

PiXL Independence:

Sociology - Student Booklet

KS5

Core Topic: Research Methods

Support for Q5 & 6 on Paper 1 and Paper 2

Contents:

- I. Multiple Choice Questions – 10 credits
- II. Short Answer Questions – 10 credits per question
- III. Independent Research – 80 credits per questions
- IV. Academic Reading – 50 credits each
- V. Extended Exam Style Questions Part One – 60 credits each plus 20 additional credits for marking your own.
- VI. Extended Exam Style Questions Part Two – 100 credits each plus 20 additional credits for marking your own.
- VII. Mark Scheme for Extended Exam Style Questions Part One
- VIII. Mark Scheme for Extended Exam Style Questions Part Two

i. Multiple Choice Questions

Answer the questions below that explore the themes of this unit.

10 credits.

1. T/F – primary data is information that has been collected or created by someone else e.g. from official statistics.

2. A list of people from which a sample will be drawn, e.g. the electoral register, is known as:
 - a. The target population
 - b. A sample frame
 - c. A representative sample
 - d. A sample

3. Participant observation is:
 - a. When the participants are aware that they are being studied
 - b. When the researcher participates in the activities of the group being studied
 - c. When the participants are unaware that they are being studied
 - d. When the researcher does not join in with the activities and watches from the sidelines

4. The definition of 'going native' is:
 - a. Joining in with the 'native' culture of the group you are observing
 - b. To observe only traditional/native cultures that is not your own culture.
 - c. When the research has lost their objectivity and simply become a member of the group (over identifying).
 - d. To observe groups while naked!

5. Social Surveys refer to which TWO research methods:
 - a. Questionnaires
 - b. Unstructured interviews
 - c. Structured interviews
 - d. Documentary sources

6. A weakness of using social surveys is:
- a. Lacks generalisability as they tend to have small sample sizes
 - b. Lack validity due to closed questions cannot gather in-depth data
 - c. High in reliability as they are standardised
 - d. They can be time consuming and costly to carry out
7. Which statement below is stating a correct difference between a lab and field experiment?
- a. Lab experiments take place in the Pp natural environment and field experiments are in an artificial environment
 - b. Only lab experiments manipulate an IV and measure a DV
 - c. Lab experiments tend to be more ethical than field experiments
 - d. Positivists like lab experiments and interpretivists likes field experiments
8. The comparative method is a 'thought experiment' which does not involve experimenting on real people, but instead makes comparisons between individuals using data mainly gathered from:
- a. Unstructured interviews
 - b. Official statistics
 - c. Reading personal documents
 - d. Observing people in their natural environment
9. T/F – Positivists claim that official statistics are not social facts but social constructions shaped by the recording processes by those who compile them i.e. those in power.
10. Which one of the following statements about Official Statistics is incorrect:
- a. Official statistics can be used to test hypotheses and establish cause and affect relationships
 - b. Marxists claim that governments manipulate statistics so that they can portray themselves in a better light and disguise the worst sides of capitalism
 - c. Statistics lack insight into the meaning, feelings and motivations of the people being studied
 - d. Because the data has been gathered first hand by the researcher it sometimes does not include all the information required

11. Which one of the following is NOT an example of a personal document:

- a. Daily diary
- b. Text message
- c. Bank statement
- d. Minutes of a meeting

12. Which one of the following statements of Historical Documents is a practical strength:

- a. There may not be many surviving documents produced by individuals
- b. They are often the only way to research a particular area from the past
- c. Historical documents can bring problems of interpretation
- d. By using more than one historical document ideas and statements can be checked for accuracy

13. Which statement does NOT apply to unstructured interviews:

- a. Interview schedule used
- b. No pre-set questions used
- c. Flexible
- d. An example of one would be the Crime Survey for England and Wales

14. Which of these statements about unstructured interviews does not relate to increased validity?

- a. Able to build up rapport with the interviewee
- b. There is no pre-mature closure of the interview
- c. Pps are able to check understanding of each question
- d. The interviewers are required to be trained which can take a long time and be costly

ii. Short Answer Questions

Short answer questions are a great way to test your knowledge and understanding (AO1) of a topic. This type of question also appears throughout AS and A Level Sociology exam papers. The command word for these questions is always 'Outline'.

