

A LEVEL SOCIOLOGY (AQA) FOR TEACHERS AND STUDENTS

UNDERSTANDING AND APPROACHING 30 MARK ESSAYS IN SOCIOLOGY OF CRIME AND DEVIANCE

by

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UNDERSTANDING AND APPROACHING 30 MARK ESSAYS IN SOCIOLOGY OF CRIME AND DEVIANCE

Introduction: Marks and Skills

In the 30 mark essays:

AO1 Knowledge carries 12 marks

AO2 Application carries 9 marks

AO3 Analysis and Evaluation carries 9 marks

The 30 mark essay contributes just under 40% of the marks on Paper Three, easily the most important question to prepare for. The aim of these materials is to help you to see where the marks, especially those for Application and Analysis and Evaluation skills, can be won. It is very important to develop a clear understanding of the type of questions that can be asked in this area of Sociology of Crime and Deviance. Each question will have its own particular focus, meaning you need to select certain knowledge and not other material. Many marks are lost by presenting material that is at a tangent to the question or which you do not explicitly make relevant. You need to orientate the knowledge you present to meet the demands of that particular question.

Having good knowledge is important but it is even more important to display the other skills as they carry 18/30 marks. We will examine each of these skills in turn.

APPLICATION SKILLS

- With 9/30 marks for Application skills, it is vital to show these throughout the answer - opening, closing and main paragraphs.
- Application is all about making links/connections (see the box below) and explaining these explicitly. It is almost as though a candidate has to make statements that say 'this is why this section of knowledge is relevant to this question'.
- If interpretation is how a question is taken apart and choosing relevant Knowledge; application is about showing why that selection of Knowledge is relevant to the question issue.
- As the Item is very short, there is likely to be only a couple of points in it that can be drawn into the essay. The Item is more useful for seeing how an issue is set up - the last sentence or two in the Item often indicates an alternative view (and therefore is a focus for evaluation).
- Links to other (relevant) topics, theories and methods/methodologies.

Ways to show application skills – link knowledge to:

- a key word in the question
- an example
- a study
- points from the Item
- a theory
- methodological issues
- other topics
- debates raised by the question

ANALYSIS

- Analysis is all about explanation. It is a focus on explaining why events take the course they do, of taking ideas apart and of explaining how they link together.
- With 25% of the marks for Analysis and Evaluation skills, it is vital to show these throughout the answer - opening, closing and main paragraphs.

Ways to show analysis skills

- explaining why two ideas connect
- developing an argument
- creating a 'chain of reasoning'
- taking a theory apart
- having a clear line of reasoning throughout your essay.
- comparing ideas/theories/explanations
- drawing out contrasts too
- explaining points from the Item

EVALUATION SKILLS

- Most students are able to recognise at least some aspects of evaluation but this is often in a fairly limited way through the presentation of negative points, usually in the form of a list of criticisms.
- This is fine at one level and will get some recognition from examiners, but it is not a full evaluation. A major hurdle for students to get over, especially at the beginning of the course, is seeing that 'evaluate' questions require them to **TEST** a claim rather than just presenting chunks of knowledge relevant to the issue in the question. The point about evaluation is to see it as using knowledge to test a claim.
- There are possibly three main aspects of evaluation: criticisms, strength and presenting alternative arguments.

Ways to show evaluation skills

- identifying the strengths of a claim/study/theory/etc
- identifying the weaknesses of a claim/study/theory/etc. ..
- assessing the methodology of a study
- offering alternative claims to that in the question
- creating an evaluative structure in their answer
- a final evaluative paragraph

Two specific Evaluation issues

The Juxtaposition issue

Many candidates place an alternative concept/theory/limitation/etc alongside the initial one. Unless this is explicitly connected then this is simple juxtapositioning. In essence, this is saying 'I know there is an alternative, here it is...' without explaining why and in what ways it is an alternative.

Evaluation and the Item

The Item sometimes sets up a claim in a paragraph containing a few sentences. Then an alternative is flagged up but not developed, usually in a single sentence as a final paragraph. This is often the core debate in the question so pick up on it when you read the Item.

Examiner Annotation

The examiner marking your essay will be looking for evidence of these skills and will use certain annotations to identify them. The annotations they use will indicate these skills – showing how important they are in leading to your final mark.

Typical annotations include:

APP for Application (of various kinds)

AN for Analysis

EVAL for Evaluation

C for concepts

TH for Theory

ST for studies.

How this pack is organised

Each Unit takes one aspect of the Sociology of Crime and Deviance.

- **Typical questions** on this aspect of Crime and Deviance are identified.
- Then **things to note about these questions**, especially their structure are outlined. These usually refer to the differences of emphasis in each question – something examiners will be watching for in your answer. Particular attention is given to ways you can demonstrate Application skills (30% of the marks, remember).
- There is then a **top mark band answer** to one of the questions with examiner annotation and commentary to show you where marks for the different skills were awarded.
- Finally there are some **exercises and brief decodes** of the other questions that are possible in this area of Sociology of Crime and Deviance.

UNIT 1 CONSENSUS APPROACHES TO UNDERSTANDING CRIME

Typical essay questions

Questions are likely either to refer to the usefulness of consensus approaches in general or they may specify a particular example of a consensus approach. You could face an 'evaluate the claim' type of question that sets up a statement taken from a consensus approach and asks you to evaluate how accurate this claim is. The question could simply state 'crime' or could indicate one or more dimensions of crime – causes, extent, effects or characteristics.

Questions could also ask about the functions of crime in society. This involves making reference not only to functionalist theories but also to Marxist approaches.

Examples include:

- Applying material from Item A and your own knowledge, evaluate the claim that crime is primarily the result of blocked opportunities in society.
- Applying material from Item A and your own knowledge, evaluate the contribution of consensus approaches to our understanding of the causes and extent of crime in society.
- Applying material from Item A and your own knowledge, evaluate sociological explanations of the causes and extent of crime and deviance.
- Applying material from Item A and your own knowledge, evaluate the contribution of consensus approaches to our understanding of crime and deviance.
- Applying material from Item A and your own knowledge, evaluate sociological explanations of the functions of crime and punishment in society.

Things to note about these questions

- 1 If the question asks about consensus approaches to crime and deviance, you need to refer to not only functionalism, but to Merton's strain theory, early subcultural approaches and to Right Realism.
- 2 If the question identifies 'functions', then refer to Marxist views of the functions of crime as well as to functionalism.
- 3 Check whether the question states 'crime', 'deviance' or 'crime and deviance'. If it does state 'deviance', then ensure your essay includes reference to non-

criminal but acts such as mental illness, suicide or anti-school subcultures which are defined by some as 'deviant'.

- 4 If the question states a claim, this will probably have been partially explained in the accompanying Item. It is very important to locate the claim within a major sociological approach e.g. 'status frustration' should be located within strain theories of crime and deviance; 'blocked legitimate opportunities' should be located within strain theories – but also within conflict approaches.
- 5 If the question focuses on the functions of crime/deviance, refer to functionalism and to conflict approaches as both see crime performing certain functions for society. Refer as well to the functions of punishment if the question allows.
- 6 Watch to see if specific aspects of crime are indicated e.g. causes, effects, characteristics, extent of crime/deviance. It is also possible to link crime and punishment together.
- 7 If the question asks about the extent of crime and deviance, there is a great opportunity to gain Application marks by making reference to the problems of defining and measuring crime and (especially) deviance.
- 8 Answers can gain Application marks by linking theories to some of the substantive topics including mental illness, suicide and education. It is sound advice to keep these links short and to the point and avoid lengthy descriptions of studies, no matter how relevant.
- 9 Where appropriate, keep linking back to the question by using the key words in the question.

EXAMPLE QUESTION AND ANSWER WITH COMMENTARY

Item A

Some sociological approaches argue that the goals which individuals should pursue, such as the 'American Dream' of material success, are defined by society. The legitimate methods for achieving them are also made clear through socialisation. However, when some groups and individuals find their opportunities are blocked and they are prevented from achieving those goals by legitimate methods, then they may turn to non-legitimate methods.

Applying material from Item A and your own knowledge, evaluate the claim that crime is primarily the result of blocked opportunities in society.

Deconstructing the question

The focus of question is on the way some groups find legitimate routes to achieving society's aims are blocked by structural inequalities. This is the basis of strain theory. You can introduce Marxist and Left realism too as they focus on unequal opportunities. Knowledge therefore potentially includes Merton's strain theory/individual adaptation to anomie, subcultural responses based on status frustration, Marxist perspectives, Left Realism and some explanations of the relationship between ethnicity and crime.

EXAMPLE ANSWER WITH EXAMINER ANNOTATION

TH APP

AN

'Functionalist theory claims that there is an agreed set of values in society that binds people together through shared norms and values. Although crime may have some functions in terms of boundary maintenance and adaptation and change, too much crime is destabilising. Strain theories, which developed initially within a consensus perspective, argue that the main cause of crime is the strain that exists when society promotes certain goals but has an unequal opportunity structure. So society encourages individuals to achieve defined goals but limits their ability to achieve those goals by legitimate means.

APP

AN

APP

In the context of the USA, there are cultural goals such as money, material goods and success and the legitimate methods are through individual self-help, work and educational opportunity. Despite an ideology of meritocracy, some groups face built-in disadvantages and do not have the same educational and employment opportunities as others. For example, black and Hispanic Americans face discrimination in work, housing and education; their opportunities are effectively blocked. Merton also suggests that the goal of achieving is so strong that it pressurises people to achieve at any cost, even if that means turning to crime. This can contribute to feelings of anomie as cultural goals out-weigh norms of achieving those goals.

AN

Merton argues that individuals can adapt to the strain caused by the dissonance between goals and legitimate methods in several ways. Some will continue accept both goals and means to achieve them, thus conforming to all aspects of society's norms about success. Those who find their opportunities are only partially blocked maybe more likely to respond in this way. Merton indicated that there are also four deviant adaptations. Innovation is when the individuals adopt illegitimate routes to success including crime. So they retain the aim of material success

AN

but reject the institutionally available means to achieve it. Alternatively, some reverse this process and forget about the goals but stick to the socially acceptable means in a ritualistic way. A third individual adaptation is to retreat from society, rejecting both the goals and the means of achieving them. Finally, some will try to replace both the goals and the means of achieving them, rebelling against society and wishing to create a new social order.

EVAL

Merton creates a useful typology of different responses to anomie and these can be applied to a range of behaviours which are deviant but not necessarily criminal such as a 'drop-out' and counter-culture groups. His idea of innovative adaptation was an early attempt to explain working-class crime and was an antidote to previous explanations that were based on notions of individual biological or psychological weaknesses. Merton also raised the possibility that the roots of crime and deviance may lie in the way opportunities are limited for some groups but not others within a social structure that claimed to be meritocratic.

EVAL

EVAL

However, what Merton's view that blocked opportunities can result in crime does not do is to explain why individuals take the adaptation route they do. Although a useful typology of responses to blocked opportunities, his five individual adaptations is not an explanatory approach. Furthermore, Merton focuses on crime that has some financial reward as it is carried out in pursuit of the American Dream and this does not apply so well to explaining non-utilitarian crime. Finally, not all crimes are individual acts, some are carried out in group contexts. All of Merton's five individual adaptations can be group responses as well. Subcultural theories developed from, and are a continuation of, this weakness in Merton's initial strain theory.

