

Skills Exercises

AO3 Analysis and evaluation

Cambridge International AS & A Level Sociology 9699

For examination from 2021



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AO3 Analysis and evaluation

Analysing and evaluating sociological theories, evidence, views, research methods and arguments, includes:

- explaining the strengths and limitations of sociological theories, views and research methods
- developing arguments against sociological theories and views
- investigating sociological theories and arguments to reveal underlying assumptions, value judgements, misconceptions, logical flaws and ideological influences
- discussing counter viewpoints or evidence to demonstrate the complexity of sociological issues and debates
- recognising the limitations of, or bias in, sociological and non-sociological evidence
- reaching conclusions based on a reasoned consideration of available evidence and arguments.

Exercise 1: Spotting analysis

Analysis is often considered to be the least understood skill. However, it is the skill that unlocks higher marks and top grades.

Learners who can effectively analyse in their answers will be able to build arguments and come to conclusions.

Analysis is about:

- effects
- consequences
- reactions.

Many learners think that analysis is about description or explanation and often spend too much time explaining and describing elements of an answer without getting to the all-important analysis.

Activity 1: Analysis or not

Give learners a series of sentences where one sentence involves analysis, and the other does not.

The sentences in **Worksheet 1: Analysis or not** can be used or replaced with other sentences. 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. For each sentence, learners decide which is the analytical one.

Use **Worksheet 1: Analysis or not 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 came to their answers and why. Ensure any misconceptions are addressed.

Activity 2: Identifying analysis in simple sentences

Show learners one or two sentences containing analysis that are explanations of causal connections. These can be everyday examples or society related. Choose examples suitable for the topic being studied. For example:

- There is an increase in divorce therefore there are more lone parent families.
- Middle class learners achieve higher attainment because they use the elaborated code.

Use **Worksheet 2: Identifying analysis in simple sentences** to encourage learners to practise spotting analysis and adding development. Go through the worksheet with learners to check they understand what is required of the task. Introduce the idea of connecting words including, 'because', 'this means', 'so', 'therefore'. For the first part of this activity learners should work individually.

Learners identify the decisions made and the reasons given for those decisions in each statement.

In groups learners consider other possible connecting words. Remind learners that not all connecting words such as 'and' are relevant for developing analysis.

Use **Worksheet 2: Identifying analysis in simple sentences answers** and ask learners to peer assess each other's work. Learners make notes on their discussion before sharing ideas with the class. These could be used later as part of a display about connecting words. Lead a class discussion to develop learners' understanding asking them to explain how they came to their answers and why. Ensure any misconceptions are addressed.

Extension activity: ask further questions such as, 'Why does this develop the statement?' or 'How will this help explain the point being made?'

Activity 3: Identifying analysis in paragraphs

Give learners a copy of **Worksheet 3: Identifying analysis in paragraphs**. 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 underline the analytical components of each paragraph.

Use **Worksheet 3: Identifying analysis in paragraphs answers** and ask learners to peer assess each other's work. Lead a class discussion to develop learners' understanding asking them whether the analysis could be extended further to make a better analytical point. Ensure any misconceptions are addressed.

Exercise 2: Developed analysis

Analysis can be limited or developed. Limited analysis does not go far enough. For example, it may identify an impact, effect or reaction, but does not continue and demonstrate how it will really affect the individual or society.

Developed analysis is about creating a chain of analysis. This means that there is a clear link between the initial impact, effect or reaction and how this might develop to really affect the individual or society.

Activity 1: Chains of analysis

Developed analysis can be seen as a chain of effects. This activity helps learners think about the links in the chain that go from the initial effect through to the end effect.

Give learners a starting effect and how this might end. The chains on **Worksheet 4: Chains of analysis** can be used or changed with other effects. 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. For each sentence, learners complete the missing links in the chain that match up to the initial effect to the end effect.

Use **Worksheet 4: Chains of analysis answers** and ask learners to peer assess each other's work. Lead a class discussion to develop learners' understanding. There may be many ways to get from the first effect to the last, so discuss the different routes learners have taken and whether any of the links are more realistic than others. Ensure any misconceptions are addressed.

Activity 2: Developing strengths and limitations

Questions on research methods often ask for strengths and limitations of a research method. Being able to analyse the strengths and limitations is an essential part of analysis and needs to be in context as well as developed.

Give learners a research scenario that may have advantages and disadvantages for a researcher. The scenarios in **Worksheet 5: Developing strengths and limitations** may be used or replaced with other scenarios. 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. For each scenario, learners think of two strengths and two limitations and explain how these would affect the research. Learners are likely to find a range of answers, so different responses should be discussed.

Use **Worksheet 5: Developing strengths and limitations answers** and ask learners to peer assess each other's work. Lead a class discussion to develop learners' understanding. Discuss with learners whether any of the strengths or limitations are more realistic than others. Ensure any misconceptions are addressed.

Extension activity: Replace the scenarios with different ones.

Exercise 3: Answering the question

Evaluation is usually considered to be the hardest assessment objective and the one that is essential for a top grade. At its heart, evaluation is about answering the question.

Activity 1: Making a judgement

When learners see an evaluative question it should be clear what the judgement will be about. Knowing what the judgement is about helps learners structure their answer because all the analytical points will create arguments to back up that judgement.

Provide learners with a series of evaluative questions from either past examination or specimen papers. Learners will not need the case study or data to work out what the judgement should be.

The questions on **Worksheet 6: Making a judgement** or any other evaluative questions can be used. 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. For each question, learners decide what the first sentence of the conclusion should be. This gives a target for the analytical arguments to work towards.

Use **Worksheet 6: Making a judgement answers** and ask learners to peer assess each other's work. Lead a class discussion to go through the learners' judgements and then listen to a few of the first sentences offering guidance where necessary. Ensure any misconceptions are addressed.

Activity 2: Two-sided arguments

One of the most important routes into evaluation is by spotting the two sides of each question. There is always a way to argue both sides of any evaluative question and in doing so learners can include evaluation in their responses.

Provide learners with several evaluative questions. The data or case study that goes with these questions is not important to be able to spot the two sides of the response.

The questions in **Worksheet 7: Two-sided arguments** can be used or any other evaluative questions from past examination papers. 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 decide what the two sides of the question are.

Use **Worksheet 7: Two-sided arguments answers** and ask learners to peer assess each other's work. Lead a class discussion to develop learners' understanding. There are sometimes different perspectives; discuss as a class why different approaches are sometimes still appropriate. Ensure any misconceptions are addressed.

Extension activity: learners develop the two sides of the argument by giving a reason for each.



Activity 3: Mini-conclusions

Learners can begin to include evaluation in an answer by developing a mini-conclusion after every analytical point.

Explain to learners that a mini-conclusion can occur after a chain of analysis and brings the point back to provide an answer to the question.

Provide each learner with a copy of **Worksheet 8: Mini-conclusions**. 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. Explain to learners that the first analytical point has been evaluated in the second paragraph. Discuss why it is evaluation and how it is different from analysis. Learners evaluate the second analytical point using the same style as the example.

Use **Worksheet 8: Mini-conclusions answers** and ask learners to peer assess each other's work. Lead a class discussion to develop learners' understanding, asking them to share their own mini-conclusions and offering feedback as needed. Ensure any misconceptions are addressed.

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