

Skills Exercises

AO1 Knowledge and understanding

Cambridge International AS & A Level Sociology 9699

For examination from 2021



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Introduction

Cambridge International AS & A Level Sociology attracts a variety of learners from many different backgrounds. For some learners, Sociology is a new subject and an opportunity to explore an area of study that interests them, while developing a set of transferable skills. Other learners have previously studied Sociology and are looking to continue developing their knowledge of the subject. Either way, the study of Sociology allows learners to experience the diverse and dynamic world within which individuals exist and gain the knowledge needed to understand how society operates within real contexts, analyse alternative courses of action and develop the ability to make justified recommendations.

Skills and why they are important?

Skills are the key to success. The performance of candidates in Cambridge International AS & A Level Sociology exams have shown a range of areas where improvement would be helpful. These areas of improvement tend to centre around the assessment objectives (AOs) of the course and we have addressed these AOs in a series of exercises and activities.

- AO1 Knowledge and understanding
- AO2 Interpretation
- AO3 Analysis and evaluation

Skills Exercises make use of examination questions and include activities and worksheets to help skills development and incorporate suggested teaching approaches, such as group work, discussion, structured support and writing in sequence. They do not attempt to cover all possible aspects of the examinations, only those problem areas which have presented consistently over time.

How will these skills be developed?

Skills Exercises aim to help learners develop skills in:

- sociological language
- how to use sociological knowledge
- sociological research methods.

Skills Exercises provide suggestions so you can have confidence that the materials you prepare and use in the classroom are building skills and resilience in your learners. This document should be used alongside the other teaching and learning resources provided on the School Support Hub.



AO1 Knowledge and understanding

Knowledge and understanding are the skills of being able to use sociological material in exam answers.

To demonstrate knowledge and understanding you need to be able to use the following in your exam answers:

- sociological concepts, theories, evidence, views, research methods, arguments and debates
- the theoretical and practical considerations that influence the design and execution of sociological research
- relevant sociological research findings.

Exercise 1: Using sociological language

Much of what you learn in sociology relates to everyday life. Since we are studying society and we are all members of society, the material may seem familiar. What is important in answers in sociology examinations is that you show your sociological understanding of issues that may seem familiar.

One way to show your knowledge and understanding is being able to write sociologically. This involves using:

- Concepts – these are key sociological words.
- Theories – perspectives or views of how society works.
- Evidence – sociological studies or empirical evidence.

Using a combination of concepts, theories and evidence will help you to demonstrate your sociological knowledge.

Activity 1: Understanding sociological perspectives

Cambridge International AS & A Level Sociology includes perspectives that learners need to know and understand so that they can interpret different views of society and use this knowledge as required in the examinations.

Sociological theories or perspectives are different ways of looking at society. Theories are also used to explain different topics in sociology such as education, family or religion.

A key to showing knowledge and understanding in answers is being able to confidently use theories and perspectives.

Give learners **Worksheet 1: Understanding sociological perspectives** and ask them to explain the difference between the sociological statements. Go through the worksheet with learners to check they understand what is required of the task. For this activity learners may work individually, in pairs or groups.

Use **Worksheet 1: Understanding sociological perspectives answers** and ask learners to peer assess each other's work. Lead a class discussion to develop learners' understanding and explaining the differences. Ensure any misconceptions are addressed.

Activity 2: Key concepts

Give learners a list of key concepts. Use the concepts in **Worksheet 2: Key concepts** or replace these with other lists depending on the topic area you are studying.

Learners identify any words they would use if they were not studying sociology. This demonstrates the importance of concepts in developing knowledge in sociology. Go through the worksheet with learners to check they understand what is required of the task. For this activity learners may work individually, in pairs or groups.

Learners give definitions/explanations of the key concepts and explain them in their own words.

Use **Worksheet 2: Key concepts answers** and ask learners to peer assess each other's work. Lead a class discussion to develop learners' understanding, ensuring any misconceptions are addressed.

Activity 3: Sociological evidence

Sociologists explain the world using their perspectives, but they also collect evidence to help to prove or disprove their ideas about society. Knowledge of sociological evidence will support a point learners need to make in an examination answer.

As well as knowing key concepts and perspectives, higher grades in sociology can be gained by being able to use evidence from statistics and studies to support the point learners make in their answers. This may be evidence that proves a point and also evidence that might disagree with a point.

Learners should have access to a range of sociological evidence to support points made in examination answers. Sociological evidence can be found in a good textbook or on the internet.

