



Cambridge Assessment  
International Education

Example Candidate Responses – Paper 3

# Cambridge International AS & A Level Sociology 9699

For examination from 2024



© Cambridge University Press & Assessment 2024 v1

Cambridge Assessment International Education is part of the 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
Question 1.....	6
Example Candidate Response – high.....	6
Example Candidate Response – middle.....	7
Example Candidate Response – low.....	8
Question 2.....	9
Example Candidate Response – high.....	9
Example Candidate Response – middle.....	11
Example Candidate Response – low.....	12
Question 3.....	13
Example Candidate Response – high 1.....	13
Example Candidate Response – high 2.....	15
Example Candidate Response – low.....	17
Question 4.....	18
Example Candidate Response – high.....	18
Example Candidate Response – middle.....	22
Example Candidate Response – low.....	26

---

## Introduction

---

The main aim of this booklet is to exemplify standards for those teaching Cambridge International AS & A Level Sociology, and to show how different levels of candidates' performance (high, middle and low) relate to the syllabus requirements. This document helps teachers to assess the standards required to achieve marks beyond the guidance of the mark scheme.

In this booklet, candidate responses have been chosen from the June 2024 exam series to exemplify a range of answers.

For each question, the response is annotated with examiner comments about where and why marks were awarded or omitted. This is followed by comments on how the answer could be improved. There is also a list of common mistakes and guidance for candidates for each question.

Please refer to the June 2024 Examiner Report for further details and guidance.

The questions and mark schemes are available on the [School Support Hub](#)

**9699 June 2024 Question Paper 32**

**9699 June 2024 Mark Scheme 32**

Past exam resources and other teaching and learning resources are available on the [School Support Hub](#)

## How to use this booklet

This booklet goes through the paper one question at a time, showing you the high-, middle- and low level response for each question. In the left-hand column are the candidate responses, and in the right-hand column are the examiner comments.

Example Candidate Response – high	Examiner comments
<p>One way schools may reinforce the ethnic stereotypes is by the ethnocentric curriculum which would portray ethnic minorities according to stereotypes, such as through history lessons, only referring to black history as slaves, reinforcing stereotypes of them as poor.</p> <p>Another way schools may reinforce ethnic stereotypes is by teacher perception and teacher racism through sets. Teachers may place</p>	<p>1 The candidate is awarded an identification mark for the ethnocentric curriculum.</p> <p>2 History only referring to black people as slaves is linked to their being seen as poor. The candidate shows understanding of how schools can reinforce an ethnic stereotype, gaining the second mark.</p> <p>3 The candidate is awarded an</p>
<p><b>Responses</b> are written by real candidates in exam conditions, demonstrating the types of answers for each level. These could be used to discuss and analyse the answers with learners in the classroom to improve their skills.</p>	<p><b>Examiner comments</b> explain where and why marks were awarded. These help to interpret the standard of Cambridge exams to help learners refine their exam technique.</p>

## How the candidate could improve their answer

This answer gained maximum marks. A little time could have been saved by omitting one of the examples of racist placement in sets. There was no need to provide a named source of material for this question.

This section explains how the candidate could improve each response. It helps learners to improve their exam technique.

## Common mistakes and guidance for candidates

- A common mistake is to give more detail on the identified way without explaining how this way reinforces ethnic stereotypes to gain the second mark.
- It is not sufficient to say that something in school disadvantages an ethnic minority. To gain a second mark it has to be stated how this disadvantage reinforces a stereotype.
- Candidates should be consciously aware that there are carefully to be clear how the second mark is to be gained.

This section lists common mistakes as well as helpful guidance from the examiner. This will help your learners to avoid these mistakes. You can use this alongside the relevant Examiner Report to guide your learners.

## Question 1

Example Candidate Response – high	Examiner comments
<p>One way schools may reinforce the ethnic stereotypes is by the ethnocentric curriculum which would portray ethnic minorities according to stereotypes such as through history lessons, only referring to black history as slaves, reinforcing stereotypes of them as poor. <span style="color: red; border: 1px solid red; border-radius: 50%; padding: 2px;">1</span></p> <p>Another way schools may reinforce ethnic stereotypes is by teacher perception and teacher racism through sets. Teachers may place Asian students in top sets reinforcing them as being 'nerdy' and putting black children in low sets due to seeing them as less able (Gilborn). <span style="color: red; border: 1px solid red; border-radius: 50%; padding: 2px;">2</span></p> <p>Another way schools may reinforce ethnic stereotypes is by teacher perception and teacher racism through sets. Teachers may place Asian students in top sets reinforcing them as being 'nerdy' and putting black children in low sets due to seeing them as less able (Gilborn). <span style="color: red; border: 1px solid red; border-radius: 50%; padding: 2px;">3</span></p> <p>Another way schools may reinforce ethnic stereotypes is by teacher perception and teacher racism through sets. Teachers may place Asian students in top sets reinforcing them as being 'nerdy' and putting black children in low sets due to seeing them as less able (Gilborn). <span style="color: red; border: 1px solid red; border-radius: 50%; padding: 2px;">4</span></p>	<p><span style="color: red; border: 1px solid red; border-radius: 50%; padding: 2px;">1</span> The candidate is awarded an identification mark for the ethnocentric curriculum.</p> <p><span style="color: red; border: 1px solid red; border-radius: 50%; padding: 2px;">2</span> History only referring to black people as slaves is linked to their being seen as poor. The candidate shows understanding of how schools can reinforce an ethnic stereotype, gaining the second mark.</p> <p><span style="color: red; border: 1px solid red; border-radius: 50%; padding: 2px;">3</span> The candidate is awarded an identification mark for teacher perception (could also be for racism or racist placement in sets).</p> <p><span style="color: red; border: 1px solid red; border-radius: 50%; padding: 2px;">4</span> The candidate shows an understanding of how an ethnic stereotype can be reinforced by the school by placing Asian students in top sets and reinforcing their image as nerdy, gaining the second mark. The candidate could have also been awarded a mark for the example of placing black children in low sets reinforcing image as less able.</p> <p><b>Total mark awarded = 4 out of 4</b></p>