EVAL

APP

EVAL

AN

EVAL

A K Cohen argues that the anomie experienced by particularly working class youths does not necessarily lead to utilitarian crime, but can result in apparently mindless acts of vandalism and violence. The educational failure such groups experience tells them they are never going to achieve on society's terms. The result is the formation of a subcultural response which is a way to achieve social status within a group. Society's norms are often inverted so for example, stealing and violence are condemned by society but may be valued within the delinquent group. Cloward and Ohlin however, stress the role of the neighbourhood in the formation of different types of subculture. Where there is an existing pattern organised crime in an area, the response tends to be criminal subcultures as young people can learn from older criminals. In neighbourhoods with a high population turnover and social

AN

instability, the response is one of a conflict subculture. In this case, behaviour is largely destructive and based around loosely organised gangs. Cloward and Ohlin see a final response to anomie as retreatism as those involved not only fail in terms of society, they also fail in relation to local gangs. Subcultural theories accept that the anomie produced by a strain between societal goals and means on achieving them, results in different forms of subcultural response.

EVAL

From a Marxist perspective, Merton and subcultural theorists all fail to provide a full explanation of crime. Although Marxists agree that there are blocked opportunities for some groups in society, this is an incomplete analysis as it does not explain why these exist. They argue that only an understanding of the criminogenic nature of

AN

capitalism can complete this picture. Capitalism creates deep social inequalities which breeds alienation and frustration leading to crime. Furthermore, the notion of strain does not provide a satisfactory explanation of corporate and state crime. These crimes are carried

EVAL

out by the powerful and successful who have not experienced blocked opportunities. In addition, strain theories over-focus on working-class crime giving a skewed image of the nature and extent of crime.

EVAL

Strain theories have directed attention away from the biological explanations of crime offering a perspective which focuses on the social forces that create it. Merton's original ideas tries to do this within a broadly consensus perspective, utilising functionalist ideas of goals and means to achieve them. However, it is an incomplete

EVAL

analysis, failing as it does to examine the structural causes of blocked opportunities for some groups and to see the group nature of some criminal acts. A focus on utilitarian crime committed by mainly working-class offenders leaves a large range of crimes unexplained. Domestic violence, many crimes against the person and the crimes of the powerful mainly fall outside this approach.'

Commentary

This is a top mark band answer (25-30 out of 30)

Let's examine it in terms of the skills needed at A level (see the definitions and examples of the skills in the introduction to this pack).

AO1 Knowledge

There is a wide range of relevant knowledge of strain theories. Studies, sociologists, concepts and theories are all identified and developed.

AO2 Application

The whole essay maintains a strong focus on strain – the thrust of the question. Alternative theories are used as evaluation, for example, Marxism in the penultimate paragraph.

There is application of theories, methods, studies and examples.

The answer links back to the key wording of question at various points.

AO3 Analysis and Evaluation

There is great deal of Analysis in the form of explaining and unpacking various arguments and studies.

Evaluation is sustained throughout, identifying the strengths and limitations of labelling and other concepts, and through comparing with alternative theories.

There is a strong reasoned, justified and evaluative final paragraph.

ACTIVITIES

1 Go through the essay and put a '**C**' by each concept, **TH** by each theory mention and **ST** for each study.

2 Take any of the examiner annotations for **AN**, **EVAL** or **APP**, and explain why these skills have been displayed. Alternatively, underline the key wording that displays those skills.

QUICK DECODES

Each essay question on this issue will have its own particular focus – they will be slightly different to each other. It is important that your selection of material to use and the way you use it reflects these variations. Here is a quick decode of the other question you could get on this area of the crime topic.

You could also go through the exemplar answer and select paragraphs that, with adjustment, could be used in answer to these questions.

Applying material from Item A and your own knowledge, evaluate sociological explanations of the functions of crime and punishment in society.

Note firstly that the question is not just about crime but about punishment as well. Although most of your answer is likely to be about crime, you need some focus on punishment otherwise your essay is unlikely to get into the top mark band. Make this clear in the way your answer is structured with a definite section on punishment.

Remember that it is not only functionalism that deals with functions, but Marxism as well.

When dealing with two or more theories/explanations, there is always a danger that an answer simply juxtaposes these, that is, sets them one after the other with no explicit comparison.

It is also effective to show where two apparently opposite theories (consensus vs conflict) may share some similarities.

You could refer to the methodological issues of defining and measuring a 'function'. What indicators could be used to provide evidence of a particular alleged function of crime or punishment?

Applying material from Item A and your own knowledge, evaluate the contribution of consensus approaches such as functionalism, to our understanding of crime and deviance.

Note that the question refers to both crime and to deviance. You need to make this distinction clear in your opening paragraph by defining both.

Consensus theories include not just functionalism but some of the earlier subcultural theories and Right Realism.

As well as the conventional material from Durkheim, Davis, Cohen and Eriksen, you can use functionalist sex role theory. Subcultural strain theories are useful in that they indicate how subcultures may perform positive functions for individuals though not for society.

As well presenting limitations of these theories as you work through them, you could refer to the methodological issues of defining and measuring a 'function' or to decide when there is too much crime or deviance for it to be performing a positive function for society.

You can also use Social Action and Marxist approaches to indicate (briefly) how alternative theories provide a different perspective on crime. This material is more effective when tied into consensus theories rather than being presented as a separate 'block' of material near the end of the answer.

UNIT 2 CONFLICT APPROACHES TO UNDERSTANDING CRIME

Typical essay questions

Questions are likely either to refer to the usefulness of conflict approaches in general or they may specify a particular example of a conflict approach – most probably Marxism. You could get an ‘evaluate the claim’ type of question that sets up a statement taken from a conflict approach and asks you to evaluate how accurate this claim is. The question could simply state ‘crime’ or could indicate one or more dimensions of crime – causes, functions, extent, effects or characteristics. Questions could also ask about the functions of crime in society. This involves making reference not only to Marxist theories but also to functionalist approaches.

A question could have a focus on a specific crime – crimes of the powerful, corporate crime. You can draw on other theories in addition to conflict approaches when dealing with these questions. Alternatively, such a question could ask about the relationship between social class and crime.

Examples include:

- Applying material from Item A and your own knowledge, evaluate the claim that laws are made and enforced in the interests of a ruling class.
- Applying material from Item A and your own knowledge, evaluate sociological explanations of class differences in crime.
- Applying material from Item A and your own knowledge, evaluate Marxist explanations of the causes and nature of crime in society.
- Applying material from Item A and your own knowledge, evaluate sociological explanations of the causes and extent of corporate crime.
- Applying material from Item A and your own knowledge, evaluate sociological explanations of the functions of crime for society.

Things to note about these questions

- 1 If the question asks about conflict approaches to crime and deviance, you need to refer to not only Marxism, but to Neo-Marxism and Left realism and feminism.
- 2 If the question identifies ‘functions’, then refer to functionalist views of the functions of crime as well as to Marxism.
- 3 Check whether the question states ‘crime’, ‘deviance’ or ‘crime and deviance’. If it does state ‘deviance’, then ensure your essay includes reference to non-criminal but acts such as mental illness, suicide or anti-school subcultures which are defined by some as ‘deviant’.

- 4 If the question states a claim, this will probably have been partially explained in the accompanying Item. It is very important to locate the claim within a major sociological approach e.g. 'ideological functions' and 'selective law enforcement' should be located within Marxist theories of crime and deviance.
- 5 Watch to see if specific aspects of crime are indicated e.g. causes, functions, effects, characteristics, extent of crime/deviance. It is also possible to link crime and punishment together.
- 6 If the question asks about the extent of crime and deviance, there is a great opportunity to gain Application marks by making reference to the problems of defining and measuring crime and (especially) deviance.
- 7 Answers can gain Application marks by linking theories to some of the substantive topics including mental illness, media influence and education. It is sound advice to keep these links short and to the point and avoid lengthy descriptions of studies, no matter how relevant.
- 8 Where appropriate, keep linking back to the question by using the key words in the question.

EXAMPLE QUESTION AND ANSWER WITH COMMENTARY

Item A

Official statistics indicate that crime appears to be predominantly working-class in nature. Marxists argue that this can only be explained in terms of the class struggle that takes place within a capitalist society. Capitalism is based on the maximisation of profit which necessarily means that the working class are exploited by the ruling class. The greed and self-interest thus created encourages crime, not only among the poor to survive, but for the wealthy to maintain their position.

Other sociologists have argued that this is an overly deterministic view of social behaviour.

Applying material from Item A and your own knowledge, evaluate Marxist explanations of the causes and nature of crime in society.

Deconstructing the question

Note that the question indicates both causes and nature of crime in society. Both need to be covered in an effective answer. It is appropriate to make reference to the Marxist critique of official crime statistics, criminogenic capitalism, law-making and law enforcement in capitalist society, and the ideological functions of crime. Other appropriate knowledge includes specific aspects of crime such as corporate, green

and state crime, media representations of crime, and different approaches to crime prevention and punishment

You can make reference to alternative theories although this is most effectively done by introducing these as each element of Marxism is dealt with, rather than in separate 'knowledge blocks' towards the end of the essay.

EXAMPLE ANSWER WITH EXAMINER ANNOTATION

TH APP

'The Marxist view of crime is based on the central idea that there is a class divide and struggle within capitalist society. Whereas functionalism sees society as characterised by consensus, Marxism sees conflict as the fundamental characteristic of capitalist society. Although both approaches agree that the structure of society strongly determines how people act, in terms of crime then, Marxists see it as reflecting the class struggle. In capitalist society, the ruling class will always seek to maintain its dominant position, exploiting the working-class in a range of ways. The causes and nature of crime reflects this class struggle.'

TH APP

AN

AN

AN

AN

EVAL

EVAL

Capitalism systematically causes criminal activity because it emphasises individual profit. Just as this can be achieved through legitimate business activities, so too can it be created through criminal acts. Capitalism encourages aggressive behaviour in the pursuit of individual gain at the expense and exploitation of others. Capitalism is at core, criminogenic as it has all the characteristics needed to cause crime. Capitalism creates poverty whilst at the same time, through high-pressure advertising, it encourages the pursuit of material goals. For those living in poverty, unable to afford these material possessions, this may propel them towards theft in order to gain these material goods. Alienation created by capitalism also results in frustration and anger which can lead to acts of violence. However, Taylor argues that this is overly deterministic and that law-breaking has a strong element of individual choice about it.

Although a possible explanation of the causes of utilitarian crimes, Marxism does not explain all types of crime. Thus feminists argue that Marxism does not offer sufficient explanation of the causes of crimes against women. Other laws, such as speed limits, cannot be seen as serving the interests of a ruling class, but as a desire for public safety.

AN

As well as influencing crime amongst the working-class, capitalism is criminogenic in the way it affects corporate and white-collar behaviour. The pressure to achieve in a material sense means that those involved in business are encouraged to commit business crimes to further their personal interests. Unlike most crime, corporate crime has potentially enormous costs. The scale of crimes such as environmental pollution, lack of protection of workforces and 'food crime' is huge. This strongly suggests that corporate crime is endemic within the capitalist system. More recently, globalisation has led to the spread of transnational crime within global capitalism. Arms and people trafficking, cyber-crimes and increased trade in drugs, are all forms of crime that have taken advantage, or even been created by, global capitalism.

AN

APP

AN

EVAL

Unlike working-class crime, the crimes of the powerful are often hidden from public view, obscured by complex legalities and in some cases, protected by the state. Some corporate and white-collar crime is subject to civil rather than criminal law which further obscures this kind of crime from public scrutiny. Corporate crime is more difficult to investigate and few state agencies have the resources to police it. Critics however, claim that there are high profile examples of cases such as that of Bernie Madoff whereby corporate crime is enforced and the outcomes are widely publicised.

AN

APP

EVAL

Some Marxists argue that crime also performs an ideological function within a capitalist system. As well as creating the idea that crime is essentially a working-class activity or the result of damaged individuals rather than the capitalist system, some laws appear to benefit everyone, thus implying that the law is fair and that no-one is above the law. Health and safety legislation, consumer protection and anti-discrimination laws are all examples which suggest the law protects all of us. Marxists argue this is simply an image and that selective enforcement and weaker penalties all reveal the true nature of crime in capitalist society.

