A LEVEL/AS SOCIOLOGY (AQA)

DEALING WITH 10 MARK QUESTIONS
by

KEITH TROBE

CONTENTS

A LINDISFARNE PRESS PUBLICATION

Email: lindpress@aol.com   www.lindisfarnepress.co.uk

1O MARK 'APPLYING MATERIAL FROM ITEM A, ANALYSE TWO ...' QUESTIONS: EDUCATION

Format of the 'Applying material from Item A, analyse two...' questions

1. The key skill here is, as with the other type of 10 mark question, APPLICATION.

2. However, the nature of the application is different in this type of question. You have to find two aspects of an issue 'buried' in the Item and then link these to your own knowledge.

3. Application is about LINKING two things together. In this type of question, the linking here is of elements in the Item and the key focus of the question.

4. So the first task is for a student to identify the two elements in the Item that you can then link to your own knowledge.

5. However, these are not going to be explicit -otherwise there would be no real application to be done.

6. So the Item elements are going to be to some extent 'hidden' and you will therefore have to read the Item carefully to identify them.

7. Once two elements have been identified (there will probably be at least three potential elements), a student needs to develop each in turn.

8. As referring to aspects of the issue not in the Item will confine an answer to the bottom mark band (1-3), it is vital that the two aspects are drawn from the Item and that this is made explicit in an answer. It is one of those situations whereby a candidate can help the examiner to give the candidate marks!

9. So make explicit reference to the elements in the Item that are being used as the starting point of each of the two paragraphs in the answer e.g. 'Item A states....'

GETTING YOUR HEAD AROUND THIS TYPE OF QUESTION

- First there is an example question with a full marks answer.

- Then there are six examples of Items to practice identifying elements in them.

- There then follows six 'skeletal' answers based on the six items we have used initially.

SPECIMEN QUESTION AND ANSWER

Item
'Teachers may attach negative stereotypical labels to pupils from particular ethnic backgrounds. They may also treat them differently as a result. Sociological research has uncovered a range of ways in which pupils may respond to these negative labels. Some may feel that the labels are unfair and inaccurate. Others might try to confront racism whilst others may find it necessary to somehow man-age the contradictory demands of their friends and the school.'

Question
Applying material from the Item, analyse two ways in which pupils from some ethnic minority backgrounds may respond to being labelled by teachers. '

Candidate A:
"As the Item states, 'some may feel that the labels are unfair and inaccurate'. This may lead pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds to reject the negative labels placed on them by some teachers. One early study, by Fuller, identified the way a group of black girls used their anger at being labelled unjustly into trying to achieve educational success. Although they did not seek the approval of teachers, the girls still aimed for academic success. They acted in some cases as if they were not concerned about school but actually worked quite hard to achieve success for themselves. The girls studied by Fuller were trying to manage the conflicting demands of some of their friends with those of the school. Importantly, this study shows that negative labels are not always accepted by those labelled, in this case the girls rejected the labels, trying to disprove them. This means that they responded by not allowing the self-fulfilling prophecy to take effect. However, Mirza's study showed that sometimes coping with teacher racism restricted even ambitious black girls from achieving.

The Item also states that some pupils so labelled 'might try to confront racism'. This is another possible response. Sewell identified a small - but highly visible in the school group of black pupils who took on the role of the 'black macho lad'. These rebels, as Sewell termed them, rejected most aspects of the school, refusing to conform to the rules and forming their own strongly bonded peer group. Using a cult of black masculinity, they believed in their own superiority. This means that in a strange way, they conformed to some extent with the negative label and their behaviour often led them to be excluded from school. This then developed into a cycle leading to educational failure. One of the problems with Sewell's study is that although it identifies the different responses to teacher labelling, it doesn't explain why pupils take the route they do."

ITEMS AND QUESTIONS: Identify the elements in the Item that could be used as the basis for two paragraphs.

Example 1
Item A
There are major differences in achievement between ethnic groups. Some sociologists have claimed that the main causes of such ethnic differences in achievement are to be found in schools rather than in the home background. There are concerns that pupils face being judged on their background from the day they enter school. How schools select pupils and how they organise learning can also have an impact on how far pupils progress.

Question
Applying material from Item A, analyse two school factors that might contribute to ethnic differences in achievement.

Example 2
Item A
Since the 1990s girls have been outperforming boys at most levels and in most subjects. Although not all boys are underachieving in comparison to girls, as a group, boys have been generally less successful than girls. Various explanations have been advanced to explain this including those that focus on the importance of behaviour during learning and out of school. Other explanations have focused on wider changes in society and the economy.

Question
Applying material from Item B, analyse two reasons for boys' underachievement.

Example 3
Item A
Labelling is the process by which teachers judge pupils against an image they have of the 'ideal pupil'. Often this means that working-class pupils are labelled as likely to be less successful than others. Some sociologists argue that labelling is important because it affects the way pupils see themselves and others who seem to be labelled in a similar way. It may also impact on the way the school selects and organises learning.

Question
Applying material from Item A, analyse two effects of labelling on working-class pupils.

Example 4
Item A
Marxists see society as fundamentally divided into two opposed social classes. The economic interests of these classes are fundamentally different which brings them into conflict with each other. There are inequalities in all aspects of capitalist society, including education and these inequalities seem to be entrenched and unchanging. Marxists are also interested in understanding why people do not always see the real cause of these inequalities. Education has a central part to play in this.

Question
Applying material from Item B, analyse two Marxist claims about the role of education in capitalist society.

Example 5
Item A
Although marketisation has been an underlying principle of state education polices since the 1980s, it is only more recently that this has developed into the privatisation of Britain's schools. Privatisation means the opening up of state education to private, profit-making businesses. There are claims that as with any competitive situation, the profit motive will have an impact on quality. However, the role of parents in schools and the way in which resources might be allocated may both be affected by placing state schools in the hand of private businesses.

Question
Applying material from Item B, analyse two possible effects of the privatisation of state education services.

Example 6
Item A
Whereas some sociologists focus on material factors to explain differential educational achievement, others see cultural factors as more influential. These factors relate to the way some groups have different world views, including that of the relevance of education. Some have painted to the way in which educational disengagement seems to be passed on down through the generations whilst other researchers emphasise the way in which information is communicated.

Question
Applying material from Item B, analyse two cultural factors that might lead to underachievement by some social groups.

WORKED EXAMPLES

Example 1
Item A
There are major differences in achievement between ethnic groups. Some sociologists have claimed that the main causes of such ethnic differences in achievement are to be found in schools rather than in the home background. There are concerns that pupils face being judged on their background from the day they enter school. How schools select pupils and how they organise learning can also have an impact on how far pupils progress.

Question
Applying material from Item A, analyse two school factors that might contribute to ethnic differences in achievement.

Elements 'buried' in the Item to use in an answer:
- 'face being judged on background' - link to ideas about teacher labelling but keep it focused on ethnicity not just generic material on this; individual teacher racism, example of Wright or Bhatti's studies, racial stereotyping; racialised teacher expectations.
- 'how schools select pupils' - link to notion of black male students as having behavioural problems; higher rate of exclusion; lower exam performance; are liability students in a competitive education market.
- 'how schools organise learning' - link to streaming and setting linked to racialised expectations; educational triage; Gillborn.

Remember, always choose the two points that you can develop in the greatest depth and explanatory detail.

Example 2
Item A
Since the 1990s girls have been outperforming boys at most levels and in most subjects. Although not all boys are underachieving in comparison to girls, as a group, boys have been generally less successful than girls. Various explanations have been advanced to explain this including those that focus on the importance of behaviour during learning and out of school. Other explanations have focused on wider changes in society and the economy.

Question
Applying material from Item B, analyse two reasons for boys' underachievement.

Elements 'buried' in the Item to use in an answer:

- 'the importance of behaviour during learning' - link to boys more disruptive in class; peer group reinforcement; laddish subcultures; anti-learning subculture.
- 'wider changes in economy' - link to declining traditional male employment opportunities; globalisation and decline in traditional heavy industry; reduced incentive to study; plus need to create positive self-image through masculine behaviour in class.
- 'behaviour out of school' - link to gender differences in leisure time; boys relate to each other through doing activities together rather than talking, also read less than girls; reading seen as feminine activity; boys have to be interested in subject matter to read about it.
- Whichever points you select to use, always state them cleanly at the start of your answer so the examiner knows you are linking to the Item.

Example 3
Item A
Labelling is the process by which teachers judge pupils against an image they have of the 'ideal pupil'. Often this means that working-class are labelled as likely to be less successful than others. Some sociologists argue that labelling is important because it affects the way pupils see themselves and others who seem to be labelled in a similar way. It may also impact on the way the school selects and organises learning.

Question
Applying material from Item A, analyse two effects of labelling on working-class pupils.

Elements 'buried' in the Item to use in an answer:

- 'the way pupils see themselves' - link to teacher expectations based on social class; self-fulfilling prophecy; individual pupils internalise the label, live up to the label; this reinforces teacher expectations and cycle continues.
- 'see others labelled in a similar way' - link to pupil subcultures as response to negative labelling; group response to negative labelling; seek out peer group to help restore status lost through negative label.
- 'school organises learning' setting and streaming reflects teacher perceptions of class differences in ability, educational triage, working-class pupils more likely to be ignored or entered for lower level exams; institutional discrimination.

Remember, always choose the two points that you can develop in the greatest depth and explanatory detail.

Example 4
Item A
Marxists see society as fundamentally divided into two opposed social classes. The economic interests of these classes are fundamentally different which brings them into conflict with each other. There are inequalities in all aspects of capitalist society, including education and these inequalities seem to be entrenched and unchanging. Marxists are also interested in understanding why people do not always see the real cause of these inequalities. Education has a central part to play in this.

Question
Applying material from Item B, analyse two Marxist claims about the role of education in capitalist society.

Elements 'buried' in the Item to use in an answer:
- 'inequalities in education' - link to Marxist ideas about habitus; working-class habitus is not given same credence as the middle-class habitus of the school; cultural capital differences.
- 'educational inequalities are entrenched and unchanging' - link to reproduction ('unchanging') of social class inequalities through education; Bowles and Gintis 'long shadow of work'; correspondence principle..
- 'people do not always see the real cause of educational inequalities' - link to Marxist concept of legitimation of inequality'; myth of meritocracy; justification of failure as fault of individual not system.

Remember, always choose the two points that you can develop in the greatest depth and explanatory detail.

Example 5
Item A
Although marketisation has been an underlying principle of state education polices since the 1980s, it is only more recently that this has developed into the privatisation of Britain's schools. Privatisation means the opening up of state education to private, profit-making businesses. There are claims that as with any competitive situation, the profit motive will have an impact on quality. However, the role of parents in schools and the way in which resources might be allocated may both be affected by placing state schools in the hand of private businesses.

Question
Applying material from Item B, analyse two possible effects of the privatisation of state education services.

Elements 'buried' in the Item to use in an answer:

- 'impact on quality of profit motive' - link to New Right notion that schools run by businesses are likely to be more efficient; need for profit is a major driver; provide better quality education at less cost.

- 'role of parents' - whereas marketisation was supposed to promote parentocracy, privatisation may well reduce the power of parents to decide which school their child attends; puts power in hands of businesses running state schools; parents have to accept the limitations placed by those businesses.

- 'resource allocation' -making profit may over-ride the interests of pupils; difficult pupils more likely to be excluded by schools as get in way of success and greater profit; pupils with special needs and behavioural problems are more expensive and less likely to add to the school's exam results.

Remember, always choose the two points that you can develop in the greatest depth and explanatory detail.

Example 6
Item A
Whereas some sociologists focus on material factors to explain differential educational achievement, others see cultural factors as more influential. These factors relate to the way some groups have different world views, including that of the relevance of education. Some have painted to the way in which educational disengagement seems to be passed on down through the generations whilst other researchers emphasise the way in which information is communicated.

Question
Applying material from Item B, analyse two cultural factors that might lead to underachievement by some social groups.

Elements 'buried' in the Item to use in an answer:

- 'different world views' - link to parental attitudes to education; high level of parental engagement linked to high pupil achievement; different likelihood to visit school, different degree of encouragement and support, working-class parents more focused on immediate gratification and fatalism.

- 'educational disengagement passed through generations' - link to parents' level of education, working-class parents less positive experience of education themselves: less confident about engaging with teachers; less aware of support needed and how to give it.

- 'information is communicated' - link to linguistic codes, working-class more likely to use restricted code; schools emphasise elaborated code; lessons, teacher-talk, exams all in mainly elaborated code leading to disadvantage.

---

10 MARK 'OUTLINE AND EXPLAIN TWO…' QUESTIONS: EDUCATION

Format of the 'Outline and Explain two…' questions.

- This style of question is found in A level Paper 1 and AS Paper 1 for Education

- The crucial skill here is APPLICATION.

- Fundamentally, this question has to link two separate elements in the specification. That's where the application skill is centred.

- The question therefore must have two elements in it. First task then on reading this question is to identify the two elements.

- Perhaps the simplest way to view this is that two separate bullet points in the specification need to be linked.

- This really tests a student's ability to apply different parts of the topic to each other.

- It is very similar to the old emphasis on SYNOPTICITY.

GETTING YOUR HEAD AROUND THIS TYPE OF QUESTION

- For each topic we will first look at the bullet points for Education and then identify some likely combinations that might form the basis of a question.

- Then we will deduce some likely example questions that link two bullet points.

- There then follows one example question with three example answers (with commentaries) at different levels of achievement.

- Finally there are six 'skeletal' answers to potential questions.

EDUCATION

The AQA specification bullets (summarised)

- Role and functions of the education system; relationship to economy and class.

- Differential educational achievement by class, gender and ethnicity.

- Relationships and processes in schools, pupil identities, subcultures, hidden curriculum, organisation of teaching and learning.

- Education policies relating to selection, marketisation and privatisation, access to educational opportunities, impact on policies of globalisation.

So likely combinations include linking:
- Policy with role/functions of the education system.

- Policy and differential educational achievement.

- Role/functions of education system and differential educational achievement.

- Differential educational achievement and pupil identities.