### How the candidate could improve their answer

This answer gained maximum marks. A little time could have been saved by omitting one of the examples of racist placement in sets. There was no need to provide a named source of material for this question.

## Example Candidate Response – middle

## Examiner comments

The first way schools may reinforce ethnic stereotypes by have ethnocentric curricula. In which norms and values and the syllabus & History is taught according the ethnic majority of the school which lack in the favour of the ethnic minority. 1 2

The second ways schools may reinforce ethnic stereotypes by lack of role models for the ethnic minorities in the schools. As Rose et al claims that in the schools of UK for the 15% of the working class background there are only 5% teachers appointed to ~~the~~ teach them who ~~but~~ belong ~~the~~ from the working class background. 3 4

1 The candidate is awarded an identification mark for the ethnocentric curriculum.

2 The reference to this not favouring the ethnic minority does not show understanding of how this reinforces ethnic stereotypes, so no second mark is awarded.

3 The candidate is awarded an identification mark for lack of role models.

4 The reference to the percentage of working-class teachers in schools does not show understanding of how a lack of role models reinforces ethnic stereotypes, so no second mark is awarded. Evidence of the percentage of ethnic minority teachers would not have gained a second mark either.

**Total mark awarded =  
2 out of 4**

## How the candidate could improve their answer

- An example could have been given of how an ethnic minority is portrayed in the curriculum to show that it could reinforce a stereotype, such as particular occupations, cultural activities, criminality or absence from positions of power or historical significance.
- It could have been explained how lack of role models of a particular ethnicity in school may give the impression that members of that ethnic minority cannot expect to gain educational success or positions of influence.

Example Candidate Response – low	Examiner comments
<p>⇒ <del>The first</del> The schools may reinforce ethnic stereotypes is due to the labelling of the teachers. <b>1</b> Rist argues that due to labelling many students lack in <del>you</del> their education as their self confidence <b>2</b> will get low due to the unnecessary labelling.</p> <p>The second way is making top noach educational institue for the higher class childrens only as the fee of those school are very high and not every parents can afford to send their ward to a <del>ret</del> top catior good institution. <b>3</b></p>	<p><b>1</b> The candidate is awarded an identification mark for labelling.</p> <p><b>2</b> The candidate has not explained what ethnic stereotype might be reinforced by labelling. It is too vague to say that labelling can lead to reduced self-confidence.</p> <p><b>3</b> The candidate makes a point about inequalities of opportunity, not the reinforcement of ethnic stereotypes. No marks are awarded here.</p> <p><b>Total mark awarded = 1 out of 4</b></p>

### How the candidate could improve their answer

- It could have been explained that if an ethnic group had a stereotype of being less able, then if teachers also labelled them as such they may lose self-confidence and actually perform less well, reinforcing the stereotype.
- An acceptable identification point could have been made by referring to any tendency to exclude ethnic groups from certain kinds of schools or from higher streams or bands. A second mark could have been gained by explaining how this could reduce their opportunity for success and thus reinforce a stereotype of being less capable.

### Common mistakes and guidance for candidates

- A common mistake is to give more detail on the identified way without explaining how this way reinforces ethnic stereotypes to gain the second mark.
- It is not sufficient to say that something in school disadvantages an ethnic minority. To gain a second mark it has to be stated how this disadvantage reinforces a stereotype.
- Candidates should be consciously aware that there are 2 marks to be gained for each point and read the question carefully to be clear how the second mark is to be gained.
- A couple of sentences for each point should be enough to gain full marks.



## Question 2

### Example Candidate Response – high

One way in which school may reinforce ethnic stereotypes is through the labelling of certain ethnic minorities, such as Black Boys, negatively. In this, a deviant subculture may develop, as did in Willis' study of lads, where they would engage in deviant activities as it is ~~not~~ the norm of the subculture, thus reinforce stereotypes.

Another way this may occur is by teachers ~~discriminating~~ against racial groups on basis of ~~general~~ ethnic stereotypes, their attitudes causing certain groups to under perform as they are given less significant ~~less~~ knowledge.

In his theory of cultural capital Bourdieu suggested that lower class students may under achieve due to ~~to~~ not having cultural knowledge ~~and~~ ~~as~~ ~~not~~ necessary for <sup>1</sup> educational attainment, such as not ~~being~~ <sup>2</sup> being able to speak in what Bernstein calls as 'Elaborated' language codes, on which <sup>3</sup> school is based on. As such, educational attainment is impacted as ~~as~~ the school is built on the culture of the middle class, and so leads to <sup>4</sup> differences in educational attainment in different classes.

