

Skills Exercises

Analysis and evaluation (AO3)

Cambridge IGCSE™
Sociology 0495

Cambridge O Level
Sociology 2251

For examination from 2025



© Cambridge University Press & Assessment 2022 v1
Cambridge Assessment International Education is part of Cambridge University Press & Assessment.
Cambridge University Press & Assessment is a department of the University of Cambridge.

Cambridge University Press & Assessment retains the copyright on all its publications. Registered centres are permitted to copy material from this booklet for their own internal use. However, we cannot give permission to centres to photocopy any material that is acknowledged to a third party even for internal use within a centre.

Contents

Introduction	4
Analysis and evaluation (AO3)	5
Exercise 1: Evaluating the usefulness of research methods	5
Exercise 2: Identifying analysis and evaluation	18
Exercise 3: Strengths and weaknesses of sociological theories	27

Introduction

Cambridge IGCSE / O Level Sociology attracts a variety of learners from many different backgrounds. For all learners Sociology is a new subject and an opportunity to explore an area of study that interests them, while developing a set of transferable skills. The study of Sociology encourages learners to think critically about contemporary social, cultural and political issues. It provides opportunities to explore sociological concepts and arguments while studying a range of stimulating topics and real-world issues.

Skills and why they are important?

Skills are the key to success. The performance of candidates in Cambridge IGCSE / O Level Sociology exams have shown a range of areas where improvement would be helpful. These areas of improvement tend to centre around the assessment objectives (AOs) of the course and we have addressed these three AOs in three Skills Exercises booklets.

- Skills Exercises – Knowledge and understanding (AO1)
- Skills Exercises – Interpretation and application (AO2)
- Skills Exercises – Analysis and evaluation (AO3)

The skills exercises in these booklets make use of exam-style questions and data and include activities and worksheets to help skills development and incorporate suggested teaching approaches, such as group work, discussion, structured support and writing in sequence. They do not attempt to cover all possible aspects of the examinations, only those problem areas which have presented consistently over time.

How will these skills be developed?

The Skills Exercises booklets aim to help learners develop skills in:

- demonstrating knowledge and understanding of sociological concepts, theories, evidence, views and research methods.
- applying relevant sociological concepts, theories, evidence, views and research methods to support points or develop arguments.
- explaining how sociological concepts, theories, evidence, views and research methods apply to a particular issue or question.
- analysing and evaluating sociological theories, evidence, views and research methods. This includes how to construct, develop and discuss sociological arguments and reach conclusions and make judgements based on a reasoned consideration of evidence.

The skills exercises provide suggestions so you can have confidence that the materials you prepare and use in the classroom are building skills and resilience in your learners. This document should be used alongside the other teaching and learning resources provided on the [School Support Hub](#)

Analysis and evaluation (AO3)

Learners are required to analyse and evaluate sociological theories, evidence, views and research methods by:

- explaining the strengths and limitations of sociological theories, views and research methods
- constructing, developing and discussing sociological arguments
- reaching conclusions and making judgements based on a reasoned consideration of evidence.

The following table contains some command words that might indicate to learners that they need to analyse and evaluate.

Command word	What it means
Discuss	write about issue(s) or topic(s) in depth in a structured way
Evaluate	judge or calculate the quality, importance, amount or value of something
Explain	set out purposes or reasons / make the relationships between things clear / say why and/or how and support with relevant evidence

Exercise 1: Evaluating the usefulness of research methods

Knowledge of the strengths and limitations of research methods is important for examination success. For Topic 1 Research methods, examination questions may ask learners to explain general strengths and limitations of research methods or samples, whilst others focus on the usefulness of the research methodology used in the source material.

Being able to discuss the strengths and limitations of research methods is an essential part of analysis and evaluation (AO3).

In source-based questions learners also need to be able to discuss why a particular aspect of research is useful or not useful **given the scenario in the source**.

Activity 1: Evaluating the usefulness of research methods in context

Provide learners with **Worksheet 1: Evaluating the usefulness of research methods in context**.

This activity provides learners with a quantitative source and a qualitative source and a range of questions to test their ability to evaluate methods in context.

The first answer has been given as an example.

Lead a class discussion to go through the answers giving guidance and making sure that any misconceptions are addressed.

Worksheet 1: Evaluating the usefulness of research methods in context

Read both sources and answer the questions.

Question 1

Source A

Average life expectancy in 1950 and 2019, in selected countries

The table below shows the average life expectancy for people in six countries between 1950 and 2019. The data is gathered from each country's official statistics, such as the census and death records.

Country	Life expectancy in 1950 (years)	Life expectancy in 2019 (years)
Argentina	46	77
Botswana	44	70
Egypt	49	72
Ghana	48	66
Hong Kong	64	85
Mauritius	45	75

Source: adapted from *Our World in Data*

a) Using the information in **Source A**, explain **two** reasons why the statistics are **not** useful in investigating life expectancy across the world.

