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CAMBRIDGE
International Education

Cambridge International AS & A Level

SOCIOLOGY **9699/31**

Paper 3 Education **May/June 2026**

MARK SCHEME

Maximum Mark: 50

Published

This mark scheme contains the instructions and marking guidance that our examiners used to mark candidate responses for this component.

Before they start marking, examiners complete a standardisation process. They review a range of candidate responses and discuss the mark scheme in detail to agree which answers can and cannot be accepted. Examiners award marks where it is clear that candidate responses have met the requirements of the mark scheme. These requirements may vary between different components or different versions of the same component, depending on the exact requirements of the question and the candidate responses seen during the standardisation process.

Sometimes, our mark schemes may allow marks to be awarded to responses which contain elements that are factually incorrect or for content not covered by the syllabus. We do this in response to the demands of a specific question to support candidates and make sure that our assessments are fair. However, these allowances should not be used as a guide for teaching and learning.

We cannot discuss the mark scheme with schools, and we recommend that schools read the mark scheme together with the assessment material and the Principal Examiner Report for Teachers.

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General marking principles

All examiners must apply these marking principles when marking candidate responses.

1	Examiners must award marks for each response in line with: • the specific **content** defined in the mark scheme • the specific **skills** defined in the mark scheme or in the level descriptions • the **standard of response** required as exemplified by the standardisation scripts.
2	Examiners must award **whole marks** (not half marks, or other fractions).
3	Examiners must award marks **positively**. This means that: • marks are not deducted for errors or omissions • marks are awarded for correct/valid answers as defined in the mark scheme and also for **other valid answers** which go beyond the scope of the syllabus and mark scheme referring to your team leader as appropriate • the quality of spelling, punctuation and grammar are judged **only** when the mark scheme indicates that these features are **specifically assessed** in the question. However, the meaning of all responses must be unambiguous.
4	Examiners must **consistently** apply the requirements of the mark scheme and any rules for what to do when candidates have not followed instructions correctly.
5	Examiners must use the **full range of marks** defined in the mark scheme, unless limited by the quality of the candidate responses seen.
6	Examiners must award marks according to the mark scheme and **must not** award marks with grade thresholds or grade descriptions in mind.

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Social Sciences-Specific Marking Principles
(for point-based marking)

1 Components using point-based marking:

- Point marking is often used to reward knowledge, understanding and application of skills. We give credit where the candidate's answer shows relevant knowledge, understanding and application of skills in answering the question. We do not give credit where the answer shows confusion.

From this it follows that we:

a DO credit answers which are worded differently from the mark scheme if they clearly convey the same meaning (unless the mark scheme requires a specific term)
b DO credit alternative answers/examples which are not written in the mark scheme if they are correct
c DO credit answers where candidates give more than one correct answer in one prompt/numbered/scaffolded space where extended writing is required rather than list-type answers. For example, questions that require *n* reasons (e.g. State two reasons …).
d DO NOT credit answers simply for using a 'key term' unless that is all that is required. (Check for evidence it is understood and not used wrongly.)
e DO NOT credit answers which are obviously self-contradicting or trying to cover all possibilities
f DO NOT give further credit for what is effectively repetition of a correct point already credited unless the language itself is being tested. This applies equally to 'mirror statements' (i.e. polluted/not polluted).
g DO NOT require spellings to be correct, unless this is part of the test. However spellings of syllabus terms must allow for clear and unambiguous separation from other syllabus terms with which they may be confused (e.g. corrasion/corrosion)

2 Presentation of mark scheme:

- Slashes (/) or the word 'or' separate alternative ways of making the same point.
- Semi colons (;) bullet points (•) or figures in brackets (1) separate different points.
- Content in the answer column in brackets is for examiner information/context to clarify the marking but is not required to earn the mark (except Accounting syllabuses where they indicate negative numbers).