AN

ST APP

Marxists see the selective enforcement of laws as further evidence of laws serving the interests of the ruling class. There is a systematic bias in the way different laws are policed which reflects the power inequalities in society. As working-class law-breaking is more likely to be heavily policed, the crimes of the powerful are less likely to be enforced. Reiman and Leighton called their study argued that through crime, the rich get richer and the poor get poorer. The prosecution rate for crimes associated with working-class offenders is far higher

TOPIC APP

than for crimes such as tax evasion even though this can have far higher financial costs for society. The representation of crime in the media reinforces this as it is far more likely to focus on particular types of crime such as violence, vandalism and petty theft, than on tax evasion or crimes against the environment. One aspect of the nature of crime therefore is how different crimes are represented in the media and in public awareness of crime. As Hall showed, crimes such as mugging can be turned into a moral panic in which BME groups were portrayed as a threat, resulting in a campaign for greater law and order in order to distract from a crisis in capitalism. However, Left realists point out that this often ignores the reality of crime.

AN

ST APP

EVAL

Another way in which capitalism can be seen as criminogenic, is through the way it creates the conditions for state crime. There are many forms of state crime including political crimes, those carried out by armed forces of the state, and cultural and economic crimes.

AN

Althusser argues that the police, prisons and armed forces form the repressive state apparatus which coerces the working class into accepting the inequalities created by capitalism. This repression is often carried out in ways that breach human rights if not the law of that particular country. However, whereas this is clear in the case of genocide, this dividing line is more difficult to establish in, for example, the case of the economic exploitation.

AN

EVAL

Marxists see the punishment of crime as part of the repressive state apparatus which exists to maintain the position of the ruling class. Prisons mirror the organisation and structure of the factory which in turn follows the pattern of society in general with some groups being subordinated to others. The criminal justice system as a whole produces outcomes in which the poor, people from disadvantaged backgrounds and certain BME groups are over-represented in the prison population. This also helps to promote a stereotypical image of crime being associated with these groups. Consensus approaches however, argue that this view fails to appreciate that crime is 'real' and that some criminals at least, need to be prevented from repeat offending through punishment.

AN

EVAL

Marxist accounts of crime challenge consensus approaches to crime and deviance by asking questions about how economic and power inequalities in capitalist society in relation to laws and their enforcement, create the conditions for crime. Marxist explanations of the nature of crime have also led to a greater focus on the crimes of the powerful which have been given even more impetus by

EVAL

EVAL

globalisation. However, a focus primarily on the economic dimensions of crime means that Marxists explanations can be criticised for failing to explain other, non-utilitarian, forms of crime. Feminists criticise Marxism for lacking a perspective on gender inequalities and crime, whilst others argue Marxism fails to explain the racist dimensions of law, crime and its enforcement.

EVAL

Commentary

This is a top mark band answer (25-30 out of 30)

Let us examine it in terms of the skills needs at A level (see the definitions and examples of the skills in the introduction to this pack).

AO1 Knowledge

There is a wide range of relevant knowledge of school factors affecting achievement. Studies, sociologists, concepts and theories are all identified and developed.

AO2 Application

The whole essay maintains a strong focus on Marxism – the thrust of the question. Alternative theories do not appear as separate ‘blocks’ but instead they are used as evaluation at various points.

There is application to theories, methods, studies and educational policies.

The answer links knowledge to the two key elements in the question, the causes and nature of crime.

AO3 Analysis and Evaluation

There is great deal of Analysis in the form of explaining and unpacking various arguments and studies.

Evaluation is sustained throughout, through comparison with alternative theories and criticisms of specific Marxist claims. Examples are drawn from a range of crimes.

There is a strong reasoned, justified and evaluative final paragraph.

ACTIVITIES

1 Go through the essay and put a ‘**C**’ by each concept, **TH** by each theory mention and **ST** for each study.

2 Take any of the examiner annotations for **AN**, **EVAL** or **APP**, and explain why these skills have been displayed. Alternatively, underline the key wording that displays those skills.

QUICK DECODES

Each essay question on this issue will have its own particular focus – they will be slightly different to each other. It is important that your selection of material to use and the way you use it reflects these variations. Here are quick decodes of other questions you could get on this area of the crime topic.

You could also go through the exemplar answer and select paragraphs that, with adjustment, could be used in answer to these questions.

Applying material from Item A and your own knowledge, evaluate the claim that laws are made and enforced in the interests of a ruling class.

Note firstly that the question specifies two aspects of crime – laws and their enforcement. Therefore an answer should cover each in an explicit manner. The claim is clearly from a Marxist perspective so that will provide the core knowledge in an answer. However, as the command word is to evaluate, it will be important to offer critiques from other theoretical viewpoints. However, when dealing with two or more theories/explanations, there is always a danger that an answer simply juxtaposes these, that is, sets them one after the other with no explicit comparison. You need to explain how one viewpoint is different to another.

You should put this material in a theoretical context with some explanation of core Marxist general theory linked to the more specific material on Marxist views of laws and their enforcement. There are also some methodological issues of generating proof of this claim as if it is accurate, a ruling class would seek to hide this process from public scrutiny.

Applying material from Item A and your own knowledge, evaluate sociological explanations of the functions of crime for society.

This is fairly open-ended question There is often an issue that when the word ‘functions’ appears in an essay, the automatic assumption is that the question is about functionalism. Of course, it is about functionalism but it is also about alternative views of the function crime plays in society, in particular, Marxism.

You could start by defining what ‘function’ means, possibly locating this within functionalist notions of societal needs and prerequisites. It can also be used as in some subcultural theories in terms of functional for individuals if not society. Functionalist ideas about the functions of crime according to Durkheim and others can then be countered with Marxist approaches to the role and function of crime in capitalist society.

You could refer to the methodological issues of defining and measuring a ‘function’ as this usually comes down to an ideological assumption rather than something tangible and measurable.

All these approaches can be criticised from a Social Action standpoint for being too deterministic and, in some cases, tautological.

UNIT 3 SOCIAL ACTION THEORIES AND CRIME

Typical essay questions

Questions are likely either to refer to the usefulness of Social Action/interactionist approaches or refer to a central concept, probably labelling or social construction.

- Applying material from Item A and your own knowledge, evaluate the claim that crime and deviance are socially constructed.
- Applying material from Item A and your own knowledge, evaluate the contribution of labelling to our understanding of crime and deviance.
- Applying material from Item A and your own knowledge, evaluate the contribution of interactionist approaches to our understanding of crime and deviance.
- Applying material from Item A and your own knowledge, evaluate the claim that labelling theory does not offer a full explanation of the causes and nature of crime and deviance.

Things to note about these questions

- 1 If the question identifies a concept then it is important to locate it within a general interactionist perspective. This involves explaining the fundamentals of interactionism and then explaining how the concept fits into them.
- 2 Check whether the question states 'crime', 'deviance' or 'crime and deviance'. As Social Action approaches may offer a greater insight into deviance than social systems viewpoints, it is likely that a question on this area will mention deviance. If it does state 'deviance', then ensure your essay includes reference to non-criminal but deviant acts such as mental illness, suicide or anti-school subcultures.
- 3 A very effective way to start your essay is to explain how Social Action and Social Systems approaches differ in their treatment of crime and deviance. This establishes a theoretical framework for your essay.
- 4 Evaluation can take the form of indicating specific criticisms (and strengths) of key interactionist ideas (labelling, social construction, self-fulfilling prophecy). Alternatively, Evaluation can take the form of using other theories, probably social systems perspectives, to examine the shortcomings of interactionism.

- 5 One very effective way to gain marks for Application, is to link interactionism with accounts of media influence. The concept of labelling underpins explanations of deviancy amplification, moral panics and folk devils.
- 6 Another way to gain Application marks is to link interactionism to an assessment of the usefulness and accuracy of official statistics. The concept of social construction is especially useful here to illustrate the existence of a 'dark figure' of crime missing from official figures.
- 7 Answers can gain Application marks by linking interactionist theory to some of the substantive topics including mental illness, suicide and education. It is sound advice to keep these links short and to the point and avoid lengthy descriptions of studies, no matter how relevant.
- 8 Keep linking back to the question by using the key words in the question.

EXAMPLE QUESTION AND ANSWER WITH COMMENTARY

Item A

Some sociological approaches see crime as actions that break the law and which are carried out by criminals. Interactionism take a very different approach, arguing that they focus on the processes by which some groups, but no others, become labelled as criminal or deviant. This reflects a basic premise of interactionism; that all aspects of social life are socially constructed. Crime results from the social interaction between those suspected of breaking the law and those responsible for enforcing it.

Applying material from Item A and your own knowledge, evaluate the contribution of interactionism to our understanding of crime and deviance.

Deconstructing the question

The focus of question is on interactionist theory. That includes labelling, self-fulfilling prophecy, social construction of crime and deviance, primary and secondary deviance, deviance amplification and reintegrative shaming.

It states crime and deviance so you need to cover both.

The question states 'understanding' (of crime and deviance). This raises the question of just how complete interactionism is as an explanation.

Avoid putting alternative theories in a separate section (probably towards the end of the essay). The key is to apply these alternatives as you go along as evaluation some aspect of interactionism.

EXAMPLE ANSWER WITH EXAMINER ANNOTATION

TH APP *'Interactionists argue that because people have consciousness, they make sense of their world by attaching meanings to events and actions. Therefore sociology should attempt to uncover and understand those meanings in order to gain insight and an empathetic understanding of the world views of social actors and groups. Interactionist approaches question official definitions of crime and how it is measured. They are less interested in identifying the apparent causes of crime and, as Item A states, are more concerned with finding out how and why some groups are labelled as criminal or deviant whilst other groups carry out the labelling. One of the strengths of interactionism is that it offers an analysis of deviant, as well as criminal, behaviour.*

EVAL *Labelling theory reveals a great deal about the processes by which some social groups are negatively labelled as deviant. As such it is a useful counter-balance to consensus perspectives which tend to accept official definitions and measurements of crime as being more or less accurate. It has been successfully applied to examining the relationship between crime and deviance and the media, official crime statistics, mental illness, suicide, education and forms of punishment.*

APP

AN *Becker argues that no act is in itself deviant or criminal, but only becomes so when others successfully label it as such. So what is important here is not the act, but society's reaction to it. Central to this is the process by which laws are made and enforced. Moral entrepreneurs, including law enforcement agencies themselves, attempt to get acts labelled as criminal or deviant. Then it depends how laws are applied. According to Cicourel the police operate on the basis of their typifications of what a criminal is like and this reflects all kinds of stereotypical assumptions. As a result they police certain, usually low-income, areas more frequently and are more likely to negotiate with middle-class youths or their parents about their misdemeanours and release them with cautions. Working-class equivalents are usually more likely to be charged. However, while useful in examining the processes involved, labelling by itself lacks a full analysis of why some groups are labelled positively and others negatively. To do this requires an analysis of power relations in society.*

ST APP

AN

EVAL

EVAL *Interactionist concepts of labelling and the self-fulfilling prophecy have been used to examine the development of deviant pupil subcultures. Studies such as Becker's show how teachers attach negative or positive labels to certain types of pupils on the basis of stereotypical*

ST APP

assumptions about them. Becker found that the teacher's 'ideal pupil' has characteristics broadly matching middle-class pupils. Gillborn and Youdell argue that teachers have racialised expectations of different ethnic groups and thus are more likely to see black boys as disciplinary problems, resulting in disproportionately more pupils from this background being excluded. The result is the creation of anti-school behaviour as pupils internalise negative labels. However, like all applications of labelling theory, it almost seems that there is no initial reason why certain groups are seen as deviant.

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EVAL

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Labelling theory is very useful in providing a critique of the crime statistics used in many areas of research. These statistics are viewed as the result of a process of social interaction between victims, suspects and the criminal justice system. There are several stages from the recognition that a crime has occurred through to conviction and sentencing at which the potential 'crime' may be dismissed from the process and not be classified as a crime. These include reporting the criminal act, the police acting on the report, stopping a suspect, charging and then prosecuting them, being found guilty and then the sentence given. Interactionists argue that official crime statistics tell us more about this process than about the amount of crime and who carries it out. There is a 'dark figure' between these official statistics and the real rate of crime.