(i)

The statistics are not useful in investigating life expectancy across the world because: *the source has been adapted.*

Explain the reason: *This means the data has been changed in some way. For example, data may have been added or removed. This shows that the figures may not show a fully accurate picture of life expectancy across the six countries.*

(ii)

The statistics are not useful in investigating life expectancy across the world because:

Explain the reason:

Question 2**Source A****The Sociology of Housework (1974)**

Ann Oakley is a British feminist who wanted to end women's subordination to men in both the home and wider society. In her famous study 'The Sociology of Housework' (1974) Oakley wanted to understand the experience of housework from the point of view of the women who did it. Her aims were to describe the housewife's situation and examine patterns of dissatisfaction.

Oakley conducted 40 semi-structured interviews with London housewives. The housewives were aged between 20 and 30 and all were mothers with at least one child under five. The interviews took two hours each and were conducted in the women's homes. She recorded the conversations so that she could have an accurate record. Using a tape recorder to record the women's words also allowed her to keep eye contact and keep the conversations as natural as possible.

Oakley concluded that many housewives in her sample did most or all the housework and they experienced housework as boring, repetitive and with little or no reward. Her findings disagreed with a previous study by Wilmott and Young which suggested that there is now more gender equality in the home regarding housework.

a) Using the information in **Source A**, explain **two** reasons why semi-structured interviews were useful in investigating women's experiences of housework.

(i)

Semi-structured interviews were useful in investigating women's experience of housework because:

Explain the reason by reference to the research:

(ii)

Semi-structured interviews were useful in investigating women's experience of housework because:

Explain the reason by reference to the research:

Worksheet 1 answers:

Question 1 – as well as the example included in the worksheet there are two acceptable additional answers below.

a) Using the information in **Source A**, explain **two** reasons why the statistics are **not** useful in investigating life expectancy across the world.

(i)

The statistics are not useful in investigating life expectancy across the world because: *only data from six countries are shown.*

Explain the reason by reference to the research: *Six countries are too small a number to represent all countries around the world, therefore is it unrepresentative and researchers*

(ii)

The statistics are not useful in investigating life expectancy across the world because: *the data has been gathered from official statistics collected by a government.*

Explain the reason by reference to the research: *This can be inaccurate because governments may manipulate the figures to create a better picture of life expectancy than is the case for political reasons.*

Question 2

a) Using the information in **Source A**, explain **two** reasons why semi-structured interviews were useful in investigating women's experiences of housework.

(i)

Semi-structured interviews were useful in investigating women's experience of housework because: *they allowed her to probe the women for more detail.*

Explain the reason by reference to the research: *This means the interviews allowed her to ask follow-up open questions. This gave the researcher the chance to gain more detailed qualitative data about the women's experiences of housework, enhancing the validity of the data.*

(ii)

Semi-structured interviews were useful in investigating women's experience of housework because: *they can have some closed, standardised questions.*

Explain the reason by reference to the research: *This means that there may be some quantitative data such what types and how many hours of housework women do, which could be used to compare with the previous findings of Wilmott and Young.*

Activity 2: Developing explanations of strengths and limitations

Give learners **Worksheet 2: Developing explanations of strengths and limitations**. This worksheet provides a framework which will enable learners to write successful answers.

When explaining the strengths or limitations of a method, encourage learners to first identify a feature of the method and then to explain why or how that feature is of benefit or not. This means they will avoid giving a wholly generic answer such as, *'because it is valid and reliable'* or *'it saves time and cost'* etc.

The worksheet gets progressively more challenging as in Question 3 and Question 4 learners are not given a full list of features but must identify them for themselves.

Working in pairs will allow learners to help and support each other as the questions get more difficult.

Lead a feedback session going through learners' responses and identifying and correcting any misconceptions.

Worksheet 2: Developing explanations of strengths and limitations

For **Question 1** and **Question 2** choose a feature of each method/type of data/sample from the list, then explain how or why it is a strength or limitation. The first one has been done for you.

1. Explain **one** strength and **one** limitation of covert participant observation.

Features of covert participant observation:

- the researcher takes part in the activities of the group
- the researcher must keep their identity and purpose a secret
- the participants do not know they are being studied.

Identify a feature of covert participant observation: *The participants do not know they are being studied.*

Develop by saying how or why it is a strength: *This means they will be unaffected by the presence of the researcher (Hawthorne Effect), therefore acting normally which gives the researcher more valid data.*

Identify a feature of covert participant observation: *The researcher must keep their identity and purpose a secret.*

Explain by saying how or why it is a limitation: *This breaches ethics as the participants cannot give informed consent and such research will be unlikely to gain finding.*

2. Explain **one** strength and **one** limitation of unstructured interviews.

Features of unstructured interviews:

- the researcher has no pre-set questions
- the researcher asks open questions
- there is an interviewer present.

