

Skills Exercises

AO2 Interpretation and application

Cambridge International AS & A Level Sociology 9699

For examination from 2021



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AO2 Interpretation and application

Interpretation and application are the skills of interpreting sociological material, including concepts, theories and evidence and applying this to a range of issues. This includes:

- using relevant sociological material to support points or develop arguments
- explaining how sociological material is applicable to a particular issue or question
- demonstrating awareness of the links between the concepts, theories and evidence used to support points or to develop arguments.

Exercise 1: Using relevant sociological material

Key to showing interpretation and application is using the correct material. Learners need to develop the skills of interpreting the question to be able to include relevant sociological material in their answer.

Activity 1: Identifying the point of view

To gain higher marks in the exams, learners need to make sure they use relevant material. For many question types, including essays, this includes identifying material that supports a view and also identifying material against a view.

Give learners **Worksheet 1: Identifying the point of view** to help them understand how to apply the right material. Go through the worksheet with learners to check they understand what is required of the task. For this activity learners may work individually or in pairs.

Once learners have added the phrases to the appropriate column, they can also add more points of their own, either in support of the view or against the view.

Use **Worksheet 1: Identifying the point of view answers** and ask learners to peer assess each other's work. Lead a class discussion to develop learners' understanding asking them to explain how they have matched the phrases and why. Ensure any misconceptions are addressed.

Activity 2: Identifying and applying theories

Using the correct theory or perspective to support a view is important in exam questions. Learners should be able to identify which perspective is relevant to a question and whether it supports a view or can be used against a view.

Once learners have decided on whether the statements are true or false, they should identify other statements that are true or false in relation to the theory or perspectives. For statements that are false, learners identify for which theory or perspective these would be true.

Give learners **Worksheet 2: Identifying and applying theories** that uses examples from the family to help learners apply theory in answers. Go through the worksheet with learners to check they understand what is required of the task. For this activity learners may work individually or in pairs.

Use **Worksheet 2: Identifying and applying theories answers** and ask learners to peer assess each other's work. Lead a class discussion to develop learners' understanding asking them to share their responses. Ensure any misconceptions are addressed.

Extension activity: adapt the worksheet to be used with other topics.

Activity 3: Factors affecting research

Questions about research methods will often require learners to differentiate between different factors affecting the choice or use of a research method. Being able to identify relevant factors will help learners gain higher marks.

Worksheet 3: Factors affecting research can be used to get learners to identify the correct factors for an answer. Go through the worksheet with learners to check they understand what is required of the task. For this activity learners may work individually or in pairs.

Use **Worksheet 3: Factors affecting research answers** and ask learners to peer assess each other's work. Lead a class discussion to develop learners' understanding asking them to share their responses. Ensure any misconceptions are addressed.

Extension activity: learners can also discuss incorrect answers suggesting methods or research perspectives for which they would be relevant.

Exercise 2: Answering the question

Learners must ensure they cover all aspects of a question in an exam. This means that learners need to know what examiners expect for each type of question. Learners need to be able to interpret the command words to ensure all elements of the question are covered.

This exercise focuses on interpreting the three types of questions to ensure all the elements are covered.

Activity 1: How to describe

Questions that ask learners to describe appear on papers 1, 2 and 3. Learners must be able to identify two points and describe those points.

Use **Worksheet 4: How to describe** to help learners develop their answers. Use marks schemes from past examination papers to expand upon examples. Go through the worksheet with learners to check they understand what is required of the task. Make sure learners know that the description shows how the point answers the question. For this activity learners may work individually or in pairs.

Use **Worksheet 4: How to describe answers** and ask learners to peer assess each other's work. Lead a class discussion making sure learners know how to identify two points and describe them and asking them to share their responses. Ensure any misconceptions are addressed.

Extension activity: this activity could be used for one topic area or across a range of topics.

Activity 2: How to explain – 8-mark questions

Questions that ask learners to explain (8 mark questions) appear on papers 1, 2 and 3. Learners must be able to identify two points, explain the points, use sociological material to support the point and explain how the material supports the point.

