



National
Qualifications
2026

2026 Sociology

National 5

Question Paper Finalised Marking Instructions

These marking instructions have been prepared by examination teams for use by Qualifications Scotland appointed markers when marking external course assessments.

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General marking principles for National 5 Sociology

This information is provided to help you understand the general principles you must apply when marking candidate responses to questions in this paper. These principles must be read in conjunction with the specific marking instructions, which identify the key features required in candidate responses.

- (a) Marks for each candidate response must **always** be assigned in line with these general marking principles and the specific marking instructions for this assessment.
- (b) Marking should always be positive. This means that, for each candidate response, marks are accumulated for the demonstration of relevant skills, knowledge and understanding: they are not deducted from a maximum on the basis of errors or omissions.
- (c) If a candidate response does not seem to be covered by either the principles or specific marking instructions, and you are uncertain how to assess it, you must seek guidance from your team leader.
- (d) The term ‘or any other acceptable answer’ allows for the possible variation in candidate responses. Credit should be given according to the accuracy and relevance of candidates’ answers. The skill of using appropriate sociological terminology and relevant use of research evidence is reflected in exemplar responses. However, at this level candidates may be awarded marks where the answer is accurate but expressed in their own words.
- (e) Questions that ask, ‘does this . . . ?’, or ask the candidate to ‘name’, ‘define’ or ‘give examples’ are straightforward questions requiring candidates to recall key points of knowledge or to give examples. The number of marks available for these questions reflects the number of points the candidate needs to make. For example, if one mark is available the candidate needs to give one correct point. If three marks are available, the candidate needs to make three correct key points.
- (f) Questions that ask the candidate to ‘describe’ require the candidate to apply their sociological knowledge and understanding to make a point and then develop this point by giving further information. For example, if two marks are available you should award a mark for making the main point and a further mark for developing the point by giving additional or related information.
- (g) Questions that ask the candidate to ‘use’ or ‘explain’ require the candidate to apply their sociological knowledge and understanding to give more information about the meaning of something, to give reasons or show connections. This may include using appropriate examples, concepts or theories to explain an aspect of sociology. For example, if three marks are available for an ‘explain’ question, you should award one mark for making a key point of explanation and a further mark for each additional correct key point of explanation. Where a greater number of smaller points are made, you should use your professional judgement about whether or not these add up to the required ‘use’ or ‘application’.
- (h) For credit to be given, points must relate to the question asked. However, within a structured question of, say, two or three parts a candidate may give more information in the first part than is required and inadvertently have given the answer to the second part. In this case you should give credit for any correct information given, whether given in the correct part or not

Marking instructions for each question

Question			General marking instructions for this type of question	Max mark	Specific marking instructions for this question
1.	(a)		Describe questions require candidates to make factual points or state characteristics and/or features.	4	Up to 2 marks can be awarded for each difference. For example: Common-sense knowledge is based on the experiences, prejudices and beliefs of people. On the other hand, social scientific explanations are based on evidence. (2 marks) Common-sense explanations may be naturalistic and/or individualistic. In contrast, sociological explanations will attempt to understand or explain phenomena in terms of wider social forces. (2 marks) Any other appropriate response.
	(b)	(i)	Questions that ask, ‘does this . . . ?’, or ask the candidate to ‘name’, ‘define’ or ‘give examples’ are straightforward questions requiring candidates to recall key points of knowledge or to give examples.	1	Award 1 mark for a suitable answer, such as questionnaires, structured interviews or official statistics.
		(ii)	Describe questions require candidates to make factual points or state characteristics and/or features.	4	Up to 2 marks can be awarded for each disadvantage. Award a maximum of 2 marks if a candidate only gives disadvantages of quantitative methods generally. For example: One disadvantage of using official statistics is that the researcher does not collect the data personally. As a result, they cannot ascertain whether the data contains any pre-existing biases. (2 marks) Another disadvantage may be that by the time the data is collected, collated then published, they may be out of date and not reflective of that situation currently. (2 marks) Any other appropriate response.