Identify a feature of unstructured interviews:

Explain by saying how or why it is a strength:

Identify a feature of unstructured interviews:

Explain by saying how or why it is a limitation:

For **Question 3** and **Question 4** you need to first identify more features of the method, before choosing one to explain as a strength and one to explain as a weakness.

3. Explain one strength and one limitation of quantitative data.

Some features of quantitative data:

- it is data in numerical form
- the data is not in word form
- ?

Identify a feature of quantitative data:

Explain by saying how or why it is a strength:

Identify a feature of quantitative data:

Explain by saying how or why it is a limitation:

4. Explain one strength and one limitation of random sampling.

Some features of random sampling could be:

- participants are selected completely randomly from a population
- ?
- ?

Identify a feature of random sampling:

Explain by saying how or why it is a strength:

Identify a feature of random sampling:

Explain by saying how or why it is a limitation:

Worksheet 2 answers may include:

2. Explain **one** strength and **one** limitation of unstructured interviews.

Identify a feature of unstructured interviews: *The researcher asks open questions.*

Develop by saying how or why it is a strength: *Open questions give qualitative data in participants' own words which is rich in detail and high in validity.*

Identify a feature of unstructured interviews: *There is an interviewer present.*

Develop by saying how or why it is a limitation: *This increases the chance of the Interviewer Effect taking place where the presence of the interviewer affects the responses given, having a negative effect on the validity of data.*

3. Explain **one** strength and **one** limitation of quantitative data.

Other features of quantitative data could be:

- *it is a type of data preferred by positivists*
- *the data is often presented in graphs, charts and tables.*

Identify a feature of quantitative data: *It is data in numerical form.*

Explain by saying how or why it is a strength: *This is very useful for positivists whose research aims at measuring how much or the extent of something, for example the amount of such as crime in society.*

Identify a feature of quantitative data: *The data is not in word form.*

Explain by saying how or why it is a limitation: *The data comes from closed questions so participants cannot go into depth and detail about their thoughts and feelings, meaning that whilst the data can give numbers it cannot give the reasons behind them.*

4. Explain one strength and one limitation of random sampling

Other features random sampling could be:

- everyone in a population has an equal chance of being selected in the sample
- it does not require any knowledge of how to sub-divide a research population
- the researcher needs a sampling frame from which to select their sample.

Identify a feature of random sampling: Participants are selected completely randomly from a research population.

Develop by saying how or why it is a strength: This means that there can be no researcher bias in the selection of the sample and therefore it is seen as a fair method of getting a sample as everyone has the same chance of being selected.

Identify a feature of random sampling: The researcher needs a sampling frame from which to select their sample

Develop by saying how or why it is a limitation: Sampling frames may not be available for the target population. For example, there is no existing sampling frame for drug users and so it is impossible to create a random sample of such people.

Activity 3: Two-sided arguments

One of the most important routes into successful evaluation is being able to spot the two sides of each argument. There is always a way to argue both sides of any evaluative question and in doing so learners can include analysis and evaluation AO3 in their responses.

Provide learners with several evaluative questions. The questions in **Worksheet 3: Two-sided arguments** can be used or any other evaluative questions from past examination papers.

Learners decide what the two sides of the argument are.

There are sometimes different perspectives; discuss as a class why different approaches are sometimes still appropriate.

Worksheet 3: Two-sided arguments

For each of the following questions, decide what the two sides of the argument are.

Then give an example of a point you could make to support each side of the argument. The first one is done for you.

1. Evaluate the positivist approach to sociological research.

One side of the argument	Other side of the argument
<i>That positivism is the best approach to research.</i>	<i>Interpretivist have identified some criticisms of the positivist approach.</i>
Example: <i>Positivists use a quantitative approach is best as it allows researchers to identify patterns and trends which can be used to make comparisons.</i>	Example: <i>A quantitative approach fails to give reasons behind the numbers – an interpretivist approach can gain qualitative data to give us the ‘whys’ behind patterns and trends.</i>
Example:	Example:

2. Evaluate the view that questionnaires are the most effective research method.

One side of the argument	Other side of the argument
Example:	Example:

3. Evaluate the view that validity is the most important aspect when planning sociological research.

One side of the argument	Other side of the argument
Example:	Example:

Worksheet 3 answers may include:

for you.

1. Evaluate the positivist approach to sociological research.

One side of the argument	Other side of the argument
That positivism is the best approach to research.	Interpretivist have identified some criticisms of the positivist approach.
Example: Positivists use a quantitative approach is best as it allows researchers to identify patterns and trends which can be used to make comparisons.	Example: A quantitative approach fails to give reasons behind the numbers – an interpretivist approach can gain qualitative data to give us the ‘whys’ behind patterns and trends.
Example: Positivists also aim for an objective approach. They try not to be personally involved in the research process – for example they might use self-completion questionnaires – and this means that there is less likelihood of researcher bias which will lower the validity of findings.	Example: Interpretivists argue that sociology can never be totally objective or value-free. This is because researchers have values which inevitably affect the research process. Many researchers are influenced by theories like feminism or Marxism. Even the choices of topic and methods are influenced by researcher values so objectivity is an impossible goal.