- *AS Research Methods Paper 2 – 'Outline two'*
- *A Level papers do not have short questions for research methods however, they do for Education and Crime and Deviance, the exam skill you practise here is very important.*

10 credits for each question answered correctly.

1. Outline two problems of covert participant observation.
(4 marks)
2. Outline two reasons why sociologists sometimes use a pilot study as part of their research. **(4 marks)**
3. Outline the difference between a sampling frame and a sample.
(4 marks)
4. Outline two reasons why the results obtained from a postal questionnaire may not be representative of the population that it aims to study.
(4 marks)
5. Outline two disadvantages of longitudinal studies in sociological research.
(4 marks)
6. Outline two advantages of using personal documents in sociological research.
(4 marks)
7. Outline two advantages of using official statistics in sociological research.
(4 marks)
8. Outline two disadvantages that sociologists might find when using structured interviews. **(4 marks)**
9. Outline the difference between the 'dependent' variable and the 'independent' variable in sociological experiments.
(4 marks)
10. Outline two factors that may influence a sociologist's choice of research topic.
(4 marks)

iii. Hyperlinks for Independent Research

Each research task has a strong link to the unit of research methods, but may also focus on wider sociological themes, remember to try and view sociology as holistically as possibly.

80 credits per task

1. Viewpoints: School league tables

Read the article and answer the question below.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/education-25810203>

Question: do the use of official statistics and exam league tables produce help the education system?

2. The Census 2011

Read the section on the ONS about why we have a census and answer the question.

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/census/2011census/whywehaveacensus>

Question: Why do we have a census and what does it allow the government to do?

Extension: For more general information about the census:

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/census/2011census>

3. Observing a 'gang'

Watch the short video of Venkatesh discussing his research.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ipb0TfdNRwM>

Question: what type of observation did Venkatesh (the researcher) use and how did he go about conducting his research?

4. Ethics in research

Download the BSA statement of ethical practise 2017 from the webpage below then complete the task.

<https://www.britsoc.co.uk/ethics>

Question/task: summarise the BSA statement of ethical practise 2017 into the main headings according to the document.

5. Marth Luther King Speech

Watch the short clip of MLK's famous 'I have a dream speech' and complete the question below.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3vDWWy4CMhE>

Question: Explain why this is an important historical document to use in research.

6. Rosenthal & Jacobson – Field Experiment

Read the article and watch at least one video from the webpage, we would recommend you watch the video entitled 'The Rosenthal Experiment - An Overview'.

<https://sites.google.com/site/7arosenthal/>

Question: Describe the experiment conducted by Rosenthal, including the procedures and the results.

7. Ethnography

Read the article written by Dr Ruben Andersson and answer the two questions it poses.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/articles/16mICRBLD67XtL4hIMMHdF7/ethnography-what-is-it-and-why-do-we-need-it>

Question: What is ethnography and why do we need it?

8. Ann Oakley – women's experience of childbirth

Either listen to the interview with Ann Oakley or download the full transcript and read it and then complete the task below.

<https://www.socialsciencespace.com/2013/04/podcast-ann-oakley-on-womens-experience-of-childbirth/>

Question/task: summarise Ann Oakley's research, including her follow up study and make a note of any strengths and weaknesses of the research.

9. The qualitative v quantitative debate

Read the article which discusses the relative merits of qualitative and quantitative data.

<https://www.socialresearchmethods.net/kb/qualdeb.php>

Question: which do you think is the preferred type of data for sociology? Make sure you make a note of any new terms/words you have not used before.

10. Reading the riots: investigating England's summer of disorder

Download the pdf document from the webpage and read the introduction and the section entitled 'The Methodological approach to the investigation'.

<http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/46297/>

Question: how did they conduct their research into the reasons behind the riots in 2011?

iv. Recommended Academic Reading for Research Methods

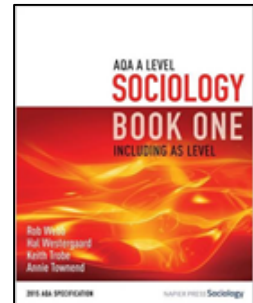
50 credits per task

Title: *AQA A Level Sociology Book One Including AS Level: Book one*

Author(s): Rob Webb, Hal Westergaard, Keith Trobe, Annie Townend

Description: Written by experienced team of authors, it provides students with everything they need to know to success in their sociology A level studies.

