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# Getting the most from this book

## Exam tips

Advice on key points in the text to help you learn and recall content, avoid pitfalls, and polish your exam technique in order to boost your grade.

## Knowledge check

Rapid-fire questions throughout the Content Guidance section to check your understanding.

## Knowledge check answers

- 1 Turn to the back of the book for the Knowledge check answers.

## Summaries

- Each core topic is rounded off by a bullet-list summary for quick-check reference of what you need to know.

## Exam-style questions

## Commentary on the questions

Tips on what you need to do to gain full marks.

## Sample student answers

Practise the questions, then look at the student answers that follow.

**Questions set 1**

**Question 6**  
Outline and evaluate sociological explanations of the relationship between ethnicity and crime.

40 marks  
(AO1: 16 marks;  
AO2: 8 marks;  
AO3: 16 marks)

It is worth identifying what the relationship is according to statistics, before you go on to apply sociological ideas to explain this. The tricky thing about this question is that all explanations are potentially relevant knowledge, so you must not forget to explicitly evaluate, and to make clear whether you are intending content to be credited as knowledge or as evaluation—you will not be double-credited. You should aim for four points of knowledge and four points of evaluation.

**Student answer**

1 Convergence is where things come together, so media convergence is the coming together of different types of media. One aspect of media convergence is the way different types of media can now all be accessed on one platform. Source B says that through your smartphone you can access many forms of media, including video, music, the internet and social media. This can be really positive since it gives individuals access to anything really easily.

Another form of media convergence is media companies merging or diversifying, so that they produce many different forms of media. Source B mentions big companies such as Google and Amazon, who offer many different types of media services, including producing hardware such as phones and tablets, and offering many other services through the internet, as well as streaming video content and so on. This could be linked with cultural imperialism, where a few big US companies dominate the digital world and impose capitalist culture on the whole world.

**7/8 marks awarded** Both points use the source effectively and show good understanding of media convergence. However, the first point could have been developed more with further examples or evidence, for example, referring to postmodernism, linking it to identity or relationships, or referring to the digital divide as a potential downside. Wider evidence can be in the form of examples, but these examples do need to go beyond the source and be well explained and applied. In the second point, the link to cultural imperialism shows this.

**Student answer**

2 Developments in digital communication can have a negative impact on age identity for older people, as mentioned in Source A, which points out that older people are not digital natives. Prensky refers to them instead as 'digital immigrants', and they may find it hard to assimilate to the digital world, which can leave them feeling isolated, especially since so much is now 'digital by default', as the source says. They may feel less positive about themselves and their value in this unfamiliar world, affecting their identity.

However, some studies suggest that digital communications can be positive for older identities, as Source A mentions, giving older people a new lease of life. This is supported by the Ages 2.0 project, which found that social media not only improved cognitive ability in older people, but also gave them more self-confidence, therefore improving their view of themselves and their age identity.

Debates in contemporary society 75

## Commentary on sample student answers

Read the comments showing how many marks each answer would be awarded in the exam and exactly where marks are gained or lost.

## Section B Crime and deviance

### How are crime and deviance defined and measured?

#### Definitions

Crime refers to activities that break the law of a particular country. Because it is based on laws passed, what constitutes a crime can change as new laws are created (for example, the law against using a mobile phone while driving) and old laws are repealed (for example, suicide was a criminal offence until 1961 in the UK).

Deviance is behaviour that goes against the norms of a society, meaning it is usually viewed as 'wrong'. Thus the opposite of deviance is conformity: following the norms of society. Not all deviance is criminal. For example, swearing in the classroom is not illegal but it is regarded as deviant as it is likely to be met with disapproval. Most crimes are seen as deviant, since criminal law tends to be based on social norms, though this is not always the case. Within a particular subculture, for example, drug-taking might be the norm, thus not deviant, even though it is illegal.