Another way in which a lack of cultural capital ~~is~~ may impact a educational attainment is through parent's attitudes. Middle ~~school~~ class mothers <sup>5</sup> are highly engaged in their child's education, while lower class parents are unable to do <sup>6</sup> so, such as what ~~the~~ Tizard suggests is through <sup>7</sup> being put off and unable to communicate with teachers due to how they present themselves. This can lead to child <sup>8</sup>

### Examiner comments

**1** The candidate gives the reason that the lack of cultural knowledge shown in language use affects educational attainment. This gains 1 mark.

**2** The candidate explains the school being based on the elaborated code. This gains a second mark.

**3** The candidate references Bernstein as the source of this material. This gains a third mark.

**4** The candidate shows material relevant to the question by explaining how the school is built on middle class culture, thus causing class differences in educational attainment. This emphasises the significance of cultural capital rather than cultural deprivation. This gains the fourth mark.

**5** The second reason at first appears to be about parental attitudes. This would not be credited as an aspect of cultural capital. Parents could be very keen on their children's educational success without having the appropriate cultural capital.

**6** The credited point is that lower class parents are unable to be highly engaged in their children's education.

**7** The candidate explains parents being put off and unable to communicate with teachers and how they present themselves, and the effect of this on their children. This gains the second mark.

**8** The candidate references Tizard for this material. This gains the third mark.

Example Candidate Response – high, continued	Examiner comments
<p>associating lesser value with school as they believe the same for the parent, so lower class children attain less. This may also be due to a lack of cultural knowledge that the <sup>lower class</sup> parent has, &amp; thus lesser parentocracy.</p>	<p><b>9</b> The candidate links the material back to the question by explaining that lack of cultural knowledge has affected educational attainment, also suggesting a link between cultural knowledge, parentocracy and class. This gains the fourth mark.</p> <p><b>Total mark awarded = 8 out of 8</b></p>

### How the candidate could improve their answer

- With careful reading, this answer gained full marks. If each reason began with the positive effect of cultural capital on educational attainment, it would have made it clearer from the start that the candidate was not confusing cultural capital with cultural deprivation theory.
- In the second point the reference to parental attitudes was confusing as it was the barriers in communication and being put off by the school due to lack of cultural capital that was relevant and was rewarded.

## Example Candidate Response – middle

## Examiner comments

Bourdieu said that cultural capital is the most important form of capital that affects educational attainment. **2**

One of the reasons is that ~~the~~ <sup>the</sup> cultural capital is often instilled in the child since the start of primary socialisation. Families use language codes that are more elaborate, take babies to zoos **1**

etc. All of this contributes in giving children of dominant classes an advantage since the start of education and ~~that~~ they carry this advantage throughout their education resulting in increased attainment.

Lack of cultural capital in lower class students means they often are unable to understand the language of their peers and teachers <sup>and</sup> do not understand specific cultural references they might make. **3**

This leads to feelings of alienation as lowered **4**

motivation ~~to~~ <sup>to</sup> for educational achievements. Habitus **5**

of the dominant classes aligns with the habits of education ~~not with~~ <sup>more</sup> meaning that cultural capital **6**

will result in higher levels of attainment.

**1** The candidate gives a reason referring to socialisation, including the elaborated code and visits to zoos. This gains 1 mark, but there is no explanation of how this can affect educational attainment.

**2** The candidate references Bourdieu as supporting this view, gaining a second mark for material. There is no further explanation of how Bourdieu's work supports this reason, so the remaining marks for this part of the question are not awarded.

**3** The candidate gives another reason referring to understanding the teachers' cultural references. There is a repeated reference to language, but as neither reason particularly focuses on language this does not prevent a mark being given for this point.

**4** The candidate explains the relevance to attainment by the feeling of alienation leading to lower motivation, gaining a second mark.

**5** The candidate uses the concept of habitus, gaining a third mark.

**6** The alignment of habitus for the middle class with the school is linked to why cultural capital can affect educational attainment, gaining the fourth mark.

**Total mark awarded =  
6 out of 8**

## How the candidate could improve their answer

- The first reason could have gained all 4 marks by fully developing how the impact of the school using the elaborated code affected learning directly or through labelling. Alternatively it could have been developed by exploring the impact of cultural experiences in socialisation on understanding and performance in a range of subjects at school.
- It would have avoided any possible confusion if the second reason had focussed on habitus without reference to language, as the elaborated code had already been used in support of the first reason.

## Example Candidate Response – low

## Examiner comments

cultural capital can affect educational attainment as marketisation of schools are happening, schools are becoming private so those with the high cultural capital mean high status, privilege and money will be encouraged and chosen for a better education. It affects educational attainment as pupils with higher cultural capital will be band/labelled into higher sets or streams whereas those with low cultural capital will be band into lower sets or streams which will demotivate the pupils in lower streams and in self-fulfilling prophecy as they will be accepting that they can't get better than others. Cultural capital can affect educational attainment as those in working-class, low cultural capital has less importance of education and there have health issues which will lead to absenteeism and loss of educational attainment.

1 The point about marketisation making cultural capital relevant in the selection process could potentially have gained credit if it had been more clearly expressed. As it stands it is too muddled up with financial capital and too vague. The point about selection will be credited where it is better expressed in relation to bands and streams.

2 The candidate gives a reason that cultural capital affects selection for higher bands and streams. This gains the first mark.

3 The candidate further explains the impact by the demotivation of those put in lower streams. This gains a second mark.

4 The candidate is awarded a third mark for the use of the concept of the self-fulfilling prophecy.

5 The candidate does not gain any further marks as neither the working-class lack of interest in education nor health issues are relevant to the question. A second reason why cultural capital can affect educational attainment is not given.