Recommended reading: Chapter 3 Research Methods with methods in context

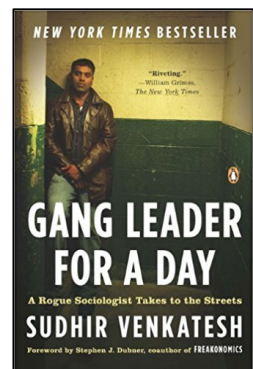


Title: *Gang Leader for a Day: A Rogue Sociologist Takes to the Streets*

Author: Sudhir Venkatesh

Description: Sociology student Sudhir Venkatesh wanted to learn by observing the poor, rather than using quantitative methods suggested by his professors, he embarks on an unlikely friendship with J.T, a local gang leader. His observations of the lives of the residents form his doctoral thesis. As it says in the title, he even gets to be gang leader for the day, when some three years into his relationship with J.T., he feels confident enough to suggest that J.T. doesn't do much for all the money he earns. He is consequently thrust into managing the Black Kings (the gang) for a day (under the close supervision of J.T.), a moral tightrope walk he has to manage without recourse to guns. Follow his 7 year observation of this gang and enjoy his honest and candid story of how he managed the most difficult of research methods.

Recommended reading: the whole text



Title: *Reading the Riots Investigating England's summer of disorder*

Author: The Guardian and London School of Economics

Description: The report brings together the outcome of the first phase of the study conducted by The Guardian and LSE, focusing on the nature, motivations, attitudes and experiences of those who rioted across London and Birmingham, Manchester, Salford, Nottingham and Liverpool.

Link: <http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/46297/>

Recommended reading: the whole document



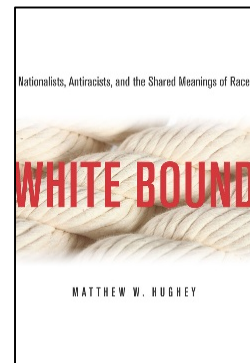
Title: *White Bound: Nationalists, Antiracists, and the Shared Meanings of Race*

Author: Matthew Hughey

Description: Matthew Hughey spent over a year attending the meetings of a white nationalist group and a white antiracist group. Though he found immediate political differences, he observed surprising similarities. Both groups make meaning of whiteness through a reliance on similar racist and reactionary stories and worldviews.

Recommended reading: Either the whole text or as an alternative a review of the book can be found here:

<http://blogs.lse.ac.uk/lsereviewofbooks/2013/02/26/book-review-white-bound-nationalists-antiracists-and-the-shared-meanings-of-race/>



Title: *Voices from the 'Jungle': Stories from the Calais Refugee Camp*

Editors: Marie Godin, Katrine Møller Hansen, Aura Lounasmaa, Corinne Squire and Tahir Zaman

Description: Offers a collection of individual testimonies written by a number of people residing in the so- termed Calais 'Jungle', the refugee camp in Northern France. This is a moving and timely anthology that seeks to give a voice to the lives, experiences and future hopes of those living in the camp.

Recommended reading: Either the whole text or as an alternative a review of the book can be found here:

<http://blogs.lse.ac.uk/lsereviewofbooks/2017/07/25/book-review-voices-from-the-jungle-stories-from-the-calais-refugee-camp-edited-by-marie-godin-katrine-moller-hansen-aura-lounasmaa-corinne-squire-and-tahir-zaman/>

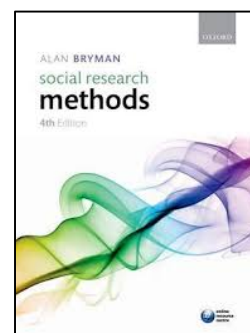


Title: *Social Research Methods 4th edition*

Author: Alan Bryman

Description: An undergraduate text which introduces sociological research method, providing students and researchers with coverage of both quantitative and qualitative methods. The book is full of engaging examples and practical tips to equip students with the tools and knowledge needed for them to complete their own research projects. The book attempts to bridge the gap between theory and practice.