3 Calculation questions:

- The mark scheme will show the steps in the most likely correct method(s), the mark for each step, the correct answer(s) and the mark for each answer
- If working/explanation is considered essential for full credit, this will be indicated in the question paper and in the mark scheme. In all other instances, the correct answer to a calculation should be given full credit, even if no supporting working is shown.
- Where the candidate uses a valid method which is not covered by the mark scheme, award equivalent marks for reaching equivalent stages.
- Where an answer makes use of a candidate's own incorrect figure from previous working, the 'own figure rule' applies: full marks will be given if a correct and complete method is used. Further guidance will be included in the mark scheme where necessary and any exceptions to this general principle will be noted.

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4 Annotation:

- For point marking, ticks can be used to indicate correct answers and crosses can be used to indicate wrong answers. There is no direct relationship between ticks and marks. Ticks have no defined meaning for levels of response marking.
- For levels of response marking, the level awarded should be annotated on the script.
- Other annotations will be used by examiners as agreed during standardisation, and the meaning will be understood by all examiners who marked that paper.

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Annotations guidance for centres

Examiners use a system of annotations as a shorthand for communicating their marking decisions to one another. Examiners are trained during the standardisation process on how and when to use annotations. The purpose of annotations is to inform the standardisation and monitoring processes and guide the supervising examiners when they are checking the work of examiners within their team. The meaning of annotations and how they are used is specific to each component and is understood by all examiners who mark the component.

We publish annotations in our mark schemes to help centres understand the annotations they may see on copies of scripts. Note that there may not be a direct correlation between the number of annotations on a script and the mark awarded. Similarly, the use of an annotation may not be an indication of the quality of the response.

The annotations listed below were available to examiners marking this component in this series.

Annotations

Annotation	Meaning
BOD	Benefit of the doubt given / the point is just about worthy of credit
E1	Explanation of the point
E2	Explanation of why it is a strength/ limitation
EXP	Development / description of the point.
EVAL	Evaluation point
DEV	Developed point
GEN	General point using sociological material but not applied to the question
IR	Point is irrelevant to the question
J	Juxtaposition of point
M	Material used to support the point
NAQ	Not answered question
REP	Repetition
SEEN	This material receives no credit, additional points not required
TV	Too vague
	Point that has been credited
	Incorrect response
	Irrelevant material

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Annotation	**Meaning**
On page comment	On page comment
Highlighter	Identification of a point

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Using the mark scheme

Some of the questions are marked using a point-based system, awarding marks for specific points and accumulating a total mark by adding points.

Some of the questions are marked using level of response. For these, the level descriptor represents performance **at the top of the level**.

For levels of response marking you should:

- award a mark at the top of the level if all criteria in the level are met
- consider the level descriptors across the full range, bearing in mind that it is not necessary for a candidate to give a faultless performance for maximum marks to be awarded within any single category
- award marks on a 'best-fit' basis; thus, compensation between higher and lower achievement for different criteria is acceptable

When marking holistically, the marks awarded for an answer are usually based on a judgement of the overall quality of the response. For holistic marking, inevitably, the mark scheme cannot cover all responses that candidates may make for all of the questions. In some cases, candidates may make some responses which the mark scheme has not predicted. These answers should nevertheless be credited according to their quality.

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Question	Answer	Marks
1	**Describe <u>two</u> ways IQ tests might discriminate against some ethnic groups.** **Indicative content** • Cultural bias, performance in tests might rely on different cultural knowledge and experience. • Procedure of the test may be unfamiliar, e.g. some cultures rely more on evaluations through oral expression/practical demonstration. • May not be in their first language, different linguistic code. • Cultural attitude to competition, individualism, speed etc. may affect performance. • Overlap with consequences of material disadvantage where an ethnic group is economically poorer, e.g. less resources for special tuition. • Any other appropriate way. ***Note:*** *way must link to ethnicity.* Reward a maximum of **two** ways. For each way, up to 2 marks are available: 1 mark for identifying a way IQ tests might discriminate against some ethnic groups. 1 mark for describing how that way discriminates against some ethnic groups. (2 × 2 marks)	**4**

