**Assessment Objectives A Level Sociology**

In A-Level Sociology exams, different answers are assessed according to specific Assessment Objectives. AQA Sociology distinguishes between three different types of objectives, which will be outlined and explained below. It is important to note that the Assessment Objectives are interlinked, for instance, the skill to apply information (AO2) is premised on understanding it (AO1).

 AO1 – Knowledge and Understanding

 AO2 – the skill of Application

 AO3 – the skill of Analysis and Evaluation (see Browne ix for key words on AO1,2,3)

**Knowledge and Understanding (AO1)**

**AO1 is tested in questions when you are asked to: analyse; define; evaluate; explain; outline; outline and explain**

-to know and understand the main theories, research methods, and concepts used by sociologists

-to be familiar with some sociologists’ studies and the findings of the respective studies

**Application (AO2)**

**A02 is tested in questions when you are asked to: Applying material from item A…; Using one example…**

-to link ideas, concepts, theories, studies and methods to each other and the question

-to show how the material you select is relevant to the question

-In questions on method in context, you need to show the strengths and limitations of a specific method (e.g. participant observation) to the characteristics of a specific research issue (e.g. bullying in school)

-to use the material of an item when asked, and linking this with your own knowledge and the question

-to use relevant examples. These can be from studies, news and current events, other sociological topics and even personal experience (but be careful with this)

-to link ideas from one area in sociology to material in another area

**Analysis (A03)**

**A03 is tested in questions when you are asked to: analyse; evaluate**

-to break down an argument or explanation into the different ideas that make it up and showing how they fit together

-to compare and contrast ideas, therefore pointing out the similarities and differences

-to organise essays appropriately, with a well -focused intro, and a clear, logical chain of reasoning from paragraph to paragraph, leading to an appropriate conclusion

**Evaluation (A03)**

-to look at arguments and evidence for and against a particular view

-to examine a theory’s assumptions (e.g. Functionalism) or linking it to a particular perspective (e.g. Positivism)

-to put forward alternative views or perspectives to create a debate

-to discuss the strengths and limitations of a research method

**20 mark exam questions (Family/Methods/Methods in Context/ Beliefs in Society)**

Will ask you to weigh up a view/theory/issue in the family: Paper 2 (and methods/methods in context in Paper 1 and 3).

You will have 30 minutes to write it.

The key thing is to explore the issue in the question, weighing up its strengths and weaknesses with other available evidence to reach a conclusion.

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| **STRUCTURE OF THE ESSAY:**INTRODUCTION – AAA* A – ‘As Item B suggests…’
* A – Argument 1 – briefly explain the view of the position in the question (this might be a particular theory or claim).
* A – Argument 2 – ‘however’ – briefly show who will counter this view.

MAIN BODYYou are looking to write about 3 paragraphsThe paragraphs should outline an argument from the view in the question. It should then develop AO2 and AO3 skills by * Using specific studies and examples to illustrate strengths and weaknesses of the argument you’ve just presented.
* Give specific evaluation points on arguments e.g. that it is outdated etc.
* Give evaluation points from different sociological viewpoints.

**THE KEY THING IS TO INCLUDE NAMED SOCIOLOGISTS AND EVIDENCE TO SUPPORT YOUR POINTS.**ConclusionShould weigh up the viewpoint in the question- does it have strengths, do its weaknesses make it ineffective, is it still relevant? |

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| **20 mark essays:****AO1 = knowledge is key- you have to understand your concepts and link to studies/named sociologists.** **AO2 = focus is placed on you being able to breakdown an argument and compare and contrast different elements.****AO3 = form a debate, provide arguments for and against the issue in the essay** |

Practice:

With the exemplar provided mark on the following:-

* The AAA in the introduction
* Studies used for the view in the question
* Comparing and contrasting different views e.g. weighing up the contribution of various arguments – especially at the end of each paragraph.
* Linking back to the question
* Evaluation with alternative arguments.