Example questions

Outline and explain two policies aimed at reducing inequalities in educational achievement based on ethnicity.

Outline and explain two ways in which the organisation of learning could affect the formation of pupil identities.

Outline and explain two reasons why the economic position of working-class families may result in poorer educational achievement for working-class pupils.

Outline and explain two ways in which globalisation may affect educational opportunities.

Outline and explain two reasons why working-class pupils may have poorer access to education than other groups of pupils.

Outline and explain two ways in which relationships in schools may contribute to boys' educational underachievement.

Outline and explain two marketisation policies that may affect pupil achievement.

Outline and explain two educational policies favoured by conflict sociologists.

Outline and explain two educational policies favoured by New Right/Neoliberal approaches.

Outline and explain two privatisation policies that may cause inequalities in educational achievement.

Outline and explain two policies aimed at reducing inequalities in educational achievement.

Outline and explain two ways in which pupil identities may be affected by educational performance.

Outline and explain two ways in which school subcultures may contribute to inequalities in educational achievement.

Outline and explain two ways in which teacher-pupil relationships could affect the educational achievement of some BME pupils.

Comments:
- We can conclude that there are a lot of potential combinations.

- However, it is not as demanding as it may seem as the potential links are not odd or unusual so there will be a lot in what students have been prepared for that will be the starting point for effective answers.

- The links are there, they just need to be brought out more in the way material is presented.

Getting into the top band
- The key is to recognise that the questions will have TWO elements. It wants you to connect the two in the answer.

- Examples above illustrate this e.g. policy and inequalities in achievement.

- Attempting to make links will move the answer up through the mark bands. The three specimen answers to the following question illustrate this important point.

SPECIMEN QUESTION AND ANSWERS

MARK EACH ANSWER AND MAKE SOME COMMENTS JUSTIFYING THE MARK YOU HAVE GIVEN IT.

Outline and explain the way two marketisation policies could create inequalities in pupils' educational achievement.

Candidate A

"Marketisation is the way an education market is created. As a marketplace is created by bringing consumers and sellers together, in this case it is parents/pupils and schools that are brought together. There are several policies that can create an education market. One marketisation policy is that of formula funding. This is when each pupil has a certain sum of money attached to them which the school gets. So the total amount of money a school receives depends on the number of pupils it gets through the door. The more pupils, the more money to spend on teachers, textbooks etc. So some schools end up with more money than others. This is unequal.

A second marketisation policy is 'free schools'. These are set up by parents with state money and are run by parents without the local council being involved. It is claimed that they raise standards by taking power from the state and giving it to parents."

Mark /10

Commentary

Candidate B

"Marketisation is the way an education market is created. As a marketplace is created by bringing consumers and sellers together, in this case it is parents/pupils and schools that are brought together. There are several policies that can create an education market. One marketisation policy is that of formula funding. This is when each pupil has a certain sum of money attached to them which the school gets. So the total amount of money a school receives depends on the number of pupils it gets through the door. The more pupils, the more money to spend on teachers, textbooks etc. This is unequal because some schools end up with more money than others and

can afford better resources and then offer a better education and become a high-achieving school. Those who lose money become 'sink schools' and do less well.

A second marketisation policy is 'free schools'. These are set up by parents with state money and are run by parents without the local council being involved. It is claimed that they raise standards by taking power from the state and giving it to parents. However, other people argue that it creates more inequality because they draw pupils from mainly middle-class backgrounds as it is their parents who are more likely to get together to form a free school. Free schools can also give preferential treatment to the sons and daughters of founding parents and teachers. So this tends to exclude working-class pupils who do not even get the chance to attend a free school."

Mark /10
Commentary

Candidate C
"Marketisation is the way an education market is created. As a marketplace is created by bringing consumers and sellers together, in this case it is parents/pupils and schools that are brought together. There are several policies that can create an education market. One marketisation policy is that of formula funding. This is when each pupil has a certain sum of money attached to them which the school gets. So the total amount of money a school receives depends on the number of pupils it gets through the door. The more pupils, the more money to spend on teachers, textbooks etc. Popular schools are then in a position to select better pupils because they are over-subscribed and this favours pupils from middle-class backgrounds. Pupils who tend to be low-achievers such as boys and some BME pupils are more likely therefore to go to a low-achieving school. This contributes to a spiral of low achievement for some pupils and the development of 'sink schools'.

A second marketisation policy is 'free schools'. These are set up by parents with state money and are run by parents without the local council being involved. It is claimed that they raise standards by taking power from the state and giving it to parents. However, other people argue that it creates more inequality because they draw pupils from mainly middle-class backgrounds as it is their parents who are more likely to get together to form a free school. Free schools can also give preferential treatment to the sons and daughters of founding parents and teachers. Evidence suggests that free schools tend to take a lower proportion of children on FSM, again suggesting their intake is skewed towards middle-class pupils. So this tends to exclude working-class pupils who do not even get the chance to attend a free school thus limiting their results."

Mark /10

Commentary

Outline and explain the way two marketisation policies could create inequalities in pupils' educational achievement.

Candidate A

"Marketisation is the way an education market is created. As a marketplace is created by bringing consumers and sellers together, in this case it is parents/pupils and schools that are brought together. There are several policies that can create an education market. One marketisation policy is that of formula funding. This is when each pupil has a certain sum of money attached to them which the school gets. So the total amount of money a school receives depends on the number of pupils it gets through the door. The more pupils, the more money to spend on teachers, textbooks etc. So some schools end up with more money than others. This is unequal.

A second marketisation policy is 'free schools'. These are set up by parents with state money and are run by parents without the local council being involved. It is claimed that they raise standards by taking power from the state and giving it to parents."

Mark 3/10

Commentary

- There is knowledge of two appropriate marketisation policies with some clear explanation in the first paragraph.

- However, the answer fails (in both cases) to connect these to inequalities in pupil achievement. The word unequal appears but it is a throwaway comment.

- This lack of connectivity keeps the answer in the bottom mark band but at the top of it because of the accurate KU displayed.

Candidate B

"Marketisation is the way an education market is created. As a marketplace is created by bringing consumers and sellers together, in this case it is parents/pupils and schools that are brought together. There are several policies that can create an education market. One marketisation policy is that of formula funding. This is when each pupil has a certain sum of money attached to them which the school gets. So the total amount of money a school receives depends on the number of pupils it gets through the door. The more pupils, the more money to spend on teachers, textbooks etc. This is unequal because some schools end up with more money than others and can afford better resources and then offer a better education and become a high-achieving school. Those who lose money become 'sink schools' and do less well.

A second marketisation policy is 'free schools'. These are set up by parents with state money and are run by parents without the local council being involved. It is claimed that they raise standards by taking power from the state and giving it to parents. However, other people argue that it creates more inequality because they draw pupils from mainly middle-class backgrounds as it is their parents who are more likely to get together to form a free school. Free schools can also give preferential treatment to the sons and daughters of founding parents and teachers. So this tends to exclude working-class pupils who do not even get the chance to attend a free school."

Mark 5/10

Commentary
- There is knowledge of two appropriate marketisation policies.

- In the second paragraph, the policy is connected to inequality in pupil achievement although this is perhaps not fully developed.

- The first paragraph does connect a policy to inequality but to inequalities between schools rather than to pupil inequalities.

Candidate C
"Marketisation is the way an education market is created. As a marketplace is created by bringing consumers and sellers together, in this case it is parents/pupils and schools that are brought together. There are several policies that can create an education market. One marketisation policy is that of formula funding. This is when each pupil has a certain sum of money attached to them which the school gets. So the total amount of money a school receives depends on the number of pupils it gets through the door. The more pupils, the more money to spend on teachers, textbooks etc. Popular schools are then in a position to select better pupils because they are over-subscribed and this favours pupils from middle-class backgrounds. Pupils who tend to be low-achievers such as boys and some BME pupils are more likely therefore to go to a low-achieving school. This contributes to a spiral of low achievement for some pupils and the development of 'sink schools'.

A second marketisation policy is 'free schools'. These are set up by parents with state money and are run by parents without the local council being involved. It is claimed that they raise standards by taking power from the state and giving it to parents. However, other people argue that it creates more inequality because they draw pupils from mainly middle-class backgrounds as it is their parents who are more likely to get together to form a free school. Free schools can also give preferential treatment to the sons and daughters of founding parents and teachers.

Evidence suggests that free schools tend to take a lower proportion of children on FSM, again suggesting their intake is skewed towards middle-class pupils. So this tends to exclude working-class pupils who do not even get the chance to attend a free school thus limiting their results."

Mark 10/10

Commentary

- There is knowledge of two appropriate marketisation policies.

- In both cases, the policy is connected to inequality in pupil achievement. This connection is developed through a number of logical connections.

SKELETAL ANSWERS

1. **Outline and explain two reasons why the economic position of working-class families may result in poorer educational achievement for working-class pupils.**

Reason 1
Working-class families, especially those in low income or transitory employment and unemployment, have low levels of economic resources. This can impact upon the educational achievement of their children in several ways. The quality of housing is likely to be poorer too small for the family's needs. There may be overcrowding in which case individual children may not have a workspace of their own in which to do their homework and without their own bedroom, they may experience poor sleep patterns making them less focused in school the following day which damages their learning. Some families are in temporary bed accommodation and have to move frequently so they change school often. Constant change disrupts their learning which makes achievement much more difficult.

Reason 2
Low income relates closely to poor diet and health. Poor diet leads to lower energy and a weaker immune system as a result of not being able to afford good quality food and nutrients. The result will be lower activity levels at school and a reduced ability to focus on school work. Poorer quality food might also link to hyperactivity and other disorders which get in the way of learning as the pupil is less able to concentrate on their work. A weaker immune system also means more illness and more time off school. This results in interrupted learning which limits educational progress as the pupil gets left behind or has gaps in their learning which can affect their exam performance.
.

2. Outline and explain two ways in which processes within school could influence pupil identities.

Way 1

Pupil identities as defined by teachers reflect stereotypes based on ethnicity. Archer argues that teacher stereotyping creates fairly fixed ethnic identities which then influence streaming, the operation of the 'A-C triage' and exam entries. These stereotypes also influence the way pupils view themselves. Some black and white working-class male pupils are typified as being a 'demonised' identity. They are perceived and defined as non-academic, unintelligent under-achievers with hyper-sexualised identities. They are seen as challenging and disruptive in the classroom. This label is then one that they may well internalises and reinforce through behaviour conforming to this image.

Way 2

Male peer groups and their activities can exert a lot of influence over the identities of other pupils and themselves. Male peer groups use a range of techniques to establish their domination of the classroom and to define the identities of female students. One is the 'male gaze' which is the sexual appraisal of girls, defining them in terms of their sexual objectification. This surveillance defines female identity not in terms of educational success, but in terms of sexual attractiveness. This is often linked to verbal abuse, calling girls by derogatory names. These techniques all attempt to define girls' identities and to maintain male power. However, whether all girls accept these definitions is open to question.

3. Outline and explain two reasons why working-class pupils may have poorer access to educational opportunities than other groups of pupils.

Reason 1

The school may structure learning opportunities in ways that directly or indirectly restrict the opportunities given to working-class pupils. So the school may have streaming in which pupils are separated into different ability groups or 'streams' in which pupils of apparently differing abilities are taught differently and to different levels. The learning materials used are likely to be of a lower level to those used in top streams and pupils in lower streams are more likely to be entered for lower tier exams, thus reducing their chances of achievement. As teachers may employ not just educational criteria when streaming, but also social criteria, working-class pupils are more likely to end up in lower streams. Teacher 'normalise' working-class underachievement, expect it to happen and then streaming causes it to happen.

Reason 2

Another reason why working-class pupils may have poorer access to educational opportunities is because their parents may lack the economic and educational capital to help their children with educational opportunities. In terms of economic capital, working-class families lack the funds to purchase additional tuition and learning resources to supplement schooling. They also cannot afford to send their children to be educated privately, something that some middle-class parents can afford. Even setting this aside, working-class parents lack the educational skills to help to get their children into higher-achieving schools as they simply are less skilled in terms of researching the quality of schools and lack the knowledge of how selection processes work.

4. **Outline and explain two educational policies favoured by New Right/Neoliberal approaches.**

Policy 1

Neoliberals and New Right approaches argue that in order to make educational provision efficient and most effective, it has to operate as an education market. Individual consumers need to be able to spend their resources where they want. Competition is necessary in order to drive up standards. The state has a limited role to play in education but one policy the state should follow is to set up an education market. This can be done through empowering parents by giving them a choice over which school their son or daughter attends. This move towards parentocracy gives power to the consumers of educational services.

Policy 2

A second policy favoured by Neoliberals is to monitor the performance of the education market. The state should set up an educational framework of national qualifications, curriculum and testing in which all schools can be judged. Without this framework, parents cannot make an informed judgement about which schools are doing well and which are not. A system of school inspections such as Ofsted reinforces this process. So education policies like these support the education market without directly controlling it

5. **Outline and explain two policies aimed at reducing inequalities in educational achievement.**

Policy 1

One policy aimed at reducing educational inequalities is comprehensive education. Before comprehensivisation from the mid-1960s, the tripartite system operated on the basis of selection by examination at 11. The 20% or so who [passed went to grammar school and had an academic education. The rest attended secondary modern school and had a more vocational education. Critics argued that the 11+ test

favoured middle-class pupils because of the knowledge and language it used. Comprehensive schooling established a school for all pupils in the same area with no selection so that all pupils had the same educational opportunities. As a result, it was hoped that this would reduce inequalities between the classes.

Policy 2

Here are clear and sustained differences in educational achievement based on ethnicity. Some BME groups of pupils have out-performed white pupils but others lag far behind. This is especially the case with pupils of Pakistani origin and those from a Caribbean background. In some cases, the claim has been made that this is the result of problems in the home culture. As a result, policies aimed to improve the social inclusion of pupils from these backgrounds have been attempted. These include additional Saturday schools, English as an Additional Language programmes and monitoring results. If pupils from these backgrounds have a better command of the language of the school, textbooks and exams, they are more likely to perform more effectively.