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Question	Answer	Marks
2	**Explain <u>two</u> ways the curriculum can affect girls' educational attainment.** **Indicative content** • Gender specific schemes, e.g. GIST/FAWE, have widened girls' perceptions of what they are able to achieve and have expanded their academic aspirations. • Stereotypical gendered guidance in subject choice, can restrict academic ambition and attainment. • School option routes may influence girls' career aspirations and attainment. • Gender bias through gendered imagery in textbooks, may affect their aspirations/efforts in particular subjects and their attainment. • Methods of learning or assessment, examination or coursework. • Any other appropriate way. Reward a maximum of **two** ways. Up to 4 marks are available for each way: 1 mark for making a point / giving a way (e.g. specific schemes). 1 mark for explaining that point (e.g. where girls have traditionally underperformed, as in science and technology, schools can make the curriculum more attractive to them and improve access and performance). 1 mark for selecting relevant sociological material such as study / concept / theory / empirical evidence to support the point (e.g. Forum for African Women Educationalists (FAWE) STEM programme). 1 mark for explaining how the material supports the point (e.g. in several African countries FAWE has inspired change in science and technology curriculum content and delivery which has improved girls' educational attainment and performance). (2 × 4 marks)	**8**

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Question	Answer	Marks
3	**'In school a pupil's social class has no relevance.'** **Using sociological material, give <u>two</u> arguments against this view.** **Indicative content** • Teacher's allocation of attention and work according to concept of 'ideal pupil' being middle class (Becker). • Pupils placed on fast learner tables (Rist) or on college entry courses (Cicourel and Kitsuse) according to perceived middle-class identity. • Pupils put in lower sets because seen as less able or with disciplinary problems, often because of class (Gillborn and Youdell). • Effects of class-based labelling on self-concept, motivation, relationships, etc. (interactionist theories). • Effects of class-based streaming on attainment (Boaler). • Effects of self-fulfilling prophecy (Rosenthal and Jacobson) which could be based on class stereotypes. • Formation of anti-school subcultures resulting from labelling and streaming based on class (Hargreaves). • Material deprivation may still affect health, equipment, dress, etc. in classroom. • Linguistic deprivation (as a result of class) may affect ability to participate in class (Bernstein). • Working-class subculture (Sugarman). • Lack of cultural capital leading to sense of exclusion (Bourdieu). • Any other relevant argument against this view. Reward a maximum of two arguments. Up to 6 marks are available for each argument. ***Note:*** *This question is asking for arguments against the view. There are no marks for explaining the view or giving arguments supporting the view.* **Levels of response** Use the following levels to mark **each** argument. **Level 3: 5–6 marks** • One clear and developed argument against the view that in school a pupil's social class has no relevance. • Sociological material, such as concepts, theories and evidence, is used to support the argument against the view. The material selected is appropriate and focused on the question with its relevance made clear. **Level 2: 3–4 marks** • One clear but underdeveloped argument against the view that in school a pupil's social class has no relevance. • The material selected is appropriate but not fully focused on the question. Sociological evidence is used but its relevance to the argument is not made clear.	**12**

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Question	Answer	Marks
3	**Level 1: 1–2 marks** • One point disagreeing with the view that in school a pupil's social class has no relevance, which is undeveloped or lacking clarity. • Any material selected lacks focus on the specific question. **Level 0: 0 marks** • No response worthy of credit.	

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<table>
<tr><th>Question</th><th>Answer</th><th>Marks</th></tr>
<tr><td>4</td><td>

Evaluate the view that the purpose of education is to provide economic benefits for society.

Indicative content

<table>
<tr><th></th><th>In support of the view</th><th>Against the view</th></tr>
<tr><td>Points</td><td>
• Functionalist view that education leads to value consensus and social solidarity.
• Functionalist view that education leads to effective role allocation.
• Parsons' values of universalism and achievement, meritocracy.
• Social democratic view of equal opportunity and economic progress.
• New Right belief in competition and marketisation leading to high standards and economic growth.
• Curriculum innovation anticipates future economic needs and prepares young people to meet these needs.
• Functionalist model of education maintaining social order enabling economic prosperity.
• Any other appropriate point.
</td><td>
• Marxist model of education maintaining capitalism and benefiting bourgeoisie.
• Althusser ISA legitimising inequality.
• Bourdieu – cultural capital of middle class rewarded. School only reflects middle class habitus.
• Divisions in and between schools by class, religion, gender and type of school.
• Subcultures and resistance to norms and values in school.
• Loss of talent through under-achievement resulting from class, ethnic or gender differences.
• Feminist view that education is patriarchal and assigns women to domestic or lower status roles.
• Ethnocentric curriculum and institutional racism perpetuates ethnic inequalities.
</td></tr>
<tr><td>Research evidence/ theory</td><td>Durkheim
Parsons
Davis and Moore
Halsey
Giroux
Ward
Smith and Noble</td><td>Althusser
Bowles and Gintis
Bourdieu
Rikowski
Ranson
Willis</td></tr>
</table>

