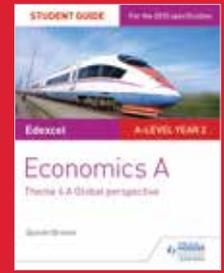
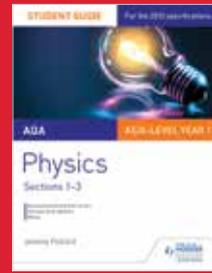
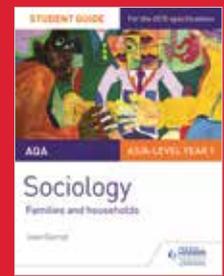
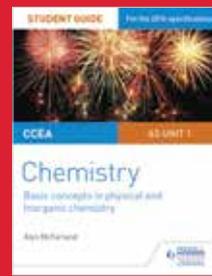


Student Guides are exam-board specific resources that support students' learning and help them get their best grades at AS and A level.



Information in the Student Guides is split into two sections so students can progressively develop their subject understanding and exam technique.

Content Guidance

Evaluation

- Policies influenced by the New Right have made education more responsive to the needs of the economy and created greater diversity in education and training.
- Supporters argue that the continual improvement in exam results is evidence that increased competition as a result of marketisation policies between schools has improved standards.
- **Baill** argues that there is a myth of 'parentocracy' and that in reality middle-class parents benefit from marketisation policies. **Garwitz** suggests working-class parents may lack the cultural and economic capital to be 'skilled choosers'.
- Marketisation has created an unequal, 'two-tier' state education system. Whereas popular schools are better funded and can attract more able, usually middle-class pupils, 'failing schools' cannot afford to be selective and may find it difficult to improve performance due to reduced funding and their inability to attract more able pupils.

Key concepts

marketisation; parentocracy; consumer choice; competition; privatisation; formula funding

Knowledge check 3

Outline three criticisms of the marketisation of education.

Postmodernism

Key ideas

- The economy has moved from being **Fordist** (based on assembly-line mass production) to **post-Fordist** (which is increasingly **fragmented** and has to respond to the needs of the global market).
- The role of the education system has similarly had to shift from a 'one-size-fits-all' provision typified by comprehensive schools popular in the 1960s, see page 23 to the **diverse** range of education and training that reflects consumer choice and the needs of the ever-changing economy.
- Postmodernists point to the impact that globalisation had on society, the economy and the education system. For example, many academic chains (see page 25) are controlled by companies from the USA, which has resulted in Americanised behaviour management policies and teaching techniques being implemented. The increase in the number of overseas students has had an impact on the types of courses offered (e.g. more in medical sciences).
- Postmodernism argues that modern theories such as functionalism and Marxism are out of date due to the impact of factors such as globalisation. They are particularly critical of Marxism as they see both the economy and the education system as being **diverse** rather than being based on class inequality.

Exam tip

Be prepared to link factors such as the increase in globalisation and privatisation and relate them to sociological theory. For example, New Right policies that have led to the increased influence of the private sector have brought about the diversity in the education system suggested by postmodernists, such as the growth of academies.

Class differences in achievement

Evaluation

- Postmodernists are right to point out that society has become more diverse and that the economy requires workers to be more adaptable and have transferable skills.
- Recent government and school policies have reflected increased diversity and flexibility in educational provision (e.g. specialist schools, academies, free schools, faith schools, lifelong learning, personalised timetables).
- Marxists argue that postmodernists ignore class inequality in the education system and wider society.
- Education is still largely under state control; is it really that diverse?

Key concepts

diversity; fragmentation; globalisation; post-Fordism

Knowledge check 4

Outline two criticisms of the postmodernist view that the education system is characterised by diversity.

Summary

After studying this section, you should be able to explain the role and purpose of education, including its relationship to the economy and to the class structure. You should be familiar with the main perspectives:

- Functionalism focuses on the positive contributions of the education system in maintaining social order in society and preparing and allocating individuals to their future role in the economy.
- Marxists focus on how the education system oppresses pupils and reproduces and legitimises inequality between the social classes.

The New Right emphasises how the marketisation of the education system is required in order that it meets the needs of pupils, parents and the economy.

- Postmodernists argue that the education system has developed to reflect the diverse needs of a post-Fordist economy.
- Feminists argue that all other theories ignore gender inequalities and that the education system reproduces patriarchal power in society.

Class differences in achievement

Social class has a significant impact on a child's educational achievement. Students from professional backgrounds are significantly more likely to achieve 5 A*-C grades at GCSE and enter higher education than those from unskilled backgrounds. As well as being more likely to stay on at school or to, middle-class pupils are more likely to start school being able to read than pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds. Different reasons have been put forward for this social class gap in achievement.

External factors

Material deprivation

- This involves a lack of money to afford basic necessities.
- Working-class families are much more likely to be in poverty due to factors such as unemployment or a low income. They therefore may lack the money to afford resources which help academic success, such as internet access, paying for school trips or study books etc.

Exam tip

Be prepared to evaluate each of these factors by referring to various policies and interventions aimed at tackling material deprivation such as bursaries, student grants for higher education, schools subsidising school trips, school and public libraries (loaning textbooks etc.).



Content Guidance section: Comprehensive topic overview enables students to consolidate what they have learnt in lessons and in their textbooks, with summaries, knowledge checks and examiner tips.