Recommended reading: Choose one chapter of interest to read and note.

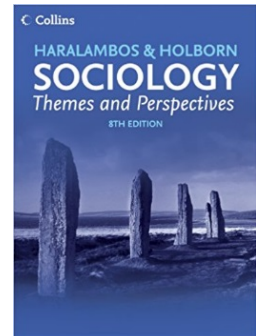


Title: Haralambos and Holborn - *Sociology Themes and Perspectives*
[Eighth edition]

Authors: Michael Haralambos, Martin Holborn

Description: An excellent extensive textbook for sociology courses in schools, colleges and higher education. A great starting point for anyone wanting to do some extra reading with clear headings and guidance.

Recommended reading: Chapter on research methods



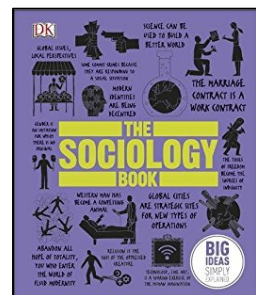
Extension reading for the whole of sociology:

Title: *The Sociology Book (Big Ideas)*

Author(s): Alexandra Beeden and Miezán Van Zyl

Description: It is a fantastic book to engage anyone and everyone in sociology! It includes great visuals.

Recommended reading: All of it!



v. Extended Exam Questions Part One

60 credits for each question plus 20 additional credits for marking your own.

Paper 1: Education with Theory and Methods – x1 10 marker on research methods

Paper 3: Crime and Deviance with Theory and Methods - x1 10 marker and x1 20 marker on research methods

Practise 10 mark exam questions on research methods:

1. Outline and explain two advantages of choosing overt participant observation as a source of data compared with covert participant observation.
(10 marks)
2. Outline and explain two practical disadvantages of using documents in sociological research. **(10 marks)**
3. Outline and explain two reasons why it is very difficult to ensure that data from unstructured interviews is objective.
(10 marks)
4. Outline and explain two reasons why interpretivist research is likely to have greater ethical problems than positivist research.
(10 marks)
5. Outline and explain two reasons why positivists favour social surveys.
(10 marks)

vi. Extended Exam Questions Part Two

100 credits for each question plus 20 additional credits for marking your own.

Practice 20 mark exam questions on research methods:

Item C

Positivists believe that the social world is like the physical world is an objective factual reality. They search for causal explanations of behaviour by following the logic of the experimental method. Arguing that society can only be studied scientifically and therefore they favour quantitative methods of research.

1. Applying material from Item C and your knowledge, evaluate the usefulness of positivist approaches to our understanding of society.
(20 marks)

Item C

Documentary sources come in a variety of forms such as diaries, letters and government reports. Some sociologists argue that they may not be authentic nor representative of all groups in society and fail. However, others favour them believe they provide rich and detail data about meanings, feelings and emotions.

2. Applying material from Item C and your knowledge, evaluate the usefulness of the different types of documentary sources in sociological research.
(20 marks)

Item C

In choosing a research method a sociologist will consider a number of different factors in order to ensure their research is gathered using the right techniques. These factors will cover various practical, ethical and theoretical issues.

3. Applying material from Item C and your knowledge evaluate the factors that affect sociologists' choice of method when carrying out research.
(20 marks)

Item C

Sociologists have occasionally used experiments as a way of studying human behaviour. In sociology there are three common types of experiments. These are lab, field and the comparative method.

4. Applying material from Item C and your knowledge, evaluate the reasons why some sociologists choose not to use experiments when conducting research.

(20 marks)

Item C

When researching society, sociologists tend to gather two types of data. Quantitative data, which comes in the form of numerical data and qualitative data in the form of words. Quantitative data includes official statistics and is often gathered via surveys, while qualitative data includes feelings and opinions about things in society, often gathered by unstructured interviews.

5. Applying material from Item C and your knowledge, evaluate the view that quantitative research methods are more useful than qualitative research methods in our understanding of society.

