CAMBRIDGE
International Education

Cambridge International AS & A Level

SOCIOLOGY **9699/32**

Paper 3 Education **February/March 2026**

MARK SCHEME

Maximum Mark: 50

Published

This mark scheme is published as an aid to teachers and candidates, to indicate the requirements of the examination. It shows the basis on which Examiners were instructed to award marks. It does not indicate the details of the discussions that took place at an Examiners' meeting before marking began, which would have considered the acceptability of alternative answers.

Mark schemes should be read in conjunction with the question paper and the Principal Examiner Report for Teachers.

Cambridge International will not enter into discussions about these mark schemes.

Cambridge International is publishing the mark schemes for the February/March 2026 series for most Cambridge IGCSE, Cambridge International A and AS Level components, and some Cambridge O Level components.

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Generic Marking Principles

These general marking principles must be applied by all examiners when marking candidate answers. They should be applied alongside the specific content of the mark scheme or generic level descriptions for a question. Each question paper and mark scheme will also comply with these marking principles.

GENERIC MARKING PRINCIPLE 1:

Marks must be awarded in line with:

- the specific content of the mark scheme or the generic level descriptors for the question
- the specific skills defined in the mark scheme or in the generic level descriptors for the question
- the standard of response required by a candidate as exemplified by the standardisation scripts.

GENERIC MARKING PRINCIPLE 2:

Marks awarded are always **whole marks** (not half marks, or other fractions).

GENERIC MARKING PRINCIPLE 3:

Marks must be awarded **positively**:

- marks are awarded for correct/valid answers, as defined in the mark scheme. However, credit is given for valid answers which go beyond the scope of the syllabus and mark scheme, referring to your Team Leader as appropriate
- marks are awarded when candidates clearly demonstrate what they know and can do
- marks are not deducted for errors
- marks are not deducted for omissions
- answers should only be judged on the quality of spelling, punctuation and grammar when these features are specifically assessed by the question as indicated by the mark scheme. The meaning, however, should be unambiguous.

GENERIC MARKING PRINCIPLE 4:

Rules must be applied consistently, e.g. in situations where candidates have not followed instructions or in the application of generic level descriptors.

GENERIC MARKING PRINCIPLE 5:

Marks should be awarded using the full range of marks defined in the mark scheme for the question (however; the use of the full mark range may be limited according to the quality of the candidate responses seen).

GENERIC MARKING PRINCIPLE 6:

Marks awarded are based solely on the requirements as defined in the mark scheme. Marks should not be awarded with grade thresholds or grade descriptors in mind.

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Social Science-Specific Marking Principles
(for point-based marking)

1 Components using point-based marking:

- Point marking is often used to reward knowledge, understanding and application of skills. We give credit where the candidate's answer shows relevant knowledge, understanding and application of skills in answering the question. We do not give credit where the answer shows confusion.

From this it follows that we:

a DO credit answers which are worded differently from the mark scheme if they clearly convey the same meaning (unless the mark scheme requires a specific term)

b DO credit alternative answers/examples which are not written in the mark scheme if they are correct

c DO credit answers where candidates give more than one correct answer in one prompt/numbered/scaffolded space where extended writing is required rather than list-type answers. For example, questions that require *n* reasons (e.g. State two reasons …).

d DO NOT credit answers simply for using a 'key term' unless that is all that is required. (Check for evidence it is understood and not used wrongly.)

e DO NOT credit answers which are obviously self-contradicting or trying to cover all possibilities

f DO NOT give further credit for what is effectively repetition of a correct point already credited unless the language itself is being tested. This applies equally to 'mirror statements' (i.e. polluted/not polluted).

g DO NOT require spellings to be correct, unless this is part of the test. However spellings of syllabus terms must allow for clear and unambiguous separation from other syllabus terms with which they may be confused (e.g. Corrasion/Corrosion)

2 Presentation of mark scheme:

- Slashes (/) or the word 'or' separate alternative ways of making the same point.
- Semi colons (;) bullet points (•) or figures in brackets (1) separate different points.
- Content in the answer column in brackets is for examiner information/context to clarify the marking but is not required to earn the mark (except Accounting syllabuses where they indicate negative numbers).