2. Evaluate the view that questionnaires are the most effective research method.

One side of the argument	Other side of the argument
That questionnaires are the most effective research method.	That questionnaires are not the most effective research method.
Example: Questionnaires are made up of mainly closed, standardised questions. This means that the data is likely to be high in reliability as the same questions can be repeated and similar results will be obtained. This means that the results are trustworthy.	Example: Unstructured interviews are likely to produce much more valid data than questionnaires. This is because the interview a natural conversation in which the respondent can go into depth and detail in response to prompts and open questions from the interviewer.

3. Evaluate the view that validity is the most important aspect when planning sociological research.

One side of the argument	Other side of the argument
That ethics are the most important aspect of a research project.	That ethics are not the most important aspect of a research project.
<p>Example: Maintaining ethics involves keeping participants safe. Milgram's experiments and the Stanford prison experiment, for example, failed to keep people safe. If they are harmed physically or emotionally this may have consequences for the researcher. They may be subject to legal claims and their work will not receive recognition by peers. So, it is crucial to abide by ethics.</p>	<p>Example: If a research project fails to achieve validity it is of little use because it has failed to show the true picture of the social reality. Some researchers use a covert approach to ensure validity knowing that it breaks ethical guidelines. But with deviant groups this is the only way to get good quality data as participants will not know they are being studied and hence act naturally.</p>

Exercise 2: Identifying analysis and evaluation

Analysis and evaluation (AO3) are skills that unlock higher marks and top grades. Learners who can effectively analyse and evaluate in their answers will be able to build arguments and come to conclusions.

Many learners think that analysis is about description or explanation and often spend time describing elements of an answer without getting to the all-important analysis.

Analysis is about:

- examining something in detail to show meaning
- showing the relationship between things.

Evaluation is about:

- assessing evidence
- making a judgement.

Activity 1: Analysis or not

Provide learners with a series of sentences where one sentence involves analysis and the other does not.

The sentences in **Worksheet 4: Analysis or not** is based on Topic 4 Family but can be used or replaced with other sentences from different topics.

For each sentence, learners decide which is the analytical one.

Lead a discussion to go through the answers, guiding learners and identifying and correcting any misconceptions.

Worksheet 4: Analysis or not

For each of the following pairs of sentences decide which one is analytical and which one is not.

Remember that analysis is about drawing out the meaning or discussing effects, consequences or reactions.

1.

Sentence 1	Sentence 2
Segregated conjugal roles are the different tasks and responsibilities adopted by husbands and wives in the home.	Segregated conjugal roles reinforce gender stereotypes by giving husbands and wives different tasks and responsibilities.

2.

Sentence 1	Sentence 2
The increase in serial monogamy is linked to changing norms and values in society.	There has been an increase in serial monogamy.

3.

Sentence 1	Sentence 2
The functionalist view that the family has lost functions is shown by the fact that elderly people are now often looked after in care homes.	Functionalists argue there has been a loss of family functions.

4.

Sentence 1	Sentence 2
Women often work a triple shift doing housework, childcare and paid employment.	Women doing the triple shift experience a burden that men experience which makes it unfair.

5.

Sentence 1	Sentence 2
Functionalists think when a man came home from a hard day at work, he can relax into his family like a warm bath, taking away the stress and refreshing him for the next day's work.	The functionalist warm bath theory argues that in providing relaxation stress relief and refreshment the family enables the economy and society to continue.

Worksheet 4 answers:

1.	<i>Sentence 2 – Sentence 1 simply describes segregated conjugal roles, whereas sentence 2 shows the relationship between these roles and gender stereotypes.</i>
2.	<i>Sentence 1 – Sentence 2 is a fact about serial monogamy, whereas sentence 1 makes a connection between this type of marriage and a change in society.</i>
3.	<i>Sentence 1 – Sentence 2 states a belief that functionalists hold about family functions, whereas sentence 1 gives extra detail to show the meaning of the belief.</i>
4.	<i>Sentence 2 – Sentence 1 just indicates knowledge of the triple shift, whereas sentence 2 draws out the implication of the triple shift and makes a judgement.</i>
5.	<i>Sentence 2 – Sentence 1 simply describes the idea of the warm bath theory, whereas sentence 2 indicates its consequences or effects.</i>

Activity 2: Identifying analysis in simple sentences

Show learners one or two sentences containing analysis, that are explanations of causal connections. These can be everyday examples or sociology related. For example:

- The man lost his job; therefore, he could not buy the food he needed for his family.
- People are constantly on their phone, this means that advertisers have a good opportunity to sell more goods.
- More young people are rebelling against norms and values; therefore, subcultures are increasing.

Learners identify the decisions made and the reasons given for those decisions in each statement. Introduce the idea of connecting words including, '**because**', '**this means**', '**so**', '**therefore**'.