Social order is the state of social stability and social solidarity that characterises most modern societies. It derives from the fact that citizens generally agree on and share similar values, morals and norms and consequently are reasonably well integrated into society; that is, they share a similar sense of belonging to society. Social order is maintained by agencies of social control.

Social control refers to the need to regulate the behaviour of citizens of a society in order to make sure they conform to laws and norms so that social order is not threatened. There are two forms of social control: formal and informal.

Formal social control refers to the law. Consequently the function of formal agencies of social control, such as the police, courts and prisons, is to control, suppress and punish illegal or criminal behaviour.

Informal social control enforces social norms in a more subtle or indirect way. For example, there are social expectations about children's behaviour, so if children behave badly, they may be informally punished by their parents. The peer group is also an informal agent of social control. For example, friends expect a certain standard of behaviour from one another and failure to live up to that standard may result in a person being excluded from a friendship network.

#### *The relativity of crime and deviance*

Sociologists believe that 'conformity' and 'deviance' are relative concepts because they relate to social norms, which are in themselves relative and variable. Behaviour which conforms to norms for one social group might be deviant behaviour for another. Similarly, what society has designated as a 'crime' may change, as new crimes are created and old crimes are abolished. Crimes also vary from country to

#### Knowledge check 16

Give another example of behaviour which is criminal but not generally seen as deviant, and of behaviour which is deviant but not actually criminal.

#### Knowledge check 17

What view would the theories of functionalism and Marxism take about social order and social control?

country. This notion of relativity can be illustrated in relation to circumstances, time and culture:

- First, what counts as deviance depends on the circumstances, or social context, in which the activity is carried out. For example, nudity is fine in some situations (such as in the privacy of the bathroom or bedroom) but regarded as deviant in most public settings.
- Second, what counts as deviant changes according to historical period, as norms change over time. For example, sex between two men was a criminal offence in the UK until 1967.
- Third, definitions of crime and deviance depend on the cultural or subcultural context. For example, drinking alcohol is illegal in Saudi Arabia and also disapproved of within certain cultures for religious reasons. Furthermore, what is 'normal' behaviour for a teenager in a particular youth subculture in the UK might be seen as 'deviant' by adult society.

### *The social construction of crime and deviance*

The examples above demonstrate that both crime and deviance are the products of cultural expectations and social processes rather than inherent badness or evil. In this sense, what constitutes crime or deviance is socially constructed; that is, it is created by society and its expectations. Interactionists argue that the social construction of deviance relates to the application of labels to certain activities and certain social groups. Becker (1966) argues that 'Social groups create deviance by making rules whose infraction constitutes deviance, and by applying those rules to particular people and labelling them as outsiders.'

Marxists also argue that crime and deviance are socially constructed, but they would argue that this is done by those with power in order to criminalise the working class. Thus Box (1983) argues that activities which cause harm or even death are only socially constructed as crime when they are carried out by working-class people, for example knife crime. However, the powerful often act in ways which cause injury or death to people, for example by flouting health and safety laws. Such activities are not socially constructed as crime because it is the powerful themselves who can control the criminal law and the prevalent norms in a society.

## Measuring crime

### *The official crime statistics*

The official crime statistics (OCS), published by the government, are made up of two types of data. First, the police record crimes reported by victims, the general public and their own officers. Second, an annual victim survey of approximately 40,000 people — the Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) — collects data about victims' experience of crime during the previous year. Supporters of this survey suggest that it is more 'valid' than the police statistics because it includes crimes which have not been reported to the police or recorded by them for various reasons. The CSEW is considered further below, under Victim surveys, but because it is conducted on behalf of the government, it is also seen as part of the OCS.

#### **Exam tip**

You may be asked how 'useful' crime statistics are in measuring crime. Many students make the mistake of disproportionately focusing on the weaknesses of these statistics. It is also important to focus on their strengths, and to apply theoretical views relating to their usefulness.