6. Outline and explain two ways in which school subcultures may contribute to inequalities in educational achievement.

Way 1

As Willis found out in his study of 'the lads' a counter-culture amongst young male pupils could in fact work to their disadvantage in terms of educational achievement and later employment. They found school bring and resisted the school by breaking the rules, disrupting classes and truanting. Whereas this was on the one hand a rejection of school, one which was similar to the shopfloor culture of the male factory worker, it actually ensured that they failed educationally and ended up in low-paid manual work.

Way 2

Although it is mainly anti-school pupil subcultures that have been the focus on most sociological research, some pupil subcultures reflect the values of the school. Lacey identified the process of polarisation whereby pupils responded to being placed in high or low streams in very different ways. Those, mainly from middle-class backgrounds, placed in the higher stream, could see that they were on course to achieve educationally which gave them high status in the eyes of the school. So they therefore responded by adhering to conventional school values, working hard and committing to their school work which usually then resulted in higher exam results.

1O MARK 'APPLYING MATERIAL FROM ITEM A, ANALYSE TWO ...' QUESTIONS: CRIME AND DEVIANCE

Format of the 'Applying material from Item A, analyse two...' questions

- The key skill here is, as with the other type of 10 mark question, APPLICATION.

- However, the nature of the application is different in this type of question. You have to find two aspects of an issue 'buried' in the Item and then link these to your own knowledge.

- Application is about LINKING two things together. In this type of question, the linking here is of elements in the Item and the key focus of the question.

- So the first task is for a student to identify the two elements in the Item that you can then link to your own knowledge.

- However, these are not going to be explicit - otherwise there would be no real application to be done.

- The Item elements are going to be to some extent 'hidden' and you will therefore have to read the Item carefully to identify them.

- Once two elements have been identified (there will probably be at least three potential elements), a student needs to develop each in turn.

- As referring to aspects of the issue not in the Item will confine an answer to the bottom mark band (1-3 110), it is vital that the two aspects are drawn from the Item and that this is made explicit in an answer. It is one of those situations whereby a candidate can help the examiner to give the candidate marks!

- So make explicit reference to the elements in the Item that are being used as the starting point of each of the two paragraphs in the answer e.g. 'Item A states....'.

SPECIMEN QUESTION AND ANSWER

Item A
Although some people argue that the media simply reports crime, others claim that it may itself actually cause crime. Coverage of crime, both real and fictional, makes up a large proportion of media output and although the storylines are often predictable, crime dramas in particular, attract large audiences. Often such dramas present crime as having some substantial rewards if it is successful. The media is often accused of over-reporting some criminal and subcultural activities whilst the development of the internet has also offered a new dimension to criminal activities.

Question
Applying material from Item B, analyse two arguments that the media may contribute to the creation of crime.

"As Item A states, 'over-reporting some criminal and subcultural activities' may contribute to the creation of crime. Cohen identified the deviancy amplification spiral as far back as 1970 using the example of media coverage of certain youth groups. He argued that the media identify a particular group as a 'folk devil' – something that was a threat to the moral fabric of society. The group is represented in media coverage in a range of negative and exaggerated ways, generating a stereotyped view of them in public perception. Over-reporting of initial criminality exaggerates it in public mind, leads to further police reaction, which results in more examples of the activity being uncovered and possibly creates 'copycat' versions of the initial activity.

Item A also suggests that 'crime having substantial rewards' may lead to further crime. Coverage of crime accounts for a large proportion of media output both in terms of the amount of coverage and the prominence given to it. This increases public awareness of crime and its apparent financial rewards in the case of utilitarian crime. Left realists argue that the media coverage of crime increases feelings of relative deprivation. Images of affluence resulting from crime contrast with their own deprivation and even the accounts of crime offered through the media through fictional or news programmes, may even offer descriptions of how to carry out crimes. Even the poorest in society have access to media. Lea and Young argue that the media also encourages individualism through the huge range of programming to choose form and through advertising. This coupled with the promotion of higher expectations of material success, leads to more crime even in a more prosperous society."

ITEMS AND QUESTIONS: Identify the elements in the Item that could be used as the basis for two paragraphs.

Example 1
Item A
Punishment for crime seems to be a universal element as all societies operate some form of punishment although its nature varies from society to society. Some sociologists argue that decisions about who should be punished and how, lies in the hands of powerful groups in society. Others consider that the aim of punishment is to show that 'justice is being seen to be done' which contributes to the general well-being of society. It may also be the case that punishment is some form of 'payback time' for those who have been damaged by criminal acts.

Question
Applying material from Item A, analyse two functions of punishment.

Example 2
Item A
As crime is seen by most people as detrimental to society, politicians have been keen to find ways to prevent or reduce the amount of crime. Sociologists have examined the different ways in which it is argued, crime can be reduced and behaviour regulated. If criminals are acting in a rational manner, then this provides one way to reduce crime. However, some would argue that a lot depends on how a neighbourhood is perceived by those who live in it and by outsiders. Others would claim, as Tony Blair did, that as well as being tough on crime, governments should be 'tough on the causes of crime'.

Question
Applying material from Item B, analyse two sociological approaches to crime prevention.

Example 3
Item A
Black, and to lesser extent Asian people, are over-represented in the prison population in Britain. Ending up in prison is the end-result of a long process starting with the way crimes are policed. If a particular type of crime is policed relatively lightly then fewer examples will be uncovered. The police have a degree of discretion about how they actually apply the law which also have a major impact on how many acts get classified as a crime and how those involved are treated. Finally some cases for prosecution are dropped before they reach the final stages in the process, trial and sentencing.
Question
Applying material from Item B, analyse two explanations of the over-representation of black and Asian British people in the prison population.

Example 4
Item A
The offending rate varies between social groups and one major difference is between that of men and women. When trying to explain differences such as this, sociologists focus on the whole process by which actions lead to conviction in the courts. Some have argued that how someone is brought up has a major role to play whilst others stress the importance of the strength of social control over behaviour. It may also be the case that changes in employment and educational opportunities can affect offending rates.

Question
Applying material from Item A, analyse two explanations of offending rates for women.

Example 5
Item A
Although a lot of sociological investigation focuses on violent, street and youth crime, some sociologists are more interested in the crimes of powerful groups in society. Corporate crime, whereby crimes are committed by business organisations, has come under particular scrutiny. Corporate crime includes carrying out acts in pursuit of the legitimate aim to make a profit and sometimes these can seem to be normal business practices by those involved. Some sociologists have seen corporate crime as inevitable and even linked to the state.

Question
Applying material from Item B, analyse two explanations of corporate crime.

Example 6
Item A
Some sociologists have been as interested in the way society responds to criminal and deviant behaviour as in the acts themselves. Once someone has been convicted of a crime or designated as being deviant, other people may become more aware of their actions and see them in a particular light. This can also be linked to the way wider social forces can be involved which creates a distorted impression of criminal and deviant behaviour. Not all labelling however, is necessarily negative in its consequences.

Question
Applying material from Item B, analyse two ways in which the labelling process may affect criminal or deviant behaviour.

WORKED EXAMPLES

Example 1
Item A
Punishment for crime seems to be a universal element as all societies operate some form of punishment although its nature varies from society to society. Some sociologists argue that decisions about who should be punished and how, lies in the hands of powerful groups in society. Others consider that the aim of punishment is to show that 'justice is being seen to be done' which contributes to the general well-being of society. It may also be the case that punishment is some form of 'payback time' for those who have been damaged by criminal acts.

Question
Applying material from Item A, analyse two functions of punishment.

Elements 'buried' in the Item to use in an answer:
- 'powerful groups in society' link to Marxist view that punishment exists to maintain the existing social order/dominance of the ruling class; nature of punishment also reflects the economic base and reflect the relations of production.
- 'justice seen to be done' - link to a functionalist view that punishment upholds agreed social values; public nature of punishment reaffirms these values; sense of moral unity, reduces future offending.
- 'payback time' - links to retribution, society can take its revenge on offender; moral view that punishment is deserved and justified.

Remember, always choose the two points that you can develop in the greatest depth and explanatory detail.

Example 2
Item A
As crime is seen by most people as detrimental to society, politicians have been keen to find ways to prevent or reduce the amount of crime. Sociologists have examined the different ways in which it is argued, crime can be reduced and behaviour regulated. If criminals are acting in a rational manner, then this provides one way to reduce crime. However, some would argue that a lot depends on how a neighbourhood is perceived by those who live in it and by outsiders. Others would claim, as Tony Blair did, that as well as being tough on crime, governments should be 'tough on the causes of crime'.

Question
Applying material from Item B, analyse two sociological approaches to crime prevention.

Elements 'buried' in the Item to use in an answer:

- 'if criminals act in a rational manner' - link to situational crime prevention; if crime is a rational act, then best way to reduce it is to reduce the opportunities for crime; if the crime was harder to carry out, they would be less likely to do it; surveillance through CCTV, improved car locks etc are all examples of target-hardening.

- 'tough on the causes of crime' - link to idea that need to deal with root causes not just the manifestations, of crime; these lie in social conditions; poverty and poor housing, lack of employment opportunities etc are the conditions for crime; need interventions that reduce the effects of these social factors.

- 'how a neighbourhood is perceived by those who live in it and by outsiders' - link to notion of 'broken windows; absence not just of formal social control but of informal social control in a neighbourhood creates conditions for crime; neighbourhood goes into a spiral of decline; needs zero tolerance policing.

Developing these points: Which of these points would you feel most confident in developing in the greatest depth and explanatory detail?

Example 3
Item A
Black, and to a lesser extent Asian people, are over-represented in the prison population in Britain. Ending up in prison is the end-result of a long process starting with the way crimes are policed. If a particular type of crime is policed relatively lightly then fewer examples will be uncovered. The police have a degree of discretion about how they actually apply the law which also has a major impact on how many acts get classified as a crime and how those involved are treated. Finally some cases for prosecution are dropped before they reach the final stages in the process, trial and sentencing.
Question
Applying material from Item B, analyse two explanations of the over-representation of black and Asian British people in the prison population.

Elements 'buried' in the Item to use in an answer:

- 'the way crimes are policed' - link to accusations of police racism; stop and search; concentration in certain areas, 'police discretion' - link to decisions in the policing process; decisions to intervene, to being cautioned; being arrested.

- 'some cases dropped before trial' -decision to bring to trial made by CPS; based on strength of evidence and likelihood of conviction.

- 'trial and sentencing' - link to judicial process; pre-trial reports; differential rates of sentencing e .g. prison or not.

Example 4
Item A
The offending rate varies between social groups and one major difference is between that of men and women. When trying to explain differences such as this, sociologists focus on the whole process by which actions lead to conviction in the courts. Some have argued that how someone is brought up has a major role to play whilst others stress the importance of the strength of social control over behaviour. It may also be the case that changes in employment and educational opportunities can have affect offending rates.

Question
Applying material from Item A, analyse two explanations of offending rates for women.

Elements 'buried' in the Item to use in an answer:
- 'the way someone is brought up' - link to gender socialisation in family; functionalist view of women taking expressive role in family; girls socialised into non-aggressive traits; gangs as source of masculine identity.
- 'social control over behaviour' - feminist view of patriarchal control; women controlled in home; in work, and in public; reduces women's opportunities for crime.
- 'chances in employment and educational opportunities' - link to idea that increasing female offending results from a reduction in patriarchal control - women have more legitimate opportunities and consequent to this, more non-legitimate opportunities.

Develop these points: remember to select the two you feel you can write the most about.

Example 5
Item A
Although a lot of sociological investigation focuses on violent, street and youth crime, some sociologists are more interested in the crimes of powerful groups in society. Corporate crime, whereby crimes are committed by business organisations, has come under particular scrutiny. Corporate crime includes carrying out acts in pursuit of the legitimate aim to make a profit and sometimes these can seem to be normal business practices by those involved. Some sociologists have seen corporate crime as inevitable and even linked to the state.

Question
Applying material from Item B, analyse two explanations of corporate crime.

Elements 'buried' in the Item to use in an answer:

- 'in pursuit of profit' - links to Merton's strain theory; corporations trying to maximise profit may find it achievable only if it means breaking the law.
- 'seen as normal business practice' - link to idea that a company may have culture that encourages or turns a blind eye to 'borderline' criminal activity in the company's interests; creates subculture; create justifications for illegal activities as being in the company interest.
- 'corporate crime is inevitable' - link to Marxist explanation of corporate crime as an extension of normal capitalist enterprise.
- 'linked to state' - link to Marxist view that the state exists to support capitalist enterprises; deals done between state institutions and corporations e.g. in terms of tax; collusion between state and corporate interests.

Developing these points: which two would you choose?

Example 6
Item A
Some sociologists have been as interested in the way society responds to criminal and deviant behaviour as in the acts themselves. Once someone has been convicted of a crime or designated as being deviant, other people may become more aware of their actions and see them in a particular tight. This can also be linked to the way wider social forces can be involved which creates a distorted impression of criminal and deviant behaviour. Not all labelling, however, is necessarily negative in its consequences.

Question
Applying material from Item B, analyse two ways in which the labelling process may affect criminal or deviant behaviour.

Elements 'buried' in the Item to use in an answer:

- 'other people see them in a particular light' - link to the interactionist argument that societal reaction is key to the process whereby acts become defined as deviant; labelling can then lead to further acts of deviance.
- 'other people see them in a particular light' - not only that but may see themselves in a different light, begin to accept the label.
- 'wider social forces create distorted impression' - media coverage of deviant and criminal activities creates deviancy amplification spiral; form of society-wide labelling; defines whole social groups e.g. benefits claimants.
- 'not all labelling is negative' - link to idea that positive labelling or re-labelling can reduce a negative master status label; individuals can be redefined.

1O MARK 'OUTLINE AND EXPLAIN TWO...' QUESTIONS
THEORY AND METHODS

Format of the 'Outline and Explain two..' questions.
This style of question is found in A level Papers 1 and 3.

- Fundamentally the question has to link two separate elements in the specification.

- This means that the skill of APPLICATION is very important here

- Perhaps the simplest way to view this is that two separate bullet points in the specification need to be linked in the question.

- This really tests a student's ability to apply different elements in the specification to each other.