In groups, learners consider other possible connecting words. Remind them that not all connecting words such as '**and**' are relevant for developing analysis.

Extend this by asking further questions such as, 'Why does this develop the statement?' or 'How will this help explain the point being made?'

Learners make notes on their discussion before sharing ideas with the class. These could be used later as part of a display about connecting words.

Worksheet 5: Identifying analysis in simple sentences is based on Topic 5 Education but the sentences can be replaced with others from different topics. The aim of the exercise is to encourage learners to practice spotting analysis and adding development.

As an extension exercise learners create their own sentences showing the skill of analysis.

Worksheet 5: Identifying analysis in simple sentences

Complete the following sentences by choosing a suitable connecting word to develop each point in this exercise. Note connecting words can be used more than once.

Because therefore as a result so lead to this means

1. In some societies, girls have little or no access to education _____ they will experience fewer life chances than boys in those societies.
2. Some parents may not choose or be able to send their children to school. _____ there has been an increase in alternatives such as home-schooling and unschooling.
3. The digital divide is a problem in some societies _____ it is a form of inequality that can negatively affect life chances.
4. Institutional racism is a form of inequality that could _____ ethnic minority learners doing less well in education.
5. Some learners are labelled negatively by teachers. _____ the children will be stereotyped and discriminated against at school.
6. The advantage of state schools is that individuals do not have to pay for their education. _____ learners from the working class can gain qualifications and achieve social mobility.
7. Middle class children have better language skills and cultural capital which may _____ better exam results.
8. The hidden curriculum is taught alongside the official curriculum. _____ children are socialised into their culture and society.

Worksheet 5 answers:

1. In some societies, girls have little or no access to education therefore they will experience fewer life chances than boys in those societies.
2. Some parents may not choose or be able to send their children to school. As a result there has been an increase in alternatives such as home-schooling and unschooling.
- 3.. The digital divide is a problem in some societies because it is a form of inequality that can negatively affect life chances.
4. Institutional racism is a form of inequality that could lead to ethnic minority learners doing less well in education.
5. Some learners are labelled negatively by teachers. This means the children will be stereotyped and discriminated against at school.
6. The advantage of state schools is that individuals do not have to pay for their education So/Therefore learners from the working class can gain qualifications and achieve social mobility.
7. Middle class children have better language skills and cultural capital which may lead to better exam results.
8. The hidden curriculum is taught alongside the official curriculum. As a result children are socialised into their culture and society.

Activity 3: Identifying analysis and evaluation in paragraphs

Give learners a copy of **Worksheet 6: Identifying analysis and evaluation in paragraphs**.

The worksheet focuses on Topic 6 Crime, deviance and social control but other paragraphs may be used focusing on material from other topics.

Using a highlighter pen or a pencil, learners identify the analytical or evaluative components of each paragraph.

Lead a class discussion around whether the analysis or evaluation could be extended further to develop the point.

Worksheet 6: Identifying analysis and evaluation in paragraphs

For each of the following paragraphs, identify the **analysis** by either highlighting or underlining the focus of the analysis.

1.

Many victims do not reported crimes to police which leads to the hidden figure of crime. One example is domestic violence. The hidden figure means that the official crime statistics are low in validity as they do not accurately show the reality of crimes occurring in society. Therefore, many sociologists now use other ways of collecting information about crime such as self-report studies.

2.

Stop and search figures show that police target young males from some ethnic minorities. This causes fear and anger amongst these young males which can lead to them joining a deviant subculture. Some subcultures express deviance by anti-social behaviour whilst others join criminal gangs. The consequence of such choices is that there is an increase in social disorder and people lose their sense of belonging in society.

For each of the following paragraphs, identify the **evaluation** by either highlighting or underlining the focus of the evaluation.

3.

Victim surveys are the best way of measuring crime because they include the hidden figure of unreported crime. Self-report studies ask people about crimes they have committed. Their key strength is that they may gain information about crimes that people have committed but that have not been reported to police. But the problem with this data is that people may lie to make themselves look for socially desirable. For this reason, self-report studies are not included in the official crime statistics.

4.

Functionalists rely on the official crime statistics to understand crime in society. Such statistics give us the volume and types of crime as well as some information about offenders. One criticism of official crime statistics is that they are quantitative data. Interpretivists would argue that numbers alone cannot give a fully valid picture of crime as they cannot answer the question of why crime occurs. This is needed for governments to direct their resources effectively in the ongoing fight against crime.

Worksheet 6 answers:

For each of the following paragraphs, identify the **analysis** by either highlighting or underlining the focus of the analysis.

1.

Many victims do not reported crimes to police which leads to the hidden figure of crime. One example is domestic violence. The hidden figure means that the official crime statistics are low in validity as they do not accurately show the reality of crimes occurring in society. Therefore, many sociologists now use other ways of collecting information about crime such as self-report studies.

2.