*Police recorded crime figures*

Some sociologists find the police recorded crime figures useful in identifying trends and patterns in criminal activity, especially with regard to:

- the volume of crime
- types of crime committed
- trends in crime (increases and decreases over time)
- the social characteristics of criminals
- the effectiveness of laws and anti-crime policies

These figures tend to be used, particularly as a starting point for developing explanations of patterns of criminality, by functionalists and subcultural theories. Realists also see the police figures, though flawed, as a useful overview.

*Limitations of the police recorded crime figures*

Other sociologists, including interactionists and Marxists, question the validity of the police recorded figures, seeing them as a social construction — a product of society and decisions made by individuals, rather than objective facts. This is because they only show crimes that are reported to and recorded by the police. In this sense, they may not reflect the reality of crime. Hence, they may tell us more about the groups involved in their collection — victims, the general public and the police — than they tell us about crimes and criminals.

The main limitation of police figures is that they only include crimes that are recorded by the police, failing to account for the '**dark figure**' of unreported and unrecorded crime. The dark figure may contain 'victimless crimes' such as drugs offences, where no one is likely to report the offence to the police. Other crime may not be recorded due to the fear or shame of the victim, the status of the offender, or the low likelihood of detection.

Victims of crime may not report crime to the police for several reasons, including fear, embarrassment, seeing the crime as too trivial, thinking the police could not do anything about it, reluctance to get the perpetrator into trouble, or lack of awareness that a crime has even been committed.

In contrast, people are more likely to report crime if they can see the benefit (for example, a police report may be necessary to put in an insurance claim) or if they believe the police are likely to catch the offender. Police figures can also be distorted by certain 'crackdowns' or initiatives which focus on particular types of crime, which may give an impression that a certain type of crime has increased, when actually it has just been focused on and recorded more by the police.

Another limitation relates to police discretion. This refers to the fact that the police can exercise choice in whether they record an incident that has been reported to them at all, and also in which category of crime they record it. It was estimated in 2014, in a report by the UK Parliament's Home Affairs Select Committee, that the police did not record one in five crimes reported to them, which led to an exaggeration of the rate of decrease in crime. Since then the police have been under much more scrutiny, but the under-recording rate still varies between police forces. In 2019 it was estimated that police in Derbyshire did not record 43% of the violent crime reported to them, whereas in Kent the discrepancy was only 4%.

**Dark figure of crime**

All the crime that is not known about, including crimes that no one has reported or detected, and crimes that, though reported to the police, have not been recorded into the figures for various reasons.

**Exam tip**

An alternative way of illustrating the dark figure of crime is by using an iceberg analogy. Only the tip of the iceberg (recorded crime) can be seen above the surface. The bulk of the iceberg (unreported and unrecorded crime) lies beneath, and is an unknown shape and size.

**Knowledge check 18**

List some specific examples of crimes that are likely to be in the 'dark figure'.

It is argued that the police exercise this discretion in recording crime because of the political pressures on them to improve their **clear-up rates** and meet targets in reducing certain types of crime. These pressures may result in police officers either reclassifying a particular offence as a less serious alternative or not recording an offence at all, especially if there is little chance of it being solved.

The police recorded figures are also dependent on how the government decides to count crimes. For example, the counting rules for crime were extensively changed in 2001–2, especially with regard to violent crime. Moreover, between 1997 and 2010 the Labour government created more than 3,600 new offences, from breaching antisocial behaviour orders to impersonating a barrister. Any rise or fall in the levels of crime may reflect changes in the law as much as actual changes in crime.

In more recent years crime rates, especially for violent crime, have started to climb, and it has been suggested that this is related to a large cut in policing numbers in England and Wales (over 20,000) which occurred between 2010 and 2019 as part of the Coalition and Conservative governments' austerity measures.

The main concerns relating to police recorded crime rates, held by interactionists and Marxists, relate to perceived police bias and the role of the police in deciding how to interpret and enforce the law. The police may exhibit conscious or unconscious bias with regard to the social status of those who report crime. Gill's 1977 study of a working-class community living in 'Luke Street' in Liverpool suggested that poorer victims of crime were treated more negatively by the police. Black communities have also long complained that the police do not take racist crimes against them seriously or investigate them thoroughly. An infamous example of this is the flawed investigation into the murder of the black teenager Stephen Lawrence in 1993, for which the Metropolitan Police were branded as institutionally racist.