AN

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ST APP

Interactionism has not only looked at crime but at the way deviance is socially constructed. Goffman studied psychiatric hospitals and noted how a patient goes through various stages through which their identity is replaced with a new master status of being mentally ill. They have their personal possessions removed, their freedom of movement restricted and have to conform to the rules of the total institution they find themselves in. Rosenhan's field experiment in which his researchers admitted themselves into psychiatric wards, indicated that their diagnosis of schizophrenia became a master status that was difficult to escape from. Even when acting normally, their behaviour was interpreted as fitting their diagnosis. Thus from an interactionist perspective, mental illness is something created by social processes. However, this can be criticised for apparently implying that mental illness is somehow not real, but the result of being labelled as such.

ST APP

EVAL

TH APP

Marxists criticise labelling theory for failing to recognise the reasons why certain groups have greater power than others in the labelling process. Much research from a labelling approach has examined the role of what Marxists would see as the 'middle men' in the process, such as the police or psychiatrists, which fails to acknowledge the root of their power which is the class structure. The state has the power to make laws and to enforce them selectively. The result is then that powerless groups, such as the working-class and some minority ethnic groups, are criminalised while corporate criminal activities are not.

AN

EVAL

Labelling theory has also been very influential in helping to understand the relationship between the media and crime. Cohen identifies the process by which moral panics are created about groups who are represented as 'folk devils'. He showed how media reaction to some relatively minor events involving youth groups, were exaggerated and distorted by the media through dramatic headlines and misleading content. Groups can be negatively labelled by the media, stigmatising them and calling for greater police intervention.

ST APP

AN

EVAL

The result is a deviancy amplification spiral in which more people take on the roles as 'advertised' in the media. Marxists argue that although this describes the process of moral panics, it does not fully explain why some groups and not others are portrayed as 'folk devils'. Why youth groups and trade unionists but not corporate criminals? Thus Hall sees the moral panics of the late 1970s as a way of distracting attention from the economic crisis of capitalism at that time.

ST APP

EVAL

EVAL

Social systems theorists argue that, ironically, interactionism is overly deterministic, as labelling seems to have an inevitable outcome once the initial labelling. Critics argue that people can reject the label and not internalise it. Marxists have also criticised interactionism for focusing too much on the enforcement of crime and not enough on the question of who makes the laws and in whose interest. What is need here, they claim, is an understanding of the class structure of capitalist society. However, interactionism has made a significant contribution to our understanding of crime and deviance by showing that, at least in part, it is socially constructed.

Commentary

This is a top mark band answer (25-30 out of 30)

Let us examine this essay in terms of the skills needs at A level (see the definitions and examples of the skills in the introduction to this pack).

AO1 Knowledge

There is a wide range of relevant knowledge of interactionist studies, concepts and theories, all identified and developed.

AO2 Application

The whole essay maintains a strong focus on interactionism – the thrust of the question. There is no added-on section listing alternative theories (instead they are then used as evaluation at various points).

There is application to theories, methods, studies and examples.

Examples are drawn from deviance as well as from crime. There is also application from topics such as education and psychiatric wards.

AO3 Analysis and Evaluation

There is great deal of Analysis in the form of explaining and unpacking various arguments and studies.

Evaluation is sustained throughout, identifying the strengths and limitations of labelling and other concepts, and through comparing with alternative theories.

There is a strong reasoned, justified and evaluative final paragraph.

ACTIVITIES

1 Go through the essay and put a '**C**' by each concept, **TH** by each theory mention and **ST** for each study.

2 Take any of the examiner annotations for **AN**, **EVAL** or **APP**, and explain why these skills have been displayed. Alternatively, underline the key wording that displays those skills.

QUICK DECODE

Each essay question on this issue will have its own particular focus – they will be slightly different to each other. It is important that your selection of material to use and the way you use it reflects these variations. Here is a quick decode of another question you could get on this area of the crime topic.

You could also go through the exemplar answer and select paragraphs that, with adjustment, could be used in answer to this question.

Applying material from Item A and your own knowledge, evaluate the claim that labelling theory does not offer a full explanation of the causes and nature of crime and deviance.

This is essentially the same question as the example given. However, it has three elements in it that are very useful to focus on in your answer. You should refer back these three elements throughout your answer.

When the question states 'not offer a full explanation of', it is stressing that you should consider in what ways labelling may not offer a complete explanation of crime and deviance. This is encouraging you to look at the limitations of labelling.

It also highlights two particular aspects of crime and deviance, its causes and nature (characteristics). It is probably most effective to deal with each in separate sections in your answer as this keeps a clear fix on the question wording.

You should refer to the methodological issues of defining and measuring deviance and crime.

UNIT 4 REALIST APPROACHES TO UNDERSTANDING CRIME

Typical essay questions

Questions are likely either to refer to the usefulness of realist approaches in general or they may specify either Right or Left realism.

A question could refer simply to 'crime' or it could specify the causes, nature, extent of - and more likely - the ways to control, crime.

You could get as 'evaluate the claim' type of question that sets up a statement taken from a Right or Left realist approach and asks you to evaluate how accurate this claim is. The question could simply state 'crime' or could indicate one or more dimensions of crime – causes, extent, effects, characteristics of, or ways to prevent, crime.

Examples include:

- Applying material from Item A and your own knowledge, evaluate the claim that crime is primarily the result of relative deprivation and marginalisation.
- Applying material from Item A and your own knowledge, evaluate the contribution of realist approaches to our understanding of the causes of crime and how to control it.
- Applying material from Item A and your own knowledge, evaluate the contribution of Right realism to our understanding of crime and deviance.
- Applying material from Item A and your own knowledge, evaluate the contribution of Left realism to our understanding of crime and deviance.
- Applying material from Item A and your own knowledge, evaluate the claim that although Right and Left realists agree that there is a real crime problem, they disagree about its causes and how to deal with it.

Things to note about these questions

- 1 If the question asks about realism perspectives in general, what links Right and Left realism is they both agree that rising crime is a real social issue. However, they then diverge drastically in how they analyse the causes and consequences of this trend.
- 2 It might be useful to organise material in terms of how each approach sees the causes, characteristics, extent, consequences of, and how to prevent, this real increase in crime.

- 3 You can include material on their different approaches to crime prevention as well.
- 4 If the question states either Right or Left realism, then of course this is going to be the main focus of your answer. However, you can make use of the other realist approach in your evaluation of the realist approach indicated in the question. The danger here is that you end up simply juxtaposing the two and the essay begins to look like a catch-all, all you know about realist perspectives. Explain why they have such different explanations and responses to crime.
- 5 You can gain Application marks by explaining the relationship of both approaches to the formulation of government policy. You can explore why Right realist approaches to crime prevention is better received politically than Left realist policies.
- 6 Watch to see if specific aspects of crime are indicated e.g. causes, effects, characteristics, extent of crime/deviance.
- 7 Answers can gain Application marks by linking theories to some of the substantive topics including media coverage of crime and subcultures. It is sound advice to keep these links short and to the point and avoid lengthy descriptions of studies, no matter how relevant.
- 8 Where appropriate, keep linking back to the question by using the key words in the question.

EXAMPLE QUESTION AND ANSWER WITH COMMENTARY

Item A

Left realists argue that there is a real problem of crime in society which results from some fundamental social inequalities. They suggest that increased individualism in a materialistic culture can create relative deprivation among many groups in society. More marginalised individuals and groups experience resentment which can lead them to crime.

Other sociologists have seen biological predisposition, inadequate socialisation and individual choice as being more important factors contributing to crime.

Applying material from Item A and your own knowledge, evaluate the claim that crime is primarily the result of relative deprivation and marginalisation.

Deconstructing the question

The focus of question is on the factors identified by Left realists as the primary causes of an increase in crime in contemporary society. You should define relative deprivation and marginalisation as well as introducing the role Left realists see played by subcultures.

As well as feeding in criticisms of these factors, you can use Right Realism as an alternative explanation.

There is the opportunity to link material about media representation of crime, influence on social policy and approaches to crime prevention.

EXAMPLE ANSWER WITH EXAMINER ANNOTATION

TH APP

Left realists accept the reality of an increase in crime rather than see it as the product of policing styles. In common with Right realists, they argue that other theories have failed to provide realistic solutions to the real fear and existence of rising levels of street crime, violence and theft. Even when there has been a fall in these types of crimes since the 1990s, public perceptions of crime remain high, especially in terms of increasing anti-social behaviour. Much of the political debate about these crimes has followed a more Right realist line, seeing criminals as badly socialised or biologically predisposed to violence and crimes against the person.

AN

AN

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Left realists however, have a very different explanation which is rooted in the structural forces moulding society. Lea and Young argue that crime results from relative deprivation. This is the idea that it is not the objective circumstances of a person, but their subjective perception of their position, that determines their feelings and behaviour. So even in a relatively affluent society, you do not have to be particularly disadvantaged to feel that you are not doing as well as someone else.

APP

Modern Western society is strongly materialistic and individuals cannot escape this as they are bombarded on a daily basis with the advertising of material needs and goods. Raised expectations about material goods which individuals cannot afford may push them in the direction of criminal acts to achieve them.

AN

Lea and Young see this as being even more likely in an intensely individualistic society. The decline of traditional communities also contributes to a weakening of the controls such communities could exert over their members. What may even replace them is the growth of subcultures that maintain the goal of material success, but which, as they find it impossible to achieve legitimately, turn to crime instead. Young argues that the result is that there is a tension between this social inclusion, whereby no-one can escape the materialistic culture of late modern society, and the economic exclusion of some groups.

ST APP

EVAL

Left realist arguments have been criticised for failing to explain why some individuals and subcultural groups facing relative deprivation choose crime whilst others do not. Almost by definition, relative deprivation is widespread in society but relatively few people commit criminal acts.

AN

Left realists have also highlighted the way some groups are marginalised. Their lack of power means that they have no way of representing their concerns which results in frustration and anger. Late modern society is characterised by destabilising changes to employment. The growth of low-paid, short-term work, typified by nearly a million workers in the UK on zero-hours contracts, especially among the young and some minority ethnic groups, results in a build up of social tension and an increased likelihood of individuals resorting to crime.

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APP

The nature of some crime also seems to be changing as a result of these kinds of social changes. Surveys of social attitudes indicate greater resentment amongst the middle class towards what is sometimes perceived as a lazy, welfare-dependent underclass. The rise in hate crime against migrant workers and non-whites is also a manifestation of the anger and frustration generated by these social changes. This also feeds into greater demands for more severe punishments for offenders.

APP

EVAL

TH APP

Marxists have been critical of Left realist explanations of crime for being overly focused on the street crimes associated with disadvantaged groups in society, and for not examining what they see as the far greater problem of corporate and globalised crime. The Left realist's close focus on inner-city crime in particular presents a very limited view of crime in general. Left realists have responded by arguing that it is this type of crime that figures most strongly in people's perceptions and fear of crime, so it is the aspect of crime that requires most investigation.

AN

EVAL

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Right realists present a fundamentally different view of the causes of crime that focuses more on the individual rather than on society. They see crime as the result of a combination of biological and social factors such as inadequate socialisation. Right realists argue that Left realists fail to recognise that individuals should take responsibility for their own actions. A decision to commit a crime is that of an individual rather than the fault of any weakness in society. Some individuals have a biological predisposition to crime, especially to violent crime, or have low intelligence. Others may have experienced inadequate socialisation in what are represented as incomplete family units. Ultimately, Right realists see left realism as too sympathetic to those who commit crime.