Stop and search figures show that police target young males from some ethnic minorities. This causes fear and anger amongst these young males which can lead to them joining a deviant subculture. Some subcultures express deviance by anti-social behaviour whilst others join criminal gangs. The consequence of such choices is that there is an increase in social disorder and people lose their sense of belonging in society.

For each of the following paragraphs, identify the **evaluation** by either highlighting or underlining the focus of the evaluation.

3.

Victim surveys are the best way of measuring crime because they include the hidden figure of unreported crime. Self-report studies ask people about crimes they have committed. Their key strength is that they may gain information about crimes that people have committed but that have not been reported to police. But the problem with this data is that people may lie to make themselves look for socially desirable. For this reason, self-report studies are not included in the official crime statistics.

4.

Functionalists rely on the official crime statistics to understand crime in society. Such statistics give us the volume and types of crime as well as some information about offenders. One criticism of official crime statistics is that they are quantitative data. Interpretivists would argue that numbers alone cannot give a fully valid picture of crime as they cannot answer the question of why crime occurs. This is needed for governments to direct their resources effectively in the ongoing fight against crime.

Exercise 3: Strengths and weaknesses of sociological theories

Learners often find the application and evaluation of sociological theories challenging. However, if analysis and evaluation (AO3) skills are practiced regularly learners can build confidence as they move through their syllabus topics.

In this exercise learners are encouraged, firstly, to find or identify suitable evaluation points for theory in context, that is, as applied to topic areas. In the syllabus there are sections outlining the application of theory. For example, in the Topic 4.2 What is the role of the family for the individual and society? functionalist, Marxist and feminist views are given in some detail.

Secondly, learners will be supported in learning to develop evaluation points in paragraphs.

Finally, ideas for how to structure an effective conclusion are provided. Taken together these activities will help learners to evaluate more effectively and hence improve outcomes in examination questions.

Activity 1: Identifying strengths and weaknesses

The first stage of being able to achieve good analysis and evaluation (AO3) marks is for learners to be able to identify basic strengths and weaknesses of each sociological theory. It is likely that teachers will teach learners an overview of each theory near the beginning of the course.

Once learners have a grasp of the main elements of each theory, they need to be able to understand how each theory can be applied in the relevant syllabus topics.

Worksheet 7 Identifying strengths and weaknesses will allow you to see how well learners can apply their basic knowledge of the theories to the context of Topic 2 Identity, self and society, specifically how identity is learned through socialisation.

It is recommended that learners work in pairs to find appropriate strengths and weaknesses of the Marxist, functionalist and feminist views.

Worksheet 7: Identifying strengths and weaknesses

Read the 'Key Points' about each theory. Practice your evaluation skills (AO3) by writing **at least one** strength and **one** weakness of each theory's view on how we learn identity in socialisation.

Theory	Key points: identity in socialisation	Evaluation
Functionalism	<p>Primary socialisation in the nuclear family is crucial as it teaches offers language and basic skills.</p> <p>The hidden curriculum and social control at school teaches children the social norms and values needed to succeed in society.</p>	<p>Weakness:</p> <p>Strength:</p> <p>Weakness:</p> <p>Strength:</p>
Marxism	<p>The family socialises working children into harmful capitalist norms and values such as fatalism, commodity fetishism and immediate gratification.</p> <p>Schools oppress working class children via teacher labelling and the middle-class culture of schools.</p>	<p>Weakness:</p> <p>Strength:</p> <p>Weakness:</p> <p>Strength:</p>
Feminism	<p>Oakley shows how children are socialised into sexist gender stereotypes in the family.</p> <p>Schools have a gendered curriculum and push girls and boys towards gendered occupations.</p>	<p>Weakness:</p> <p>Strength:</p> <p>Weakness:</p> <p>Strength:</p>

Worksheet 7 answers may include:

Theory	Key points: identity in socialisation	Evaluation
Functionalism	<p>Primary socialisation in the nuclear family is crucial as it teaches offers language and basic skills.</p> <p>The hidden curriculum and social control at school teaches children the social norms and values needed to succeed in society.</p>	<p>Weakness: Some families are dysfunctional and fail to teach the norms and values or even teach deviant ones.</p> <p>Strength: Without this socialisation children would be feral like 'Genie' in the United States who was left unattended during her early years.</p> <p>Weakness: This is not always effective as some rebel and join anti-school subcultures or turn to crime when they leave school.</p> <p>Strength: Durkheim said, there is no 'society of saints' but most people do conform both at school and in wider society.</p>
Marxism	<p>The family socialises working children into harmful capitalist norms and values such as fatalism, commodity fetishism and immediate gratification.</p> <p>Schools oppress working class children via teacher labelling and the middle-class culture of schools.</p>	<p>Weakness: We live in a meritocratic capitalist society and many working-class children aspire to social mobility which enhances their life.</p> <p>Strength: Working class children suffer from relative deprivation, resulting in some turning to crime and deviance to acquire material rewards they cannot access legitimately.</p> <p>Weakness: Free education and comprehensive schools give working class children the necessary materials and an environment in which they can thrive and achieve.</p> <p>Strength: Willis' study of the 'lads' shows that the middle-class culture of schools breeds resentment and fatalism in working class males leading to the reproduction of social class.</p>
Feminism	<p>Oakley shows how children are socialised into sexist gender stereotypes in the family.</p> <p>Schools have a gendered curriculum and push girls and boys towards gendered occupations.</p>	<p>Weakness: This study is outdated. Today many parents encourage children to be themselves without forcing them into stereotypes, e.g. girls playing football and boys using grooming products.</p> <p>Strength: Stereotypes continue to exist with young girls' obsession with pink and looking like a 'princess'; boys are still encouraged to do contact sports and be 'manly'.</p> <p>Weakness: There are initiatives that encourage girls are to choose STEM subjects and girls are increasingly taking on 'male' jobs such as construction, lorry driving, engineer etc.</p> <p>Strength: There is still a clear pattern of difference in the number of boys and girls taking subjects like computer science and physics (male dominated) and art and languages (female dominated). This division then feeds into males and females heading towards different jobs.</p>