There is also evidence that the police stereotype particular social groups — young people, black people, working-class people and people living in particular neighbourhoods — as more 'suspicious' and potentially more criminal, which makes them more likely to stop, search and arrest members of these groups. This suggests that certain groups appear more frequently in the statistics because the police pay them more attention. In contrast, the police are less likely to label middle-class people, women and older people as potentially criminal. They are not paid the same attention and consequently do not turn up in the police statistics so often.

Police discretion also influences the recorded figures in that if a person or group is stopped, their chances of getting arrested may depend on how the officer interprets their appearance, attitude and manner. Anderson et al. (1994) found that officers were more likely to arrest youth whom they interpreted as disrespectful.

### **Victim surveys**

A second way of estimating the extent and patterns of crime is by using victim surveys. A victim survey asks a sample of the population, either locally or nationally, which offences have been committed against them over a certain period of time. The best-known victim survey is the government's Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW), which is part of the OCS. This survey arguably offers a more accurate picture of crime than police records, since crimes that have not been reported to or recorded by the police can be estimated.

**Clear-up rate** The proportion of recorded crimes that are solved, in that the perpetrator is discovered and charged.

### **Knowledge check 19**

Explain how and why such police stereotyping and discretion may impact on our perception of the 'typical criminal', from both an interactionist and a Marxist perspective.

The CSEW data show that there is significantly more crime than is reported to the police. The survey has consistently found that young males, in particular those who are unemployed or low-waged, have a higher chance of being victims of violence. The older a person gets, the less likely they are to be a victim of crime. Those from minority ethnic groups also reported more victimisation than white people.

Realist sociologists such as Young (1988) have been critical of the government's application of victim surveys because the CSEW does not provide detailed information about particular places, and is largely quantitative rather than qualitative. The left realists Jones, McLean and Young carried out the Islington Crime Survey (ICS) in 1986, which asked victims living in inner-city London about serious crime such as sexual assault, domestic violence and racial attacks in a more in-depth way, using semi-structured interviews. This survey found that a third of households in poorer neighbourhoods had been affected by serious crime, and women, in particular, had realistic fears about being the victims of sexual crime.

Other realist crime surveys suggest that poor people often experience repeat victimisation because they cannot afford to invest in securing their property; that crime disproportionately affects them because they often do not have insurance; and that they feel that the police are unsympathetic to their plight. Realist victim surveys therefore conclude that poverty is the main variable which makes a person more at risk of being a victim of crime in the UK.

#### *Limitations of victim surveys*

All types of victim survey can be criticised for being partial, selective and potentially biased. For example, the CSEW excludes certain types of crimes such as crimes against businesses and fraud, since they do not tend to have individual victims. Similarly, other 'victimless crimes', such as drugs offences and vandalism, will not be measured by such surveys.

Homeless people tend to be excluded from most victim survey samples, and those from minority ethnic groups have been found to be less likely to respond to the survey. It may also be that those who have not been a victim of crime are less likely to respond, leading to a self-selecting and unrepresentative sample, which will mean that the results are not generalisable.

Such surveys often over-rely on the memories of victims, but the trauma of crime may mean that these are often faulty and biased. Moreover, if a person is unaware that he or she is a victim of crime, they cannot report it either to the police or in a survey. Finally, despite victim surveys being anonymous, people also tend to under-report certain types of offence, such as sexual offences.

#### *Self-report studies*

Self-report studies question people about crimes they have committed. Anonymity and confidentiality are usually guaranteed, but for obvious reasons, self-report studies tend to focus on minor criminal acts, rather than attempting to investigate serious crimes. They are usually in a questionnaire format, listing particular offences and asking the respondent to tick the ones they have committed.