(20 marks)

vii Extended Questions Mark Schemes Part One

10 mark extended question standard mark schemes

For each question give yourself a mark out of 10, identify a strength and a target for future improvement.

Marks	Level descriptors
8-10	Answers in this band will show very good knowledge and understanding of two areas in sociological research that the question asks about. There will be two applications of relevant material. There will be appropriate analysis.
4-7	Answers in this band will show a reasonable to good knowledge and understanding of two areas in sociological research that the question asks about There will be one or two applications of relevant material. There will be some basic analysis.
1-3	Answers in this band will show limited knowledge and little or no understanding of the question or the material. There will be limited focus on the question. There will be limited or no analysis.
0	No relevant points.

Q1. Mark out of 10:

Strength:

Target:

Q2. Mark out of 10:

Strength:

Target:

Q3. Mark out of 10:

Strength:

Target:

Q4. Mark out of 10:

Strength:

Target:

Q5. Mark out of 10:

Strength:

Target:

viii. 20 mark extended question standard mark schemes

For each question give yourself a mark out of 20, identify a strength and a target for future improvement.

Marks	Level descriptors
17-20	<p>Answers in this band will show sound, conceptually detailed knowledge of a range of relevant material. Sophisticated understanding of the question and of the presented material will be shown.</p> <p>Appropriate material will be applied accurately and with sensitivity to the issues raised by the question.</p> <p>Analysis and evaluation will be explicit and relevant. Evaluation may be developed. Analysis will show clear explanation. Appropriate conclusions will be drawn.</p>
13-16	<p>Answers in this band will show accurate, broad or deep but incomplete knowledge. Understands a number of significant aspects of the question; good understanding of the presented material.</p> <p>Application of material is largely explicitly relevant to the question, though some material may be inadequately focused.</p> <p>Some limited explicit evaluation, and/or some appropriate analysis, e.g. clear explanations of some of the presented material.</p>
9-12	<p>Answers in this band will show largely accurate knowledge but limited range and depth, e.g. broadly accurate, if basic. Understands some limited but significant aspects of the question; superficial understanding of the presented material.</p> <p>Applying listed material from the general topic area but with limited regard for its relevance to the issues raised by the question, or applying a narrow range of more relevant material.</p> <p>Evaluation will take the form of juxtaposition of competing positions or to one or two isolated stated points. Analysis will be limited, with answers tending towards the descriptive.</p>
5-8	<p>Answers in this band will show limited undeveloped knowledge, e.g. two or three insubstantial points. Understands only limited aspects of the question; simplistic understanding of the presented material.</p> <p>Limited application of suitable material, and/or material often at a tangent to the demands of the question, with limited reference to the question set.</p> <p>Very limited or no evaluation. Attempts at analysis, if any, are thin and disjointed.</p>
1-4	<p>Answers in this band will show very limited knowledge, e.g. one or two very insubstantial points about research methods in general. Very little/no understanding of the question and of the presented material.</p> <p>Significant errors and/or omissions in application of material.</p> <p>No analysis or evaluation.</p>
0	No relevant points.

Q1. Mark out of 20:

Strength:

Target:

Q2. Mark out of 20:

Strength:

Target:

Q3. Mark out of 20:

Strength:

Target:

Q4. Mark out of 20:

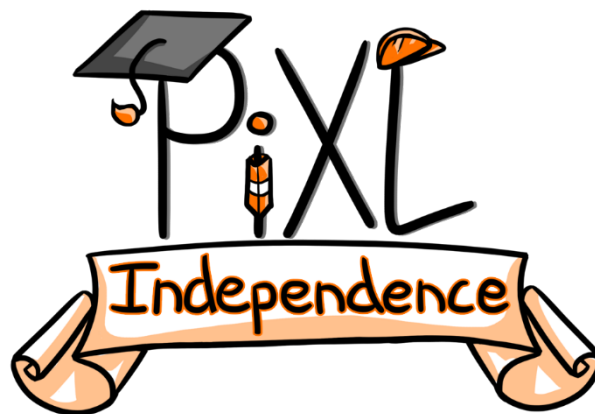
Strength:

Target:

Q5. Mark out of 20:

Strength:

Target:



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