- It is very similar (if not the same) as the old emphasis on SYNOPTICITY

Getting your head around this type of question
- For each topic we will first identify the bullet points and then identify some likely combinations of bullet points that might form the basis of a question.

- Then we will deduce some likely example questions that link two such bullets.

- There then follows one example question with three example answers (with commentaries) at different levels of achievement.

- There then follows six 'skeletal' answers to potential questions.

The AQA specification bullets (summarised)
- Quantitative and qualitative methods; research design
- Questionnaires, interviews, participant and non-participant observation, experiments, documents, official statistics.
- Primary and secondary data; qualitative and quantitative data.
- Positivism, interpretivism; 'social facts'.
- Consensus, structural and social action theories.
- Modernity, post-modernity and sociological theory.
- Science and sociology
- Relationship between theory, and methods
- Values and objectivity
- Sociology and social policy

Example questions

Outline and explain two reasons why positivists reject the use of participant observation as a method.

Outline and explain two reasons why interpretivists favour unstructured interviews.

Outline and explain two reasons why functionalists are likely to choose to use quantitative methods.

Outline and explain two reasons why positivists would use some types of secondary data but not others.

Outline and explain two reasons why interpretivists would use some types of secondary data but not others.

Outline and explain two reasons why it is very difficult to ensure that data from unstructured interviews is objective.

Outline and explain two reasons why questionnaires could be considered as creating objective data.

Outline and explain two reasons why interactionist sociologists are more likely to use methods that create qualitative data.

Outline and explain two reasons why interactionist sociologists are likely to use participant observation in their research.

Outline and explain two reasons why positivist sociologists are more likely to use methods that create quantitative data.

Outline and explain two ways in which a sociologist's values can affect their choice of research method.

Outline and explain two reasons why interpretivist research is likely to have greater ethical problems than positivist research.

Outline and explain two ways in which the research design of a study could be made more scientific.

Outline and explain two reasons why Marxists would choose to study certain topics and not others.

Outline and explain two reasons why interpretivist research is likely to have more ethical problems than positivist research.

Outline and explain two ways in which the research design of a study could be made more scientific.

Outline and explain two reasons why Marxists would choose to study certain topics and not others.

Outline and explain two reasons why those forming social policies would prefer to use quantitative data.

Comments:
- We can conclude from this that there are a lot of potential combinations.

- However, it is not as demanding as all that. The potential links are not odd or unusual - there will be a lot in how students have been prepared for this whole topic that will provide the starting point for effective answers.

- They are already there in the way the course is delivered, they just need to be brought out more in the presentation of material.

Getting into the top mark band
- The key is to recognise that the question will have TWO elements. The question will want you to connect the two together.

- Examples above show this e.g. interpretivists - greater ethical problems; questionnaires - objectivity, attitude to value-freedom - choice of topic.

- If you just focus on one of the two elements, then you will be stuck in the bottom mark band. This happened in the first AS exam using this kind of question in 2016.

- Attempting to make links will move you up; making clear connections will take you further and into the top mark band.

SPECIMEN QUESTION AND ANSWERS

MARK EACH ANSWER AND MAKE SOME COMMENTS JUSTIFYING THE MARK YOU HAVE GIVEN IT.

Outline and explain two reasons why interpretivist research methods are more likely to have major ethical problems compared to positivist methods.

Candidate A

"Ethical problems refer to issues of right and wrong in research. Research methods often have serious ethical issues. One is that of the need to get the informed consent of those involved. They should be guaranteed the right to refuse to be involved. This means those being researched should be aware of the aims and nature of the research so they can fully appreciate what is involved and how it might affect them It doesn't just mean at the start of the project but has to be maintained all the way through. Even at the end at the research they should be aware of how the results are likely to be used

A further ethical issue is that of being protected from harm. The researcher has no right to cause any form of harm, physical or psychological, to those involved even if they think - as Milgram did - that if is necessary for the success of the research. This includes all stages in the research, from the issues considered, the risks involved, how the study is carried out, through to how the data is released. This links to guaranteeing anonymity as without this there is a greater risk of causing upset and embarrassment.

Interpretivists prefer to use methods such as participant observation which has many ethical worries including lack of informed consent and problems in protecting people from harm."

Mark /10

Commentary

    .

Candidate B

"Interpretivists use methods including participant observation, unstructured interviews and qualitative secondary data. Many of these have substantial ethical problems which bring the validity of their studies into doubt. For example, participant observation, especially if it is covert, is ethically dubious as those being studied do not know that they are participating in a research project.

This means that they have not been given the chance for consent to being studied, it is happening without them knowing it. Some sociologists argue that the ends justify the means, in other words, not telling people they are being observed is alright if it means their behaviour remains normal and natural.

Unstructured interviews do not have this problem as they are overt. However, they have an ethical problem in that because these interviews are aimed to get an empathetic relationship going, it is possible that the interviewer and interviewee might become too friendly, too close. In a close relationship they might let slip information that they really didn't want to be part of the research."

Mark /10

Commentary

Candidate C

"Interpretivists begin from the assumption that there is no single agreed social 'reality'. Rather, it is a case of finding out what the social reality is of each social actor and social group. They want to know how people construct social reality as they see it. This means using methods that uncover the meaning people hold and which do not impose the researcher's ideas on them.

To uncover meanings using methods that allows a researcher to get close to the up close and personal with those being studied. As the researcher wants to find out the worldview of someone, they will have to involve themselves in some way with them, for example, through PO or structured interviews. This focus on getting close to individuals brings with it particular ethical problems. The closer the relationship built through using an empathetic approach, the greater the danger of exploring private areas that research subjects might find upsetting or even harmful. For example, investigating the victims of domestic violence through unstructured interviews may take the interviewee back over some very unpleasant life experiences. Re-living violent episodes may be useful for the research, but not for the interviewee. Positivist

research methods such as questionnaires do not tend to establish a close relationship and therefore have fewer ethical concerns.

A second reason why there are more ethical problems with interpretive research is their focus on validity. Interpretivists searching for the meanIngs social actors hold place a great deal of emphasis on gaining an authentic picture of the way people see the world. If however, the group and individuals being researched are aware that they are in a research situation, then they are likely to alter their behaviour and stated views. This Hawthorne effect therefore reduces the validity of the data gathered. An interpretivist may therefore be tempted to carry out covert research in which those being researched are not aware of the real research intention. So CPO may be carried out. This involves deception in that the researcher takes on a role within the group as a 'cover' from which they can observe the way the group functions without their presence changing behaviour. For example, Laud Humphreys took on the 'watchqueen' role in order to watch gay men in public restrooms. This is ethically dubious as the researcher has not gained the informed consent of those being observed. They also have no right to remove themselves from being observed so some fundamental human rights are being transgressed here. Most positivist research however, is overt. For example, there is no way of disguising the fact that being given a questionnaire means you are in a research situation - everything is overt.”

Mark: /10

Commentary

Outline and explain two reasons why interpretivist research methods are more likely to have major ethical problems compared to positivist methods.

Candidate A

"Ethical problems refer to issues of right and wrong in research. Research methods often have serious ethical issues. One is that of the need to get the informed consent of those involved. They should be guaranteed the right to refuse to be involved. This means those being researched should be aware of the aims and nature of the research so they can fully appreciate what is involved and how it might affect them It doesn't just mean at the start of the project but has to be maintained all the way through. Even at the end at the research they should be aware of how the results are likely to be used

A further ethical issue is that of being protected from harm. The researcher has no right to cause any form of harm, physical or psychological, to those involved even if they think - as Milgram did - that if is necessary for the success of the research. This includes all stages in the research, from the issues considered, the risks involved, how the study is carried out, through to how the data is released. This links to guaranteeing anonymity as without this there is a greater risk of causing upset and embarrassment.

Interpretivists prefer to use methods such as participant observation which has many ethical worries including lack of informed consent and problems in protecting people from harm."

Mark 3/10

Commentary
- The candidate displays a good understanding of two ethical problems facing sociological researchers. There's detail and analysis in both paragraphs.
- However, the answer fails to connect these explicitly to interpretivist methods and to explain why these methods have greater ethical problems (than positivist methods). The key skill in this type of question is that of APPLICATION. The question will always have two elements in it which need to be connected in some ways (two, to be precise). Without this being attempted an answer will remain in the bottom mark band with a maximum of 3/10.
- Candidate A makes a tentative attempt in the last paragraph but it is unlikely to take them to 4/10 because there is no connectivity between that and the two ethical issues.

Candidate B

"Interpretivists use methods including participant observation, unstructured interviews and qualitative secondary data. Many of these have substantial ethical problems which bring the validity of their studies into doubt.
For example, participant observation, especially if it is covert, is ethically dubious as those being studied do not know that they are participating in a research project.

This means that they have not been given the chance for consent to being studied, it is happening without them knowing it. Some sociologists argue that the ends justify the means, in other words, not telling people they are being observed is alright if it means their behaviour remains normal and natural.
Unstructured interviews do not have this problem as they are overt. However, they have an ethical problem in that because these interviews are aimed to get an empathetic relationship going, it is possible that the interviewer and interviewee might become too friendly, too close. In a close relationship they might let slip information that they really didn't want to be part of the research."

Mark 6/10

Commentary
- There is a focus on two ethical problems associated with two examples of interpretivist methods. These are fairly clearly identified though not fully explained. Both would benefit from further analysis and the use of examples of research studies.
- However, they are only linked explicitly to interpretivism in the opening short paragraph. There needs to be more explanation why the two methods are favoured by interpretivists.
- What is it about these methods that link them to an interpretivist approach?

Candidate C
"Interpretivists begin from the assumption that there is no single agreed social 'reality'. Rather, it is a case of finding out what the social reality is of each social actor and social group. They want to know how people construct social reality as they see it. This means using methods that uncover the meaning people hold and which do not impose the researcher's ideas on them.
To uncover meanings using methods that allows a researcher to get close to the up close and personal with those being studied. As the researcher wants to find out the worldview of someone, they will have to involve themselves in some way with them, for example, through PO or structured interviews. This focus on getting close to individuals brings with it particular ethical problems. The closer the relationship built through using an empathetic approach, the greater the danger of exploring private areas that research subjects might find upsetting or even harmful. For example,

investigating the victims of domestic violence through unstructured interviews may take the interviewee back over some very unpleasant life experiences. Re-living violent episodes may be useful for the research, but not for the interviewee. Positivist research methods such as questionnaires do not tend to establish a close relationship and therefore have fewer ethical concerns.

A second reason why there are more ethical problems with interpretive research is their focus on validity. Interpretivists searching for the meanlngs social actors hold place a great deal of emphasis on gaining an authentic picture of the way people see the world. If however, the group and individuals being researched are aware that they are in a research situation, then they are likely to alter their behaviour and stated views. This Hawthorne effect therefore reduces the validity of the data gathered. An interpretivist may therefore be tempted to carry out covert research in which those being researched are not aware of the real research intention. So CPO may be carried out. This involves deception in that the researcher takes on a role within the group as a 'cover' from which they can observe the way the group functions without their presence changing behaviour. For example, Laud Humphreys took on the 'watchqueen' role in order to watch gay men in public restrooms. This is ethically dubious as the researcher has not gained the informed consent of those being observed. They also have no right to remove themselves from being observed so some fundamental human rights are being transgressed here. Most positivist research however, is overt. For example, there is no way of disguising the fact that being given a questionnaire means you are in a research situation - everything is overt."

Mark: 10/10

Commentary
- The opening short paragraph gets a good fix on what the question is about and helps Candidate C focus on the demands of the question. It identifies the link between interpretivism and the aim of uncovering the meanings people hold. This then leads logically to the kind of methods intepretivists use and from those to the ethical issues connected to them.
- The second paragraph - and the first reason - makes a clear link between uncovering meanings and 'getting up close and personal' with people. The answer then leads to the ethical problem of putting people in potentially harmful situations. As the question offers a comparison with positivist research, the final sentence of this paragraph is useful for bringing the answer briefly back to this aspect of the question.
- The third paragraph - and second reason - repeats this pattern. It links the search for meaning to a focus on validity and thence to avoiding the Hawthorne effect. From there it leads to the use of covert research and the ethical problems associated with this approach to research. Finally, as with

the preceding paragraph, there's a brief comparison with positivist methods as being mainly overt.

- In both paragraphs dealing with the reasons, Candidate C establishes a strong stream of reasoning'. One thing leads to another. This is important as it clearly demonstrates application and analysis skills - crucial for a top band mark.

SKELETAL ANSWERS

1 Outline and explain two reasons why Marxists would choose to study certain topics and not others.

Reason I
Marxists particularly interested in the role of social class in determining behaviour and outcomes - social class position and relationships are central to any analysis of society - going to choose any topic that reflects the role of social class - examples include class and educational disadvantage, class and health inequalities They focus less on other forms of social disadvantage such as gender, disability or ethnicity inequalities.

Reason 2
Marxists are structuralist sociologists - society determines social behaviour and outcomes - economic base determines class relationships and creates conflict - so research will focus on topics reflecting this on a large scale throughout society examples include school reflecting work via the correspondence principle or religion acting as a brake on social change. They are less interested in investigating the world views of individuals or in the minutiae of everyday social interaction.

Focusing on key Marxist issues such as social class and economic determinism offer the opportunity for longer, more detailed responses.

2 Outline and explain two ways in which the research design of a study could be made more scientific.

Way 1
A scientific approach emphasises the need for a study to be representative -so that the results can be generalised - using a representative sample means that what is true for the sample is true for the wider social group. So the research sample needs to be some form of random sampling e.g. stratified random samples or quota samples. This is favoured by Positivists who want to make their research as scientific as possible.

Way 2
A scientific approach emphasises the need for research to be reliable - so it needs to be structured in a way that it can be replicable - repeating in exactly the same way means it can be carried out on other groups - the results compared - also results can be verified. So methods such as questionnaires are more reliable and scientific because they ask the same questions in the same order with the same answer opportunities.
Focusing on big issues such as reliability and representativeness, offer the opportunity for longer, more detailed responses.

3 Outline and explain two ways in which a sociologist's attitude to value-freedom in research can affect their choice of research topic.

