

THEORY + METHODS QUIZ

Now test yourself

TESTED

- 39 a) What are the key differences between positivism and interpretivism?
b) What is a social fact?
c) How do positivists and interpretivists see the role of the respondent?
- 40 a) What is the difference between primary and secondary data?
b) Name two reasons why sociologists may use secondary data.
c) Name two advantages of qualitative data and two advantages of quantitative data.
d) What is the difference between methodological pluralism and triangulation?
- 41 a) What is a sample frame?
b) Why might a sociologist choose to use a non-representative sample?
c) What type of sampling method might a researcher use in a group that is difficult to access?
- 42 a) Explain what is meant by standardised.
b) What does operationalise mean?
c) Name three strengths of using questionnaires.
- d) Why are unstructured interviews favoured by interpretivists?
e) What is the difference between the control group and the experimental group?
f) What is a comparative experiment? Give an example of a study using this method.
g) What is the difference between interpretivism and feminist methodology?
- 43 a) What types of documents might an interpretivist favour and why?
b) Name a study that involved the use of documents within school.
c) Name two problems with using documents in research.
- 44 a) Name two advantages of using official statistics.
b) Name two disadvantages of using official statistics.
c) Why might positivists favour the use of official statistics?
- 45 a) Identify two practical problems a researcher may experience.
b) Identify two ethical issues that a researcher needs to consider.
c) How might the theoretical perspective of a researcher shape their research?
- 46 a) What is the difference between consensus and conflict theories?
b) Name three characteristics of modern society and compare these with postmodernity.
c) Briefly explain the Marxist view of society.
d) Name two types of feminism and explain the difference between them.
e) How are functionalist views of society different from other theoretical perspectives?
f) Explain the difference between Marxist and neo Marxist ideas.
- 47 a) How is social policy shaped by sociological research?
b) Identify two reasons why sociology may not be seen as a science.
c) What is the difference between subjective and objective?

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Theory	Macro/Micro	Structural/ Social action	Consensus/ Conflict	Positivist/Interpretivist/Other
Functionalism	Macro	Structural	Consensus	Positivist
New Right	Macro	Structural	Consensus but critical of society	Positivist
Marxism and neo Marxism	Macro	Structural	Conflict	N/A
Feminism	Macro and micro	Structural	Conflict	Feminist methodology
Interpretivism	Micro	Social action	Neither	Interpretivist
Postmodernism	Neither	Neither	Neither	Researchers should control the research and shape its direction

- 37 a) Science is based on the idea that directly observable or **empirical** data should be used to support claims and create **social facts**.
- b) Science makes the assumption that individuals are **passive** and shaped by **society**. Sociologists known as **positivists** think the same.
- c) **Functionalists** argue that sociology can and should be a science, claiming that it is possible for people to remain **objective**. They favour **reliability** and want to establish cause-and-effect relationships.
- d) **Interpretivists** argue that sociology cannot be a science as individuals have **free will**. They argue that instead sociology should focus on uncovering **meanings**.
- e) **Popper** and **kuhn** argue that in different ways, science is not as objective as it claims to be.
- f) **Realists** argue that people cannot be studied scientifically but that **social sciences** are possible.
- 38 a) False
- b) True
- c) True
- d) False
- e) True
- 39 a) Positivism takes the view that sociology should be similar in approach to the natural sciences. Interpretivists argue that humans cannot be treated in the same way as inanimate objects as they have free will and consciousness. Therefore the approach they take to carrying out research is very different.
- b) A social fact is phenomena that exists beyond people yet may shape people's behaviour.
- c) Positivists see people as passive and likely to respond in ways which are measurable and reflect social forces. Interpretivists see the individual as having free will and negotiating their own roles and behaviour.
- 40 a) Primary data is data that is gathered first hand by the researcher. Secondary data is data already collected by others which is sometimes used by sociologists.
- b) It can reveal information about the past; it is also cheap and easy to access.

c)