Use **Worksheet 5: How to explain – 8-mark questions** to help learners develop their answers. Use marks schemes from past papers to expand on examples. Go through the worksheet with learners to check they understand what is required of the task. Make sure learners know that the description shows how the point answers the question. For this activity learners may work individually or in pairs.

Use **Worksheet 5: How to explain – 8-mark questions answers** and ask learners to peer assess each other's work. Lead a class discussion asking learners to share their responses. Ensure any misconceptions are addressed.

Extension activity: this activity could be used for one topic area or across a range of topics.

Once learners have completed the grid, they can use this to produce a paragraph for each point.

Activity 3: Sociological debates

The more exposure learners have to different social debates, the more adaptable they are likely to be when applying their sociological knowledge and understanding in an examination.

For this activity, each learner researches a different social debate. This could involve researching sociological theories and perspectives on the debate, studies and also contemporary examples from their own society or other societies.

Worksheet 6: Sociological debates gives some examples of debates that could be used. For this activity learners should work in small groups. Learners research the debate and the specific nature of that debate.

Learners present their findings to the rest of the group, including examples of contemporary issues that exist in your country.

If there have been specific issues in your country try to choose a debate that would use these issues, for example a debate about the availability of free school meals in the UK or the publication of crime statistics.

Exercise 3: Linking concepts to theories and evidence

Interpretation and application skills can be demonstrated by showing how sociological ideas link.

Activity 1: Linking concepts to theories and evidence

If a question includes a reference to a key concept, learners should be able to demonstrate interpretation and application by linking the concept to a sociological theory or evidence.

Learners should be encouraged to make these links by not only learning the definition of a key concept but also how it links to other sociological knowledge.

Give learners **Worksheet 7: Linking concepts to theories and evidence**. Learners provide the theory/evidence that links to the concept. Go through the worksheet with learners to check they understand what is required of the task. For this activity learners may work individually or in pairs.

Use **Worksheet 7: Linking concepts to theories and evidence answers** and ask learners to peer assess each other's work. Lead a class discussion asking learners to share their responses. Ensure any misconceptions are addressed.

Extension activity: this activity can be used as revision and exam preparation or adjusted to fit the end of a topic.

Activity 2: Patterns and trends

Sociologists may use statistics to examine issues and topics. When using statistical data or trends in data this should be interpreted to link to sociological material.

This activity is to help learners consider how they use patterns and trends to link to sociological material. Learners should be aware that when using statistics trends these should be explained to show interpretation.

Give learners **Worksheet 8: Patterns and trends**. Learners explain what the statistical pattern or trend stated shows and explain how this might be interpreted in relation to sociology. Go through the worksheet with learners to check they understand what is required of the task. For this activity learners may work individually or in pairs.

Use **Worksheet 8: Patterns and trends answers** and ask learners to peer assess each other's work. Lead a class discussion going through learners' answers and ensuring that their explanations are thorough and clear. Ensure any misconceptions are addressed.

Extension activity: this activity could be used each time learners encounter statistical information. This will improve their skills of interpretation and application.



Activity 3: Essay planning

To ensure the correct material is used for essay answers, learners should consider planning their responses.

Give learners **Worksheet 9: Essay planning**. This grid can be used for any essay question. Go through the worksheet with learners to check they understand what is required of the task. For this activity learners may work individually or in pairs.

Learners identify four points that would support the view in the question. For each of these points learners give sociological evidence that supports the point. They then do the same for the points against the view and support these with evidence. This will give a structure for the essay that then just needs the points to be developed.

Use **Worksheet 9: Essay planning answers** and ask learners to peer assess each other's work. Lead a class discussion and go through learners' essay planning ensuring that it is organised correctly and that relevant points and evidence to support has been selected. Ensure any misconceptions are addressed.

Extension activity: this activity could be used for any essay question to ensure that learners select relevant material and are able to use this material to show both ideas in support of the question and points against. This activity could also be used as a starter activity at the beginning of a lesson to get learners used to planning for essay questions. They can peer assess each other's planning giving positive feedback and an improvement. Use previous mark schemes and textbooks to help.

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