Question			General marking instructions for this type of question	Max mark	Specific marking instructions for this question
	(c)		Questions that ask the candidate to 'explain' require the candidate to give more information about the meaning of something, to give reasons or show connections.	6	Up to 3 marks can be awarded for each explanation. Award a maximum of 4 marks if candidates give generic features of qualitative methods. Participant observation can be overt or covert. Any answer where the candidate gives an advantage or disadvantage which only applies to one or the other, without stating they are referring to overt/covert, cannot be awarded full marks. Candidates may be credited if their advantage / disadvantage relates to a feature. For example: With participant observation, the researcher joins in with the group they are studying. (1 mark) This allows them to spend time with the group and join in with their daily activities which helps the researcher to understand why they behave as they do. (2 marks) Participant observation can be covert or overt. (1 mark) If carried out covertly, the sample do not know they are being studied. (1 mark) If overt, the people have given their consent to being studied. (1 mark) Any other appropriate response.

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	(d)		Questions that ask the candidate to 'explain' require the candidate to give more information about the meaning of something, to give reasons or show connections.	6	Up to 3 marks can be awarded for each explanation. Award a maximum of 4 marks if candidates give generic advantages or disadvantages. For example: An advantage of unstructured interviews is that due to the unstructured nature, the researcher can discuss any topics that arise during the interview. (1 mark) The flexibility allows them to delve deeper on certain topics of interest, eg discussing personal experiences of discrimination. (2 marks) A disadvantage of unstructured interviews is that it is hard to record the data. Recording or even note-taking may be off-putting to the respondent, disrupting the flow of the interview. (2 marks) This could discourage the respondent from discussing certain sensitive information. (1 mark) Any other appropriate response.

Question			General marking instructions for this type of question	Max mark	Specific marking instructions for this question
	(e)		This question has a simple describe command. The candidate is required to describe main features. Candidates are required to do this twice.	4	Up to 2 marks can be awarded for each description. Candidates can refer to specific theories. For example: The action perspective is also known as a bottom-up approach as it focuses on how individuals and small groups influence the structures in society. (2 marks) It examines human agency, which refers to the capacity of individuals to act independently and make choices free from external constraint. (2 marks) Any other appropriate response.
	(f)		Questions that ask the candidate to 'explain' require the candidate to give more information about the meaning of something, to give reasons or show connections.	5	Up to 5 marks can be awarded for this explanation. Candidates can refer to specific theories. Marks can be awarded in a number of ways. For example: This perspective views society as a system of interrelated parts, such as family, education, religion, and the economy, which work together. (2 marks) Institutions are interconnected, meaning the actions of one institution can impact others. (1 mark) Religion, as an institution, often provides moral guidelines that influence individual behaviour and influences the operation of other institutions like the legal system. (2 marks) Any other appropriate response.

Question			General marking instructions for this type of question	Max mark	Specific marking instructions for this question
2.	(a)		This question has a simple describe command. The candidate is required to make a relevant point for 1 mark and then expand on this for a further mark.	4	There are up to 2 marks available for each explanation. For example: In primary socialisation, the parents teach children the basic ‘rights’ and ‘wrongs’ of expected behaviour. (1 mark) ‘Good’ behaviour is rewarded, and ‘bad’ behaviour is negatively sanctioned. (1 mark) We are also taught about gender identities by the examples of family members (1 mark) and the way we are dressed and through play. (1 mark) Primary socialisation reinforces socially acceptable behaviour. (1 mark) Any other appropriate response.
	(b)		Questions that ask the candidate to ‘explain’ require the candidate to give more information about the meaning of something, to give reasons or show connections. This must be done twice for full marks.	6	There are up to 3 marks available for each explanation. 1 mark can be awarded for naming each agent of secondary socialisation. For example: One way that an agent of secondary socialisation can influence human social behaviour is when the media persuade people to believe that they have to look a certain way. (1 mark) Many people are influenced by the media showing them images of ‘perfect’ looking people adding pressure to conform to these ideals. (2 marks) Another way is how education can reinforce gender stereotypes. (1 mark) Although boys and girls are allowed to choose any subjects they want, there are still far more boys who take physics and more girls who take hospitality. (2 marks) Any other appropriate response.

