**Planning stratification 20 mark essays:**

**Advice for this:**

* Stratification essay questions need you to consider theoretical evidence alongside real world examples.
* There are several ways to approach it. If a question has a theory that is identified you can write paragraphs on different aspects of their view and then counter with other theories – this is very much what is going on in question 2 and 3.
* The other way to approach one of these questions is to see your paragraphs as themes that help to build a debate i.e. in question 4 you could do a paragraph on a different type of identity and explore how different theories and contemporary evidence show that the labour force is either open and non-discriminatory, or how it is not.

**Question 1:**

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| Item: Marxists suggest that occupation is still the most efficient way of describing social class of both an individual and the family they belong to at any point in their lives. Most studies have concentrated on the occupation of the main in the household. Some feminists would argue that to fully understand the class position of a family the occupation of both parents should be considered.  **Applying material from the item and your knowledge, evaluate the extent to which occupation is a useful indicator of an individual’s social class [20 marks]** | |
| Tips: this essay needs you to look at measures in class: objective and subjective. Consider what occupation shows about someone’s social class position and problems with it, in terms of social mobility, wealth, views of feminists and issues with subjective views of class. Possible studies/sources: NS-SEC, Registrar General’s scale, Surrey scale (feminism), Savage, Archer etc. | |
| Introduction (address the item and outline the different issues in the debate) | |
| Paragraph 1 |  |
| Paragraph 2 |  |
| Paragraph 3 |  |
| Conclusion | |

Question 2:

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| Item: Worldwide, the rich have got richer, even when the world economy slumped into recession, and the poor have got poorer. In the UK, men from the poorest backgrounds are on average likely to live 15 years less than their richer counterparts. Marxists might explain this as due to the continuation of the inequalities of capitalism, while other thinkers may argue that this is not due to social class but other forms of inequality, such as social exclusion, education gaps or a lack of adequate socialisation.  **Applying material from the item and your knowledge, evaluate the usefulness of Marxist theories in explaining inequality [20 marks]** | |
| Tips: this essay needs you to look at Marxist arguments that claim that class has polarised and reasons for this (you could also look on a global scale). This theory then needs countered with others to demonstrate how inequality could be due to a variety of factors. | |
| Introduction (address the item and outline the different issues in the debate) | |
| Paragraph 1 |  |
| Paragraph 2 |  |
| Paragraph 3 |  |
| Conclusion | |

Question 3:

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| Item: Racism has often been given as a reason for the historic position of ethnic minorities. As the UK became a more diverse culture and assimilation occurred, it was expected by functionalists that differences between groups would become less marked and all would be treated equally. However, figures for poverty and unemployment show this has not happened and Marxists and Weberians would argue ethnic minorities still face inequality and are negatively privileged.  **Applying material from the item and your knowledge, evaluate the usefulness of functionalist theories in explaining ethnic inequality [20 marks]** | |
| Tips: take functionalist views of ethnicity as your starting point and then pick them apart using (at least) Marxist and Weberian arguments. Use contemporary evidence to highlight the extent to which assimilation has occurred. Postmodernism would be an excellent counterpoint in this essay. | |
| Introduction (address the item and outline the different issues in the debate) | |
| Paragraph 1 |  |
| Paragraph 2 |  |
| Paragraph 3 |  |
| Conclusion | |

Question 4:

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| Item: A truly open labour market is one where from an equal base everyone has the same chances of recruitment and advancement. It assumes that workers are employed and progressed on the basis of merit rather than privilege, favour or background.  **Applying material from the item and your knowledge, evaluate the view that an open and non-discriminatory labour market exists in the UK [20]** | |
| Tips: this essay needs you to use the sources from the social mobility workbook. It involves a much more wide-ranging approach where you can pull evidence in from across the topics in stratification and can look at any of the evidence related to the workforce. You can do a paragraph on a different topic e.g. age, class, gender and contrast different theoretical views – usually functionalism (meritocracy) vs. Marxist/feminist/Weberian views. It will need contemporary evidence to make it work. The into will need to define what is meant by an ‘open labour market’. | |
| Introduction (address the item and outline the different issues in the debate) | |
| Paragraph 1 |  |
| Paragraph 2 |  |
| Paragraph 3 |  |
| Conclusion | |

Question 5:

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| Item: Class is measured by poverty affects in both youth and old age, but gender, ethnicity and disability are also tightly interwoven. Levels of poverty for the young and old may be due to factors such as social exclusion and the social capital of these two groups, or may merely be due to the fact that these groups are less likely to be employed.  **Applying material from the item and your own knowledge, evaluate the view that age inequalities are most likely to happen during the period of old age. [20]** | |
| Tips: in this essay you will contrast the inequality of the young and old, deciding who is more likely to experience social exclusion. Make sure to include real life evidence and theory. You also need to think about how other aspects of identity e.g. disability in old age, or being a particular gender could affect a person’s experience. These types of identity could be used as the paragraphs e.g. poverty/class, gender, disability, with arguments for and against old age. | |
| Introduction (address the item and outline the different issues in the debate) | |
| Paragraph 1 |  |
| Paragraph 2 |  |
| Paragraph 3 |  |
| Conclusion | |