**Total mark awarded =  
3 out of 8**

## How the candidate could improve their answer

- The impact of labelling and streaming on attainment could have been briefly developed with some interactionist material to gain the fourth mark.
- It was vital to check whether all the instructions in the question had been followed. Two reasons are clearly asked for, so only giving one would cost the candidate half the available marks.
- Showing the importance of cultural capital in marketisation, explaining the benefits to schools, league tables, etc. of selecting those with cultural capital and the resultant benefit in attainment to those favoured would have been credited as a good reason if clearly expressed.

## Common mistakes and guidance for candidates

- It is common to confuse cultural capital with cultural deprivation or with economic or social capital.
- Some candidates accurately explained what cultural capital is or gave appropriate examples of it but did not go on to explain how it can affect educational attainment.
- It is important to remember that the third and fourth mark for each reason can only be gained if sociological material is used.

## Question 3

### Example Candidate Response – high 1

### Examiner comments

The argument that education system advantages ~~not~~ males is heavily misleading in the system is tilted more toward the benefit of girls. One way this is done is through the feminisation of education, whereby education has been altered to benefit girls. This feminisation has allowed girls to achieve better academically and has widened the education gap in their favour, which is highest in the pupils of age 16. This can partly be explained by the introduction of coursework in 1988 which ~~also fits~~ suited girls better. Sewell argues that girls ~~are~~ spend more time on their work, take care ~~of~~ of its presentation and are better at keeping deadlines. Furthermore, the dominance of female teachers and headteachers has allowed girls a range of female role models and proved that there are a range of career choices available to them, and not just the role of mothers and ~~house~~ wives. Furthermore, Wehr argues that removal sexist stereotypes has helped girls to ~~st~~ achieve better by opening a range of activities and careers for them, and has resulted in increasing educational attainment by them. This education actively supports girls ~~at~~ achievement and is designed to help them to better.

Furthermore, teachers actively perceive girls as better students than boys. They are biased toward girls as boys are more aggressive

- 1 The candidate based their first argument on the feminisation of education.
- 2 This is first developed by explaining how coursework suits girls.
- 3 The candidate shows knowledge of the increase in coursework from 1988 and Sewell's study of its effects.
- 4 How it suits girls in terms of presentation skills and keeping to deadlines is explained.
- 5 The candidate develops further with reference to female role models in schools.
- 6 The candidate explains the impact of these on female career choices.
- 7 The argument concludes with reference to Wehr and the removal of sexist stereotypes and its impact on attainment for girls. Overall, there is enough relevant material and development to achieve the top of Level 3.
- 8 The second argument is based on teachers' perceptions of girls and boys.

## Example Candidate Response – high 1, continued

## Examiner comments

and discipline of the class. Howard Becker argues 9  
 that his theory of labelling leads to a  
 self-fulfilling prophecy where girls consistently  
 follow their teacher's expectations and perform  
 better, while boys fail to deliver. McRobbie 10  
 has sought to explain the 'ideal pupil' image  
 of girls by using the concept of bedroom  
 culture, where girls remain in their bedrooms,  
~~reading~~ and spend time in reading. Thus,  
 quiet, passive and obedient girls are much  
 more preferred by teachers as they are  
 easier to discipline and work hard to  
 achieve good grades. This education  
 consistently encourages girls - sometimes at the detriment  
 of boys - to achieve educational attainment. 11

9 The candidate applied material from Becker on the ideal pupil, labelling and the self-fulfilling prophecy.

10 The candidate applied McRobbie's concept of bedroom culture to explain girls' advantages in teachers' eyes.

11 The encouragement of girls, sometimes to the detriment of boys, links back to the question. There is enough material and development to achieve the top of Level 3.

**Total mark awarded =  
12 out of 12**

## How the candidate could improve their answer

- This answer gained full marks, but it was not the only way it could have done so. An aspect of feminisation such as method of assessment, female role models or removal of stereotyping could have been presented as an argument in itself in greater depth. This answer had enough explanation of each point to be counted as developed, but there was a danger of an answer being too much a list of undeveloped points which could risk a lower mark.
- To ensure the response was seen clearly as answering the question asked, it was safer to refer more directly to the wording of the question, e.g. to say 'The feminisation of education shows that the system no longer advantages males'.

## Example Candidate Response – high 2

## Examiner comments

The statement 'the education system advantages males' can have quite a contradictory approach from what it states.

Firstly, the education system & has over time ~~lead~~ lead to males being disadvantaged rather than advantaged due to many many changes in the way education works. One main reason being the feminisation of education. Sociologists claim, due to the whole movement of feminism and riots for equal rights ~~women~~ more women have attained secondary education which has led to ~~to~~ more women in the workforce specifically educational institutions. This has led to more females being present, giving girls an upper hand as seeing their female teachers as role models, comparatively, boys are likely to not feel as included as they may be able to relate more to male teachers as role models rather than female teachers. This can lead to ~~women~~ <sup>girls</sup> outperforming boys in terms of GCSE's and other forms of ~~edu~~ formal education. ~~Women~~ Girls are also likely to perform better than boys due to the introduction of coursework by the 1988 education reform act as girls are usually more organised and well collected compared to boys. which can also make it easier for girls to grasp the concepts taught

1 The candidate's first argument refers to the feminisation of education.

2 The candidate relates this to feminism and wider social changes as more women have gained positions in educational institutions.