#### **Exam tip**

It is important that you can explain and give examples of all three methods of measuring crime, and their comparative strengths and weaknesses, remembering that none of them is perfect.



Studies based on self-reports, for example, Belson (1968) on adolescent boys in London and Campbell (1981) on teenage girls, indicate that the majority of respondents admit to some kind of illegal activity, which confirms the dark figure of unreported and unrecorded crime. Self-reports indicate that females and middle-class males are just as likely to commit such crimes as working-class males. In particular, they have challenged the idea that females commit significantly less crime than males. They therefore challenge the validity of the official criminal statistics and especially the picture of the typical criminal as male and working class.

The 2003 Offending, Crime and Justice Survey, which used self-reports, found that 40% of white people admitted offences compared with just 28% of black people and 21% of Asian people. A self-report survey conducted by Sharp and Budd (2005) found that people from mixed-race backgrounds were most likely to admit soft drug use, while more white people admitted using heroin and cocaine.

However, Marsh (2006) observes that the self-report method may be unreliable because despite guarantees of confidentiality and anonymity, some respondents may still not admit committing criminal offences. Research by Junger-Tas (1989) suggests that boys who have had more contact with the criminal justice system are less likely to cooperate with such surveys. Self-report data may not be representative because self-reports mainly focus on asking questions about petty offences rather than serious crimes, and also tend to use small and specific samples, usually focusing on young people. Moreover, the samples of young people used in self-report studies are often unrepresentative in the sense that such questionnaires are often distributed in schools and colleges, which tends to leave out school dropouts and truants.

The validity of the data generated by self-reports may also be undermined by under-reporting. People may under-report because self-report studies are retrospective and depend on respondents being able to remember what crimes they have committed in the previous 12 months; people may also be too scared or ashamed to admit to some of their crimes. However, validity may be undermined by over-reporting too. Boys may exaggerate or over-report their offences to create an impression of 'being tough'. Attempts to check the 'honesty' of respondents have indicated that about a quarter are likely to conceal wrongdoings.

### Summary

- Crime and deviance can both be said to be socially constructed and relative to circumstance, time and culture.
- There are three main ways of collecting data about the prevalence of crime: police recorded figures, victim surveys and self-report surveys. None of these can claim to be a perfect measure of all crime, and there is a recognised 'dark figure' of crime which is very difficult to measure.
- Official crime statistics (OCS) include the police figures, but also a government-commissioned annual victim survey, the CSEW.
- The police figures give sociologists useful data in terms of crime trends and types of crime committed. They produce a picture of the 'typical criminal' which is then used as a starting point for many sociological explanations of crime.

### Knowledge check 20

Which method of measuring crime would be the most accurate for measuring the following types of crime: (a) murder, (b) underage sex, (c) theft of personal property?



# Questions & Answers

## ■ How to use this section

In this section you will find two sets of A-level questions. Each question part is followed by a brief analysis of what to watch out for when answering it. At the end of the question and analysis section, an A\*-grade student answer is given for each question, which is worth either full marks or close to full marks. The comments included throughout tell you what enables the student to score so highly and where or why they miss out on any marks.

Read each question carefully and either try to answer it in full or at least make notes on how you would answer it before reading the student answer and comments. As a general point, you should always read the whole question carefully before starting to write. When you come to a question that is based on sources, study both sources carefully before you start writing, as at least one of them will be relevant to the question, and reference to at least one source is required to access some of the available marks.

Remember that there is no single way of answering an exam question — high marks can be gained taking different approaches. However, the example answers and comments should help to show you the kinds of approach that would do well and some of the pitfalls to avoid.

## Examinable skills

OCR Sociology examination papers are designed to test certain defined skills. These skills are expressed as assessment objectives (AOs). There are three AOs and it is important that you know what these are and what you have to do in an exam to show your ability in each.