Activity 2: Developing evaluation of theories

Analysis and evaluation (AO3) skills involve the ability to develop points and arguments as part of extended answers such as essays.

In **Worksheet 8: Developing evaluation of theories**, learners are provided with a writing frame for each question that will enable them to structure an evaluative paragraph.

The activity is focused on Topic 5 Education, but both the questions and the writing frame can be modified by using material from other topics.

Encourage learners to incorporate any relevant studies or empirical evidence that they have come across in their studies.

Worksheet 8: Developing evaluation of theories

Fill in the gaps to develop a strength and a limitation of each theory's view of education.

1. Evaluate the functionalist view of education.

Functionalists argue that schools are meritocratic. This means

Evidence to support this is

This shows that

However, feminists disagree. They have shown that there is a gendered curriculum in school. This means

For example

This suggests that the functionalist view is incorrect because

2. Evaluate labelling theory as an explanation for why some ethnicity minorities underachieve in school.

Labelling theory argues that some ethnic minorities are negatively labelled in school. This means

Evidence to support this is

This shows that

However, functionalists disagree. They argue that all learners have equal opportunities in school. This means

For example

This suggests that the labelling view is incorrect because

3. Evaluate Marxist explanations for working class underachievement in education.

Marxist theory points to material deprivation as a main cause of working-class underachievement. Material deprivation is

Evidence to support this idea is

This shows that

However, other sociologists disagree. They argue that many learners enjoy compensatory education. This means

For example

This suggests that the Marxist view is not totally correct because

4. Evaluate the feminist view of education.

Feminists argue that education continues to support gender inequality in society. Evidence to support this idea is

Moreover,

This shows that

On the other hand, other sociologists argue

For example

This suggests that the feminist view is not totally correct because

Worksheet 8 answers:**1. Evaluate the functionalist view of education.**

Functionalists argue that schools are meritocratic. This means that all learners have equal opportunities to do well. Learners succeed or fail according to their talents and work ethic.

Evidence to support this is the introduction of free and universal education in many societies.

This shows that all children, regardless of their ethnicity, gender or social class background, have the same chances to achieve good qualifications which can lead to high status and well-paid jobs.

However, feminists disagree. They have shown that there is a gendered curriculum in school. This means that some subjects are still seen as 'masculine' whilst others are seen as 'feminine'.

For example, physics, maths and computer science are seen as hard subjects which boys should aspire to whilst arts, languages and humanities subjects are seen as easier and girls are often channelled into studying these subjects.

This suggests that the functionalist view is incorrect because if learners are 'guided' and expected to study certain subjects there will be a knock-on effect in terms of the kinds of qualifications and future jobs that males and females get. It leads ultimately to gender inequality in the form of horizontal segregation in the workplace.

2. Evaluate labelling theory as an explanation for why some ethnicity minorities underachieve in school.

Labelling theory argues that some ethnic minorities are negatively labelled in school. This means that they are stereotyped on the basis on their ethnicity and this prejudice leads to discrimination by teacher and/or peers.

Evidence to support this is Becker's theory of labelling in which teachers can attach a label to ethnic minority learners who may internalise it and it then becomes a self-fulfilling prophesy. For example, if an Afro-Caribbean learner is labelled as low ability they may come to believe it is true and stop trying which in turn leads to poor achievement.

This shows that labelling can profoundly affect a learner's outcomes in school which then impacts on future life chances.

However, functionalists disagree. They argue that all learners have equal opportunities in school. This means even if they are labelled ethnic minority learners have the power to create a self-negating prophesy.

For example, the same Afro-Caribbean learners can reject the stereotypes and use the support and opportunities in school to improve and achieve a successful outcome.

This suggests that the labelling view is incorrect because it is too deterministic and offers an overly pessimistic view of the power of individuals to create their own destiny.