Way 1

If sociologist believes that values should not be kept out of research - for example, Gouldner through 'committed sociology' - then it is necessary to take sides - can take the side of the powerful or disadvantaged groups in society e.g. is the problem poverty or is it the wealthy? Looking at society from the perspective of the 'underdog' leads to studying certain issues and from certain points of view choosing topics such as the poor, people in mental health institutions or those involved in crime - but from their perspectives.

Way 2

Functionalists argue research can and should be value-free, the role of research in society should be to help maintain the social equilibrium - by helping to solve problems that threaten the survival of society - so the choice of topic is not in their hands but determined by social leaders (politicians, heads of big business etc). This also links to the functionalist claim that research should be scientific and objective so researchers should be the 'neutral technicians' of society. This approach means that sociological problems and social problems become more or less the same thing.

This question allows for the exploration of two different (near-opposite) approaches.

4 Outline and explain two reasons why it is difficult to ensure that data from unstructured interviews is objective.

Reason 1

Objectivity refers to the absence of bias or preconceived ideas - so researchers should keep detached from their investigations, maintaining value-neutrality stressed as important by positivists. Unstructured interviews are unstandardised and open-ended - no fixed list of questions -attempt to establish a close relationship between interviewer and interviewee. Closer the relationship - greater the degree of interaction - more likely that researcher loses ability to be detached - gets too close to interviewee - sympathises with their views - gets drawn into their world e.g. Oakley as mother identified closely with women interviewed about maternity.

Reason 2

Interviewee is aware they are in an interview - unstructured interview feels more like a conversation between friends) - can lead them to feel somehow special - start to over-reflect on their answers - begin to sense what the interviewer wants - may be aware of the power inequalities established through the interaction - begins to offer answers they think may be what the researcher wants - data loses validity and becomes less objective.

5 Outline and explain two reasons why interactionist sociologists would use some types of secondary data but not others.

Reason 1

Interactionists take a 'bottom-up' approach - not a macro but a micro style - want to uncover the meanings individuals hold - so focus on individuals in small social groups this means using data that reflects the worldviews of those individuals/social groups so large-scale secondary data is inappropriate preference is for personal secondary data such as letters, memoirs, diaries, photographs, social media posts. This allows researcher to see, for example, if people feel they've been labelled.

Reason 2

Interactionists see individuals as having a degree of free will - people not just puppets of society driven by social forces - so it is important to gain insight into people's lives - greater validity and depth of understanding including historical understanding in some cases - how individuals have arrived at the meanings they hold. For example, reveals how people interpret the roles they take e.g. parent, victim of crime etc.

Focusing on key interactionist issues such as a micro approach and free will offer the opportunity for longer, more detailed responses that can he related to interactionist concepts such as labelling and role taking.

6 Outline and explain two reasons why those forming social policies would prefer to use quantitative data.

Reason 1

Those formulating social policies want to know what social problems exist - their characteristics, extent and social distribution - for example how much poverty exists or the relationship between educational disadvantage and class or ethnicity otherwise resources could be wasted through being wrongly directed. Identifying society-wide problems cannot be done through looking at individual cases and standpoints - need data that is society-wide - this means large-scale quantitative data - so statistics taken from the Census would be ideal.

Reason 2

Those formulating social policies want to know how to deal with these social problems - again, anecdotal accounts do not provide verifiable evidence on large-scale - want to estimate effects of policy changes on large-scale - for example, using crime statistics to evaluate success of a particular crime prevention strategy - comparing two areas, one with, one without, the strategy indicates its impact.

It is useful to make room in the answer for reference to specific examples of quantitative data -in this case, crime statistics and Census data.

1O MARK 'APPLYING MATERIAL FROM ITEM A, ANALYSE TWO ...' QUESTIONS: FAMILIES AND HOUSEHOLDS

Format of the 'Applying material from Item A, analyse two...' questions

- The key skill here is, as with the other type of 10 mark question, APPLICATION.

- However, the nature of the application is different in this type of question. You have to find two aspects of an issue 'buried' in the Item and then link these to your own knowledge.

- Application is about LINKING two things together. In this type of question, the linking here is of elements in the Item and the key focus of the question.

- So the first task is for a student to identify the two elements in the Item that you can then link to your own knowledge.

- However, these are not going to be explicit -otherwise there would be no real application to be done.

- So the Item elements are going to be to some extent 'hidden' and you will therefore have to read the Item carefully to identify them.

- Once two elements have been identified (there will probably be at least three potential elements), a student needs to develop each in turn.

- As referring to aspects of the issue not in the Item will confine an answer to the bottom mark band (1-3), it is vital that the two aspects are drawn from the Item and that this is made explicit in an answer. It is one of those situations whereby a candidate can help the examiner to give the candidate marks!

- So make explicit reference to the elements in the Item that are being used as the starting point of each of the two paragraphs in the answer e.g. 'Item A states....'.

GETTING YOUR HEAD AROUND THIS TYPE OF QUESTION
- First there is an example question with a full marks answer.

- Then there are six examples of Items to practice identifying elements in them.

- There then follows six 'skeletal' answers based on the six items we have used initially.

SPECIMEN QUESTION AND ANSWER
Item
Since the 1960s there has been a substantial rise on the number of divorces and in the divorce rate. This pattern coincided with changes in the way the state viewed marriage and divorce. This to some extent has reflected the way people view divorce. It is also interesting to note that two-thirds of divorces are initiated by women.

Question and Full-mark answer:
Applying material from the Item, analyse two explanations of a high divorce rate in the UK.
Candidate A:
"As the Item states, ' two-thirds of divorces are initiated by women. Although there may be several reasons for this, it may be that this is the result of women's greater financial independence and security. The proportion of women in paid employment had risen over the last forty years and although they still tend to have lower pay than men, legal protections over pay and discrimination have resulted on the gap losing. The way girls have outstripped boys in educational success has also contributed to their stronger economic position. One result of these changes is that women are less dependent economically on men and so do not have to stay in an unhappy relationship for financial reasons. They may also gain in confidence through the experience of paid employment and have a wider social network, both of which may make going through the divorce process less of a threat.

The Item also states that 'changes in the way the state viewed marriage and divorce' may be a cause of higher divorce rates. Changes by the state to the laws about divorce have made it much easier for people to get divorced. The grounds for divorce have been widened and simplified. The key change was in 1971 when instead of having to prove or admit a 'crime' against the marriage, the grounds for divorce were changed to straightforward 'irretrievable breakdown'. The cost of a divorce has been reduced considerably as many divorces are now uncontested. These factors have made divorce a lot easier to carry out and it is no coincidence that the biggest rise in divorce occurred after the 1971 change in law. However, it can also be argued that in itself, this is at best an incomplete explanation as just because something is easier to do, doesn't provide the incentive to do it."

ITEMS AND QUESTIONS: Identify the elements in the Item that could be used as the basis for two paragraphs.

Example 1
Item A
Functionalists see society as one large social organism. The various sub-systems, including the family, function to meet the needs of society. So functionalists ask the question, what are the needs of society that the family functions to meet. One social need is to reproduce new members of society and the family as best suited to meet this need. The family is also the best place in which to socialise the young into society's norms and values. Furthermore, functionalists claim that modern industrial society needs a socially and geographically mobile workforce so the nuclear family with its gender specific roles of men as breadwinner and women as carer, is a functional fit for this need.

Question
Applying material from Item A, analyse two criticisms feminists would make of a functionalist view of the functions of the family.

Example 2
Item A
The average age of people in the UK is rising and there are now fewer young people and more older people. Traditionally, the age demographic would be presented as a pyramid, now it is more of a sequence of age blocks. With fewer people being born and more living longer as a result of better diet, living conditions and so on, the elderly will be dependent on fewer and fewer young people. Tax revenues will also be affected and the structure of the household unit will also change.

Question
Applying material from Item B, analyse two effects of an ageing population.

Example 3
Item A
Although it is very pleasant to see childhood as a time of happiness and innocence within the 'child-centred family', some sociologists have pointed to the way it can be characterised by inequality. Children are not treated the same as adults in terms of where and when they can do things. Nor are all children's life experiences the same.

Question
Applying material from Item A, analyse two ways in which childhood is characterised by inequalities.

Example 4
Item A
The New Right have a conservative view of the family which builds on functionalist analysis. They argue that there is only one appropriate form of the family and that is the patriarchal nuclear family with a clear gender division in terms of paid and domestic work between two married, heterosexual adults. Childcare is primarily the responsibility of the mother. The New Right argue that many of society's problems are located in alternative family structures. They advocate polices that give strong support to the nuclear family.

Question
Applying material from Item B, analyse two family policies that New Right sociologists would favour.

Example 5
Item A
Postmodernists argue that society has entered a new 'postmodern' phase. Society is increasingly fragmented and is characterised by diversity of cultural opportunities. People are now able to construct their own identities, taking what is sometimes called a 'pick and mix' approach. Social change also occurs in many areas at an unprecedented speed creating unpredictability in people's lives. New technology especially in terms of media means that new ideas are communicated very quickly and to a global audience.

Question
Applying material from Item B, analyse two effects of postmodern society on the family.

Example 6
Item A
Although the usual image of the household is that of a family-based unit, nearly 30% of households are single-person households. Age plays an important role here as do employment patterns. The move to a postmodern society has also affected social values and has seen a greater emphasis on the individual.

Question
Applying material from Item B, analyse two reasons for the increase in one-person households.

WORKED EXAMPLES

Example 1
Item A

Functionalists see society as one large social organism. The various sub-systems, including the family, function to meet the needs of society. So functionalists ask the question, what are the needs of society that the family functions to meet. One social need is to reproduce new members of society and the family as best suited to meet this need. The family is also the best place in which to socialise the young into society's norms and values. Furthermore, functionalists claim that modern industrial society needs a socially and geographically mobile workforce so the nuclear family with its gender specific roles of men as breadwinner and women as carer, is a functional fit for this need.

Question
Applying material from Item A, analyse two criticisms feminists would make of a functionalist view of the functions of the family.

Elements 'buried' in the Item to use in an answer:
- 'family as best suited to meet the need to reproduce new members - link to feminist claims that the family oppresses women by linking them to childcare; claim that children can be brought up perfectly well in female-headed one-parent households.
- 'socialise the young into society's norms and values' - link to feminist criticism that these norms and values are patriarchal and oppress women; not the agreed values of society but the values of men.
- 'gender specific roles of men as breadwinner and women as carer - link to criticism that there is no basis for this argument; roles can be different; is a value judgement to claim that this is the only way these needs can be organised.

Remember, always choose the two points that you can develop in the greatest depth and explanatory detail.

Example 2
Item A

The average age of people in the UK is rising and there are now fewer young people and more older people. Traditionally, the age demographic would be presented as a pyramid, now it is more of a sequence of age blocks. With fewer people being born and more living longer as a result of better diet, living conditions and so on, the elderly will be dependent on fewer and fewer young people. Tax revenues will also be affected and the structure of the household unit will also change.

Question
Applying material from Item B, analyse two effects of an ageing population.

Elements 'buried' in the Item to use in an answer:
- 'elderly will be dependent on fewer young people' - link to notion of the 'dependency ratio' falling; fewer people of working age proportionate to number of retired people; affects when can draw pension.
- 'structure of the household unit will change' – as people live longer, more likely to result in one-person pensioner households; most will be women as they live longer/usually slightly younger than their husbands; increase in social isolation and dependency on family or social services.
- 'tax revenues will fall' - link to provision of public services; fewer people of working age means less tax revenue; yet increased needs of older generation = double whammy of less state income and greater need to be provided for.

Whichever points you select to use, always state them cleanly at the start of your answer so the examiner knows you are linking to the Item.

Example 3
Item A
Although it is very pleasant to see childhood as a time of happiness and innocence within the 'child-centred family', some sociologists have pointed to the way it can be characterised by inequality. Children are not treated the same as adults in terms of where and when they can do things. Nor are all children's life experiences the same.

Question
Applying material from Item A, analyse two ways in which childhood is characterised by inequalities.

Elements 'buried' in the Item to use in an answer:
- 'characterised by inequality' - link to inequalities such as where children can go e.g. access to films, alcohol, compulsory schooling.
- 'children are not treated the same as adults'- link to differences in legal status, access to paid employment, all of which makes children dependent on adults.
- 'all children's life experiences not the same' – link to class and cultural differences affecting childhood; children in poor families have lower birth weights, poorer development etc.

Remember, always choose the two points that you can develop in the greatest depth and explanatory detail.

Example 4
Item A
The New Right have a conservative view of the family which builds on functionalist analysis. They argue that there is only one appropriate form of the family and that is the patriarchal nuclear family with a clear gender division in terms of paid and domestic work between two married, heterosexual adults. Childcare is primarily the responsibility of the mother. The New Right argue that many of society's problems are located in alternative family structures. They advocate polices that give strong support to the nuclear family.

Question
Applying material from Item B, analyse two family policies that New Right sociologists would favour.

Elements 'buried' in the Item to use in an answer:
- ' between two married, heterosexual adults' - link to policies that make divorce more difficult legally or in terms of cost; pressurises couples to stay together; also policies that reward through tax breaks for example, being married rather than cohabiting.
- 'childcare is primarily the responsibility of the mother' - link to policies that link childcare to the mother such as mothers receive the child benefit.
- 'many of society's problems are located in alternative family structures' - link to policies that reduce what New Right see as welfare dependency e.g. reducing benefits for lone parents or pursuing absent father for childcare payments.

Remember, always choose the two points that you can develop in the greatest depth and explanatory detail.

Example 5
Item A
Postmodernists argue that society has entered a new 'postmodern' phase. Society is increasingly fragmented and is characterised by greater opportunities which in turn leads to greater equality. People are now able to construct their own identities, taking what is sometimes called a 'pick and mix' approach. Social change also occurs in many areas at an unprecedented speed creating greater choice in people's lives.

Question
Applying material from Item B, analyse two effects of postmodern society on the family.