3 Having more female teachers is an advantage for girls.

4 The candidate develops the point in relation to the comparative lack of role models for boys to relate to and their lower performance in GCSEs.

5 Coursework has also been increased which is an advantage for girls.

6 The candidate explains how this advantages girls, though somewhat weakly.

## Example Candidate Response – high 2, continued

## Examiner comments

in school better, but also crack the 7  
examinations much easier.

Another reason the education system may not advantage the males would be due to stereotypes of girls and boys in 8  
school. Majority of the time, teachers tend to pupil label boys as disruptive and attention seekers compared to girls who they label as quite, passive and understanding. This leads to teachers negatively affecting boys as they would rather spend time disciplining boys 9  
rather than actually helping them gain knowledge. This leads to boys gaining the self fulfilling prophecy which leads to them internalising these thoughts and hence acting more devious and 10  
not trying to actually attain education as much as the girls. Moreover, the independance of girls and career oriented women has led to crisis of 11  
masculinity for men in the British society.

7 The candidate's suggestion that coursework helps girls do better in exams does not quite make sense, but it is reasonable to assume that the candidate meant 'helps girls get better exam results' rather than the inaccurate view that they are better at timed exams than coursework compared to boys. Overall, there is enough development in this answer to get into Level 3, but not to the top of it.

8 The second argument refers to teachers' stereotypes of boys and girls.

9 The candidate explains disadvantages to boys in terms of them being seen as discipline problems, whereas girls are seen as worth helping with their work.

10 The candidate explains the process of the self-fulfilling prophecy and boys' underachievement.

11 The candidate's point about the crisis of masculinity is not used well here in relation to the question as its consequences within the education system are not explored. Overall, a clear argument about teacher labelling is presented, but it lacks material from relevant studies and is not quite developed enough for the top level.

**Total mark awarded =  
9 out of 12**

## How the candidate could improve their answer

- For the first argument there could have been more development of any aspect of the feminisation of the school, whether of the different ways in which the gender of staff affects learning, changing teaching methods or subject choices.
- For the second argument there could have been reference to studies of classroom interaction which show the impact of gender stereotypes or further exploration of how the wider cultural or subcultural perceptions of masculinity affect what happens in schools.



## Example Candidate Response – low

## Examiner comments

To a greater extent, the education system advantages males however feminists state that over the years the girl children are becoming more advantaged than males and this is because females now have female teachers to look up to and be motivated to work harder than the males.

Patriarchy penetrates males and advantages males however it is overly deterministic.

In the 1900s, women were viewed as stay home wives and men had higher occupations than the females but recently in the 1970s, Sue Sharpe noticed that women were now more involved in taking on their careers and obtaining jobs like the males.

Feminists also held campaigns that against rape in marriages which motivated the females to do better and be independent not forgetting the campaign for the equal pay which helped females express themselves in a much better way.

However, functionalists

Callaghan states that schools benefit girls because of the decline in the hegemonic masculinity and Francis states that girls now have higher career aspirations unlike in the past when girls took up to the low paying jobs, they now value themselves and also want to be Presidents of companies and nations.

1 The first argument is simply stated – girls have more female teachers to look up to. The candidate gains 1 mark, but there is no further explanation or material to support it so no further marks can be awarded.

2 The second argument is that girls are motivated to work harder than males.

3 The candidate supports this by evidence of wider changes in society, the decline in hegemonic masculinity and girls' increased self-confidence. This provides some explanation, but there is little focus on the school system, so does not reach the top of Level 2.

**Total mark awarded =  
4 out of 12**

## How the candidate could improve their answer

- The first argument could have been developed with evidence of female dominance in the teaching profession and discussion of the impact of same-gender role models on motivation, classroom interaction, etc.
- The second argument could have been developed with evidence of girls' success in education and discussion of how schools have encouraged girls' achievements relative to boys, or how changing male roles in society have impacted boys' experience of school.

## Common mistakes and guidance for candidates

- Many candidates focused on changes for women in the wider society and girls' career aspirations, especially citing Sue Sharpe's studies, but did not relate this to how education systems may no longer advantage males.
- It is always helpful to use the wording of the question in presenting each argument to ensure the focus is made relevant, e.g. 'The limited number of male primary teachers shows that the education system does not always advantage males. Rather the girls gain advantage from female role models in school by...' or 'Males used to gain advantage in the education system by being encouraged into high status subjects and careers. However, with GIST and other policies to encourage equality for girls this is no longer the case...'

## Question 4

### Example Candidate Response – high

### Examiner comments

Education's main function The view that the main function of education is to allocate individuals to appropriate roles, is a view shared by functionalists, ~~never~~ the new right and the social democrats. All these branches of sociology support this views. **1**

Durkheim sees the role of education to teach individuals their appropriate role in society and how to conform to it through sanctions and rewards. But Parsons takes this a step forward by ~~with~~ arguing that education serves to allocate ~~these to~~ individuals to occupations that are ~~most~~ appropriate to level of skill. The school does this by rewarding students with qualifications based on their performance in standardized assessments. Davis and Moore also support this view ~~out~~ saying that the education 'sifts, sorts and grades' these individuals into the role in society they are best suited to. Education makes sure that the ones who are functionally the most able are granted the most functionally important positions in society. **2**

Consequently, social democrats also see the function of education to allocate individuals to their appropriate roles so that economy progresses. They see this function only being met if the education system operates on equal levels which is why in 1965 the comprehensive schooling system was introduced, doing away with the tripartite system which resulted in a wastage of talent as it prevented working class children being allowed opportunities to meet their potential. According to them, a comprehensive schooling system will allow for equal opportunities in mixed ~~stabilitte~~ classroom **3**

**1** The candidate makes it clear that the points to be made are directly related to the question asked.

**2** This is a very well written summary of the contributions of Durkheim, Parsons and Davis and Moore to the debate, but these points are made briefly, so their arguments are not fully explained or supported.