3. Evaluate Marxist explanations for working class underachievement in education.

Marxist theory points to material deprivation as a main cause of working-class

underachievement. Material deprivation is when someone is unable to afford basic resources, which can impact a learner's educational achievement. This can range from computers and books to food and housing.

Evidence to support this is the lower levels of children from disadvantaged backgrounds. Children who live in cramped housing have no place to study properly; moreover, they may lack basic equipment such as computers or books which will mean they will struggle to achieve as well as middle class learners who do have such resources.

This shows that there is a big correlation between being materially deprived and doing poorly in the education system.

However, other sociologists disagree. They argue that many learners enjoy compensatory education. This means they receive extra help outside school hours to make up for any disadvantages they may experience.

For example, this may be with extra resources or tuition, 'breakfast clubs' or early intervention schemes such as Sure Start in the UK

This suggests that the Marxist view is not totally correct because efforts are being made to tackle the deprivation issues to allow children in poverty to flourish and achieve well at school.

4. Evaluate the feminist view of education.

Feminists argue that education continues to support gender inequality in society. Evidence to support this idea is that in some societies girls do not have equal access to education due to cultural stereotypes about women's future role as housewife and mother.

Moreover, some girls have no access to education if they live in a country like Afghanistan where most are forbidden to go to school.

This shows that whilst there may be progress in some modern industrial societies there are still big differences across the globe in terms of girl's rights and access to education.

On the other hand, other sociologists argue that much progress has been made in improving girls' access to education in many societies and this is borne out by the fact that girls are nowadays often doing better than boys.

For example, girls are outperforming boys across a range of subjects and many girls are now receiving a university education and going on to get 'top jobs' in society.

This suggests that the feminist view is not totally correct because it is inaccurate to say that education continues to support gender inequality in society. In fact, it is doing the opposite and allowing many girls to improve their qualifications and therefore their life chances.

Activity 3: Re-arrange the conclusion

Learners often struggle to write an effective conclusion in essay questions. Coming to a judgement based on the evidence is part of the skill set of required for analysis and evaluation (AO3).

Give learners **Worksheet 9: Re-arrange the conclusion**

Explain to learners that the jumbled conclusions given in response to the questions draw from different areas of the syllabus, but they should be able to work out the correct order even if they have not studied each topic.

Learners work in pairs to give peer support.

Lead a discussion about what makes each one an effective conclusion.

Worksheet 9: Re-arrange the conclusion

For each answer reorder the separate statements to create an effective conclusion.

You will need to add in appropriate punctuation.

1. Evaluate the view that the family is the most effective agency of socialisation.

...this is supported by the emotional bond parents have with children ...
...this would not be possible without primary socialisation...
...for example, through peer pressure and media stereotypes...
... the family is where children first learn social norms and values...
...in conclusion, the family is the most effective agency of socialisation...
...whilst secondary agencies such as peers and the media are influential with young people...

2. Evaluate the view that welfare states are ineffective in reducing inequalities.

...thus, the welfare state is only partially effective in reducing some inequalities in society...
... other measures, such as equal opportunity laws, now punish discrimination against minorities ...
...in summary... ...however, ...
... in addition, the welfare state can encourage a dependency culture...
... welfare state measures such as free schools and healthcare have improved people's life chances...

3. Evaluate the view that official crime statistics are the most accurate measurement of crime.

...victim surveys help to uncover some of the hidden figure...
... official crime statistics are not the most accurate measure of crime...
...to conclude ... so . and thus, show a more accurate picture ...
...official crime statistics are reliable ...
...and allow sociologists to see the volume and patterns of crime in society ...

Worksheet 9 answers:

1. Evaluate the view that the family is the most effective agency of socialisation.

In conclusion, the family is the most effective agency of socialisation. The family is where children first learn social norms and values. This is supported by the emotional bond parents have with children. Whilst secondary agencies such as peers and the media are influential with young people, for example, through peer pressure and media stereotypes, this would not be possible without primary socialisation.

2. Evaluate the view that welfare states are ineffective in reducing inequalities.

In summary, welfare state measures such as free schools and healthcare have improved people's life chances. However, other measures such as equal opportunity laws have helped to tackle discrimination against minorities. In addition, the welfare state can encourage a dependency culture. Thus, the welfare state is only partially effective in reducing some inequalities in society

3. Evaluate the view that official crime statistics are the most accurate measurement of crime.

To conclude, official crime statistics are reliable and allow sociologists to see the volume and patterns of crime in society. However, they lack validity due to a hidden figure of unreported and unrecorded crime. Victim surveys help to uncover some of the hidden figure and thus show a more accurate picture. So official crime statistics are not the most accurate measure of crime.

Cambridge Assessment International Education
The Triangle Building, Shaftesbury Road, Cambridge, CB2 8EA, United Kingdom
t: +44 1223 553554
e: info@cambridgeinternational.org www.cambridgeinternational.org

© Cambridge University Press & Assessment 2022 v1