Elements 'buried' in the Item to use in an answer:

- 'greater equality' - link to notion of 'negotiated family'; women able to construct own identities; greater opportunities in employment etc leads to greater equality in relationships.
- 'People able to construct their own identities' – link to individualisation thesis; traditional influences of class, gender etc have less influence over us; individuals are freed from traditional roles;
- 'creating greater choice in people's lives' – link to notion of 'pure relationship'; relationships not held together by traditional bonds but through choice; requires meeting each other's needs; increased marital breakdown

Remember, always choose the two points that you can develop in the greatest depth and explanatory detail.

Example 6
Item A
Although the usual image of the household is that of a family-based unit, nearly 30% of households are single-person households. Age plays an important role here as do employment patterns. The move to a postmodern society has also affected social values and has seen a greater emphasis on the individual.

Question
Applying material from Item B, analyse two reasons for the increase in one-person households.

Elements 'buried' in the Item to use in an answer:

- 'age plays an important role' - link to the demographic pattern of ageing population; also feminisation of old age as women survive longer that men (and tend to marry older men); implications for social services, health service etc.
- 'employment patterns' - link to changes in employment such as less of a fixed pattern career; people move around a lot more and between jobs; rise of 'living apart together' couples with separate accommodation.
- 'greater emphasis on individual' - link to individualisation; people less tied to traditional roles and values; no longer stay together because of society's pressure; rise in divorce as people prepared to seek 'pure relationship'.

Remember, always choose the two points that you can develop in the greatest depth and explanatory detail.

10 MARK 'OUTLINE AND EXPLAIN TWO...'

QUESTIONS: FAMILIES AND HOUSEHOLDS

Format of the 'Outline and Explain two...' questions.

- This style of question is found in A level Paper 2.

- The crucial skill here is APPLICATION.

- Fundamentally, this question has to link two separate elements in the specification. That's where the application skill is centred.

- The question therefore must have two elements in it. First task then on reading this question is to identify the two elements.

- Perhaps the simplest way to view this is that two separate bullet points in the specification need to be linked.

- This really tests a student's ability to apply different parts of the topic to each other.

- It is very similar to the old emphasis on SYNOPTICITY.

GETTING YOUR HEAD AROUND THIS TYPE OF QUESTION

- So for each topic we will first look at the bullet points for Families and Households and then identify some likely combinations that might form the basis of a question.

- Then we will deduce some likely example questions that link two bullet points.

- There then follows one example question with two example answers (with commentaries) at different levels of achievement.

- Finally there are six 'skeletal' answers to potential questions.

FAMILIES AND HOUSEHOLDS
The AQA specification bullets (summarised)

- Relationship of family to social structure/change, economy and state policies.

- Changing patterns of marriage, cohabitation, separation, divorce, childbearing, life course, personal life, diversity of family structure.

- Gender roles, domestic labour and power relationships.

- Childhood, changes in status of children in family/society.

- Demographic trends in UK since 1900, birth rates, death rates, family size, life expectancy, ageing population, migration, globalisation.

So likely combinations include linking:
- Childhood and state policy.

- State policies and marriage/cohabitation/divorce.

- State policies and demographic trends

- Divorce and family structure

Example questions

Outline and explain two state policies that affect the status of children in contemporary society.

Outline and explain two ways in which functionalists would explain differences in the social position of children in society.

Outline and explain two ways in which Marxists would explain differences in the position of children in society.

Outline and explain two ways on which state policies may influence the divorce rate.

Outline and explain two state policies which may influence the death rate.

Outline and explain two state policies that may affect the birth rate.

Outline and explain two state policies that may influence migration patterns.

Outline and explain two ways in which a high level of divorce may affect family structure.

Outline and explain two effects of migration patterns on family structure in the UK.

Outline and explain two ways in which the personal life perspective undermines the functionalist view of the central importance of the nuclear family.

Outline and explain two ways in which changing gender roles may affect the structure of the contemporary family.

Outline and explain two criticisms of the functionalist claim that the modern family is child-centred.

Outline and explain two effects of an ageing population on family and household structure.

Outline and explain two ways in which increased family diversity undermines the claims of the New Right.

Comments:
- We can conclude that there are a lot of potential combinations.

- However, it is not as demanding as it may seem as the potential links are not odd or unusual so there will be a lot in what students have been prepared for that will be the starting point for effective answers.

- The links are there, they just need to be brought out more in the way material is presented.

Getting into the top band
- The key is to recognise that the questions will have TWO elements. It wants you to connect the two in the answer.

- Examples above illustrate this e.g. gender and contemporary family structure.

- Attempting to make links will move the answer up through the mark bands. The three specimen answers to the following question illustrate this important point.

SPECIMEN QUESTION AND ANSWERS

MARK EACH ANSWER AND MAKE SOME COMMENTS JUSTIFYING THE MARK YOU HAVE GIVEN IT.

Outline and explain two ways in which the personal life perspective undermines the functionalist view of the central importance of the nuclear family.

Candidate A
"The personal life perspective has a wide view of family relationships. They begin with the meanings people hold in relation to others with whom they have an intimate relationship, the 'family' becomes a much broader thing. People find their identity and emotional needs met from a range of sources, not just the conventional 'family. These sources include friends, memories of dead family members, pets and social media contacts. These are far wider than the nuclear family. This is very different from Parsons' model of the family.

Functionalism is a structural theory. However, the personal life perspective argues that if you start not from society but from individuals, a 'bottom-up' rather than a 'top-down' approach, you get a very different picture. Individuals have their own views of which relationships meet which of their needs. This challenges the functionalist view of 'one family type fits all'. People construct their own identities form a range of sources and to a range of end-products."

Mark /10

Commentary

Candidate B

"Functionalists have a very narrow definition of what constitutes a 'nuclear family'. They see the family as a household composed of people sharing ties of blood and choice through marriage and adoption. Parsons saw the nuclear family is based on segregated gender roles with men taking an instrumental role whilst women perform an expressive role. The personal life perspective takes a much wider view of family relationships. By starting with the meanings people hold in relation to others with whom they have an intimate relationship, the 'family' becomes a much broader thing. People find their identity and emotional needs met from a range of sources, not just the conventional 'family. These sources include friends, memories of dead family members, pets and social media contacts. These are far wider than the nuclear family. This approach recognises that the Parsonian view of the conjugal relationship at the heart of the nuclear family is highly idealised. Not everyone has their needs met through this relationship.

Functionalism is a structural theory. It sees people as passive members of society who are manipulated by social structures such as the family to operate in particular ways. So Parsons saw the nuclear family as the family structure most suited to modern industrial society industrial society as it is socially and geographically mobile and work and affective functions can be divided between husbands and wives. The personal life perspective argues that if you start not from society but from individuals, a 'bottom-up' rather than a 'top-down' approach, you get a very different picture. Individuals have their own views of which relationships meet which of their needs. This challenges the functionalist view of 'one family type fits all'. People construct their own identities form a range of sources and to a range of end-products "

Mark /10

Commentary

Outline and explain two ways in which the personal life perspective undermines the functionalist view of the central importance of the nuclear family.

Candidate A

"The personal life perspective has a wide view of family relationships. They begin with the meanings people hold in relation to others with whom they have an intimate relationship, the 'family' becomes a much broader thing. People find their identity and emotional needs met from a range of sources, not just the conventional 'family. These sources include friends, memories of dead family members, pets and social media contacts. These are far wider than the nuclear family. This is very different from Parsons' model of the family.

Functionalism is a structural theory. However, the personal life perspective argues that if you start not from society but from individuals, a 'bottom-up' rather than a 'top-down' approach, you get a very different picture. Individuals have their own views of which relationships meet which of their needs. This challenges the functionalist view of 'one family type fits all'. People construct their own identities form a range of sources and to a range of end-products."

Mark 4/10

Commentary

- Two aspects of the personal life perspective are accurately identified

- However, the first paragraph fails to connect one aspect to functionalism. The second paragraph has a little connection through the first sentence but this is thin.

- This answer just nudges into to middle mark band because of that (limited) connection.

Candidate B

"Functionalists have a very narrow definition of what constitutes a 'nuclear family'. They see the family as a household composed of people sharing ties of blood and choice through marriage and adoption. Parsons saw the nuclear family is based on segregated gender roles with men taking an instrumental role whilst women perform an expressive role. The personal life perspective takes a much wider view of family relationships. By starting with the meanings people hold in relation to others with whom they have an intimate relationship, the 'family' becomes a much broader thing. People find their identity and emotional needs met from a range of sources, not just the conventional 'family. These sources include friends, memories of dead family members, pets and social media contacts. These are far wider than the nuclear

family. This approach recognises that the Parsonian view of the conjugal relationship at the heart of the nuclear family is highly idealised. Not everyone has their needs met through this relationship.

Functionalism is a structural theory. It sees people as passive members of society who are manipulated by social structures such as the family to operate in particular ways. So Parsons saw the nuclear family as the family structure most suited to modern industrial society industrial society as it is socially and geographically mobile and work and affective functions can be divided between husbands and wives. The personal life perspective argues that if you start not from society but from individuals, a 'bottom-up' rather than a 'top-down' approach, you get a very different picture. Individuals have their own views of which relationships meet which of their needs. This challenges the functionalist view of 'one family type fits all'. People construct their own identities form a range of sources and to a range of end-products "

Mark 10   /10

Commentary

- The opening paragraph clearly identifies one aspect of functionalism in some detail and with reference to Parsons. The rest of the paragraph identifies one way in detail in which the personal life perspective is different and returns to connect it to the original aspect of functionalism.

- The second paragraph repeats this process with a second aspect of functionalism and of the personal life perspective.

- In both paragraphs, Candidate B establishes a strong stream of reasoning'. One thing leads to another. This is important as it clearly demonstrates application and analysis skills - crucial for a top band mark.

SKELETAL ANSWERS

1 Outline and explain two ways in which a high level of divorce may affect family structure.

Reason 1
The most obvious outcome of a high level of divorce where children are involved is the creation of more reconstituted families. These now account for over 10% of families with dependent children. There are several implications of this pattern. Reconstituted families are at greater risk of poverty and money issue may be greater with conflicting financial demands linking families and former families. There are also boundary issues in terms of control, norms and responsibilities, especially in relation to contact with parents outside the reconstituted family.

Reason 2
High levels of divorce may reflect the process of individualisation and in turn fuel this process. Divorce has become normalised in modern society which leads people to see personal fulfilment as the right thing to pursue. The result is that more households and forms of the family are likely to be based on one adult, either living alone or with children. This is not simply a practical outcome of divorce but the way people then focus on their personal needs, which often means preferring to live alone, or if in with another adult, as cohabitees rather than being married..

2. Outline and explain two effects of demographic changes on families and households in the UK.

Effect 1
One demographic change is that of an ageing population. Instead of the 'age pyramid' of the past with proportionately fewer people living not old age, now have more of a series of 'age blocks' piled on top of each other. As a result of increased life expectancy and declining fertility, the proportion of people over 65 is rising in relation to the whole population. As women in particular live longer, and marry older men, there is not just a rise in one-person pensioner households, but especially female one-person pensioner households. Currently, one household in eight contains just one elderly person. There are issues here for family structure in terms of people living alone and what this means in terms of dependency of such households on the wider family and on public services.

Effect 2
There has been a marked decline in the birth rate and the total fertility rate. This has been a long-term decline since 1900 and although there have been fluctuations in recent years, the TFR now stands at about 1.83. Families are therefore getting smaller which has implications for family structure. Fewer children means that childcare takes up fewer years than in the past enabling both parents to be in paid employment. It also means there are more one-child families and the experience of childhood for these children may be lonelier.

3. Outline and explain two legal changes that have affected partnerships in the family.

Change 1

Changes to the legal status of same-sex relationships may have led to more such relationships. Civil partnerships at first, then same-sex marriage have placed same-sex relationships in a legal framework. This gives this form of relationship a formally recognised and validated status. However, some argue that a legal status similar to that of heterosexual couples actually limits same-sex relationships and makes them less distinct.

Change 2

Changes to divorce making it easier to obtain have affected partnerships in that is offers those in an unhappy marriage a way out. Making divorce easier to obtain also reduces the social stigma attached to divorce. Whether this means that partnerships are therefore more unstable or whether it allows for a search for a more satisfying and stronger partnership, is open to debate.

4. Outline and explain two ways in which Marxists would explain differences in the position of children in contemporary society.

Way 1

Marxists would probably focus on the inequalities between children in contemporary society. This is largely an extension of the class inequalities faced by adults. There is a direct correlation between social class and birth-weight which has consequences for later development. Babies born to poor mothers are likely to have lower birth-weight. There is also a link between low income families and higher levels of hyperactivity amongst children, being more likely to be on the at-risk register and having more illness in childhood. These reflect poor housing, diet and clothing - all part of social class inequalities.

Way 2

A second way Marxists would examine childhood in contemporary society is through the inequalities hat exist between children and adults. Adults exert control over children's time, space and activities in ways that they do not attempt to do with other adults. Where a child can be, at what time, for how long are all controlled by adults. The state too exerts controls over children in relation to employment, education and many behaviours such as drinking alcohol. Marxists tend to see all this control as a reflection of the controls over adults in a capitalist society. Children are being socialised into accepting adult controls in the same way as adults are expected to accept other hierarchical controls.

5. Outline and explain two criticisms of the claim that the modern family is child-centred.

Criticism 1

March of Progress theorists have argued that the modern family is far more child-centred than ever before. They are now the focal point of the family, have a major say in what happens to them and the family and receive a great deal of emotional and financial investment from their parents. Palmer argues that this is not an accurate depiction of childhood, but an idealised view. One aspect of what she calls 'toxic childhood' is health. Children in Western societies have high levels of obesity, experience several health problems as a result and often have body image issues. Junk food which is extensively marketed to families and children is a major cause of these trends.

Criticism 2

Some feminists have extended the notion of patriarchy to become 'age patriarchy'. In the same way as there is a pattern of male domination of women, there is adult domination of children. Children in families with domestic violence as a feature are perhaps extreme examples of the way gender patriarchy can impact on children's experiences. Children can experience childhood as oppressive with wide-ranging controls over their behaviour. Children experience restrictions on their daily activities including where they can go, who they can see and what they can do. Tension in families often revolves around disputes over these boundaries.

