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# A-LEVEL SOCIOLOGY

7192/3 Crime and Deviance with Theory and Methods  
Report on the Examination

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## General

Most students seem to have managed their time appropriately, with few signs that they were unable to complete the paper. Some students showed detailed sociological knowledge and sophisticated understanding that they applied successfully to the set questions, and in general students seemed reasonably well versed in relevant material. However, fewer found success in evaluating the issues raised by the questions.

An increasing number of students appear to have had difficulty in producing legible handwriting. Centres should see it as their duty to take the appropriate steps to ensure that these students are not disadvantaged as a result; unfortunately, this was not always evidently the case.

## Question 1

Most students successfully identified two ways in which gender may influence being a victim of crime. Most answers referred to the vulnerability of women or the influence of patriarchy; many linked this with domestic abuse or sexual crimes. References to male victims usually referred to socialisation and/or to violence related to masculinity, leading to men becoming victims of the violence of other men when they became gang members or spent time in the wrong places.

The main reason for failing to score marks was to write about committing crime rather than about being a victim. Some gained partial reward for identifying a particular type of crime of which men or women are likely to be victims but without going on to elaborate on this.

## Question 2

This question was generally answered well. The most frequently cited criticism was that labelling theory is deterministic; this was usually explained correctly. Other frequently cited criticisms included the theory's failure to explain primary deviance, its romanticised view of deviants or its neglect of structural factors.

A significant minority of answers outlined criticisms of the labelling *process* (for example that labelling is discriminatory or unfair), rather than of the theory. Some students tended to recycle the same criticism in different guises. A few wrote excessively long answers to this question.

## Question 3

Most students were able to draw on one or two appropriate points from the Item. More effective answers then developed these points appropriately by employing relevant sociological concepts and studies. For example, some students took 'agencies of the criminal justice system, such as the police' and applied it in terms of the way in which police use typifications in activities such as stop and search, how justice may be negotiated etc. Similarly, some students took 'some individuals may also have greater... pressure to offend' and applied this to utilitarian crime via relative deprivation or blocked opportunities faced by the working class.

In less effective answers, the connection between the potential point from the Item and the material presented was less clearly made. In some cases, this was because the sociological material offered was more about ethnicity than social class.

In a minority of cases, students simply offered various sociological explanations of class differences in the statistics but with no application of material from the Item, for example via accounts of how the ruling class can make the laws so as to avoid incriminating themselves.

#### **Question 4**

Effective answers showed both breadth and depth of knowledge with a good range both of concepts and of issues. Material was presented analytically, unpacking a range of aspects of the relationship between crime and the media. These often included the social construction of crime news; media representations of crime, criminals and victims; the role of the media in creating crime (for example, relative deprivation, moral panics and the deviance amplification spiral) and the role of new media in contributing both to crime and to its policing. Evaluation was explicit and well linked to the specific issues raised in the answer. Less effective, but still reasonably successful, answers tended to lack this level of analysis and evaluation, and were more knowledge-driven.

Weaker responses had a narrower range of aspects (usually focusing on media distortion) or presented little in the way of studies to support their claims. Such answers tended to be descriptive, limited in terms of concepts and lacking analysis and evaluation. Accounts of significant issues, such as moral panics or relative deprivation, were often hazy; the presentation of relevant studies was frequently skimpy or with inaccuracies.

Some answers took a 'perspectives' approach, including Marxist, functionalist, feminist or other views. Unfortunately, this approach led many to focus on tangential material, with detailed accounts of the general sociological perspectives that quickly lost sight of the media, crime, or both. However, there were a few very good answers of this type that did succeed in applying such perspectives to the set question.

#### **Question 5**

Most students could offer two disadvantages of laboratory experiments. Most often these included the artificiality of the setting (often conflated with the Hawthorne effect), while other disadvantages included difficulties in identifying and controlling variables, a lack of representativeness or ethical problems. However, many answers failed to explain or develop these points successfully; some simply described an example of an experiment that experienced such problems. Some students did not know the difference between reliability and validity. A minority of students included evaluation, for which no marks were available on this question.

#### **Question 6**

This question proved to be quite challenging for some students. Most were able to put together a list of positivist characteristics as advantages, such as objectivity, reliability, quantification and generalisability. However, most could not evaluate these advantages. Instead a typical response, having provided a paragraph or two on the advantages, gave a list of disadvantages, or a list of reasons why interpretivist sociologists would not like the method. The result was an essay of two halves with little to link them into a coherent answer to the set question.

Some generic 'methods' material appeared in weaker responses, for example drifting into a description of an alternative research method that the student asserted were 'better' than structured interviews. The weakest answers sometimes confused structured and unstructured interviews, reliability and validity, and even positivism and interpretivism.

### **Mark Ranges and Award of Grades**

Grade boundaries and cumulative percentage grades are available on the [Results Statistics](#) page of the AQA Website.