3 Calculation questions:

- The mark scheme will show the steps in the most likely correct method(s), the mark for each step, the correct answer(s) and the mark for each answer
- If working/explanation is considered essential for full credit, this will be indicated in the question paper and in the mark scheme. In all other instances, the correct answer to a calculation should be given full credit, even if no supporting working is shown.
- Where the candidate uses a valid method which is not covered by the mark scheme, award equivalent marks for reaching equivalent stages.
- Where an answer makes use of a candidate's own incorrect figure from previous working, the 'own figure rule' applies: full marks will be given if a correct and complete method is used. Further guidance will be included in the mark scheme where necessary and any exceptions to this general principle will be noted.

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4 Annotation:

- For point marking, ticks can be used to indicate correct answers and crosses can be used to indicate wrong answers. There is no direct relationship between ticks and marks. Ticks have no defined meaning for levels of response marking.
- For levels of response marking, the level awarded should be annotated on the script.
- Other annotations will be used by examiners as agreed during standardisation, and the meaning will be understood by all examiners who marked that paper.

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Annotations guidance for centres

Examiners use a system of annotations as a shorthand for communicating their marking decisions to one another. Examiners are trained during the standardisation process on how and when to use annotations. The purpose of annotations is to inform the standardisation and monitoring processes and guide the supervising examiners when they are checking the work of examiners within their team. The meaning of annotations and how they are used is specific to each component and is understood by all examiners who mark the component.

We publish annotations in our mark schemes to help centres understand the annotations they may see on copies of scripts. Note that there may not be a direct correlation between the number of annotations on a script and the mark awarded. Similarly, the use of an annotation may not be an indication of the quality of the response.

The annotations listed below were available to examiners marking this component in this series.

Annotations

Annotation	Meaning
BOD	Benefit of the doubt given / the point is just about worthy of credit
E1	Explanation of the point
E2	Explanation of why it is a strength/ limitation
EXP	Development / description of the point.
EVAL	Evaluation point
DEV	Developed point
GEN	General point using sociological material but not applied to the question
IR	Point is irrelevant to the question
J	Juxtaposition of point
M	Material used to support the point
NAQ	Not answered question
REP	Repetition
SEEN	This material receives no credit, additional points not required
TV	Too vague
✓	Point that has been credited
✗	Incorrect response
≀	Irrelevant material

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Annotation	Meaning
On page comment	On page comment
Highlighter	Identification of a point

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Using the mark scheme

Some of the questions are marked using a point-based system, awarding marks for specific points and accumulating a total mark by adding points.

Some of the questions are marked using level of response. For these, the level descriptor represents performance **at the top of the level**.

For levels of response marking, you should:

- award a mark at the top of the level if all criteria in the level are met
- consider the level descriptors across the full range, bearing in mind that it is not necessary for a candidate to give a faultless performance for maximum marks to be awarded within any single category
- award marks on a 'best-fit' basis; thus, compensation between higher and lower achievement for different criteria is acceptable

When marking holistically, the marks awarded for an answer are usually based on a judgement of the overall quality of the response. For holistic marking, inevitably, the mark scheme cannot cover all responses that candidates may make for all of the questions. In some cases, candidates may make some responses which the mark scheme has not predicted. These answers should nevertheless be credited according to their quality.