6. Outline and explain two state policies that may influence patterns of divorce.

Policy 1

Governments have the power to create policies that can make divorce easier or more difficult to obtain. In general, the last fifty years have seen a general trend towards making divorce legally easier. As divorce is the dissolution of a legal contract – marriage – then the legal definition of the terms on which divorce can take place is crucial. The 1969 Divorce Law reform Act changed the legal grounds for divorce from having to prove a 'crime against the marriage' to the widened definition of 'irretrievable breakdown' of the marriage. This made it much easier for couples to divorce as only one partner had to make this claim. This resulted not only in a spike in applications but a long term sustained increase.

Policy 2

Changes to the employment pay and conditions of women have had a major impact on divorce. Improvements for women mean that they have much greater economic

independence; they are no longer so reliant on a husband/breadwinner. This makes then freer to put an end to an unhappy marriage as they know they can survive financially outside of that marriage. Although there are several reasons for improvements in women's economic status, a major influence has been a succession of government policies aimed at reducing sex discrimination in employment and pay. Rising – if not full – equalisation of pay and legally better work prospects have enhanced the economic position of women.

1O MARK 'APPLYING MATERIAL FROM ITEM A, ANALYSE TWO ...' QUESTIONS: BELIEFS

Format of the 'Applying material from Item A, analyse two...' questions

- The key skill here is, as with the other type of 10 mark question, APPLICATION.

- However, the nature of the application is different in this type of question. You have to find two aspects of an issue 'buried' in the Item and then link these to your own knowledge.

- Application is about LINKING two things together. In this type of question, the linking here is of elements in the Item and the key focus of the question.

- So the first task is for a student to identify the two elements in the Item that you can then link to your own knowledge.

- However, these are not going to be explicit -otherwise there would be no real application to be done.

- So the Item elements are going to be to some extent 'hidden' and you will therefore have to read the Item carefully to identify them.

- Once two elements have been identified (there will probably be at least three potential elements), a student needs to develop each in turn.

- As referring to aspects of the issue not in the Item will confine an answer to the bottom mark band (1-3), it is vital that the two aspects are drawn from the Item and that this is made explicit in an answer. It is one of those situations whereby a candidate can help the examiner to give the candidate marks!

- So make explicit reference to the elements in the Item that are being used as the starting point of each of the two paragraphs in the answer e.g. 'Item A states....'

GETTING YOUR HEAD AROUND THIS TYPE OF QUESTION

- First there is an example question with a full marks answer.

- Then there are six examples of Items to practice identifying elements in them.

- There then follows six 'skeletal' answers based on the six items we have used initially.

SPECIMEN QUESTION AND ANSWER

Item
One recent trend has been the growth of new religious movements in many Western societies. It is estimated that there are nearly half a million people who are involved in some way or another with NRMs. Sociologists have attempted to explain this development. Some argue that sects offer an explanation for the social and economic position that some people find themselves in. It may also be that it is how people feel about their social position rather than their actual position that leads them to sects and cults. Uncertainty and insecurity in the modern world can also motivate people.

Question
Applying material from the Item, analyse two reasons for the growth in membership of New Religious Movements.

Candidate A:
"As the Item states, the 'social and economic position that some people find themselves in' may offer an explanation of the growth of membership of NRMs. Sects and cults disproportionately draw their membership from the poor and oppressed. These groups existing on the margins of society, largely excluded from mainstream society, may well feel that they are not receiving the status and economic rewards that they deserve. Whereas mainstream churches may offer a legitimation of inequality, NRMS may offer a different explanation for their subordinate status. World-rejecting NRMS can attract the discontented by the promise of a better alternative life to the one they find themselves in. People can achieve that better life by adhering to the new religion. However, many people attracted to NRMs come from middle-class backgrounds and do not experience a lack of social and economic status so this does not offer a full explanation of NRM membership.

The Item also states that 'uncertainty and insecurity in the modern world can also motivate people' to join NRMS. Wilson argues that the growth in NRMs coincided with a period of marked social change and upheaval. This undermines social norms and creates uncertainty which moves people to seek security within a small religious group which has a clear message which appeals to them. Part of change is secularisation and the traditional religions and churches have less appeal and which may also demand too much loyalty. Some NRMs which are a reaction to social change are described by Wallis as world-rejecting as they offer a more idealistic world which rejects the rampant consumerism of the modern Western world. However, there is an issue here in that some NRMs offer stability in response to change yet others seem to offer an alternative lifestyle which is itself a form of change."

ITEMS AND QUESTIONS: Identify the elements in the Item that could be used as the basis for two paragraphs.

Example 1
Item A
Functionalist analysis argues that society if like an organism which has fundamental needs that need to be met. The various elements that make up society – social sub-systems – function to meet these needs. Shared religious values reinforce society's agreed social norms and help to keep people together. Religious also provide us with meanings and guide us through life crises.

Question
Applying material from Item A, analyse two criticisms of the functionalist view that religion performs positive functions for society.

Example 2
Item A
There is substantial evidence that religion has been declining in importance in many Western societies. Attendance at church, identification with a religion and a loss in the influence wielded by established churches all point to decline. Some sociologists have explained this process in terms of the development of different ways of explaining events. Some of these are non-religious explanations, others are from different religions. The movement of people around the world and greater communication may also have had an effect.

Question
Applying material from Item B, analyse two reasons for secularisation in many Western societies.

Example 3
Item A

Sociologists see different threats to the stability of society. One threat to the social order comes from individual selfishness; if people pursued their own goals all the time then conflict can result. Another danger is the way people may develop ideas that create an alternative view of the way society could be. Many sociologists see the need to exert control over people as a fundamental social need that religion can help to meet.

Question
Applying material from Item A, analyse two ways in which sociologists have argued that religion can act as a conservative force in society.

Example 4
Item A

There is a clear gender divide in the UK when it comes to involvement with religion. Women are more likely than men to hold religious beliefs, attend church and have a stronger commitment to religious values. Women often have different social roles to men that involves them in activities that bring them closer to religious views. Their values also often connect them more closely to religion than do those of men. Women may also be closer to the natural world.

Question
Applying material from Item B, analyse two reasons why women are more likely than men to be involved in religion.

Example 5
Item A

Any religion can have its fundamentalist element and followers. Fundamentalism refers to the desire for believers to return to a past 'golden age' and to embrace the core fundamentals of their traditional religious belief. This can arise when a religion feels under pressure from outside. The modern world can offer many different choices which too can become a pressure on a religion. It may also be the case that fundamentalism is only really a development within religions that allow little interpretation of their core beliefs.

Question
Applying material from Item B, analyse two reasons for the growth in religious fundamentalism.

Example 6
Item A
There are many forms of belief system – religious, ideological, scientific – but some are arguably, more open than others. Religion is often claimed to be a closed belief system because it often claims to have the absolute truth, a form of perfect knowledge that is heresy to challenge. Such beliefs also have to be more or less unchanging as otherwise they could not support their claim to be the one and only true belief.

Question
Applying material from Item B, analyse two reasons why science may be considered to be an open belief system.

WORKED EXAMPLES

Example 1
Item A
Functionalist analysis argues that society if like an organism which has fundamental needs that need to be met. The various elements that make up society – social sub-systems – function to meet these needs. Shared religious values reinforce society's agreed social norms and help to keep people together. Religious also provide us with meanings and guide us through life crises.

Question
Applying material from Item A, analyse two criticisms of the functionalist view that religion performs positive functions for society.

Elements 'buried' in the Item to use in an answer:
- 'reinforce society's agreed social norms' – link to Marxist criticism that religion reflects the values not of society but a ruling class; forms an ideological justification for inequality (the poor shall inherit the earth); so 'reinforce' and 'norms' – yes, but not 'society's'
- 'provide us with meanings' – link to critique that these meanings are not based on rational thought but are faith-based; superstition is no alternative to rational, scientific explanation;
- 'help to keep people together' - link to feminist critique that religion maintains divisions; sacred texts/places of worship etc segregate men and women; women seen as subordinate.

Remember, always choose the two points that you can develop in the greatest depth and explanatory detail.

Example 2

Item A

There is substantial evidence that religion has been declining in importance in many Western societies. Attendance at church, identification with a religion and a loss in the influence wielded by established churches all point to decline. Some sociologists have explained this process in terms of the development of different ways of explaining events. Some of these are non-religious explanations, others are from different religions. The movement of people around the world and greater communication may also have had an effect.

Question

Applying material from Item B, analyse two reasons for secularisation in many Western societies.

Elements 'buried' in the Item to use in an answer:

- 'different ways of explaining events' – link to development of rational ways of thinking; growth of a technological worldview; have greater explanatory power than religious ideas about divine intervention, miracles etc.
- 'from different religions' - link to religious diversity; religions rarely now have monopoly on explanations; alternative religious ideas; pic n' mix; reduces the power of a single religion.
- 'movement of people around the world' - link to increasing social and cultural diversity; contact between people with different faiths in globalised world; cannot escape alternative views; undermines plausibility of a single faith.

  Whichever points you select to use, always state them cleanly at the start of your answer so the examiner knows you are linking to the Item.

Example 3

Item A

Sociologists see different threats to the stability of society. One threat to the social order comes from individual selfishness; if people pursued their own goals all the time then conflict can result. Another danger is the way people may develop ideas that create an alternative view of the way society could be. Many sociologists see the need to exert control over people as a fundamental social need that religion can help to meet.

Question

Applying material from Item A, analyse two ways in which sociologists have argued that religion can act as a conservative force in society.

Elements 'buried' in the Item to use in an answer:
- 'individual selfishness = threat to stability' - link to notion that religion stabilises society by supporting the value consensus in society; the desires of individuals are controlled by the force of religion e.g. religious courts/Sharia law; religion supports individual conformity.
- 'alternative view of way society could be' - link to religion's attempt to impose conformity; Marxist notion of ideological function of religion; legitimates inequality and prevents development of alternative world views.
- 'control over people' – link to feminists claims of patriarchal nature of religion; religious values, practices etc maintain subordination of women e.g. segregation in places of worship; religious sanctions reinforce civil law.

Remember, always choose the two points that you can develop in the greatest depth and explanatory detail.

Example 4
Item A
There is a clear gender divide in the UK when it comes to involvement with religion. Women are more likely than men to hold religious beliefs, attend church and have a stronger commitment to religious values. Women often have different social roles to men that involves them in activities that bring them closer to religious views. Their values also often connect them more closely to religion than do those of men. Women may also be closer to the natural world.

Question
Applying material from Item B, analyse two reasons why women are more likely than men to be involved in religion.

Elements 'buried' in the Item to use in an answer:
- 'women involved in activities that bring them closer to religious views' - link to traditional expressive role of women; religion has strong affinity with this role, valuing motherhood e.g. Mary, Mother of God; carer roles reflect the spiritual care of the church.
- 'values connect women more closely to religion' - link to gender socialisation patterns; women brought up to be more passive and obedient so more accepting of religious values especially if paternalistic.
- 'women may be closer to the natural world' - link to the way women are prominent in New Age movements; 'earth mother' motif; child-rearing makes women less goal oriented and more caring; closer to more of the ultimate questions of life and death.

Remember, always choose the two points that you can develop in the greatest depth and explanatory detail.

Example 5
Item A
Any religion can have its fundamentalist element and followers. Fundamentalism refers to the desire for believers to return to a past 'golden age' and to embrace the core fundamentals of their traditional religious belief. This can arise when a religion feels under pressure from outside. The modern world can offer many different choices which too can become a pressure on a religion. It may also be the case that fundamentalism is only really a development within religions that allow little interpretation of their core beliefs.

Question
Applying material from Item B, analyse two reasons for the growth in religious fundamentalism.

Elements 'buried' in the Item to use in an answer:
- 'religion feels under pressure from outside' – fundamentalism on Third World = reaction to change being brought from outside; modernisation and globalisation provide reason for defensiveness; also provides some of the methods for this defensiveness e.g. internet communications.
- 'modern world offers different choices' – link to link to Giddens on cosmopolitanism; tolerance of different ideas conflicts with fundamentalist faith; weakens power of religious authority; resistance to change through return to fundamental values.
- 'only within religions that allow little interpretation of their beliefs' - link to idea that fundamentalism is mainly found in monotheistic religions; with no competing Gods (as in Hinduism), little room for interpretation of holy scriptures; = easier for fundamentalism to flourish.

Remember, always choose the two points that you can develop in the greatest depth and explanatory detail.

Example 6
Item A
There are many forms of belief system – religious, ideological, scientific – but some are arguably, more open than others. Religion is often claimed to be a closed belief system because it often claims to have the absolute truth, a form of perfect knowledge that is heresy to challenge. Such beliefs also have to be more or less unchanging as otherwise they could not support their claim to be the one and only true belief. Science on the other hand may claim to be an open system.

Question
Applying material from Item B, analyse two reasons why science may be considered to be an open belief system.

Elements 'buried' in the Item to use in an answer:

- 'more or less unchanging beliefs' - link to notion that scientific knowledge is cumulative (Popper); process of discarding knowledge that is shown to be false; each discovery builds on or demolishes previous ones.
- 'absolute truth' - link to acceptance that all scientific knowledge is open to being disproven; principle of falsification; all scientific knowledge is open to question; 'organised scepticism'.
- 'heresy to challenge' - link to use of empirical evidence to test theories/hypotheses; not seen as heretical to do so; objective research; research must be published and shared to be of value.

Remember, always choose the two points that you can develop in the greatest depth and explanatory detail.

10 MARK 'OUTLINE AND EXPLAIN TWO…' QUESTIONS: BELIEFS

Format of the 'Outline and Explain two…' questions.

- This style of question is found in A level Paper 2 for Beliefs

- The crucial skill here is APPLICATION.

- Fundamentally, this question has to link two separate elements in the specification. That's where the application skill is centred.

- The question therefore must have two elements in it. First task then on reading this question is to identify the two elements.

- Perhaps the simplest way to view this is that two separate bullet points in the specification need to be linked.

- This really tests a student's ability to apply different parts of the topic to each other.

- It is very similar to the old emphasis on SYNOPTICITY.