Provide pairs of learners with a different topic from the syllabus. For example, the AS Level subject content for topics 6.1–6.4 has been split as seen on **Worksheet 3: Sociological evidence**. 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 list every study or piece of empirical evidence they can find in their topic from the syllabus.

Learners then give a brief outline of the study or evidence and record it.

When completed, discuss and fill in any gaps so that learners have a complete evidence list. Use **Worksheet 3: Sociological evidence answers** and ask learners to peer assess each other's work. Lead a class discussion to develop learners' understanding, ensuring any misconceptions are addressed.

Extension activity: adapt the worksheet for other topics.

Exercise 2: How to use sociological knowledge

The Cambridge International AS & A Level Sociology syllabus includes the theories that need to be known and understood. The basic elements of each theory can be summarised so they can be easily recalled by learners.

Key concepts are important in being able to demonstrate sociological knowledge of theories.

Activity 1: Matching key concepts to theories

Give learners a list of key concepts and theories. **Worksheet 4: Matching key concepts** to theories can be used or adapted to include key concepts and theories. 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 4: Matching key concepts answers** and ask learners to peer assess each other's work. Lead a class discussion to develop learners' understanding of how these theories can be compared and contrasted. Ensure any misconceptions are addressed.

Extension activity: adapt the worksheet for other key concepts and theories.

Activity 2: Research methods connectives

Sociology perspectives and theories are an important way to show knowledge and understanding of the subject.

Learners need to understand how perspectives can be used to help with the higher-level skills of analysis and evaluation.

Give learners **Worksheet 5: Perspectives** and ask them to complete each concept or approach by inserting the missing words. 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 5: Perspectives answers** and ask learners to peer assess each other's work. Lead a class discussion asking learners to share their answers and explain why the concept/approach is correct. Ensure any misconceptions are addressed.

Activity 3: Providing sociological evidence

Being able to support your answers with evidence can show greater knowledge and understanding. Studies in sociology provide support and evidence that can help in developing a point in a short question or an essay.

Worksheet 6: Providing sociological evidence can be used to help learners recall sociological evidence. This could be used for any topic area. 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 matched the concept to the sociologist, they should produce a summary of the findings of the study and discuss as a group. Use **Worksheet 6: Providing sociological evidence answers** and ask learners to peer assess each other's work. Lead a class discussion to develop learners' understanding, ensuring any misconceptions are addressed.

Extension activity: adapt the worksheet for other topics.

Exercise 3: Sociological research

One key area of knowledge and understanding is the topic of research methods. The knowledge from this section can also be used when examining evidence in other areas of the course. The method used by a study may be discussed in answers, as well as the findings of a study.

It is important to be able to understand the different types of research methods and how they are used to collect data. Examination questions may also be focused on key concepts in relation to research methods.

Activity 1: Research and data

Sociologists gather evidence to support their ideas. Sociologists carry out research in different ways. These different methods of research also give different types of data.

An examination question can have a single research method at its core, but require different examples to be given to allow a full answer. Learners need to be able to link these different types together so they can choose the most important or most relevant ones to use in an answer.

Learners will need to identify quantitative and qualitative research methods. They will also need to identify which of these are primary research methods and which are secondary.

Give learners **Worksheet 7: Research and data**. 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 create a mind-map using different examples that link to the specific type of data.

Use **Worksheet 7: Research and data answers** and ask learners to peer assess each other's work. Lead a group discussion and ask learners to share each group's ideas. Where a group has added an example that no-one else has, ask for an explanation. Ensure any misconceptions are addressed.

Extension activity: discuss which examples might be most relevant when answering different examination questions.



Activity 2: Concepts and approaches to research

Learners should develop a comprehensive knowledge of some of the key terms relating to research methods in the syllabus.

Give learners **Worksheet 8: Concepts and approaches to research**, a partially complete diagram, representing key concepts and approaches to methods from the syllabus. The concepts and approaches can be replaced with different ones as required or could focus on specific research methods. 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: Concepts and approaches to research answers** and ask learners to peer assess each other's work. Lead a group discussion about the concepts and approaches and when each might be relevant to research. Ensure any misconceptions are addressed.

Activity 3: Matching methods to concepts

Give learners a list of methods and concepts. **Worksheet 9: Matching methods to concepts** can be used or adapted to include different methods. 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 9: Matching methods to concepts answers** and ask learners to peer assess each other's work. Lead a group discussion asking learners which method would be appropriate in different research scenarios. Ensure any misconceptions are addressed.

Extension activity: adapt the worksheet to include different methods.

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