**3** A well developed explanation of the Social Democratic perspective, supported with specific policies. The evaluative tone also gains some credit towards AO3.

## Example Candidate Response – high, continued

## Examiner comments

where the only distinct differentiating factor is educational attainment. To further ensure that this function is being met, they also influenced the introduction of compensatory programs like Education Action Zones (EAZ) and Sure Start, which work to decrease inequalities resulting from class differences. Hence the social democratic view supports and works to maintain the educational function of allocating individuals to appropriate roles.

Consequently, in addition, the new right also supports this view. Chubb and Moe credit competition created to classrooms that allows students to showcase their full potential and allow for them to hence allocated to occupations best fit for them. Marketisation policies introduced under the 1988 education reform act; hence serves to maintain this competition through formula funding and open enrolment so that the best and identified and appropriate roles are allocated to them.

Furthermore, the use of IQ tests also support the view that education is an mechanism for appropriate allocation of individuals. Eysenck highly argues the these tests are objective measure of intelligence and Saunders also agrees by saying that these only reveal innate abilities of the students hence allowing them to all o cated to appropriate resources based on their intelligence.

However, Marxist sociologists strongly disagree with such views as according to them the roles that students are allocated into are not appropriately matched to their ability. ~~As~~ Rather, marxists like Bowles and Gintis see

4 The candidate presents material explicitly linked back to the question asked.

5 The candidate gains credit for application of New Right ideas to the argument, but their relevance is not very clearly explained.

6 The candidate also gains credit by the reference to IQ testing and Saunders, but the mechanisms through which this links to role allocation, e.g. 11+ or streaming are not explored.

7 The candidate's evaluation begins with a clear reference to the wording of the question, and specifically how a Marxist perspective challenges the view presented.

## Example Candidate Response – high, continued

## Examiner comments

The education system is legitimizing the already present social order, ~~with~~ ~~Althusser~~ as education rewards those who conform but not those who do not. Since ~~the~~ <sup>they need</sup> conform to middle class values to succeed, which is also not guaranteed as higher education is most widely only available to the upper classes attained through ~~money~~ money, Bowles and Gintis see education as ~~benefitting~~ and allocating suitable roles to 8

Rather than a mechanism for allocation, Marxists see ~~the~~ education as a form of social control with its function being reproducing existing inequalities. 9

By justifying unequal rewards as legit, they justify unequal class and consequently wealth distribution. Althusser sees education as part of the ideological state apparatus which ~~school~~ socializes students into ruling class ideologies and leads them to develop false class consciousness. Similarly both Illich and Fine see schools as repressive institutions that reward conformity to middle class values, passivity and a docile nature as a way of inculcating a passive labour force.

Bates & Riseborough note that working class and black minority students are routinely pushed towards vocational qualifications which results to lower paid, low status jobs. Bourdieu sees schools as inherently based on <sup>the</sup> cultural habitus of the upper and middle class, thereby disadvantaging working class children who are at a disadvantage even before entering school as a result of

8 The candidate relates Bowles and Gintis to the question in a nuanced way – appropriate role allocation only occurs for the middle class.

9 The evaluation now focusses on the alternative view of education as a means of social control, supported by Althusser and Illich.

## Example Candidate Response – high, continued

## Examiner comments

their lack of culture capital. Failure in examinations and self-elimination at the hands of the working class is seen as choices made by these individuals and hence justifying their social positions. Bourdieu <sup>to view</sup> sees this as **10** a resp. reasonable ~~resp~~ response as he sees the education system inherently against the interests of working classes. Nevertheless he sees these responses as contributing to legitimizing the existing social order. Ball et al. note that white middle class parents possess the right capitals in the right currency which enable them to make the best choices for their children as they have both social connections to get into the best schools and the money to facilitate proper education after.

If the function of allocating was indeed met, this would mean the working classes **11** would experience social mobility. Breen however notes that the most functionally important occupations are defined by social closure & by higher education which most working class students cannot attain due to material deprivation.

In conclusion <sup>as Tronter notes</sup> education cannot compensate for society.

**10** Evaluation continues with a well-informed discussion of barriers to working-class opportunity, using Riseborough, Bourdieu and Ball.

**11** This is related back to the question by linking the appropriate allocation of roles in society to a requirement for working-class mobility, referencing Breen and social closure.

Mark for AO1 = 9 out of 10

Mark for AO2 = 5 out of 6

Mark for AO3 = 9 out of 10

**Total mark awarded =  
23 out of 26**

## How the candidate could improve their answer

- This response achieved the top band for all the AOs but did not quite achieve full marks.
- For AO1, the presentation of theories of role allocation was a little thin and could have been boosted with reference to meritocracy, universalistic criteria, etc. as well as some discussion of gender equality policies.
- For AO2, the application of New Right ideas and Saunders as well as the use of Bowles and Gintis in the evaluation section could have been clearer.
- For AO3, there is scope for discussion of gender and ethnicity barriers to appropriate role allocation as well as exploring other functions of education, e.g. social cohesion.