GETTING YOUR HEAD AROUND THIS TYPE OF QUESTION

- So for each topic we will first look at the bullet points for Education and then identify some likely combinations that might form the basis of a question.

- Then we will deduce some likely example questions that link two bullet points.

- There then follows one example question with two example answers (with commentaries) at different levels of achievement.

- Finally there are six 'skeletal' answers to potential questions.

Beliefs

The AQA specification bullets (summarised)

- Ideology, science and religion

- Relationship between social change and social stability, and religious beliefs, practices and organisations

- Religious organisations, cults, sects, denominations, churches and New Age.

- Relationship between social groups and religious/spiritual organisations and movements, beliefs and practices.

- Significance of religion and religiosity, nature and extent of secularisation, globalisation and spread of religions.

So likely combinations would include linking:

- Science, ideology and social change/stability

- Sects cults, New Age etc and secularisation

- Sects, cults etc and social change

- Secularisation and social stability

- Relationship between social groups and religious organisations

- Social groups and religious beliefs, practices and organisations

Example questions

Outline and explain **two** sociological explanations of the relationship between ideology and social change.

Outline and explain **two** ways in which science may be different to religious beliefs.

Outline and explain **two** ways in which religion may reinforce patriarchal values.

Outline and explain **two** ways in which religion may affect the social position of women.

Outline and explain **two** ways in which religion may benefit particular social groups.

Outline and explain **two** reasons why religion plays a significant social role.

Outline and explain **two** views of the relationship between sects and cults and social change.

Outline and explain **two** reasons why churches may be more likely than other religious organisations to act as a conservative force.

Outline and explain **two** effects of globalisation on religion.

Outline and explain **two** changes postmodernity may have brought about on religious belief and practice.

Outline and explain **two** ways in which new religious movements may be evidence that secularisation is not occurring in Western societies.

Outline and explain **two** reasons why the development of New Religious Movements is not evidence that secularisation is occurring.

Outline and explain **two** reasons why women are more likely than men to join New Age movements.

Outline and explain **two** reasons why churches are more likely than other forms of religious organisation to act to prevent social change.

Comments:
- We can conclude that there are a lot of potential combinations.

- However, it is not as demanding as it may seem as the potential links are not odd or unusual so there will be a lot in what students have been prepared for that will be the starting point for effective answers.

- The links are there, they just need to be brought out more in the way material is presented.

Getting into the top band
- The key is to recognise that the questions will have TWO elements. It wants you to connect the two in the answer.

- Examples above illustrate this e.g. policy and inequalities in achievement.

- Attempting to make links will move the answer up through the mark bands. The three specimen answers to the following question illustrate this important point.

SPECIMEN QUESTION AND ANSWERS

MARK EACH ANSWER AND MAKE SOME COMMENTS JUSTIFYING THE MARK YOU HAVE GIVEN IT.

Outline and explain two ways in which religion may affect the social position of women.

Candidate A

"Feminists usually see religion as a patriarchal force that assists in the subordination of women. Religious beliefs in particular can offer a worldview in which women occupy an inferior, unequal position. Sacred texts often focus entirely on male gods and religious leaders. Some religious stories negativise women as the cause of human suffering or place them in a domestic and childbearing role. So for example, in the Christian faith, Mary is glorified as the mother of Jesus, the motherhood being the defining point.

Some feminists argue that this is not the fault of religion itself but the result of underlying patriarchal forces in society that establish patriarchy then manipulate religion to reinforce female subordination. These sociologists point to the pre-monotheistic religions of several millennia ago that often had a female earth goddess at their heart."

Comment:

Mark   /10

Candidate B

'*Most feminists argue that there is a close connection between patriarchal society and the role played by religion. According to feminists, patriarchy – the male domination of society – is central to nearly all societies. Sacred texts often focus entirely on male gods and religious leaders. Some religious stories negativise women as the cause of human suffering or place them in a domestic and childbearing role. So for example, in the Christian faith, Mary is glorified as the mother of Jesus, her motherhood being what defines her. The result is the justification and reproduction of female inequalities. Religious values and practices that promote female subordination place women in an unequal social position. For example, if they are expected to be good wives and mothers, then their role in education and employment is limited, they are unlikely to have a career of their own. Some feminists argue that not all religions operate as an ideological reinforcement of patriarchal values. Woodhead claims that here are 'religious forms of feminism' as it is possible for women to use religions, even patriarchal religion, to improve their social status and position. Some religions – a distinct minority - are consciously non-patriarchal, for example, the Quakers. Others may be quite conservative and patriarchal but within them, women can use a number of strategies to use their religion to improve their position. For example, Muslim women may wear the veil so that they gain sufficient approval so they can then enter education. Alternatively, women may use the doctrine of the church as a lever to get better treatment. Some sociologists argue that these strategies do not really alter the main patriarchal thrust of these religions, they are just pushing at the edges of it. '*

Comment

In this answer, the candidate has chosen two distinct feminist views about the way religion may affect the social position of women. The big danger with this question is that a candidate selects two aspects of 'religion as patriarchal' e.g. religious beliefs and practices. There may be too much overlap in doing that – here, two competing feminist views are clearly separate and different policies they know a lot about. In both cases the link to women's social position is made explicit – there is a run of logically connected statements.

Mark   /10

Outline and explain two ways in which religion may affect the social position of women.

Candidate A

"Feminists usually see religion as a patriarchal force that assists in the subordination of women. Religious beliefs in particular can offer a worldview in which women occupy an inferior, unequal position. Sacred texts often focus entirely on male gods and religious leaders. Some religious stories negativise women as the cause of human suffering or place them in a domestic and childbearing role. So for example, in the Christian faith, Mary is glorified as the mother of Jesus, the motherhood being the defining point.

Some feminists argue that this is not the fault of religion itself but the result of underlying patriarchal forces in society that establish patriarchy then manipulate religion to reinforce female subordination. These sociologists point to the pre-monotheistic religions of several millennia ago that often had a female earth goddess at their heart."

Comment:
The first paragraph has some good knowledge of patriarchal attitudes with examples. However, although this is linked to negativising women, the link to women's social position is not fully developed. The second paragraph is a good illustration of choosing an issue that you understand but do not really have any depth of understanding about. So the connection to women's social position is stated but not explicitly developed.

So 5/10

Candidate B

"Most feminists argue that there is a close connection between patriarchal society and the role played by religion. According to feminists, patriarchy – the male domination of society – is central to nearly all societies. Sacred texts often focus entirely on male gods and religious leaders. Some religious stories negativise women as the cause of human suffering or place them in a domestic and childbearing role. So for example, in the Christian faith, Mary is glorified as the mother of Jesus, her motherhood being what defines her. The result is the justification and reproduction of female inequalities. Religious values and practices that promote female subordination place women in an unequal social position. For

example, if they are expected to be good wives and mothers, then their role in education and employment is limited, they are unlikely to have a career of their own. Some feminists argue that not all religions operate as an ideological reinforcement of patriarchal values. Woodhead claims that here are 'religious forms of feminism' as it is possible for women to use religions, even patriarchal religion, to improve their social status and position. Some religions – a distinct minority - are consciously non-patriarchal, for example, the Quakers. Others may be quite conservative and patriarchal but within them, women can use a number of strategies to use their religion to improve their position. For example, Muslim women may wear the veil so that they gain sufficient approval so they can then enter education. Alternatively, women may use the doctrine of the church as a lever to get better treatment. Some sociologists argue that these strategies do not really alter the main patriarchal thrust of these religions, they are just pushing at the edges of it."

Comment

In this answer, the candidate has chosen two distinct feminist views about the way religion may affect the social position of women. The big danger with this question is that a candidate selects two aspects of 'religion as patriarchal' e.g. religious beliefs and practices. There may be too much overlap in doing that – here, two competing feminist views are clearly separate and different policies they know a lot about. In both cases the link to women's social position is made explicit – there is a run of logically connected statements.

So 10/10

SKELETAL ANSWERS

1. **Outline and explain two sociological explanations of the relationship between ideology and social change.**

Explanation 1

Ideology is a world view with a cohesive set of inter-related beliefs and values which offers a way to understand the world. An ideology can take a number of forms including religious and political worldviews. For some sociologists, an ideology can be a set of beliefs that, in a disguised fashion, justify the interests of a particular social group. Marxists see ideology as functioning to legitimate the inequalities found in capitalist society in which a ruling class exploit a majority, property-less class. In order to prevent the subordinate class demanding a change in their position, ideologies such as religion and nationalism are employed to prevent them seeing the real cause of their weak position and thus prevent the emergence of class consciousness and social change.

Explanation 2

Functionalists recognise that in a modern secular society, religious ideas may have lost some of their power to influence people. The rise of rational, scientific thought has undermined the power of religions ideologies in Western societies. These societies are also often now multi-faith and the existence of a range of faiths undermines the belief that there is only one true religion. For a functionalist, this loss of power threatens the 'glue' of society and may lead to major social change. They argue however, that civil religion takes the place in terms of preventing social change and ideologies (although they do not use the word itself) such as nationalism brings people together.

Always a safe route to choose two very different sociological views to avoid the danger of overlapping points (choosing Marxism and feminism may have resulted in an overlap).

2. **Outline and explain two views of the relationship between sects and cults and social change.**

View 1

Some sects and cults seem to offer members a promise of social change. Troeltsch argued that sects tend to draw members mainly from marginalised communities that are low in social status and reward, and this is because there is a desire amongst these groups for improvement. However, the nature of the social change promised by such movements varies. In some cases it is the withdrawal from the world and awaiting a millenarian event that will improve their situation or which has the promise of happiness in the afterlife. In other cases, such as with cargo cults in Melanesia, the cult turns into a political movement demanding change in the here and now.

View 2

An alternative view of the relationship is to see sects as a response to social change rather than a potential cause of change. A functionalist approach would see a period of major social change such as industrialisation, as generating anomie in society as the changes challenge existing patterns of behaviour. So existing norms and values have less hold over people and the result is uncertainty and anxiety. As a result, people turn to alternative social groups to give them a sense of belonging and to re-establish the loss sense of community. Sects often offer solace and a promise of salvation which take the place of the previous norms and values.

3. **Outline and explain two reasons why churches may be more likely than other religious organisations to act as a conservative force.**

Reason 1

One view of a conservative social force is that it defends traditional institutions, values, behaviours etc. Churches tend to be long-established, traditional institutions, for example, the Church of England has existed for centuries. Churches often also claim to have a monopoly on the truth. A functionalist view of religion is more appropriately linked to the role of a church. This argues that religion legitimates society's central value system and gives meaning to events. Churches do this by having sets of values that mirror that central value system. Other religious organisations such as sects and cults may often be world-rejecting and this is clearly a challenge to the established order.

Reason 2

A second reason why churches may be more likely to act as a conservative force is that they are more likely to have close links with the state. In some cases they are the official state religion, or may have political and economic links to the state. For example, many schools in England are faith schools with strong links to a church. For a church, it is important to socialise young people into their belief-system. So it is in the interests of the church to act in a conservative manner as they themselves are part of the status quo. Other religious organisations such as sects, cults and denominations are not linked to the state and have no vested interest in preserving the status quo. In some cases they may be in opposition to the state so would not act in a conservative manner.

4. **Outline and explain two effects of globalisation on religion.**

Effect 1

Globalisation means the world is becoming increasingly interconnected. The deregulation of trade, the growth of globalised media and other markets and the creation of instant communication through the internet, all present a challenge to religion. The extent of changes and the exponential speed at which they occur all undermine traditional views and lifestyles. This clash between traditional cultures and late modernity may well have created the conditions for the rise of religious fundamentalism. The emphasis in late modern society on individualism and personal choice is directly at odds with the strict dogmas of traditional religions which potentially creates a fundamentalist reaction as a religion attempts to reassert its authority.

Effect 2

Globalisation has the potential to create a 'clash of civilisations'. Huntington argues that religion has been central to recent global conflicts, especially involving Western, Christian nations and Islam. Western societies are characterised by liberal progressive values such as democracy with values based on core Christian beliefs Globalisation also means that people see themselves more in these broad categories than as members of nation-states. The struggle between these two civilisations is difficult to resolve because religious values tend to be held very strongly and the contest is then fought out on a global stage with 'proxy wars' being fought in many parts of the world.

5. **Outline and explain two changes postmodernity may have brought about on religious belief and practice.**

Change 1

Postmodern society is based on individual consumerism. We construct our own individual identities, often acquiring them by combining those on offer. In terms of religion, this translates into being 'spiritual shoppers'. Not only do we buy our clothes and social activities, we select our religious identity as well. We no longer have to belong to a specific, often inherited through family, religion, we can pick and mix our religions, often creating a highly individualised version.

Change 2

The development of global instant communication networks, especially the internet, means that religion can go online too. In some cases this is an extension of traditional religion with church services etc being transmitted so people do not have to be actually present at the service. A new development however, is the way global religious communities can gather and communicate online. This is a form of cyber-

religion that means individuals can share their personal spiritual values and create online spiritual communities that exist in cyber-space.

6 Outline and explain two ways in which new religious movements may be evidence that secularisation is not occurring in Western societies.

Way 1

Secularisation is the process by which religion loses its influence in society. Some sociologists have argued that this process has been under way on many Western societies for several decades citing dramatic falls in church attendance etc. However, some have argued that the rise in NRMs is evidence to the contrary. Joining a NRM is usually a matter of choice rather than family tradition and this may be seen as an example of 'spiritual shopping' in which people are relatively free to choose their religion (or not). Arguably, choosing to join a NRM is a more positive act than simply 'going because you have to' and the commitment is greater. This implies that the desire for religion is deeper and stronger and thus religion is not losing its influence among members of NRMS.

Way 2

New Age NRMs reject the traditional views of mainstream religions but nevertheless illustrate the importance of spiritual beliefs in contemporary Western society. The New Age emphasises spirituality and an individual's search for inner peace. Although their beliefs may be unconventional compared to the established churches, New Age NRMs imply re-enchantment of the world, permeating it with spirituality. Although conventional worship may have declined, in many cases it has been replaced with new 'self-religions'.