good sociological knowledge and understanding.

Lower in the band candidates' answers will demonstrate a thorough and accurate knowledge on the set question and a very good understanding of a range of relevant empirical and theoretical material.

At this level possible answers might include:

- detailed and complex arguments focused on the question set, but with a theoretical structure that is still one-sided or,
- increasingly full, accurate and wider descriptions of factors related to choices of different research methods and with a clear theoretical structure or,
- coherent and accurate material from a range of perspectives and with concepts such as scientificity, value freedom and objectivity understood and discussed.

Higher in the band the links between theoretical and empirical material will be made more explicit. Accounts of studies and theories will be more detailed and the understanding of the debate and its complexities made explicit.

At this level possible answers might also include some of the following:

- discussion of the pragmatic nature of many research decisions;
- questions about the scientificity of science;
- awareness of the political and ideological nature of much of the debate;
- the complexity of the question will be fully explored.

In answering this question, candidates may refer to some of the following sources and/or relevant alternative ones: sources referred to may vary depending on the substantive area from which the candidate draws the material, but could include: Marx, Durkheim, Parsons, Weber, Merton, Comte, Feyerabend, Kuhn, Popper, Lyotard, Bauman.

3 Evaluate the usefulness of secondary data in sociological research.

(40 marks)

Knowledge and Understanding

20 marks

0 No knowledge or understanding relevant to the set question.

1 – 5 Answers in this band will show very limited sociological knowledge and understanding.

Lower in the band candidates will present an answer based on a common sense understanding of sociological research rather than sociological arguments or evidence. There will be only a peripheral link to the question with little evidence that the candidate has understood either the question or the material offered in response to it.

Higher in the band candidates may present a flawed account of knowledge on sociological research or types of data. The answer is likely to be characterised by isolated or disjointed points that show very little understanding. The material is still likely to lack a clear focus and is unlikely to raise issues stemming from the question set. Conceptual terms will tend to be used imprecisely or inaccurately and meaning will be unclear.

At this level possible answers might include:

- some isolated points about sources of data or,
- some flawed material from sociological research.

6 – 10 Answers in this band will show limited sociological knowledge and understanding.

Lower in the band candidates will present knowledge on the set question that is likely to contain inaccuracies and some confusion in understanding. Knowledge is likely to be stronger than understanding. Answers at this level may contain significant amounts of irrelevant material.

At this level possible answers might include:

- a brief list of factors related to sources of secondary data or,
- some disjointed but basically accurate material from one or more perspective(s) or,
- a list of examples of research studies using different forms of secondary data – e.g. Durkheim and Atkinson.

Higher in the band candidates will present an essentially descriptive account of sociological knowledge on the question. Answers will display a basic understanding of the material presented, although a few inaccuracies may still be present. There will be a limited understanding of the demands of the question set.

At this level possible answers might include:

- outlines of one or two studies focused more on a substantive topic area than the question set, possibly studies of suicide, educational achievement or the family or,
- a more extensive list of sources of and/or different kinds of data with only limited links to the question or,
- more coherent and accurate material from one or more perspective(s), possibly in a simple juxtaposition, but lacking focus on the question set.

11 – 15 Answers in this band will show reasonably good sociological knowledge and understanding.

Lower in the band candidates may present accounts that are still somewhat generalised and descriptive and often narrowly focused.

At this level possible answers might include:

- more detailed descriptions of studies focused more on a substantive topic area than the question set, possibly from education, the family or crime and deviance and with the question largely implicit or,
- a more extensive list of different kinds of quantitative and qualitative data and/or examples of studies and with a limited theoretical structure or,
- coherent and broadly accurate material from two or more perspective(s), possibly a developed juxtaposition, but lacking clear focus on the question set.

Higher in the band candidates' answers will present an increased amount of appropriate empirical and/or theoretical detail, and will be increasingly accurate and organised. There will be evidence that the theoretical debate is understood. Candidates will display a clear understanding of the demands of the set question.

At this level possible answers might include:

- more detailed descriptions of studies focused on the question set, but with a limited theoretical structure or,
- fuller and more accurate descriptions and/or examples of different types of data, with distinctions between quantitative and qualitative, primary and secondary made clear, but still with limited theoretical structure or,
- coherent and broadly accurate material from two or more perspectives and with more development on understanding the relationship between theory and method.

16 – 20 Answers in this band will show very good sociological knowledge and understanding.

Lower in the band candidates' answers will demonstrate a thorough and accurate knowledge on the set question and a very good understanding of a range of relevant empirical and theoretical material.

At this level possible answers might include:

- increasingly full, accurate and wider descriptions of factors related to different types of data, with distinctions between quantitative and qualitative, primary and secondary made clear, and with a clear theoretical structure or,
- detailed and/or referenced accounts of studies tied in to the question set with concepts and/or ideological issues accurately explored and clearly understood or,
- coherent and accurate material from a range of perspectives and with concepts such as primary and secondary, quantitative and qualitative, reliability and validity clearly understood and discussed.

Higher in the band the links between theoretical and empirical material will be made more explicit. Accounts of studies and theories will be more detailed and the understanding of the debate and its complexities made explicit.

At this level possible answers might also include some of the following:

- greater awareness of the complexity of ideological and political issues and their relationship to research;
- greater understanding of the pragmatic nature of much research;
- greater awareness of the range of issues that affect research decisions and choices of data source.

In answering this question, sources referred to may vary depending on the substantive area from which the candidate draws the material. Candidates may approach the question from a largely theoretical perspective or focus more on empirical material drawn from one or more of the substantive areas in the specification. Either approach is perfectly acceptable.