### Assessment objective 1 (AO1)

**Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of sociological theories, studies, theorists, concepts and empirical data.**

Your exam answers must demonstrate clearly to the examiners that your knowledge is accurate and appropriate to the topic being discussed and that you have a clear understanding of it. It is not enough simply to reproduce knowledge learned by rote. You must be able to use your knowledge of concepts, sociological studies, empirical evidence and sociological theories in a meaningful and logical way to address the specific question set.

## Assessment objective 2 (AO2)

### Apply sociological theories, concepts and evidence to a range of issues.

This means that you must be able to demonstrate the ability to address the question throughout your response by consistently applying relevant sociological evidence (including concepts, studies, theories and/or statistics).

The first two questions in Section A will instruct you to refer to the source(s), which means referring directly to at least one of the two sources. You must read and analyse these sources carefully and use them in your answer. However, 'applying' the material does not mean simply copying it from the source and leaving it to speak for itself. You will need to show your understanding of the material by doing something with it, such as using it to form or illustrate a point, which you can then support with your wider knowledge.

Application in question 3 and Section B questions is assessed on your ability to select and link appropriate sociological evidence to the precise question asked. Ensure you stay focused on the question you have been given, and do not be tempted to veer off into other aspects of the topic, even if you feel more confident about them or want to show off your other knowledge. You will only be credited for knowledge that is relevant.

## Assessment objective 3 (AO3)

### Analyse and evaluate sociological theories, concepts and evidence in order to:

- present arguments
- make judgements
- draw conclusions

The skill of evaluation is shown by the ability to identify the strengths and weaknesses or limitations of any sociological material. It is not sufficient, however, simply to list the strengths or limitations of something — you need to be able to say *why* something is considered a strength or weakness, and sometimes you will need to state *who* claims that this is a strength or weakness.

Depending on what it is you are discussing, you may be able to reach a credible and supported conclusion about the relative merits or otherwise of something. This means that it should be based on the sociological arguments and evidence that you have presented during your answer. Merely presenting opposing explanations does not constitute analysis or evaluation — ensure you make some comparison and show why these opposing views would challenge the main view in the question.

## Weighting of assessment objectives

In the exam papers, each AO is given a particular weighting, which indicates its relative importance to the overall mark gained. You can find out the breakdown of AO weightings for each question in the mark schemes for past papers, which are on the OCR website ([www.ocr.org.uk](http://www.ocr.org.uk)). These stay constant every year and are worth noting. They are also given after each of the example questions below.

### Command words

Ofqual, the body that sets the criteria for all GCE sociology specifications, has an approved list of 'command words' that are used in exam questions. The following are some of the most commonly used, but this list is not exhaustive and occasionally other, similar words or phrases may be used instead. It is worth learning what is meant by these command words, to ensure that you give an appropriate response.

**Define** Give the meaning of something.

**Explain** Describe the purposes or uses of something, give reasons for it or present the main arguments supporting a method, view or theory.

**Describe/Outline** Give the main characteristics of a concept or sociological view, or present evidence relating to or supporting a position.

**Outline and explain** Give the main characteristics of a sociological view and develop these by referencing studies and using examples.

**Using the source and your wider sociological knowledge, explain...** Draw on the material provided and develop it using your own knowledge to answer the question.

**Evaluate/Discuss/Assess** Explain and develop support for but also criticisms of the view, and/or use alternative views to challenge and highlight weaknesses in the view.

## The A-level examination

The topic of 'Debates in contemporary society' is examined on Paper 3 of the A-level examination, which is organised into two sections. Section A, 'Globalisation and the digital social world', contains two sources, at least one of which needs to be referred to in both question 1 and question 2, although wider sociological knowledge is also required in these questions. Section A includes three compulsory questions worth 9, 10 and 16 marks respectively, adding up to 35 marks in total, or one third of the total marks for this paper.

Section B contains three options, with three questions for each. The first option is 'Crime and deviance' and you should answer all three questions: a 10-mark, a 20-mark and a 40-mark question.