AN

POL APP

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In terms of crime prevention or reduction, Left realists argue that there is a need to deal with relative deprivation and marginalisation. Governments need to tackle the huge, and increasing, inequalities in late modern society that create crime. In particular, social reforms are needed that deal with poverty, poor housing and inequalities in educational and employment opportunity. So policies such as Sure Start in the UK and the Perry pre-school project in the USA are necessary on a society-wide scale. Only by reducing the fundamental structural forces, can crime be reduced. Left realists also call for an end to military style policing such as stop-and-search and emphasise the need for greater community influence over policing in order to reduce the alienation some communities feel from the police.

EVAL

Right realists have criticised this view of crime prevention for ignoring the responsibility individuals have over their own actions. From this perspective, it is more effective to make crime more difficult to carry out through target-hardening, surveillance and harsher punishments. They also argue that rather than increasing social welfare programmes, it is these that are actually creating

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problems of welfare dependency which results in more one-parent families, greater inadequate socialisation and ultimately, more crime. More generally, Left realist approaches to crime reduction are criticised for being politically unrealistic and expensive. There is far more support for populist politicians calling for tougher sentences than for those wanting major social change. Wholesale social change is a slow and costly process. However, supporters of schemes like the Perry project have pointed to the potential future cost saving of such policies in terms of fewer people carrying out robberies, being incarcerated etc.

Thus there is a fundamental ideological divide between Left and Right realists. Left realist see crime in a societal context whereas Right realism views it as individual actions. It is unlikely that there are ways to bridge this divide. Possibly the greatest weakness of Left realism is not in its analysis, but in its inability to get much traction inside government policy. With the exception of New Labour, most governments find the populist call for tougher action against crime easier to embrace than to focus on policies aimed at reducing society-wide inequalities. Even Tony Blair had to call for being 'tough on crime' in order to present policies that were 'tough on the cases of crime'.

Commentary

This is a top mark band answer (25-30 out of 30)

Let us examine it in terms of the skills needs at A level (see the definitions and examples of the skills in the introduction to this pack).

AO1 Knowledge

There is a wide range of relevant knowledge of Left realism. Studies, sociologists, concepts and theories are all identified and developed.

AO2 Application

Left realist approaches are applied to the nature, causes and extent of crime as well as to crime prevention strategies. There is application of theory, policy and examples.

AO3 Analysis and Evaluation

There is Analysis in the form of explaining and unpacking various arguments and studies.

Evaluation is sustained throughout, identifying the strengths and limitations of key Left realist concepts, especially the two in the question. Alternative theories are used evaluatively rather than a 'block' of different knowledge.

There is a strong reasoned, justified and evaluative final paragraph demonstrating all three Ao2/3 skills.

ACTIVITIES

1 Go through the essay and put a '**C**' by each concept, **TH** by each theory mention and **ST** for each study.

2 Take any of the examiner annotations for **AN**, **EVAL** or **APP**, and explain why these skills have been displayed. Alternatively, underline the key wording that displays those skills.

QUICK DECODES

Each essay question on this issue will have its own particular focus – they will be slightly different to each other. It is important that your selection of material to use and the way you use it reflects these variations. Here is a quick decode of the other question you could get on this area of the crime topic.

You could also go through the exemplar answer and select paragraphs that, with adjustment, could be used in answer to these questions.

Applying material from Item A and your own knowledge, evaluate the contribution of realist approaches to our understanding of the causes of crime and how to control it.

This question wants you to focus primarily on Right realist approaches. You can make use of material about Left realism but it is best to use this evaluatively. So avoid presenting two 'knowledge blocks', one on each approach, as this will look like a catch-all answer.

Start with an explanation of the basis of Right realism.

Note that the question wants you to focus on two aspects of crime in particular – the causes of crime and crime prevention strategies. This means organising your answer into two main sections, one on the causes of crime, the other on crime prevention. In each section keep a focus on one of these two aspects of the question. You can feed in criticisms as you go along and present the alternative Left realist view.

You could refer to the methodological issues of measuring the effectiveness of Right realist crime prevention strategies.

You can also gain marks for Application by linking material about media representations of crime/crime prevention and/or the relationship with government policy.

Applying material from Item A and your own knowledge, evaluate the claim that although Right and Left realists agree that there is a real crime problem, they disagree about its causes and how to deal with it.

This question is inviting you to carry out a comparison between Right and Left realist approaches. However, it is less effective to present two 'knowledge blocks', one on each approach, as this does not draw out much in the way of direct comparison.

Direct comparison is much more effective. The question is set out in such a way as to steer you towards a clearly comparative structure to your answer. Firstly a section examining if they do agree that there is a real crime problem; then a section comparing Right and Left realist views of the causes of crime; finally, a section on how far they disagree over what to do about crime.

UNIT 5 ETHNICITY AND CRIME

Typical essay questions

Questions on ethnicity and crime may focus on crime, offending and/or victimisation. Or a question could specify causes, characteristics, extent or effects of crime by ethnic group – perm any two or three from this list.

They may focus on one explanation of the relationship between ethnicity and crime or ask you to evaluate a range of explanations.

There may be an explicit (or implicit) focus on the way crime statistics are socially constructed reflecting racism within the Criminal Justice System.

- Applying material from Item A and your own knowledge, evaluate sociological explanations of the relationship between ethnicity and offending.
- Applying material from Item A and your own knowledge, evaluate the claim that some minority ethnic groups experience racism both in the criminal justice system and as the victims of crime.
- Applying material from Item A and your own knowledge, evaluate the claim that differences in offending rates by ethnic group are best primarily the result of racism in the Criminal Justice System.
- Applying material from Item A and your own knowledge, evaluate the claim that the over-representation of some minority ethnic groups in crime statistics is primarily the result of the social construction of these statistics.
- Applying material from Item A and your own knowledge, evaluate sociological explanations of the relationship between ethnicity and crime.

Things to note about these questions

1. Note whether the question states crime or specifies offending. If it is the latter, then you should focus on explanations of ethnicity and the commission of crimes. If it is 'crime, then you can cover offending and victimisation of ethnicity.
2. There are methodological issues with defining and measuring ethnicity, especially in relation to offending. In particular, there is a potential relationship

between racism and the social construction of offending by ethnic group. It is possible to have to deal with a question that focuses on this issue.

3. If the question poses one explanation as the 'main' cause of ethnic variations in offending, you should focus on that but use other explanations as alternatives. Avoid doing this in two (or more) 'blocks' of knowledge without explaining the differences between them or explicitly comparing them.
4. Answers can gain Application marks by applying examples of crime or policing practices. However, there is a danger here of going off into long descriptions of these examples so it is sound advice to keep these links short and to the point and avoid lengthy descriptions, no matter how relevant.
5. Further Application marks can be made by linking to other topics such as the media or education.
6. Where appropriate, keep linking back to the question by using the key words in the question.

EXAMPLE QUESTION AND ANSWER WITH COMMENTARY

Item

According to UK official crime statistics, black British people are five times more likely than whites to be stopped and searched, three times more likely to be tasered and over three times more likely to end up in prison. Some sociologists have claimed that this – and similar statistics for some other minority ethnic groups - reflects the way these groups experience relative deprivation and are marginalised in society. However, some sociologists have challenged the validity of official crime statistics, alleging that they reflect racism within the Criminal Justice System.

Applying material from Item A and your own knowledge, evaluate sociological explanations of the relationship between ethnicity and offending.

Deconstructing the question

The focus of question is on the relationship between ethnicity and offending. This seems very straightforward. Appropriate knowledge includes the patterns of offending by ethnic group, the methodological problems in establishing these patterns, the processes involved in the Criminal Justice System (CJS), Left realism, Right realism and, Neo-Marxism. There is also scope to focus on the validity of official crime statistics and ethnicity.

EXAMPLE ANSWER WITH EXAMINER ANNOTATION

METH APP

EVAL

EVAL

'Before offering explanations of this relationship, it is necessary to identify what the patterns of offending and ethnicity are. It is certainly the case that official crime statistics indicate higher levels of offending by black and Asian groups of the population. At the end of the whole Criminal Justice System (CJS) process, these groups are over-represented in the prison population. However, there are considerable issues with official statistics of offending and ethnicity self-report studies show very similar levels of offending for white and black British people whilst Asian groups reported much lower levels of criminal activity. As some explanations of ethnicity and crime are based on accepting the accuracy of official statistics, so if these are inaccurate, the effectiveness of the 'explanations' are undermined.

METH APP

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EVAL

There are several methodological problems associated with investigating crime and ethnicity. Not only do these show how difficult it is for sociologists to investigate, but they also challenge the accuracy of the image that certain ethnic minorities commit more crime than others. The whole process of the social construction of crime statistics by ethnic group highlights the effects that racism in the CJS might have. Thus statistics about offending may be accurate in one sense, but only because the system creates more recorded offending by certain ethnic groups. Whether some ethnic groups do commit more crime than others is true or whether it is a case of more being uncovered, investigated and brought to trial is a difficult question to answer.

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EVAL

Some sociologists have explained ethnic differences in offending by reference to the role of racism in the CJS which results in more of the 'dark figure' of offending by some ethnic groups is exposed compared to that of other groups. There is evidence to indicate from Phillips and Bowling, that many police officers hold negative stereotypes of some ethnic minorities being 'criminal' and that this forms part of the 'canteen culture' of police stations.. Not only this, but the Macpherson report identified institutional racism in the Metropolitan Police. Police racism is one explanation offered for the higher rates of stop and search for black and Asian people. However, it may be that it is just that these groups are over-represented in the groups and areas most likely to be targeted for stop and search actions.

EVAL

The process involved in arrests reveal a similar pattern. Arrest rates for black people are higher than for whites although this may reflect a greater rate of denial of an offence which rules out cautions as a possible course of action for an arresting officer. However, when it comes to prosecution and convictions, cases against black and Asian alleged offenders are more likely to be dropped. Some sociologists have seen this as again reflecting

EVAL

racism within the police as these cases may well be dropped for a lack of sufficient evidence. However, this can be criticised as having it both ways, racism in the police force when disproportionately more black and Asian people are stopped and arrested, racism when fewer than whites are prosecuted or found guilty.

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EVAL

One early consensus theory examining ethnicity is Park's host-immigrant model, argue that the process by which a new migrant group assimilates into the host society can involve tensions including resorting to criminality. For example, a spike in arrests for drink driving offences in the UK was related to an influx of large numbers of Polish workers to the UK. According to Park's model, this will reduce as the migrant group accepts the cultural norms of their new host society. However, this approach can be criticised for offering a highly generalised view of relationships within a society experiencing immigration.

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EVAL

Also within a consensus perspective, Right realists have suggested biological and cultural factors as an explanation of ethnic differences in offending. Murray views the welfare state as a 'nanny state, which creates a culture of welfare dependency among the low-paid and unemployed – groups in which some minority ethnic groups are over-represented. He also sees the rise of lone parent families and what he considers to be the consequent weak socialisation as a cause of criminality. As black families are more likely to be headed by a single female, this is seen as a cause of higher rates of offending by black youths. However, some Asian groups have large extended family structures marked by strong social control, yet Asians are twice as likely as whites to be stopped and searched. This suggests that family structure may not be a strong determinant of offending.

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AN

EVAL

Left realists – from a conflict perspective - accept that official statistics reveal true differences in offending by ethnic group. Whilst accepting that some police officers act in a racist manner, Lea and Young also point out that most offences are reported by the public rather than are 'discovered by the police. So unless the general public are as racist as the police, this suggests that official statistics are relatively accurate. They see this pattern as reflecting the relative deprivation and marginalisation of some minority ethnic groups. Young black British have higher levels of unemployment than whites which may produce greater temptation for crime and have a younger age profile which means there are more people at peak offending age (14 – 21). Many minority ethnic groups live in inner city areas and are in low-income casual employment or are unemployed. Interestingly, when controlled for social class, all ethnicities have a very similar amount of street crime, so whites living in lower class areas

EVAL

offend at the same level as their minority counterparts. This seems to suggest that social class is at least as important as racism in determining offending. However, this has been criticised not least in terms of the increase in arrests of young Asians since 9/11 and 'Islamophobia' in the media and amongst some politicians.