</td><td>**26**</td></tr>
</table>

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<table>
<tr><th>Question</th><th>Answer</th><th>Marks</th></tr>
<tr><td>4</td><td>
<table>
<tr><th></th><th>In support of the view</th><th>Against the view</th></tr>
<tr><td>Relevant concepts</td><td>Social solidarity
Role allocation
Secondary socialisation
Meritocracy
Social mobility</td><td>Social control
Ideological state apparatus
False consciousness
Correspondence principle
Legitimisation
Cultural reproduction
Vocationalism</td></tr>
</table>
The above content is indicative and other relevant approaches to the question should be rewarded appropriately.
</td><td></td></tr>
</table>

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Levels of response for Question 4

The maximum mark for **Question 4** is 26.

Examiners should award up to 10 marks for AO1, up to 6 marks for AO2, and up to 10 marks for AO3.

Level	AO1: Knowledge and Understanding	Marks
5	• Very good knowledge and understanding of the view that the purpose of education is to provide economic benefits for society. • The response contains a wide range of detailed points with very good use of concepts and theory or research evidence.	9–10
4	• Good knowledge and understanding of the view that the purpose of education is to provide economic benefits for society. • The response contains a range of detailed points with good use of concepts and theory or research evidence.	7–8
3	• Reasonable knowledge and understanding of the view that the purpose of education is to provide economic benefits for society. • The response contains a narrow range of detailed points or a wider range of underdeveloped points, with some use of concepts or theory or research evidence.	5–6
2	• Basic knowledge and understanding of the view that the purpose of education is to provide economic benefits for society. • The response contains a narrow range of underdeveloped points and may include basic references to concepts or theories or research evidence.	3–4
1	• Limited knowledge and understanding of the view that the purpose of education is to provide economic benefits for society. • The response contains only assertive points or common-sense observations.	1–2
0	• No knowledge and understanding worthy of credit.	0

Level	AO2: Interpretation and Application	Marks
3	• A range of material is selected, accurately interpreted, well developed and consistently applied to answering the question.	5–6
2	• Some relevant material is selected and accurately interpreted but it lacks either development or application to the question.	3–4
1	• There is some attempt to apply sociological material, but this is limited, inaccurate or lacks relevance to the specific question.	1–2
0	• No interpretation and application worthy of credit.	0

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Level	AO3: Analysis and Evaluation	Marks
5	• Very good analysis/evaluation of the view that the purpose of education is to provide economic benefits for society. • There is clear and sustained analysis with detailed and explicit evaluation.	9–10
4	• Good analysis/evaluation of the view that the purpose of education is to provide economic benefits for society. • The evaluation is explicit and direct but not sustained or relies on a good account of evidence and arguments **against** the view that the purpose of education is to provide economic benefits for society.	7–8
3	• Some analysis/evaluation of the view that the purpose of education is to provide economic benefits for society. • There is either one explicitly evaluative point or a simple descriptive account of evidence and arguments **against** the view that the purpose of education is to provide economic benefits for society.	5–6
2	• Basic analysis/evaluation of the view that the purpose of education is to provide economic benefits for society. • There is an attempt to consider more than one side of the debate or one point **against** the view that the purpose of education is to provide economic benefits for society.	3–4
1	• Limited analysis/evaluation of the view that the purpose of education is to provide economic benefits for society. • Any analysis or evaluation is incidental, confused or simply assertive.	1–2
0	• No analysis and evaluation worthy of credit.	0

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