Questions & Answers

The AS examination

The topic of *Families and households* is examined on Paper 2 of the AS examination. Research methods and topics in sociology. The question appears in Section B of Paper 2, as 3.2.2.2, and is worth 50% of the AS qualification. Section B questions are worth 40 out of the 60 total marks. You should therefore spend about an hour answering the *Families and households* question, trying to manage your time so that you have time to read through the whole paper at the end.

Question 1

1 Define the term 'domestic division of labour'. (2 marks)

There are two parts to this concept: 'domestic' and 'division of labour'. Make sure you include both in your definition.

2 Using one example, briefly explain how increased life expectancy may affect household structure. (2 marks)

There is no need to define 'increased life expectancy' – your answer should make it clear what you are talking about. Make sure you focus on 'household structure' rather than roles. If you are unsure, you can always include a second example, but this should not be standard practice – extra examples use up time.

3 Outline three reasons for change in the status of children in society. (6 marks)

Make sure you have three reasons and put each one on a separate line so that the examiner is able to distinguish between them. Remember the question is about 'status', not 'role'.

4 Outline and explain two ways in which the role of fathers has changed over the past 70 years. (10 marks)

Make sure you have two different ways and that your focus is clearly on the role of fathers. While the timescale does not have to be precise, 70 years goes back roughly to the end of the Second World War, so don't spend time talking about fathers in medieval or Victorian times. In this type of question, it is helpful to separate out your explanations, having them in different paragraphs and/or using 'One way is... and a second way is...' to introduce the separate points.

5 Read Item A and answer the question that follows. (20 marks)

Item A

Research by feminist sociologists such as Oakley argued that this was because these roles were shown that gender roles were unequal in the family. However, it is now claimed that there is a growing equality between partners, with domestic tasks being shared more equally.

Applying material from Item A and your knowledge, evaluate the contribution of feminists to our understanding of gender roles within the family.

The AS examination

There are three pieces of information in the item that you should use (legally) in your answer – that research into gender roles was carried out by feminist sociologists and what their research showed, that some claimed that different gender roles are 'natural', and the claim that things have changed. Make sure you use all of these, not simply copying the phrases but discussing them. Your evaluation should look at how and why the research was useful, and also consider the arguments and evidence regarding whether and to what extent things have changed.

Student A

1 This refers to how the adult partners in a family divide up the jobs – mainly 'housework' and 'child care' but also things like DV and gardening. In other words, who does what. (2 marks awarded. A concise and accurate definition.)

2 With increased life expectancy, people are living to a much greater age than they used to. Sometimes this means that people are no longer able to look after themselves, especially if they are widowed, so the adult children might take their aged parent to live with them, possibly making an extended family structure with three generations under the same roof. (2 marks awarded. This is an appropriate example which is clearly explained. There is no need to define the term, as the student has done in the first sentence.)

3 One reason is that children are now dependent for longer, because the age of compulsory education has increased. They have their dependent status for longer than children in Victorian times did, when children could leave school at 11. A second reason is that as the family size has decreased and most families have only one or two children, each child can have more time and money spent on them, making them seem more precious and important and giving them higher status. This is seen in China with the one-child policy, where children are referred to as 'little emperors'. A third reason is that children now have many more legal rights than they used to and can be protected by the state. They have a defined legal status whereas in the past they were almost 'non-persons'. (4 marks awarded. Three reasons are given and clearly outlined. Beware of writing more than you need to in these short questions – for example, the reference to China was unnecessary.)



Question and Answer section: Using what they have learnt in lesson and from their textbooks, students can use this section to transfer their knowledge into exam success, with the exam style questions, sample student answers and tips on exam technique.

“A really useful guide with expert commentary from examiners. It’s a fantastic resource for students and for me as a teacher.”

AQA Sociology Student Guide 1

“Amazing revision guide. It was recommended by one of my teachers and is totally brilliant.”

Edexcel Economics (A) Student Guide 2

Written by examiners and teachers, Student Guides can be used as:

Textbook support

The guides are a great way for students to check what they should know throughout the course, reviewing them alongside their class notes to reinforce knowledge.

- **Consolidate knowledge** learnt in the classroom and from the textbook, by applying it to new examples in new ways, including how it would be approached in the exam
- **Reinforce subject language** with key terms and their definitions
- **Knowledge** check with quick questions throughout each topic, reinforcing understanding before moving on to the next topic in the guide.

Revision and exam technique aid

Student Guides put course material into an exam context. If students identify any gaps in their knowledge, they can revisit the topic in the guide and review the material in conjunction with other notes.

- **Sample answers** enable students to compare their own work with the model answer so they can assess their work and see where they need to improve to hit the assessment objectives that examiners will be looking for
- **Examiner tips** after each of the sample answers show students how the answer could have been improved to achieve a better grade, and identifies typical mistakes that candidates make
- **Question and answer section** written to mimic the style of the new AS and A-level questions helps form the knowledge into answers that will score the best marks in the exam.

“Very impressed with exam tips and medial answers. Very good for the price.”

AQA Sociology Student Guide 2

“This really is an excellent and very helpful study guide. I wish I had books like that in my days of studying!”

AQA Business Student Guide 1

For more details on the Student Guides series and to see samples across the subject range, go to:

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