TH APP

Some conflict approaches take a different line. Neo-Marxists such as Gilroy claim that black criminality is a racist myth but as a result of policing processes such as stop and search and the military style policing sometimes employed against black communities, they are criminalised as a group. This can then lead on to crime as a means of political resistance against racism in the CJS and in wider society. Hall's 1970s study of the media-

AN

inspired moral panic over 'black muggers' supports Gilroy's argument. Hall claims that this moral panic was created to distract attention from the crisis in capitalism of the time by blaming a marginalised group in society for crime. However,

ST APP

there is no direct proof of this connection and the fact that Asians have lower rates of offending than blacks but face similar racism within the CJS challenges Gilroy's claim.

EVAL

AN

The relationship between ethnicity and offending is not straightforward. There is doubt as to whether there are real ethnic differences in patterns of offending or whether these recorded statistics reflect racism within the CJS. It is unlikely as well that there is a single over-arching explanation for all offending. What may be more useful is to examine the nature and causes of particular types of crime in relation to ethnicity. It is also important to note that while a great deal of time is spent examining the reasons for patterns in ethnicity and offending, the

AN

Race Disparity Audit of 2017 showed that black, Asian and mixed race people were also more likely to be the victims of crime than white people with nearly one in five experiencing crime.

EVAL

Commentary

This is a top mark band answer (25-30 out of 30)

Let's examine it in terms of the skills needs at A level (see the definitions and examples of the skills in the introduction to this pack).

AO1 Knowledge

There is a wide range of relevant knowledge of school factors affecting achievement. Studies, sociologists, concepts and theories are all identified and developed.

AO2 Application

The whole essay maintains a strong focus on interactionism – the thrust of the question. There is no added-on section listing alternative theories (instead they are then used as evaluation at various points).

There is application to theories, methods, studies and educational policies.

Examples are drawn from deviance as well as from crime.

AO3 Analysis and Evaluation

There is great deal of Analysis in the form of explaining and unpacking various arguments and studies.

Evaluation is sustained throughout, identifying the strengths and limitations of labelling and other concepts, and through comparing with alternative theories.

There is a strong reasoned, justified and evaluative final paragraph.

ACTIVITIES

1 Go through the essay and put a '**C**' by each concept, **TH** by each theory mention and **ST** for each study.

2 Take any of the examiner annotations for **AN**, **EVAL** or **APP**, and explain why these skills have been displayed. Alternatively, underline the key wording that displays those skills.

QUICK DECODES

Each essay question on this issue will have its own particular focus – they will be slightly different to each other. It is important that your selection of material to use and the way you use it reflects these variations. Here is a quick decode of some other questions you could get on this area of the crime topic.

You could also go through the exemplar answer and select paragraphs that, with adjustment, could be used in answer to these questions.

Applying material from Item A and your own knowledge, evaluate the claim that some minority ethnic groups experience racism both in the criminal justice system and as the victims of crime.

This question identifies two aspects of ethnicity and crime that need to be examined – racism in the CJS and racism directed at some minority ethnic groups. You are likely to have more to say on the former than the latter, that's not a problem but make sure both aspects are covered.

You should identify the patterns of offending by ethnicity and raise issues to do with the social construction of crime by ethnicity. An answer should examine the

processes within the CJS – reporting, policing, arrests/cautions, prosecutions, trials, convictions and sentencing – identifying which stages appear to indicate racism in the treatment of some minority ethnic groups, and those stages where it seems not to.

Neo-Marxist theories are a good source of claims about the role of racism. These can be evaluated with reference to alternative theories, including Left and Right realism.

You should examine the relationship between ethnicity and victimisation. You can consider racist hate crimes and the likelihood of some minority ethnic groups being the victim of any kind of crime.

Applying material from Item A and your own knowledge, evaluate the claim that the over-representation of some minority ethnic groups in crime statistics is primarily the result of the social construction of these statistics.

You should indicate what ethnic patterns exist in the official crime statistics, especially in terms of offending.

The key term here is 'social construction (of official crime statistics)'. This needs explaining from a Social Action perspective. It should also be linked closely to the idea that racism permeates potentially every aspect of the reporting, policing and CJS process.

From this you can move on to include some of the neo-Marxist explanations of how racism affects the creation of crime statistics, including reference to moral panics and the role of crime as resistance to racism.

The theoretical framework for this question is likely to be a combination of Social Action and conflict approaches. As the question states 'primarily the result of', you can use alternative explanations of the over-representation of some minority ethnic groups in crime statistics as evaluation.

There is an opportunity to reflect on how important the official statistical patterns are. If they are inaccurate then many of the theoretical explanations of these patterns also fall.

UNIT 6 GENDER AND CRIME

Typical essay questions

Questions may focus on the relationship between crime and women or that of the relationship between men and crime. Alternatively they may be coupled together into a 'gender and crime' question. Questions could focus on the patterns of female or male crime (or both), explanations of these patterns and/or women as victims of crime.

- Applying material from Item A and your own knowledge, evaluate sociological explanations of the differences in patterns of criminal acts between men and women.
- Applying material from Item A and your own knowledge, evaluate sociological explanations of the causes and extent of female crime.
- Applying material from Item A and your own knowledge, evaluate the claim that women offend less than men because of the way their behaviour is controlled in a patriarchal society
- Applying material from Item A and your own knowledge, evaluate sociological explanations of why men commit more crime than women.

Things to note about these questions

1. Note whether the question states gender, men or women and crime as its focus. Gender and crime allows you to cover both men and women. Similarly, if the question links men and women (as the last two questions above do), then you need to cover both.
2. If the question specifies either men or women, then you focus on whichever is in the question.
3. Note whether the question identifies a specific aspect of the relationship between gender and crime. Check whether the question states causes, extent, patterns, effects – if it does, then these are the aspects to focus on.
4. If the question is open-ended asking about the relationship between gender and crime, then all these aspects plus gender patterns in being victims of crime, can be included.
5. A good way to gain Application marks is to explore the methodological issues involved such as the problems involved in using official statistics about the

relationship between gender and crime, and how the criminal justice system's processes may distort this relationship.

6. Where appropriate, keep linking back to the question by using the key words in the question.

EXAMPLE QUESTION AND ANSWER WITH COMMENTARY

Item

Most early sociological research examined what was essentially male crime. In the last forty or so years however, there has been an increased focus on female crime as a distinct phenomenon. Some sociologists have claimed that the lower levels of female crime compared to that of males is the result of a 'chivalry factor' within the criminal justice system. Others see it more as the result of the social controls placed on women in a patriarchal society.

However, some sociologists have highlighted the problems associated with establishing an accurate picture of the extent of female crime.

Applying material from Item A and your own knowledge, evaluate sociological explanations of the causes and nature of female crime.

Deconstructing the question

The focus of question is on the relationship between women and crime. Appropriate knowledge includes gender patterns in official statistics, the chivalry thesis, bias against women in the criminal justice system, functionalist explanations, patriarchal control, the liberation thesis and the criminalisation of women.

The 'nature' of crime refers here to its characteristics, the forms and types of female crime. 'Causes' refers to the range of alternative explanations of patterns of female crime.

It is also very useful to identify the difficulties in measuring this aspect of crime. You can indicate the problems with official statistics, women and crime.

EXAMPLE ANSWER WITH EXAMINER ANNOTATION

| | |
|----------|--|
| | <p><i>'According to the 2015 official statistics relating to gender and crime, in general, females appear are substantially under-represented as offenders throughout the criminal justice system compared with males. This is particularly true in relation to the most serious offence types and sentences, though patterns by sex vary between individual offences. Women account for a quarter of first time offenders, but only one in seven of re-offenders. Females are still substantially underrepresented among those prosecuted, at just over a quarter of the total (27%). This is broadly mirrored in convictions, remands and sentencing, although women have a slightly higher conviction ratio. This all seems to indicate a continuation of an established pattern of crime as a typically male activity. Sociologists from consensus and conflict perspectives have offered different accounts of what appears to be female under-representation in crime figures.</i></p> |
| AN | |
| APP | |
| AN | |
| TH APP | |
| METH APP | <p><i>However, there are substantial problems with determining the extent of female crime. It depends which crimes are considered and how those crimes are policed. For example, between 2005 and 2015, the number of females prosecuted rose by 6% but this was largely driven by an increase in prosecutions for TV licence evasion. What looks like a 'crime wave, may simply be the result of a change in prosecution policy. Furthermore, some sociologists have argued that women are under-represented in crime statistics not because they commit less crime but because the criminal justice system treats men and women differently. So in terms of the extent of female crime, the first thing to do is to establish how accurate crime statistics are.</i></p> |
| AN | |
| EVAL | |
| TH APP | <p><i>The 'chivalry thesis' suggests that the CJS treats women with greater leniency because men see their role as treating women with sympathy and respect. Thus the police are less likely to charge women and judges and juries more likely to give women lighter sentences than men. It is the case that men are more likely to be charged or cautioned than women, receive heavier sentences and be sent to prison. Some self-report studies have also found that self-reported offending shows a smaller gender gap than the official statistics. However, the gender difference even in self-reported crime is still substantial and there may well be an under-reporting of crimes against women carried out by men. A further criticism of the chivalry thesis is that men are more likely to carry out serious crimes than women which leads to heavier sentences.</i></p> |
| AN | |
| EVAL | |

EVAL

An alternative view poses the opposite claim – that the CJS actually treats women unfairly in that it is biased against them. Individual women who do not present themselves as conforming to society’s norms about women are often less likely to be treated fairly. It is almost as if they are on trial for their lack of conformity to norms as for an alleged crime.

EVAL

Walklate points out the way in rape trials it is often the victim’s past sexual history that is on trial, not the offender. However, if this is the case, then it is more, not less likely, that women would be over-represented in crime statistics.

TH APP

From a consensus perspective, Parsons argues that because females perform the ‘expressive role’ in the family they are less likely to carry out crime. As women are involved in looking after the emotional needs of their children and husbands, girls grow up internalising caring values and this reduces the likelihood of them committing crime. If someone feels empathy towards others, they are not likely to carry out acts that damage other people. This expressive role in the nuclear family also bonds women to the community which in turn reduces the likelihood of committing crimes against the community. Furthermore, the primary focus on the family means that women have fewer opportunities for crime, especially work-related or street crimes as they are in those contexts less often than men. Even if this functionalist view was relevant in the past, some sociologists have pointed out that in late modernity, these traditional gender roles in the family have declined. Walklate also criticises this approach for being ultimately based on the biological determinism of women being child-bearers.

AN

AN

EVAL

EVAL

AN

AN

APP

Heidensohn argues that women commit fewer crimes in a patriarchal society because they experience greater social control than men. Women have fewer opportunities for crime because they are subject to patriarchal control in the domestic sphere, in public and at work. Men have greater financial power in the home because they are more likely to be the breadwinner and can resort to violence to maintain their dominant position. Fear of violence and social norms relating to how women appear in public means that they are less likely than men to be out at night. The opportunities for white collar crime are also reduced for women as they are less likely than men to occupy the higher positions in companies which open up opportunities for this sort of crime. Sexual harassment at work also helps to maintain patriarchal control in employment contexts. Heidensohn’s approach has been criticised for being overly-deterministic and over-stating the degree of control over

Commentary

This is a top mark band answer (25-30 out of 30)

Let's examine it in terms of the skills needs at A level (see the definitions and examples of the skills in the introduction to this pack).

AO1 Knowledge

There is a wide range of relevant knowledge of explanations of the relationship between women and crime. Studies, sociologists, concepts and theories are all identified and developed.

