

# GCSE AQA 9-1 Sociology

## Paper 1 – The Family



Model responses to 3-4 Mark Exam  
Style Questions

- 1. Identify and explain one reason why some sociologists use a broad rather than narrow definition of family (4)** One reason why some sociologists use a broad rather than narrow definition of family is because there are so many different types of family. Allan and Crow said family means different things to different people and can include traditional and less traditional family types. For example, civil partnerships are a type of family. A broad definition covers the broad range of family types.
- 2. Describe what sociologists mean by the term Lone parent family (3)** Lone parent families consist of one parent looking after their children. Divorce, death, separation or absenteeism can cause it. 90% of lone parent families are headed by females who may be single, divorced, separated or widowed.
- 3. Identify and describe one example of alternatives to families in the UK today (3)** There are many alternatives including, friendships, one person households for example of people who never had children, foster homes, secure units, residential care homes. Budgeon found that friendships are becoming the new family especially for people who are living alone and have no immediate family nearby. She found that when it came to certain issues people would choose friends over family.
- 4. Identify and explain how one turning point in an individuals life might lead to change in their family or household situation (4)** Turning points are significant events in your life that change your family situation for example, you may grow up in a nuclear family but when you move out for university you will be in a household. One turning point could be divorce as you could go from a nuclear family to being a single person household or a lone parent family depending on if children are involved.
- 5. Describe what sociologists mean by cultural diversity (3)** Cultural diversity means different cultures which can impact on different family types. For example black women are more likely to continue working when they become mothers while Asian women can be expected to be full time mothers. Immigration to the UK has had an impact on the different types of family. Many Asian families still live in extended families.
- 6. Describe what sociologists mean by solo living (3)** Solo living is living by yourself. There are many reasons for this including, divorce, separation, being a student, living a single life. Irish and Caribbean are most likely to be living in a solo family. Pakistani and Bengali are least likely as they are most likely to be in extended families.

- 7. Describe what sociologists mean by egalitarian role relationships (3)** This means that roles are more equal. Class can shape role relationships. Middle class relationships tend to be more egalitarian or equal than working class ones. Some research also shows that working class fathers are more involved in childcare than middle class fathers. Some Asian families are based on unequal, male dominated relationships which is the opposite to egalitarian.
- 8. Identify one aspect of family diversity and explain how you would investigate this aspect using unstructured interviews (4).** The Rapoport identified 5 main aspects of family diversity including, class, organisation, culture, life course and cohort. One aspect of family diversity would be organisational which means how roles are carried out in a family. You could use unstructured interviews to understand the reasons behind one parent doing certain jobs while another does other jobs. This is because unstructured means you can ask more questions that give you rich detail and information.
- 9. Identify and describe one alternative to nuclear family households (3)** One alternative is Kibbutzim which is a family where many families live in one space. The mothers take care of all the children. Children sleep in separate rooms to the adults. Equality and cooperation are important for people who live in a Kibbutzim which helps everyone share the living space. (other alternatives include communes and one-child family policy).
- 10. Identify and explain one of Murdock's four functions of the family. (4)** Murdock believed in four functions sexual, reproductive, economic and educational. One function of Murdock's is educational which means that family is responsible for primary socialisation which is essential for society. New members like children need to know how to behave and speak the language which family teaches you. Parents have the main role in disciplining and teaching children right from wrong. Murdock says no other structure can perform these functions apart from family.
- 11. Identify and explain one criticism of Parsons's view of the nuclear family (4)** Parsons said that family has two main functions primary socialisation and the stabilisation of adult personalities. One criticism of Parsons is that that he gives rose tinted view of the family which ignores the dark side of the family for example domestic violence and child abuse. Leach says that parents fighting and children rebelling is a sign that the nuclear family is not very pleasant but Parsons ignores this because he only sees the positives for society.

- 12. Identify and explain one function of the nuclear family from a Marxist perspective (4)** Eli Zaretski said that the family has a number of functions which serve capitalism including economic, class reproduction and consumption. One function is class reproduction which means that children born to working class parents stay working class. They are raised in a working class way where discipline and authority are seen as most important so they are raised into subordinate people who don't question anything. Upper class parents produce upper class children and the class system stays in place.
- 13. Identify and describe one difference between the feminist and functionalist accounts of primary socialisation (4)** Feminists believe primary socialisation creates girl and boy identities which keep men in power and women as second. They see primary socialisation as working for the benefit of patriarchy and male domination by teaching boys to be strong and girls to be sensible. Functionalists see primary socialisation as essential to society and parents are giving their children the personalities they need to survive in society. Delphy found women suffer in relationships with more work than men.
- 14. Describe what is meant by joint conjugal roles (3)** The husband and wife share many tasks. The husband and wife share their leisure time together. This can be caused by many factors such as changes in employment where men and women are breadwinners. Social attitudes towards the traditional roles of men and women may have changed too.
- 15. Describe what is meant by segregated conjugal roles (3)** Clear division of labour with tasks divided into male and female tasks. The husband and wife spend little time together having their own interests and friends outside the home. Parsons found men had an instrumental role as breadwinner and women took on the expressive role as homemaker. Bott's work was criticised because she only interviewed 20 families in London so could not be representative.
- 16. Identify and explain one factor that may have led to an increase in symmetrical families. (4)** Young and Willmott found there was more equality between the spouses; that the couple and children were more home centred due to feminism, contraception, interest in home life and technological developments that made home leisure more important. One factor would be the rise in feminism which has encouraged women towards education and employment and reject the role of the traditional housewife.