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Question	Answer	Marks
1	**Describe <u>two</u> ways schools promote value consensus.** **Indicative content** • Teaching of widely held social norms, e.g. following the rules, rewards and punishments. • Universalistic standards, e.g. for assessment, wearing school uniform. • Collective rituals, e.g. assemblies, sports day • Values expressed through formal curriculum, e.g. role models in history. • Values expressed through hidden curriculum e.g. respect, gender roles. • Any other appropriate way. Reward a maximum of **two ways**. For each way, up to 2 marks are available: 1 mark for identifying a way in which schools can promote value consensus. 1 mark for describing how that way can promote value consensus. (2 × 2 marks)	**4**

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Question	Answer	Marks
2	**Explain <u>two</u> ways the interests of the powerful can influence the curriculum.** **Indicative content** • Academic knowledge is given higher status than vocational courses • Routine of learning prepares labour force for exploitation – correspondence theory • Ethnocentric curriculum reinforces power of dominant ethnic group • Gendered curriculum reinforces patriarchy. • Curriculum based on cultural capital of middle class • Training for leadership in private and selective schools • State influence over the curriculum, e.g. government censorship • Any other appropriate way. Reward a maximum of **two** ways. Up to 4 marks are available for each way. 1 mark for making a point / giving a way (e.g. Academic knowledge is given higher status than vocational courses.) 1 mark for explaining that point (e.g. The knowledge held by those in power is given higher status in the curriculum.) 1 mark for selecting relevant sociological material such as a study/concept/ theory/empirical evidence to support the point (e.g. Young) 1 mark for explaining how the material supports the point (e.g. Young argues that success in academic subjects is valued more highly and is taught to those perceived as most able, thus reinforcing the success and power of the middle class) (2 × 4 marks)	**8**

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Question	Answer	Marks
3	**'Education ensures that the important roles in society are filled by the most suitable people.'** **Using sociological material, give <u>two</u> arguments against this view.** **Indicative content** • Not all potentially suitable people have equal access to education, barriers according to class, ethnicity or gender. • Under-attainment by many potentially suitable people due to material factors. • Under-attainment by many potentially suitable people due to cultural factors – cultural capital or cultural deprivation. • Under-attainment by many potentially suitable people due to in-school factors. • Inaccuracy of IQ tests, exams, recruitment procedures, etc. in identifying most suitable people. • Other factors affecting recruitment and social mobility such as social capital and informal networks. • Education system not keeping up with changing economy. • Concept of 'important roles' questionable. • Any other appropriate argument. Reward a maximum of two arguments. Up to 6 marks are available for each argument. ***Note:*** *This question is asking for arguments against the view. There are no marks for explaining the view or giving arguments supporting the view.* **Levels of response** Use the following levels to mark **each** argument. **Level 3: 5–6 marks** • One clear and developed argument against the view that education ensures that the important roles in society are filled by the most suitable people. • Sociological material, such as concepts, theories and evidence, is used to support the argument against the view. The material selected is appropriate and focused on the question with its relevance made clear. **Level 2: 3–4 marks** • One clear but underdeveloped argument against the view that education ensures that the important roles in society are filled by the most suitable people. • The material selected is appropriate but not fully focused on the question. Sociological evidence is used but its relevance to the argument is not made clear.	**12**

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Question	Answer	Marks
3	**Level 1: 1–2 marks** • One point disagreeing with the view that education ensures that the important roles in society are filled by the most suitable people, which is undeveloped or lacking clarity. • Any material selected lacks focus on the specific question. **Level 0: 0 marks** • No response worthy of credit.	

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Question	Answer	Marks
4	**Evaluate the view that class is the most important influence on educational attainment.** **Indicative content**	**26**

	In support of the view	Against the view
Points	• Evidence of relative success of upper and middle class throughout education. • Material explanations. • Class-cultural explanations. • In-school processes. • Failure of compensatory policies. • Marxist arguments of ruling class intention and ideological control. • Class often key factor where ethnicity or gender appears to cause disadvantage. • Success of feminist and anti-racist reforms.	• Functionalist argument for meritocracy and intelligence/hard work as decisive factors. • Changing class structure questioning relevance of past statistics. • Social democratic reforms in education reducing impact of class. • Evidence on ethnicity as major factor e.g. Black Caribbean boys in Britain seen as less able and more disruptive, British Asian and Chinese families valued education as transformative. • Evidence on gender as major factor (either way depending on society) e.g. differences in opportunities for girls and their portrayal in the curriculum is significant in many nations. • Intersectionality of class, gender and ethnicity. • Global differences more important. • Concept of class questioned – postmodern views

