

General Certificate of Education
January 2005
Advanced Level Examination



SOCIOLOGY
Unit 5

SC5W

Thursday 20 January 2005 Morning Session

In addition to this paper you will require:
a 12-page answer book.
You may use a calculator.

Time allowed: 1 hour 30 minutes

Instructions

- Use blue or black ink or ball-point pen.
- Write the information required on the front of your answer book. The *Examining Body* for this paper is AQA. The *Paper Reference* is SC5W.
- This paper contains **two** Sections. Answer the question in Section A and **one** question from Section B.
- Do all rough work in the answer book. Cross through any work you do not want marked.

Information

- The maximum mark for this paper is 60.
- Mark allocations are shown in brackets.
- You will be assessed on your ability to use an appropriate form and style of writing, to organise relevant information clearly and coherently, and to use specialist vocabulary where appropriate.
- The degree of legibility of your handwriting and the level of accuracy of your spelling, punctuation and grammar will also be taken into account.

SECTION A – THEORY AND METHODS

Answer **all** parts of this Section.

Total for this Section: 20 marks

- 1** Read **Items A** and **B** and answer parts (a) to (d) which follow.

Item A

Steve Taylor and his colleagues conducted a study of professionals involved with child abuse cases.

First, we did formal interviews with the various professional groups involved. We asked them how they defined child abuse, and how they recognised something as a case of child abuse. This produced some very useful information. However, sociologists should not just reproduce what people say, and you cannot conduct research purely on interviews. So, having identified some of the things professionals saw as problematic about child abuse, we also used participant observation to give us a fuller picture. This meant going out with social workers on visits, going to case conferences and attending court in order to see their ideas in action. 5
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At the same time we were able to put further questions; for example, asking social workers to explain particular decisions. As supplementary information we also used documentary data, such as social work files and case conference notes.

Source: adapted from P. MCNEILL, Society Today 2 (Macmillan Education Ltd.) 1991

Item B

Participant observation studies have often been of specific subcultures. In particular, there has been a large number of participant observational studies of gangs and other youth subcultural groups. One of the earliest and most influential of these was William Foote Whyte's *Street Corner Society*. Using participant observation, Whyte studied a gang in a poor, largely Italian immigrant part of Chicago. He described himself as "seeking to build a sociology based on observed interpersonal events". 5

Writing of his experiences with the group, Whyte stated, "as I sat and listened, I learned the answers to questions that I would not even have had the sense to ask if I had been getting my information solely on an interviewing basis".

Source: adapted from W. F. WHYTE, Street Corner Society, (University of Chicago Press) 1955, reproduced with the permission of Nelson Thornes Ltd. from Introduction to Sociology, 4th Edition first published in 1997.

- (a) Identify the sociological term that describes the process of using a range of different methods to check or compare results (**Item A**). (2 marks)
- (b) Identify and briefly explain **two** reasons why some researchers might choose **overt** rather than **covert** participant observation. (4 marks)
- (c) Identify and briefly explain **two** criticisms of qualitative research methods. (4 marks)
- (d) Examine some of the reasons why participant observation might be particularly suitable for researching topics such as those in **Items A and B**. (10 marks)

SECTION B – THEORY AND METHODS

Answer **one** question from this Section.

Total for this Section: 40 marks

- 2 “Choices of topic and method in sociological research are more likely to be made on practical rather than ideological, theoretical or ethical grounds.”

To what extent do sociological arguments and evidence support this view of sociological research?
(40 marks)

- 3 Assess the usefulness of structural approaches to our understanding of society. (40 marks)

END OF QUESTIONS

THERE ARE NO QUESTIONS PRINTED ON THIS PAGE

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