



Cambridge O Level

SOCIOLOGY

2251/01

Paper 1 Research Methods, Identity and Inequality

For examination from 2025

SPECIMEN PAPER

2 hours



You must answer on the enclosed answer booklet.

You will need: Answer booklet (enclosed)

INSTRUCTIONS

- Answer **two** questions in total:
Answer Question 1.
Answer **either** Question 2 **or** Question 3.
- Follow the instructions on the front cover of the answer booklet. If you need additional answer paper, ask the invigilator for a continuation booklet.

INFORMATION

- The total mark for this paper is 80.
- The number of marks for each question or part question is shown in brackets [].

This document has **6** pages. Any blank pages are indicated.

Answer Question 1.

Research methods

- 1 (a) Read Source A and then answer the questions below.

Source A

'The Study of Adult Development' is a study that has been going on for over 80 years. The aim of the study was to investigate the factors that make people healthy and happy. It began in 1938 when a sample of 268 white, male students were recruited at an elite university called Harvard in the United States. The staff at Harvard selected students who were mentally and physically fit.

The participants were given questionnaires to complete. They also participated in face-to-face, in-depth interviews. Both methods were conducted at regular intervals. The research covered personal topics such as mental health, physical health, work, relationships, ageing and retirement. In the interviews researchers aimed to make the participants feel comfortable and relaxed and encouraged them to speak in their own words. The participants also did physical and psychological tests.

The main findings included:

- close relationships help to delay mental and physical decline
- close relationships are better predictors of long and happy lives than social class, IQ or genes
- the quality of relationships is more important for health and happiness than how many relationships a person has.

Source: <https://news.harvard.edu/gazette> (2017).

- (i) From Source A, identify **two** personal topics covered in 'The Study of Adult Development'. [2]
- (ii) Using information in Source A, explain **two** reasons why in-depth interviews were useful in investigating what makes people healthy and happy. [4]
- (iii) Using information in Source A, explain **three** reasons why the sample may **not** be representative of all people. [6]
- (b) Identify **two** types of question used by sociologists. [2]
- (c) Explain **one** strength and **one** limitation of official statistics. [4]
- (d) Evaluate the interpretivist approach to sociological research.
Your answer should include:
- at least **two** arguments for the approach and **two** arguments against the approach
 - a conclusion. [10]
- (e) Explain the research methods and evidence that you would choose to investigate how young people use the internet. Give reasons for your choices.
Your answer should include:
- **two** primary methods with relevant sampling
 - **one** source of secondary evidence. [12]

Answer **either** Question 2 **or** Question 3.

Identity: self and society

- 2 (a) Define the term:
- (i) feminism [2]
 - (ii) primary socialisation. [2]
- (b) Give **two** examples of social control used in education. [2]
- (c) Explain **three** reasons why people may join deviant sub-cultures. [6]
- (d) Explain **three** ways identity can be chosen rather than given in the digital age. [6]
- (e) Discuss the view that a global culture has now emerged.
Your answer should include:
- at least **three** developed points with evidence. [8]
- (f) Evaluate the view that gender is the main influence on identity.
Your answer should include:
- at least **three** arguments for the view and **three** arguments against the view
 - a conclusion. [14]

Social stratification and inequality

- 3 (a)** Define the term:
- (i)** meritocracy [2]
 - (ii)** racism. [2]
- (b)** Give **two** examples of how people achieve status in society. [2]
- (c)** Explain **three** ways societies have tried to reduce social inequalities. [6]
- (d)** Explain **three** features of a dependency culture. [6]
- (e)** Discuss how migration may have an impact on societies.
Your answer should include:
- at least **three** developed points with evidence. [8]
- (f)** Evaluate Marxist views of social inequality.
Your answer should include:
- at least **three** arguments for the views and **three** arguments against the views
 - a conclusion. [14]

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