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<table>
<tr><th>Question</th><th>Answer</th><th>Marks</th></tr>
<tr><td>4</td><td>
<table>
<tr><th></th><th>In support of the view</th><th>Against the view</th></tr>
<tr><td>Research evidence/theory</td><td>Bowles and Gintis
Bourdieu
Sullivan
Willis
Nash
Bernstein
Smith and Noble
Lupton
Rangel and Lieras
Whitty
Sharpe
Boaler
Gillborn and Youdell
Morley and Lussier</td><td>Gillborn and Youdell
Connolly
Shane
Mirza
Strand
Sewell
Basit
Charles
Jamal
Jackson, Rampino and Taylor
Archer
Francis and Skelton</td></tr>
<tr><td>Relevant concepts</td><td>Social mobility
Cultural deprivation
Material deprivation
Cultural capital
Habitus
Marketisation
ISA (Ideological State Apparatus)
Intersectionality</td><td>Racial discrimination
Institutional racism
Crisis of masculinity
Class conflict
Patriarchy
Meritocracy
Universalistic
Intelligence
Ethnocentrism
Subcultures
Globalisation</td></tr>
</table>
The above content is indicative and other relevant approaches to the question should be rewarded appropriately.
</td><td></td></tr>
</table>

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Levels of response for Question 4

The maximum mark for **Question 4** is 26.

Examiners should award up to 10 marks for AO1, up to 6 marks for AO2, and up to 10 marks for AO3.

Level	AO1: Knowledge and Understanding	Marks
5	• Very good knowledge and understanding of the view that class is the most important influence on educational attainment. • The response contains a wide range of detailed points with very good use of concepts and theory or research evidence.	9–10
4	• Good knowledge and understanding of the view that class is the most important influence on educational attainment. • The response contains a range of detailed points with good use of concepts and theory or research evidence.	7–8
3	• Reasonable knowledge and understanding of the view that class is the most important influence on educational attainment. • The response contains a narrow range of detailed points or a wider range of underdeveloped points, with some use of concepts or theory or research evidence.	5–6
2	• Basic knowledge and understanding of the view that class is the most important influence on educational attainment. • The response contains a narrow range of underdeveloped points and may include basic references to concepts or theories or research evidence.	3–4
1	• Limited knowledge and understanding of the view that class is the most important influence on educational attainment. • The response contains only assertive points or common-sense observations.	1–2
0	• No knowledge and understanding worthy of credit.	0

Level	AO2: Interpretation and Application	Marks
3	• A range of material is selected, accurately interpreted, well developed and consistently applied to answering the question.	5–6
2	• Some relevant material is selected and accurately interpreted but it lacks either development or application to the question.	3–4
1	• There is some attempt to apply sociological material, but this is limited, inaccurate or lacks relevance to the specific question.	1–2
0	• No interpretation and application worthy of credit.	0

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Level	AO3: Analysis and Evaluation	Marks
5	• Very good analysis/evaluation of the view that class is the most important influence on educational attainment. • There is clear and sustained analysis with detailed and explicit evaluation.	9–10
4	• Good analysis/evaluation of the view that class is the most important influence on educational attainment. • The evaluation is explicit and direct but not sustained or relies on a good account of evidence and arguments suggesting that class is **not** the most important influence on educational attainment.	7–8
3	• Some analysis/evaluation of the view that class is the most important influence on educational attainment. • There is either one explicitly evaluative point or a simple descriptive account of evidence and arguments suggesting that class is **not** the most important influence on educational attainment.	5–6
2	• Basic analysis/evaluation of the view that class is the most important influence on educational attainment. • There is an attempt to consider more than one side of the debate or one point suggesting that class is **not** the most important influence on educational attainment.	3–4
1	• Limited analysis/evaluation of the view that class is the most important influence on educational attainment. • Any analysis or evaluation is incidental, confused or simply assertive.	1–2
0	• No analysis and evaluation worthy of credit.	0

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