**Godalming College**

THIS BOOKLET MUST BE BOUGHT TO ALL SOCIOLOGY LESSONS FROM NOW ON, ALONG WITH THE MAIN RESEARCH METHODS BOOKLET

**Sociology Department**

**RESEARCH METHODS:**

**DIFFERENT EXAM QUESTIONS FOR PAPER 1 AND 3**

**AND**

**REVISION SUMMARY SHEETS**



**WORKBOOK**

RESEARCH METHODS FOR A LEVEL PAPERS 1 AND 3

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Name:** | **Set:** | **Group:** |

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# **EXAM QUESTIONS**

## **Style of questions**

**Paper 1:**

10 mark**:** 2 ways/advantages/disadvantages/issue with a method e.g.

* Outline and explain two advantages/disadvantages of [a method] [10 marks]

Methods could include:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **QUANTITATIVE** | **QUALITATIVE** |
| * Laboratory experiments
* Field experiments
* Questionnaires
* Structured interviews
* Official statistics
* Non-official statistics
* Non-participant observation- overt/covert
* Content analysis
 | * Unstructured interviews
* Semi-structured interviews
* Group interviews/ focus groups
* Participant observation- overt/ covert
* Documents
 |

OR

* Outline and explain two reasons why positivists prefer quantitative data [10 marks]
* Outline and explain two reasons why interpretivists prefer qualitative data [10 marks]
* Outline and explain two reasons why positivists are critical of qualitative methods [10 marks]
* Outline two ethical problems often associated with qualitative research method [10 marks]
* Outline and explain two practical advantages of quantitative methods [10 marks]

**WRITING A 10 MARKER**

Clearly state your point, use evidence from sociological studies to support and explain in detail the issue, add a tiny bit of evaluation.

### **20 mark: methods in context (applying research methods to the study of education.**

**How the 20 mark methods in context works:**

The question will include an Item, which you will need to refer to.

They always have the same format:

 **Applying material from Item B and your knowledge, evaluate the strengths and limitations of using [a method] to investigate [an issue in education e.g. parental attitudes, classrooms, pupils, teachers, schools].**

The method could include: questionnaires (face to face or postal), interviews (structured, semi-structured, unstructured), participant observation (cover or overt), experiments, longitudinal approaches, documents and official statistics.

**What you need to know:**

The methods: from the list on the previous slide you have to have a knowledge of the P,E,T issues for each one.

The research characteristics: the main groups and areas of education that sociologists study- parents, teachers, classrooms, schools and pupils. You need to think about the main characteristics of each that a researcher would have to take into account when studying them e.g. teachers are busy professionals who may not have time for a long unstructured interview, or parents might see a researcher as a social worker in disguise.

**Discuss:**

**What particular issues do you think arise when…**

Researching within closed educational institutions?

Researching children?

Researching teachers?

Researching classrooms?

Researching parents?

Researching educational statistics?

**How to write a 20 mark methods in context question:**

*What to do:*

The key thing is that you must apply your knowledge of the research method to the study of the educational issue the question asks you about, in simple terms:

You must weigh up and argue, during the course of your essay, whether this is the best method for studying the area of education in the question.

In applying your knowledge to the method, be as specific as you can to the issue in the question.

*What not to do:*

Write it like a 10 mark- if you only look at the advantages and disadvantages of the method you will not be able to gain more than a D grade.

**STRUCTURE**

Introduction (WWWE):

What - define the method and the issue in the question

Who – would generally use it? (Positivist, Interpretivist, Realist)

Why – would they use it to study the education issue in the question? (e.g. to compare results, to gain validity, reliability, representativeness etc.)

Evaluation- who would not use the method to study the education issue in the question and why? (Positivist, Interpretivist, Realist)]

Main body:

* The key thing is that every paragraph has to consider the impact on studying the education issue in the question. You need to be specific about how particular groups e.g. pupils, parents, teachers etc. might respond to the method. Aim to make three specific points that show the impact of the method on the group.
* This means including examples of studies or research characteristics (from previous page) that will help back up your argument. Application is key- you need to demonstrate that you are able to relate what you know about a method to its application in real life.

Checklist for the main body

A checklist for the main body could be summed up using the acronym P.E.R.V.E.R.T

**P**ractical issues raised with using the method

**E**thical issues arising from using the method

**R**eliability of the information collected

**V**alidity of the information obtained

**E**xamples from research or your own understanding to illustrate points.

**R**epresentativeness of the information

**T**heoretical issues- such as positivist or interpretivist views of using the method

[This approach just makes sure you include the key aspects with the P,E,T structure we have been using]

CONCLUSION: Weigh up whether this is the best method for studying the education issue in the question. Perhaps offer a solution for a method that would be a better approach.

**Essay plan for a methods in context question**

|  |
| --- |
| **Question:** |
| **Introduction:**WhatWhoWhyEvaluation |
| **Practical advantages**  | **Practical disadvantages** |
| **Links to the education issue in the question** | **Links to the education issue in the question** |
| **Ethical advantages** | **Ethical issues disadvantages** |
| **Links to the education issue in the question** | **Links to the education issue in the question** |
| **Theoretical advantages (validity, reliability, representativeness)** | **Theoretical disadvantages (validity, reliability, representativeness)** |
| **Links to the education issue in the question** | **Links to the education issue in the question** |
| **Conclusion- is this the best method to study the issue in the question?** |

**Paper 3:**

### **20 mark: theory and methods**

We will cover these next year. They have the same structure as the 20 mark methods in context but require you to use examples from actual pieces of sociological research to illustrate your points.