AO2 Application

The whole essay maintains a strong focus on the two aspects of crime identified in the question – the causes and the nature of female crime.

There is application to theories, methods, studies, policies and other topic areas.

The key terms of causes and extent are recycled effectively in the answer.

AO3 Analysis and Evaluation

There is great deal of Analysis in the form of explaining and unpacking various arguments and studies.

Evaluation is sustained through comparing alternative explanations and by identifying the specific strengths and limitations of these theories.

There is a strong reasoned, justified and evaluative final paragraph.

ACTIVITIES

1 Go through the essay and put a '**C**' by each concept, **TH** by each theory mention and **ST** for each study.

2 Take any of the examiner annotations for **AN**, **EVAL** or **APP**, and explain why these skills have been displayed. Alternatively, underline the key wording that displays those skills.

QUICK DECODES

Each essay question on this issue will have its own particular focus – they will be slightly different to each other. It is important that your selection of material to use and the way you use it reflects these variations. Here is a quick decode of some other questions you could get on this area of the crime topic.

You could also go through the exemplar answer and select paragraphs that, with adjustment, could be used in answer to these questions.

Applying material from Item A and your own knowledge, evaluate the claim that women offend less than men because of the way their behaviour is controlled in a patriarchal society.

This question identifies one major explanation of gender differences in offending, Heidensohn's feminist approach. Your answer needs to focus on this explanation.

An effective answer will also identify alternative explanations such as the functionalist sex role theory and the chivalry thesis. It is also appropriate to cover the liberation thesis as according to this approach, declining patriarchal power in society should generate an increase in female crime.

You could refer to the methodological issues of defining and measuring female crime. This could challenge the official statistical picture, which in turn underpins these explanations.

Applying material from Item A and your own knowledge, evaluate sociological explanations of why men commit more crime than women.

There are several elements to this question. Firstly, is the official picture of men committing more crime than women accurate? This allows you to bring in the methodological problems of establishing gender differences in crime.

Secondly, if true, how can we explain the higher crime rate for men? Theories based on masculinity are appropriate here.

Thirdly, how have sociologists explained the lower crime rate for women? Here it is appropriate to refer to the chivalry thesis, functionalism, patriarchal control, gender deals, and the liberation thesis.

Throughout the answer, you can make reference to consensus/conflict approaches and to functionalist, feminist and postmodernist theories.

UNIT 7 GLOBALISATION AND CRIME: ENVIRONMENTAL, HUMAN RIGHTS AND STATE CRIME

Typical essay questions

Questions may focus on a general aspect of these crimes, such as the relationship between globalisation and crime. Alternatively they may couple several together either stated explicitly or under a general grouping such as 'crimes of the powerful' (in which case you can refer to white-collar and corporate crime as well).

The question could be general – just referring to 'crime'. Or, it could specify causes, characteristics, extent or effects of crime – perm any two or three from this list.

The Item is likely to be particularly useful for questions such as these as it would give a brief outline of the aspects of crimes of the powerful that you could consider.

- Applying material from Item A and your own knowledge, evaluate sociological explanations of the relationship between globalisation and crime.
- Applying material from Item A and your own knowledge, evaluate the impact of globalisation on the nature and extent of crime.
- Applying material from Item A and your own knowledge, evaluate sociological explanations of the causes, nature and extent of state crime.
- Applying material from Item A and your own knowledge, evaluate sociological explanations of the crimes of powerful organisations.

Things to note about these questions

1. If the question asks about the crimes of powerful organisations, you can refer to corporate, global, green, and state crime. The aspect that unites all of these is the ability of those with power to determine events.
2. Note whether the question states crime in general or whether it is more specific in terms of causes, extent, effects and nature of crime. If these are specified then you should focus primarily on those aspects of crime.
3. If there are two such aspects in the question then it turns the question into two (connected) parts. You should devote some material/time to each aspect. Not covering both will limit marks.
4. It is probably a good idea to start by offering a definition of whichever term is used in the question. This helps you to keep a focus on what you need to cover.

5. All of these crimes are difficult to investigate because they are carried out by powerful organisations that will do anything to protect their position. There are also difficulties in defining and measuring these types of crime, so a good way to gain Application marks is to explore these methodological issues.
6. Answers can gain Application marks by applying examples of such crime. However, there is a danger here of going off into long descriptions of these examples so it is sound advice to keep these links short and to the point and avoid lengthy descriptions, no matter how relevant.
7. Where appropriate, keep linking back to the question by using the key words in the question.

EXAMPLE QUESTION AND ANSWER WITH COMMENTARY

Item

A recent area of research into crime is that of the relationship between globalisation and crime. The greater inter-connectedness of the world - technologically, financially and in many other ways – has impacted not only on legitimate activities but on the nature and extent of crime as well. Patterns of criminal organisation, as well as the kinds of crimes committed, have changed as a result of globalisation. Some sociologists have pointed to the ways crime carried out in the name of the state, has a global dimension as well.

Applying material from Item A and your own knowledge, evaluate the impact of globalisation on the nature and extent of crime.

Deconstructing the question

The focus of question is on the relationship between globalisation and crime. Appropriate knowledge includes the economic cost/value of global crime, the demand and supply sides of globalised crime, risk consciousness, capitalism, glocal crime, corporate crime, the role of the state, green crime and some state crime.

The 'nature' of crime refers to its characteristics, the forms and types of globalised crime.

The 'extent' of globalised crime refers to how much crime has a global dimension and committed by which social groups.

As the question also states 'impact', then it will be very useful to identify the difficulties in defining and measuring this aspect of crime.

EXAMPLE ANSWER WITH EXAMINER ANNOTATION

AN

Globalisation is one of the most important developments in recent decades and it has had a major impact on criminal activity. Societies around the world are increasingly inter-connected through ICT, globalised media, cheap air travel, the deregulation of markets and the ease at which businesses can relocate to cheaper and more efficient countries. Just as this has created many new aspects of legitimate economic activity, so it has also created new opportunities for crime. Globalisation has affected not just the nature of crime - its characteristics and forms - but how much crime there is and how it is carried out. Sociologists from different perspectives have attempted to explain this relationship, in some cases developing new theories, but mainly adapting existing sociological theories, especially Marxism.

AN

TH APP

METH APP

EVAL

EVAL

The extent of global crime is very difficult to measure. In the first place, the global aspect means that the crimes transcend national boundaries and cross police and court jurisdictions. Official crime statistics are principally kept by governments only for their own country and the global dimension of a crime may not be known to the victim or the police. Furthermore, crime is at least partly hidden from sight and therefore difficult to measure. Even though the accepted view is that global crime is extensive in extent, the best that can be done is to estimate just how much it costs. Over twenty years ago, Castells estimated it at £1trillion.

ST APP

METH APP

EVAL

The impact of globalisation on crime is also a fast-changing dynamic. Glenny notes that twenty years ago it often reflected traditional forms of violence, extortion etc only on a wider scale. More recently, this has changed to a much lower-risk approach based on cybercrime. Some globalised crime is very difficult to identify because it is on the borderline between legality and illegality. If the definition of 'crime' is broadened to include 'deliberate harm', then the extent of such crime is virtually impossible to estimate in monetary terms. The deregulation of markets over the past thirty years has created many more opportunities for fraud and tax evasion.

AN

One aspect of the nature of crime is that globalisation has created new feelings of insecurity in many ways. A culture of 'risk consciousness' is created by the global movement of political refugees and economic migrants has resulted in many countries in an increased fear of immigration and linking crime to immigration. This image is amplified by the media with moral panics about

immigrant welfare scroungers 'flooding' the country, taking jobs from locals and setting up criminal gangs.

TOPIC APP

According to Glenny, hierarchically organised global crime continues to operate. His study of the Russian mafias after the break-up of the Soviet Union shows that they retained the traditional hierarchical crime structure. In the chaos following the break-up, criminal organisations were an essential part of the creation of a new capitalist class in Russia. This lends support to the Marxist analysis of globalisation as being an extension of capitalism.

ST APP

From a conflict perspective, globalisation is seen as unleashing previously restrained market forces. One effect has been the deindustrialisation of parts of Western countries as firms shift production to low-wage economies in developing countries, creating poverty in the countries of origin. The materialistic culture encouraged by globalisation creates great inequalities in wealth which damages social cohesion. At the same time, the opportunities created by deregulation of markets means that elites in both developed and developing countries have more opportunities to add to their already great wealth. The growth of transnational organisations such as the EC and FIFA has also led to more opportunities for fraud and corruption.

TH APP

AN

APP

ST APP

Hobbs and Dunningham argue that globalisation has changed the way crime is organised. Traditionally, organised crime has been hierarchical, as for example, with the Italian Mafia and Camorra. Criminals are now more loosely organised in a 'glocal' format. So the crime is carried out locally as with the supply and selling of illegal drugs on the streets. However there is also a global dimension to this with the supply chain extending thousands of miles. The impact of this has been to create loose networks of opportunistic criminals working together or not as the situation allows. However, it may be that this is nothing new, just that global transport and communication links are so much stronger and quicker that this form of criminal organisation is more effective than in the past.

AN

EVAL

APP

Globalisation has also enabled state crime to take on new dimensions. It is much easier now to 'export' state crime to other countries for them to carry out the actual actions a powerful state wants to see happen. Rendition of suspected terrorists so that they can be tortured and interrogated in an allied country enables a more powerful country to maintain its human rights record whilst achieving its political objectives. States can also facilitate corporate and in an

international context it is easier for transnational corporations to avoid legal reaction in individual countries.

EVAL

So it can be seen that globalisation has had a major impact on both the nature of crime and its extent. New types of crime have developed and existing forms adjusted to a global context. Interestingly, few if any kinds of crime have reduced or disappeared as a result of globalisation.

EVAL

Explanations of this relationship have tended to come from conflict theories especially the application of Marxist ideas which see the impact of globalisation primarily in terms of it being a further stage of capitalism. Consensus approaches have had little to say about this issue, perhaps because global crime is located to some degree outside of a single society so conventional consensus explanations of crime and anomie do not seem to be applicable.

EVAL

The limited sociological explanations of this relationship may also demonstrate the limits of sociological research and the absence of resources to fund research into this issue.'

Commentary

This is a top mark band answer (25-30 out of 30)

Let's examine it in terms of the skills needs at A level (see the definitions and examples of the skills in the introduction to this pack).

AO1 Knowledge

There is a good range of relevant knowledge of globalisation and crime. Studies, sociologists, concepts and theories are all identified and developed.

AO2 Application

The whole essay maintains a strong focus on globalisation – the thrust of the question. There is a focus on the two issues of nature and extent of crime specified in the question.

There is application to theories, methods, studies and educational policies.

Examples are applied and not simply described.

AO3 Analysis and Evaluation

There is great deal of Analysis in the form of explaining and unpacking various arguments and studies.

Evaluation is sustained throughout, via criticisms of explanations and through alternative explanations.

There is a very strong reasoned, justified and evaluative final paragraph.

ACTIVITIES

1 Go through the essay and put a 'C' by each concept, TH by each theory mention and ST for each study.

2 Take any of the examiner annotations for AN, EVAL or APP, and explain why these skills have been displayed. Alternatively, underline the key wording that displays those skills.

QUICK DECODES

Each essay question on this issue will have its own particular focus – they will be slightly different to each other. It is important that your selection of material to use and the way you use it reflects these variations. Here is a quick decode of some other questions you could get on this area of the crime topic.

You could also go through the exemplar answer and select paragraphs that, with adjustment, could be used in answer to these questions.

Applying material from Item A and your own knowledge, evaluate sociological explanations of the causes, nature and extent of state crime.

This question identifies three aspects of state crime that need to be examined – causes, nature and extent. Nature refers to the characteristics of state crime; the form that it takes. Extent refers to the scale of state crime and which states are more likely to carry out criminal acts.

You should organise your answer into three sections reflecting these aspects of state crime.