Question			General marking instructions for this type of question	Max mark	Specific marking instructions for this question
	(c)		Questions that ask the candidate to 'explain' require the candidate to give more information about the meaning of something, to give reasons or show connections.	4	For example: Sociologists understand culture as a complex system of shared beliefs, values, norms, and practices. (1 mark) Norms are the rules and expectations that guide behaviour within a society, while values are deeply held beliefs about what is important or desirable. (2 marks) Symbols, including language, are the tools through which culture is communicated. (1 mark) Any other appropriate response. Appropriate examples may be credited.
	(d)		This question has a simple describe command. The candidate is required to describe main features. Candidates are required to do this three times.	6	Award a maximum of 2 marks per feature. For example: Japanese culture is a harmonious blend of ancient traditions and modern innovations, deeply rooted in values such as respect for elders and authority. (2 marks) Traditional arts like tea ceremonies, are celebrated and preserved as integral aspects of cultural heritage. (1 mark) Rituals and practices associated with Shinto, Japan's indigenous religion, further connect the culture to its historical roots. (1 mark) Seasonal celebrations, such as Hanami, where people gather to admire cherry blossoms highlight the enduring connection to nature in Japanese society. (2 marks) Any other appropriate response.

Question			General marking instructions for this type of question	Max mark	Specific marking instructions for this question
3.	(a)	(i)	Questions that ask the candidate to 'explain' require the candidate to give more information about the meaning of something, to give reasons or show connections.	6	Candidates may refer to sociological theories in their answer but are not required to do so. Example: Gender based discrimination in the workplace. The gender pay gap exists in society between males and females. The gender pay gap may result in females being paid less than men for doing the same or a similar role in the workplace. (2 marks) Feminists state that this gap in wages is a result of our patriarchal society (1 mark) where women are oppressed and treated unfairly in the world of work. (1 mark) Liberal feminists fight for equality through legislative change, introduction of new legislation or tighter policing of existing laws. (2 marks) Any other appropriate response
		(ii)	This question has a simple describe command. The candidate is required to make a relevant point for 1 mark and then expand on this for a further mark. This must be done twice.	4	There are up to 2 marks available for each finding. Example: Lancaster University (2017) studied the Hollywood wage structure and found that females actors earned, on average, 56% less than male actors per film. (1 mark) This was despite the hours spent filming or the status of the role taken within the film. (1 mark) They also found that action films are the most popular film genre with teenagers. (1 mark) Action films also predominantly star a male actor more so than female. (1 mark) Any other appropriate response.

Question			General marking instructions for this type of question	Max mark	Specific marking instructions for this question
	(b)		Questions that ask the candidate to 'explain' require the candidate to give more information about the meaning of something, to give reasons or show connections.	8	If no structural theory is used, a maximum of 6 marks can be awarded. Example: Marxism believes that education disadvantages working class children by alienating them in schools. (1 mark) Working class children are more likely to use a restricted speech code, compared to middle class children who use an elaborate code. (1 mark) This will disadvantage working class children in the classroom as teachers speak in the elaborate code. (1 mark) Marxists also believe that there is a material deficit for working class children in education. (1 mark) Many studies have shown that working class children have less access to the materials that assist learning in comparison to their middle-class counterparts. (1 mark) This can include access to the internet, devices to complete their work on and textbooks. (1 mark) There is a further divide in education between state and private schools, which Marxists believe gives the children of the bourgeoisie an advantage. (1 mark) An example is that only 7% of UK children go to private schools, but over 70% of senior judges did. (1 mark) Any other appropriate response.

Question			General marking instructions for this type of question	Max mark	Specific marking instructions for this question
	(c)		This question has a simple describe command. The candidate is required to make a relevant point for 1 mark and then expand on this for a further mark .	2	There are up to 2 marks available for each description. Example: In the control group, the children who were not identified as intellectual bloomers, every fifth child gained 20 IQ points. In the experimental group, the children randomly identified as academic bloomers, nearly every second child gained 20 IQ points. (2 marks) Rosenthal and Jacobson concluded that teacher's expectations could result in a self-fulfilling prophecy, (1 mark) where their prediction of great academic growth would come true by virtue of it being made. (1 mark) Any other appropriate response.

[END OF MARKING INSTRUCTIONS]