The exam lasts for 2 hours 15 minutes, carries 105 marks and is worth 35% of the A-level qualification. It is worth spending about 45 minutes on Section A (including time to carefully read both sources) and 90 minutes on Section B.

# Questions set 1

## Section A Globalisation and the digital social world

Read the source material and answer **all** the questions in Section A.

### Source A

For young people born since the millennium, sometimes referred to as 'digital natives', the digital world is what they have grown up with. Older people may sometimes struggle to fully engage with social media and the necessity of being able to access the internet for virtually everything these days. With the decline of the high street and with many services going 'digital by default', digital literacy has become necessary to complete many essential tasks, including banking, shopping and raising complaints. This may leave older people feeling isolated and confused. However, the digital social world does provide many opportunities for connections and some research suggests that older people are gaining a new lease of life from discovering social media.

### Source B

The smartphone has become a necessity rather than a luxury and, in just one device, an individual can access many different digital services and products, well beyond texting and making phone calls. The capacity for streaming video content and music, as well as accessing social media and other websites, means that the whole world is literally in your hand. This can make it very hard for people to escape. The constant desire to check what is going on can be an addiction which detracts from other aspects of life, and there may be negative consequences, particularly for young people. The global economy has also shown media convergence with the growth of a few huge companies, including Google and Amazon, which have diversified from their core business and now offer many different services as well as producing digital hardware.

## Question 1

With reference to the source(s) and your wider sociological knowledge, explain how developments in digital communication have led to media convergence.

9 marks

(AO1: 5 marks;

AO2: 4 marks)

Create two separate points that demonstrate your understanding of media convergence and its link to digital communication. Make sure you refer to at least one of the sources in each point, but also support with wider evidence, which could include examples, studies, concepts or theories.

## Question 2

With reference to the source(s) and your wider sociological knowledge, discuss the view that developments in digital forms of communication have a negative impact on age identity.

10 marks

(AO1: 4 marks;

AO2: 2 marks;

AO3: 4 marks)

Don't forget to evaluate in this question. Identify two points that support the idea that there is a negative impact on age identity, and then challenge this by suggesting two ways in which there might be a positive impact. Refer to at least one of the sources in at least one of your points and stay focused on the question.

## Question 3

Evaluate the view that developments in digital communication have led to increasing cultural homogenisation.

16 marks

(AO1: 4 marks;

AO2: 4 marks;

AO3: 8 marks)

For this question, more marks are available for AO3 than AO1, so you need at least three evaluation points that challenge the view in the question, but could have just two knowledge points that support the view (increasing cultural homogenisation). Support your points with evidence. Make sure you clearly show your understanding of what cultural homogenisation actually refers to.

## Section B

### Option 1 Crime and deviance

Answer **all** the questions in Section B.

## Question 4

In what ways do neo-Marxists and radical criminologists explain crime and deviance?

10 marks

(AO1: 6 marks;

AO2: 4 marks)

Make sure you show that you understand what approach neo-Marxists take to understanding crime and deviance. You need three detailed paragraphs, but you don't need to evaluate.

## Question 5

Discuss the view that alternative ways of measuring crime are more useful than the police recorded crime figures.

20 marks

(AO1: 8 marks;

AO2: 4 marks;

AO3: 8 marks)

Think about alternative methods of measuring crime and split these into three clear points to support the view, ensuring that you show why they are more useful than police figures. You may find yourself struggling to include sociological evidence such as studies and concepts, but because this essay is about measuring crime, you can use methodological concepts such as representativeness and validity, and relevant approaches to research such as positivism. In evaluation, you can consider criticisms of these alternative methods, but should compare these to the usefulness of police recorded figures to fully address the question.

## Question 6

Outline and evaluate sociological explanations of the relationship between ethnicity and crime.