Quantitative data	Qualitative data
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Large amounts of data can be collected ● Relatively cheap and easy to collect data ● Can detect changes over time ● It is possible to isolate variables in the data ● Correlations can be found (relationships between two or more pieces of data) ● Social facts can be established ● It is possible to compare different sets of data ● Highly reliable data 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Rich, detailed data ● High in validity ● May uncover meanings unexpected in the research ● The data may contain complex and highly personal information ● The data is less affected by the researcher since it comes directly from the respondent ● The data is often collected in more naturalistic settings where the respondent is likely to be more relaxed and honest ● <i>Verstehen</i> is possible, so that the researcher can truly understand the world of the person they are researching through their eyes

- d) Methodological pluralism means to use both positivist and interpretivist methodology, while triangulation refers to using more than one method.
- 41 a) A sample frame is the list from which a sample is drawn.
 b) In order to prove a point, a researcher might use the group most likely to disprove his or her hypothesis so that the research findings can be seen to be even more strongly in support of the findings.
 c) Snowball sampling which is a sample built on contacts.
- 42 a) Where everyone gets the same questions/approach or treatment within research.
 b) To put into practice, to measure.
 c) Lots of data, so generalisable.
 Inexpensive to distribute for example, by email.
 Can isolate variables and correlations to prove or disprove a hypothesis.
 d) They provide deeper meaning, they are naturalistic and they may uncover findings which were unexpected.
 e) The control group stays the same, the experimental group has some change made to it.
 f) The comparative method is a thought experiment, using secondary data; e.g. Durkheim used suicide statistics in his research.
 g) Interpretivist research focuses on meanings and feminist methodology begins with the view that women are oppressed in society and need supporting, empowering and understanding.
- 43 a) Qualitative documents such as letters, diaries and pictures.
 b) Gewirtz used school documents such as prospectuses to explore the impact of marketisation policies.
 c) They can lack credibility and authenticity; they may also be biased.
- 44 a) Inexpensive, easy to access.
 b) They are difficult to compare as the measures and definitions of things may change. They may also be biased or manipulated by the government.
 c) They are reliable and from them it is possible to establish social facts.

- 45 a)** Time constraints – the researcher may have a limited amount of time which could shape the scale of the research and the type of research method used.
- Access can be a practical issue, so it may be hard for a researcher to 'get in' to certain groups such as criminal gangs, which may restrict the research.
- b)** Harm to the researcher or those being researched.
- Protecting the respondents' anonymity, e.g. not exposing a person's identity as it may have negative consequences for them.
- c)** If a researcher is positivist in approach, then they are likely to want to use quantitative measures or data as they will see reliability as important. Feminists are likely to want to use feminist methodology as they see other approaches as malestream and they believe research should support and empower women.
- 46 a)** Consensus theories believe that society works in harmony and that there is agreement about core values and norms. Conflict theories, on the other hand, believe that there are inequalities between particular groups in society which lead to conflict.
- b)** Modernity was characterised by stability, a general belief in science and a general decline in religion. Post-modernity is characterised by increasing fragmentation, choice and change.
- c)** Marxists believe that society is made up of two social classes: the ruling class and the working class. The ruling class control the working class and exploit their wage labour for profit. Marxists believe that this will lead to the working classes becoming more and more frustrated, leading to a revolution and finally communism, where society is more equal.
- d)** Liberal feminists are optimistic that society is becoming more equal in terms of gender – through policy change and changing attitudes. Radical feminists believe that complete change in society is necessary for men and women to become more equal.
- e)** Functionalists think society benefits the individual and society and that social forces shape us positively, unlike other theories.
- f)** Marxists argue that the economic relations of production shape society, while neo Marxists claim that ideas and the economy shape society.
- 47 a)** Social policy is informed by sociological research, e.g. on domestic violence, which leads to changes in the law and the way the police respond. Social policy is also shaped by the way researchers explore the impact of policies such as if they have been effective or have had unintended effects.
- b)** Because interpretivists argue that humans have free will and consciousness, which means that they cannot be treated the same way as inanimate objects in a science laboratory.
- Further, interpretivists argue that researchers impose their own subjectivity on the research process and therefore sociology cannot be seen as a science.
- c)** Subjective means to allow your feelings to interfere with the research, to be biased, whereas objectivity is the idea that a person can detach themselves and their feelings from the research.