Item: Some sociologists favour using quantitative research methods such as structured interviews and questionnaires. These two methods are similar in many ways. Both use a fixed list of questions, often with pre-set, pre-coded answer categories, and both are relatively quick to complete. Their differences mainly come from how they deliver the questions- either face-to-face or in written form. However, interpretivists argue that quantitative methods impose the researcher’s views on respondents and do not allow them to express themselves in the way they would like to.

* Applying material from the item and your knowledge, evaluate the claim that quantitative research methods may have many advantages, but they tell us little about what people really think and do [20 marks]

OR

…evaluate the use of [a method] [20 marks]

…evaluate the contribution of interpretivists/positivists to our understanding of society [20 marks]

# **EVALUATION OF DIFFERENT RESEARCH METHODS**

To be able to write any of the research methods questions in the exam papers you need to ensure that you have a detailed summary to evaluate them, using PET issues.

## **PET - STATISTICS**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Define the** **method** |  |
| **Example(s)** |  |
| **Circle correct** | **Quantitative** | **Qualitative** | **Positivist** | **Realist** | **Interpretivist** |
|  | **Strengths**  | **Weaknesses**  |
| **Practical** |  |  |
| **Ethical** |  |  |
| **Theoretical** |  |  |

## **PET - QUESTIONNAIRES**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Define the** **method** |  |
| **Example(s)** |  |
| **Circle correct** | **Quantitative** | **Qualitative** | **Positivist** | **Realist** | **Interpretivist** |
|  | **Strengths**  | **Weaknesses**  |
| **Practical** |  |  |
| **Ethical** |  |  |
| **Theoretical** |  |  |

## **PET- STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Define the** **method** |  |
| **Example(s)** |  |
| **Circle correct** | **Quantitative** | **Qualitative** | **Positivist** | **Realist** | **Interpretivist** |
|  | **Strengths**  | **Weaknesses**  |
| **Practical** |  |  |
| **Ethical** |  |  |
| **Theoretical** |  |  |

##

## **PET- SEMI STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Define the** **method** |  |
| **Example(s)** |  |
| **Circle correct** | **Quantitative** | **Qualitative** | **Positivist** | **Realist** | **Interpretivist** |
|  | **Strengths**  | **Weaknesses**  |
| **Practical** |  |  |
| **Ethical** |  |  |
| **Theoretical** |  |  |

## **PET- UNSTRUCTURED INTERVIEWS**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Define the** **method** |  |
| **Example(s)** |  |
| **Circle correct** | **Quantitative** | **Qualitative** | **Positivist** | **Realist** | **Interpretivist** |
|  | **Strengths**  | **Weaknesses**  |
| **Practical** |  |  |
| **Ethical** |  |  |
| **Theoretical** |  |  |

##

## **PET – GROUP INTERVIEWS/FOCUS GROUPS**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Define the** **method** |  |
| **Example(s)** |  |
| **Circle correct** | **Quantitative** | **Qualitative** | **Positivist** | **Realist** | **Interpretivist** |
|  | **Strengths**  | **Weaknesses**  |
| **Practical** |  |  |
| **Ethical** |  |  |
| **Theoretical** |  |  |

##

## **PET - PARTICIPANT OBSERVATION**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Define the** **method** |  |
| **Example(s)** |  |
| **Circle correct** | **Quantitative** | **Qualitative** | **Positivist** | **Realist** | **Interpretivist** |
|  | **Strengths**  | **Weaknesses**  |
| **Practical** |  |  |
| **Ethical** |  |  |
| **Theoretical** |  |  |

##

## **PET - NON PARTICIPANT/STRUCTURED OBSERVATION**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Define the** **method** |  |
| **Example(s)** |  |
| **Circle correct** | **Quantitative** | **Qualitative** | **Positivist** | **Realist** | **Interpretivist** |
|  | **Strengths**  | **Weaknesses**  |
| **Practical** |  |  |
| **Ethical** |  |  |
| **Theoretical** |  |  |

##

## **PET - FIELD EXPERIMENTS**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Define the** **method** |  |
| **Example(s)** |  |
| **Circle correct** | **Quantitative** | **Qualitative** | **Positivist** | **Realist** | **Interpretivist** |
|  | **Strengths**  | **Weaknesses**  |
| **Practical** |  |  |
| **Ethical** |  |  |
| **Theoretical** |  |  |

## **PET - LABORATORY EXPERIMENTS**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Define the** **method** |  |
| **Example(s)** |  |
| **Circle correct** | **Quantitative** | **Qualitative** | **Positivist** | **Realist** | **Interpretivist** |
|  | **Strengths**  | **Weaknesses**  |
| **Practical** |  |  |
| **Ethical** |  |  |
| **Theoretical** |  |  |

## **PET - QUALITATIVE SECONDARY DOCUMENTS**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Define the** **method** |  |
| **Example(s)** |  |
| **Circle correct** | **Quantitative** | **Qualitative** | **Positivist** | **Realist** | **Interpretivist** |
|  | **Strengths**  | **Weaknesses**  |
| **Practical** |  |  |
| **Ethical** |  |  |
| **Theoretical** |  |  |