40 marks

(AO1: 16 marks;

AO2: 8 marks;

AO3: 16 marks)

It is worth identifying what the relationship is according to statistics, before you go on to apply sociological ideas to explain this. The tricky thing about this question is that all explanations are potentially relevant knowledge, so you must not forget to explicitly evaluate, and to make clear whether you are intending content to be credited as knowledge or as evaluation — you will not be double-credited. You should aim for four points of knowledge and four points of evaluation.

### Student answer

- 1 Convergence is where things come together, so media convergence is the coming together of different types of media. One aspect of media convergence is the way different types of media can now all be accessed on one platform. Source B says that through your smartphone you can access many forms of media, including video, music, the internet and social media. This can be really positive since it gives individuals access to anything really easily.

Another form of media convergence is media companies merging or diversifying, so that they produce many different forms of media. Source B mentions big companies such as Google and Amazon, who offer many different types of media services, including producing hardware such as phones and tablets, and offering many other services through the internet, as well as streaming video content and so on. This could be linked with cultural imperialism, where a few big US companies dominate the digital world and impose capitalist culture on the whole world.

**7/9 marks awarded** Both points use the source effectively and show good understanding of media convergence. However, the first point could have been developed more with further examples or evidence, for example, referring to postmodernism, linking it to identity or relationships, or referring to the digital divide as a potential downside. Wider evidence can be in the form of examples, but these examples do need to go beyond the source and be well explained and applied. In the second point, the link to cultural imperialism shows this.

### Student answer

- 2 Developments in digital communication can have a negative impact on age identity for older people, as mentioned in Source A, which points out that older people are not digital natives. Prensky refers to them instead as 'digital immigrants', and they may find it hard to assimilate to the digital world, which can leave them feeling isolated, especially since so much is now 'digital by default', as the source says. They may feel less positive about themselves and their value in this unfamiliar world, affecting their identity.

However, some studies suggest that digital communications can be positive for older identities, as Source A mentions, giving older people a new lease of life. This is supported by the Ages 2.0 project, which found that social media not only improved cognitive ability in older people, but also gave them more self-confidence, therefore improving their view of themselves and their age identity.

There may also be a negative impact on young people and their identity, because of the pressure to keep up with everyone on social media and issues such as FOMO (fear of missing out). Young people continually compare themselves to others, which might lead to a negative self-concept. Gardner and Davis suggest it makes young people more narcissistic and self-obsessed.

However, there are positive impacts on younger people and their identity, since they have so many more choices in the digital world, and can construct their own identities from a wide variety of sources, according to postmodernists. Polhemus says we live in a 'pick and mix' society, and identity is constructed through consumption, rather than based on production, such as what we do or what our family does. For young people this is positive since they can create their own identities regardless of their class or gender, for example. Therefore, the impact on age identity for younger people is positive since it provides choice and confidence.

**10/10 marks awarded** This response has more than enough content to access full marks. It is nicely balanced, with two points supporting the view and two points challenging it. Only one developed reference to one of the sources is needed, and this response refers to Source A twice. Wider evidence is linked in to each point.

### Student answer

- 3 Cultural homogenisation is the process whereby all cultures are becoming the same. Hall argued that globalisation could lead to cultural homogenisation and digital communication has arguably speeded this up. Through the internet we are all exposed to one global culture, and we consume the same brands, music, films and so on. This relates to Ritzer's idea of McDonaldisation, where in the pursuit of rationality, media output becomes uniform and predictable.

Another view on increasing cultural homogenisation is a Marxist one. Seabrook suggests that it is a form of cultural imperialism, with Western, capitalist culture being spread globally, through the internet. This can be seen as a deliberate process in pursuit of profit, and it is wiping out cultural diversity. Seabrook sees it as a 'declaration of war' on alternative cultures.

On the other hand, this process has led to a backlash of cultural defence, whereby cultures resist this homogenisation and try to maintain their own cultural identity. For example, in France they ensure that films in the French language are shown in cinemas. Some countries have gone further, by blocking global digital communications. An example is the 'Great Firewall of China' — American sites such as Google and Facebook are blocked in China, which is preventing homogenisation.