Explanations of state crime tend to come mainly from conflict perspectives. It is useful as well to try to explain why consensus approaches have little to say about state crime.

You could refer to the methodological issues of defining and measuring state crime. You can also consider the difficulties of investigating such crimes – why might states be unwilling to have their crimes exposed to investigation?

You can make links to environmental crime and to the role of globalisation in relation to state crime.

Applying material from Item A and your own knowledge, evaluate sociological explanations of the crimes of powerful organisations.

The key term here is 'powerful organisations'. This is a fairly broad notion and includes global, criminal networks, state crime, many green crimes and corporate crime. You need to make this clear in your opening paragraph.

The theoretical framework for this question is likely to be Marxism although reference should be made to strain theory, labelling and differential association as well as green criminology.

Consensus theories generally lack an analysis of the crimes of the powerful so it will be useful to speculate why this is the case.

There are many examples of crimes of the powerful but you need to be careful not to list and describe these. It is much more effective to apply these examples to make a point.

There is opportunity here to raise the methodological issues of defining, investigating and measuring the crimes of the powerful – groups that have the power to limit investigation.

UNIT 8 CRIME CONTROL AND PUNISHMENT

Typical essay questions

Questions may refer to the usefulness of different crime prevention strategies by referring explicitly to a specific approach, for example, situational crime prevention or the role of surveillance. Alternatively, you could get a more generic question about sociological explanations of different crime prevention approaches.

- Applying material from Item A and your own knowledge, evaluate the claim that crime is most effectively prevented by tackling the root causes of crime.
- Applying material from Item A and your own knowledge, evaluate the claim that crime is most effectively prevented by reducing the opportunities for crime.
- Applying material from Item A and your own knowledge, evaluate sociological explanations of the effectiveness of different crime prevention strategies.
- Applying material from Item A and your own knowledge, evaluate the claim that crime is prevented most effectively by maintaining a high level of surveillance.
- Applying material from Item A and your own knowledge, evaluate sociological explanations of the role of punishment in society.

Things to note about these questions

- 1 If the question identifies a particular approach to crime prevention, then it is important to make that the initial focus of your answer.
- 2 However, because the question asks you to evaluate a particular approach, it is legitimate – and advisable – to do so not only through specific criticisms of that approach, but also by examining alternative crime prevention strategies.
- 3 There is a danger here though, that an answer becomes a list of juxtaposed accounts of the different strategies. Therefore it is important to show the differences between these strategies – make direct comparisons.
- 4 A very effective way to gain Application marks in for links to theory and method, is to point out the difficulties involved in measuring the effectiveness of a crime prevention strategy. Issues with official statistics and the role of field experiments can be discussed within this.

- 5 Another very effective way to gain marks for Application, is to link crime prevention strategies to other aspects of crime for example, media representations of crime and its prevention, or class differences in crime/prevention.
- 6 A further way to gain Application marks is to link crime prevention strategies to the theories that lie behind and underpin them. In particular, make links to Right and Left realist theories.
- 7 Keep linking back to the question by using the key words in the question.

EXAMPLE QUESTION AND ANSWER WITH COMMENTARY

Item A

The issue of how to reduce crime is the focus of public and sociological interest. Some sociologists have argued that the quickest and most effective way to reduce crime is to minimise the opportunities for crime to take place. By making it more difficult for a crime to be committed, through for example, security guards or CCTV, the potential cost to the criminal of carrying out a crime is increased.

Other sociologists have argued that this is not dealing with the underlying causes of crime and so is unlikely to be a long-term solution to crime.

Applying material from Item A and your own knowledge, evaluate the claim that crime is most effectively prevented by reducing the opportunities for crime.

Deconstructing the question

The focus of question is on crime prevention strategies, in particular, situational crime prevention. That includes reducing opportunities for crime, rational choice theory, target-hardening etc.

There are issues with measuring the effectiveness of this approach, specific criticisms of it and also alternative strategies that may be more effective.

Key words and phrases in the question include 'crime', 'prevention' reducing opportunities'. It is useful to keep using these key words and phrases in your answer.

EXAMPLE ANSWER WITH EXAMINER ANNOTATION

TH APP

'Some theorists have argued that rather than attempt to bring about change within society, the most effective way to prevent crime is to reduce the opportunities for crime. These are usually referred to as situational crime reduction strategies and focus on one particular type of crime at a time. These strategies also link to elements in environmental crime prevention approaches which emphasise the need to maintain the image of an area. However, others have argued that this sort of approach is a short-term fix at best as it does not deal with the underlying causes of crime. Some sociologists have argued that only by dealing with the causes of crime will the crime rate reduce.

AN

EVAL

METH APP

There are substantial difficulties in measuring the effectiveness of any particular crime prevention strategy. The usual way is to measure changes in the number of crimes committed in an area that is subject to a crime reduction intervention. However, there is no real way of knowing why the number of crimes has fallen, stayed the same or risen during a particular time period. It may be that the number of crimes may have fallen because it is already falling or that factors unknown to researchers may have had an effect. Although a useful exercise even comparing outcomes to another area with similar social characteristics, does not give definitive data.

EVAL

AN

EVAL

ST APP

Clarke argues that as most theories do not come up with realistic, workable solutions to crime, then it makes more sense to try to remove or reduce opportunities for crime. By altering the immediate situation that a crime could take place in to increase the risks attached to committing a criminal act, or by reducing the likely reward for doing so, it is possible to reduce crimes. Target-hardening involves making it more difficult to carry out a crime by for example, putting place stronger and more complex locks on doors and windows or by replacing cash transactions with pre-paid cards. A very common approach is to increase surveillance and there has been a marked increase in the use of CCTV and private security guards to achieve this.

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Reducing the opportunities for crime assumes that criminals base their actions on rational decision-making. Right realists propose this rational choice theory which argues that a decision to commit a crime is based on an evaluation of the probably consequences of carrying out the crime. If the perceived rewards from the crime outweigh the potential costs, then the criminal act will take place. Felson suggests that the

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EVAL absence of a 'capable guardian' - whether human or otherwise – is an important element in this calculation. However, as Right Realists also argue that criminal behaviour is mainly the result of biological predisposition and inadequate socialisation, this conflicts with their claim that the criminal acts rationally.

AN Reducing the opportunities for crime as a prevention strategy is also closely bound up with ideas of surveillance, stronger punishment and zero tolerance towards anti-social behaviour. The huge growth in CCTV - a form of panopticism – is one indication of the growth in surveillance. The more recent development is that of surveillant assemblages, in which digital technologies can operate in a collective

AN way, creating even greater identification of individuals. Stronger punishments are often politically popular. Margaret Thatcher's 'short, sharp shock' for young offenders and Tony Blair's 'tough on crime' stance have contributed to the UK having the highest prison rate in Western Europe. Zero tolerance policing is also a politically popular

EVAL line in which even the slightest sign of crime or anti-social behaviour is met with a police response. All of these approaches feed into a more generalised way of reducing the opportunities for crime by increasing the risks associate with such acts.

EVAL However, even if the crime rate falls in the area where the situational prevention strategy is applied, it may simply mean that crimes have been displaced. If criminals are rational in their decision-making, they would be likely to move to where the opportunities are easier, to where the targets are 'softer'. Therefore criminal and deviant acts

ST APP would not reduce, they would just move. The NYC Port Authority bus station offered many opportunities for crime in the way their toilets and other facilities were laid out. By fitting smaller sinks, they discouraged rough sleepers from using them to bathe in. However,

EVAL this did not end the behaviour as rough sleepers simply moved elsewhere. As well as spatial displacement, the criminal could change to different type of crime or use a different method or victim.

EVAL A further issue with situational crime reduction strategies is that it tends to focus on highly visual crime such as petty street crime and other forms of low-level interpersonal crime such as vehicle theft, burglary and anti-social behaviour. Situational crime prevention is more difficult to apply to other kinds of crime. It is much more difficult

EVAL to reduce the opportunities for white collar, state and environmental crime. Given the higher economic costs of these kinds of crime, this is a fairly serious limitation of situational crime prevention.

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Some sociologists have argued that reducing the opportunities for crime does not deal with the causes of crime, just its potential manifestations. As the Item suggests, this is not a long-term solution to crime. Lea and Young argue that crime is the result of relative deprivation and marginalisation. Left realists argue that crime can only be reduced by tackling these social problems of poverty, inequality of opportunity, discrimination and vast inequalities in housing and wealth,. Policing also needs to be responsive to local communities and military-style policing avoided. Although criticised for offering solutions that are expensive and politically difficult to deliver, Left realism has highlighted the weaknesses of more superficial crime prevention strategies based on just reducing the opportunities for crime.

Crime prevention based on reducing the opportunities for crime has been politically very popular. It is also a relatively cheap way to address crime. It is often seen as a political 'knee-jerk' reaction to events. However, it can only be applied to certain types of relatively low-level street crime and it is difficult to use in relation to corporate, global crime. It is also of no application in instances of crimes carried out on impulse as most violent crimes are. People do not always step back and rationally decide their behavioural choices. Target-hardening in the form of increased surveillance may also have a negative impact on human rights in society.

Commentary

This is a top mark band answer (25-30 out of 30)

Let us examine it in terms of the skills needs at A level (see the definitions and examples of the skills in the introduction to this pack).

AO1 Knowledge

There is a wide range of relevant knowledge of crime reduction strategies. Studies, sociologists, concepts and theories are all identified and developed.

AO2 Application

The whole essay maintains a strong focus on ways to reduce the opportunities for crime. Alternative theories are then used as evaluation at various points.

There is application to theories, methods, studies and educational policies.

Examples are applied rather than simply described.

AO3 Analysis and Evaluation

There is great deal of Analysis in the form of explaining and unpacking various arguments and studies.

Evaluation is sustained throughout, identifying the strengths and limitations of different aspects of reducing the opportunities for crime.

There is a strong reasoned, justified and evaluative final paragraph.

ACTIVITIES

1 Go through the essay and put a '**C**' by each concept, **TH** by each theory mention and **ST** for each study.

2 Take any of the examiner annotations for **AN**, **EVAL** or **APP**, and explain why these skills have been displayed. Alternatively, underline the key wording that displays those skills.

QUICK DECODES

Each essay question on this issue will have its own particular focus – they will be slightly different to each other. It is important that your selection of material to use and the way you use it reflects these variations. Here are some quick decodes of other questions you could get on this area of crime and deviance.

You could also go through the exemplar answer and select paragraphs that, with adjustment, could be used in answer to this question.

Applying material from Item A and your own knowledge, evaluate the claim that crime is prevented most effectively by maintaining a high level of surveillance.

Because the question uses the phrase 'prevented most effectively', although it is surveillance that should be the core of your answer, it implies that there another forms of crime prevention and their effectiveness needs to be explored as well.

As well as presenting good knowledge of Foucault, synoptic surveillance, actuarial justice etc, you need to keep returning to the issue of their effectiveness – that term should be used in most paragraphs.

You should refer to the methodological issues of measuring the effectiveness of crime prevention strategies.

You should place different crime prevention strategies within a theoretical framework, for example, linking surveillance to situational crime prevention and placing both within a Right realist theoretical perspective.

Applying material from Item A and your own knowledge, evaluate the claim that crime is most effectively prevented by tackling the root causes of crime.

Because the question uses the phrase 'prevented most effectively', although it is tackling the root causes of crime that should be the core of your answer, it implies that there are other forms of crime prevention and their effectiveness needs to be explored as well.

As well as presenting good knowledge of Lea and Young, Perry Pre-School project, relative deprivation, subcultures, marginalisation and exclusion, you should refer (in less detail) to alternative crime prevention strategies.

You should refer to the methodological issues of measuring the effectiveness of crime prevention strategies.

You should place different crime prevention strategies within a theoretical framework, for example, identifying this approach as one preferred by Left realists.