## Example Candidate Response – middle

## Examiner comments

It is ~~widely~~ the. The belief that education serves to prepare people for the workforce is widely shared by all functionalists. They seek to explain society in terms of the interaction between institutions, and that all institutions work together to bring a functional and efficient society. One of the earliest functionalists - Emile Durkheim - came up with the idea of social solidarity. He argued that education instills key norms, values and attitudes in children that help them integrate in society. ~~As a student~~ children know from an early age what to do and how to behave, they take on their respective roles in society without difficulty and work together to ~~use~~ with other members of society to bring ~~to~~ together a social solidarity.

1 The candidate does not use the exact wording of the question but addresses the belief that education prepares people for the workforce. Although there is some overlap in meaning, there is a danger of losing some marks by slightly changing the focus.

2 This paragraph on Durkheim combines the juxtaposition of the function of maintaining social solidarity with a link to preparing children for their future roles. The place of these points in the overall debate could have been made clearer.

## Example Candidate Response – middle, continued

## Examiner comments

Durkheim's ideas of social solidarity were developed by Parsons who suggested that education acts as a bridge between ~~society~~ the wider society and the family. It is a society ~~in~~ in which ~~allows~~ which allows students to work ~~escape~~ independently of their parents and form new connections - thus preparing ~~them~~ for ensuring their transition from education to workplace is smooth. He argues that in school, pupils move away from the particularistic values of the family and move toward universalistic values of the school. As opposed to the family, pupils are encouraged to work hard ~~for to~~ ~~as~~ ~~are~~ ~~advised~~ for achievement, rather ~~than~~ than ascribed, status - which ultimately prepare students to help them to work hard in their respective <sup>3</sup> workplaces to ~~and~~ obtain an achieved status. Further ~~theories~~ theories of functionalism are developed by Davis and Moore, who agree that the main role of education is to prepare students for ~~their~~ role allocation. According to them, education 'gifts and sorts' <sup>4</sup> individuals based on their innate abilities and talents, thus the most important jobs are ~~are~~ allocated to the most able members of society. They argue that this, done through ~~the~~ meritocracy, as the most intelligent and able students ~~is~~ are able to perform better ~~than~~ and thus are rewarded with high-paying jobs. Thus education <sup>is</sup> is naturally suitable for role allocation. Davis and Moore

<sup>3</sup> The candidate clearly explains Parsons' theory, though somewhat implicitly in relation to the question.

<sup>4</sup> The candidate clearly applies Davis and Moore's ideas.

## Example Candidate Response – middle, continued

## Examiner comments

has been highly criticised for the view on what is important or unimportant is ~~highly~~ a subjective matter, not something that can be objectively measured. 5

Marxists perspectives reject the functionalist view of role allocation in total argue that capitalist societies use ideas to make people conform and obey them. Althusser developed his idea of ideological state apparatus to argue that education serves to justify the class inequality and encourages the ~~belief~~ belief that inequality is justified, thus reproducing inequality. Bowles and Gintis came up with the idea of correspondence principle in explaining the link between education and workplace by suggesting that ~~education~~ schools mirror workplaces and hidden curriculum - such as punctuality and obedience - teach children to ~~pass~~ submit to authority (by ~~or~~ recognising the authority of teachers). Deviance is punished and obedience is rewarded. ~~By~~ They argue that such activities actively encourage students to view themselves in limited roles - such as duty as jobs for the entirety of their lives - and not raising their voice against the capitalist structure. ~~but~~ Such students then go on to become an ideal workforce - submissive, efficient and obedient. 7

5 This evaluation point, though a valid criticism of Davis and Moore, does not really bear on this debate.

6 The main evaluation argument is clearly stated in terms of the Marxist rejection of the functionalist view.

7 This is accurately developed referencing Althusser and Bowles and Gintis.



## Example Candidate Response – middle, continued

## Examiner comments

However, they fail to acknowledge the ~~existence~~ of subcultures that do not conform to such ideas (Willis). 8

In conclusion, all sociologists agree that the function of education is to prepare students for work, but differ in the methodology, and whether ~~the~~ education is fulfilling ~~there~~ only ~~concededly~~ or not. 9

8 This evaluation point again seems to appear because it has been learned rather than because it has any bearing on the main argument.

9 The conclusion is weakened by the slight change in wording from the question asked.

Mark for AO1 = 6 out of 10

Mark for AO2 = 4 out of 6

Mark for AO3 = 6 out of 10

**Total mark awarded =  
16 out of 26**

## How the candidate could improve their answer

- This essay was fairly well focused on the question, but the candidate would have benefited from using the exact words of the question to introduce key points.
- The main arguments on both sides were reasonably well presented, but could have been developed further, with more detail, supporting studies and discussion of a wider range of aspects of the debate – such as feminist or postmodern perspectives.
- More mention could have been made of possible alternative functions, such as social cohesion.
- Evaluation should have focussed on the weighing up of the arguments and evidence for the statement in the question.

## Example Candidate Response – low

## Examiner comments

The main function of the education system is to ~~also~~ perform role allocation of the members of society. This is a functionalist perspective, argued by ~~two~~ sociologists Davis and Moore (1945).

