# Spot the bands – Marking activity

In this activity, your task is to identify what band each of the responses given would fall into. The response to the question has been broken up into segments and in the left hand margin of each segment write down the appropriate band you think the response falls into based upon the criteria below.

Band 3 (B3) – the segment mentions ONE of the following three characteristics

      WHO – a charactersitics of who we are researching

      WHAT – a characteristic of the issue being researched

      HOW – a developed strength or limitation of the research method being used

Band 4 (B4) – the segment will contain TWO of the three listed characteristics

Band 5 (B5) – the segement will refer to all three of the characteristics

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### Item C

One impact of in-school processes on student experience is the formation of pupil identities. Processes such as setting and streaming can lead to pupils reacting in different ways. Further processes, such as the curriculum and the policies and procedures of the school can also influence pupil's identities, while the interactions with teachers and with their peers can also influence a pupil's understanding of their own identity.

Sociologists often use unstructured interviews to conduct research inside school settings, but they are not without their limitations. Pupils and teachers may not wish to take part in interviews for a variety of reasons. However, they do provide researchers with an opportunity to develop a rapport with those they are interviewing.

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**Applying material from item C and elsewhere, evaluate the strengths and limitations of using unstructured interviews to investigate the impact of in-school processes on pupil's identity formation (20)**

| Band? | |
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| B3<br>HOW | Unstructured interviews are a flexible research method that are commonly used by interpretivists in their research as they provide the researcher with qualitative data, which might disclose the meanings and motivations behind the actions of those they are studying. |
| HOW<br><br><br><br>WHO | When using unstructured interviews, researchers have the ability to develop a rapport with their respondents, which means that they may be more open and honest with their answers. This is useful in investigating the processes in-school that might cause identity formation, particularly in working-class pupils. These pupils are more likely to be resistant to discussing their |

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| B4 | education with researchers, who they may see as a teacher in disguise. By developing a rapport with these pupils, researchers may be able to get more honest answers out of these pupils. |
| HOW<br><br>WHAT<br>WHO<br><br>B5 | A further advantage of using unstructured interviews to investigate in-school processes involved in the formation of identity would be the flexible nature of the method. As there are very few set questions, the interviewer can ask follow-up questions of pupils that may not be aware of how in-school processes have affected them. For example, female pupils may be unaware of the way schools reinforce their gendered identities through forcing them into subject choices, but a skilled interviewer may be able to pick up any hints in the pupil's response and ask them to elaborate on their answer. |
| WHAT<br><br>HOW<br><br>B4 | As the topic of identity formation could reveal issues such as sexual harassment, bullying or racism, care must be taken to protect the pupils from psychological and physical harm. As interviewers would be trained to conduct these interviews, they would be able to show empathy and compassion for pupils who have been victims of these acts and could offer support and guidance in helping them to deal with these issues. |
| WHAT<br>WHO<br>B4 | There are limitations to using unstructured interviews to investigate these processes though. One such limitation might be access. Researcher are reliant upon gaining access to the school to interview pupils by gatekeepers, usually headteachers who are responsible for the safety of pupils. Whilst the presence of a researcher may not cause alarm, the subject matter being discussed with pupils, particularly issues of teacher racism, setting and streaming and teacher labelling might mean that the headteacher is reluctant to let the researcher have access as it might give a bad impression of the school. |
| WHO<br><br><br>HOW<br><br><br>WHAT<br>B5 | If the research is granted access, headteachers may put forwards teachers and pupils that they know have had positive experiences in the school, which would affect the validity of the research as the responses would be one-sided and not reveal the complete truth. This could be more evident in unstructured interviews as headteachers will not know what questions the researcher is going to ask and therefore would need to put forward pupils he could rely upon to give a positive impression, and so pick students with a pro-school attitude. |
| HOW<br>WHO<br><br>B4 | A final consideration would be the responses of teachers to being interviewed by a researcher. As the researcher and the teacher would be of a similar status, teacher may be more likely to be open and honest with the researcher about the school's processes. However, as teachers have better impression management skills that others, they may also try to impress the researcher by giving them responses that they think they want to hear, which in turn could affect the validity of the research. |
| WHAT<br>WHO<br>B4 | Furthermore, teachers may not want to disclose in an interview anything that might put their career at risk. Issues such as teacher racism or objectifying pupils would lead to disciplinary action and possible exclusion from teaching, and so they are less likely to take part (as stated in item C). |