According to Davis and Moore, schools are capable of <sup>facilitating the effective</sup> ~~effectively~~ selecting and allocating of individuals into future roles. This is because they claim schools to be ~~merit~~ meritocratic. Meritocracy being a ~~so~~ system of equality of opportunity whereby individuals are rewarded based on merit and regardless of the social characteristics / background.

This reward system works through a process of sifting and sorting e.g. tests and examinations. Such that if a child went to school & acquired good ~~course~~ grades, this would enable them to ~~good~~ get into good universities and take good courses, which would ultimately result in them getting well-paying jobs / achieving high status in the society.

Therefore, sifting and sorting of students ensure that only the most functionally able and intellectually ~~acquire the most functi-~~ talented individuals acquire the most functionally important roles in the society, while the rest occupy the other jobs.

However, Marxists among other sociologists

1 The introduction shows that the candidate has correctly read the question and is going to apply appropriate material.

2 Davis and Moore's theory is outlined clearly with the use of appropriate concepts.

## Example Candidate Response – low, continued

## Examiner comments

discredit this claim of meritocracy. For instance the <sup>French</sup> sociologist Bourdieu ~~1986~~ who stated that "meritocracy is a myth". Meaning that schools simply have an appearance / create an illusion of fairness, and justice and award on merit. ~~rather~~ They are not meritocratic, and ~~that~~ those that achieve high status through the education system is actually due to other social factors such as material and social capitals. ~~The~~ This coincides with one of the Marxist's proposed functions of education: 'legitimizing class inequalities'. Marxists ~~suggest~~ argue that <sup>even</sup> when working class students ~~get~~ succeed in school, ~~that~~ it doesn't end with them achieving higher status (working class children always get working class jobs, Willis [1971]) unlike their middle class counterparts.

Althusser also argues against ~~the~~ the role allocation, suggesting that the main function of schools is to socialization people into capitalistic values through ideological conditioning. This can be done in numerous ways such as through the hidden curriculum [Douglas, 1968]; children are taught values such as punctuality, blind obedience and passivity ~~through~~ just from their experience in school. Althusser suggests this is to prepare them for the roles as future employees who will do whatever their employers tell them to do. So schools teach ideals that promote capitalism, not allocating individuals

3 The evaluation is focused here on the Marxist critique of meritocracy.

4 The evaluation includes the suggestion of an alternative function of education; legitimising inequality.

5 This paragraph discusses the role of education in preparing an obedient workforce. There is some confusion of the work of Althusser and Douglas with that of Bowles and Gintis.

## Example Candidate Response – low, continued

## Examiner comments

into appropriate roles.

Finally, according to Bowles and Gintis (2002), the main function of schools ~~is to~~ are a tool used by the bourgeoisie to ~~re~~ produce cultures that reproduce class inequalities. Meaning the function of ~~the~~ education is to ensure that the ruling elites retain their ~~pre~~ privileged positions in the society through their children. This is done by ~~by~~ They do this by investing a lot of time, money and resources into their children's academics. For example, enrolling them into quality schools. Further proof is how at these advanced quality schools, there is an oversubscription of middle class children, while ~~at~~ vocational schools are filled with w.c kids. All this to ~~ensure~~ <sup>make certain</sup> that the wealthy remain wealthy, while the less privileged stay that way.

In conclusion, indeed the education systems plays an important role of placing individuals into appropriate societal roles, however <sup>that</sup> ~~there are~~ <sup>is it's only function</sup> ~~negatives~~ to schools such as ideological conditioning, legitimizing class inequalities and reproducing class inequalities.

6 This paragraph completes the evaluation by pointing to the role of education in class reproduction but uses a limited range of evidence on the processes involved.

7 The concluding paragraph usefully links back to the question but is limited to a summary list of possible functions of education.

Mark for AO1 = 4 out of 10  
Mark for AO2 = 3 out of 6  
Mark for AO3 = 6 out of 10

**Total mark awarded =  
13 out of 26**

## How the candidate could improve their answer

- For AO1, the knowledge and understanding demonstrated was accurate but lacked development in either depth or breadth. There was much more to explore in terms of theoretical analysis of the function of role allocation and of studies of how it might work and specific policies showing its implementation.
- For AO2, the material used was relevant, largely accurate though not always clearly presented and lacking in development. Candidates should take the opportunity to draw on a wider range of their sociological knowledge and shown how they could apply it to the debate in the question.
- For AO3, there was explicit evaluation of meritocracy, and some alternative functions of education are presented. However, to reach Level 4 there needed to be more analysis of problems with the idea of appropriate role allocation, drawing on more evidence of barriers to opportunity such as from feminist or interactionist perspectives, or perhaps exploring alternative functions such as maintaining social cohesion.

## Common mistakes and guidance for candidates

- Often candidates struggle to link their detailed explanations back to the central point of whether the main function of education is to allocate individuals to appropriate roles in society.
- Some candidates spend their time on rather general accounts of functionalist views without specific application to role allocation.
- In their evaluation, some candidates just present a juxtaposition of opposing views or alternative functions without explicit evaluation of the argument that the *main* function of education is *appropriate* role allocation.
- It helps to explicitly refer to the words in the question when introducing material on both sides of the argument.
- Candidates should aim to include a range of developed material on both sides of the argument.
- The essay is an opportunity to show how it is possible to draw on a range of material from across the syllabus and to apply it in a way that is explicitly relevant to the question asked.

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

© Cambridge University Press & Assessment 2024 v1