- 17. Describe what is meant by stratified diffusion (3)** Young and Wilmott found that stratified diffusion was the process by which changes in families filtered down from middle class to working class. So if middle class families were becoming more symmetrical then this would filter down and more working class families would become more symmetrical.
- 18. Identify and describe one way in which power can be measured in families (3)** One way in which power can be measured is through the financial aspect. Whichever partner earns more money may be seen as more powerful in financial decision making about the shopping or redecorating the house. Pahl interviews 102 married couples and found there are still many marriages where men control the finances and women and children could be in poverty. Another way is domestic violence.
- 19. Identify and explain what Oakley means by the term conventional families (4)** Oakley believed this was the type of family that people want to have because it is happy and less stressful but this wasn't true. She found conventional families were stressful and there was financial inequality in them where women depended on their husbands for income leading to men having more power. Conventional families are based on traditional gender roles where the man holds economic power and family life is stressful. Neo-conventional families involve dual worker families and the triple shift.
- 20. Identify and explain one factor that may have led to changes in the relationships between parents and children over the last 100 years. (4)** Parent child relationships have become more democratic and less authoritarian because of changes in the law which made children have to go to school. This raised awareness of children's rights and many middle class families developed democratic relationships with their children according to Pryor and Trinder. Children can help translate for immigrant parents; help out in the family business; help with housework which shows they can contribute according to Scott. The emphasis used to be on discipline but is now on freedom.
- 21. Identify and explain one advantage of using official statistics to study families (4)** One advantage is you can see what has happened to families. Since the 1970s, there have been many changes in the family. These changes include the ages at which people are getting married; the ages at which people have children; you can see how laws have affected marriage and divorce. This lets

sociologists look at patterns in marriage, divorce and remarriage. They are readily collected and seen as reliable as they are also used by government.

- 22. Identify and explain one reason why the majority of reconstituted families have a biological mother and a step-father. (3)** One reason why over 80% of reconstituted families are made up of a biological mother and step father is because after separation, children often stay with the mother. Only 11% have the opposite. This also shows that women are seen as better at the role of homemaker and having the expressive role.
- 23. Identify and explain one factor that may have led to the increase in the number of lone parent families since the 1970s. (4)** There are four main factors, increases in divorce, changing attitudes, fatherless families and more freedom. One factor that may have led to the increase in lone parent families is divorce. Many lone parent families are headed up by divorced mothers. The Divorce Act made it easier for women to get a divorce especially for reasons like empty shell marriage or irreconcilable differences.
- 24. Identify and explain one factor that may have led to changes in the patterns of fertility in the UK over the last 30 years. (4)** There are many factors that include, economic, labour markets, later marriage, feminism and birth control. One factor is the rise of feminism which has encouraged women to think of their roles as breadwinners or career workers. This meant women took advantage of opportunities in work and education because laws changed to make it easier for them. This meant women could choose when they wish to have children or whether they even wanted children.
- 25. Describe what is meant by serial monogamy (3)** Serial monogamy is when a person doesn't see marriage as a life long commitment. For example a person who keeps getting married and divorced over and over again. There is less stigma about divorce and it is easier to get which means serial monogamy is common in the UK.
- 26. Identify and explain one reason why the average age at which people get married in Britain has increased during the last 30 Years. (4)** One reason has been the changes in educational and employment opportunities for women which has meant they have been able to get jobs and develop careers instead of getting married earlier and becoming housewives. Women can also spend time enjoying their independence and freedom before wishing to decide who or when to marry. Sex outside marriage is also no longer a stigma so people do not have to be married to have sex.

- 27. Identify and explain one factor that may have led to the increase in cohabitation during the last 20 years (4)** Cohabitation is up because less people are getting married. This is mainly due to changing attitudes towards sex outside marriage. The majority of cohabiting people had families which meant they had sex outside marriage. Before the 1960s to have sex outside marriage was seen as sinful and people would see it negatively in society. Some also argue that many cohabiting couples do so before they decide to get married.
- 28. Identify and explain one contemporary social issue related to the family (3)** There are several social issues including the quality of parenting, relationships between teenagers and parents and the care of elderly people. The quality of parenting is very important as it is linked to children's wellbeing. Concepts like parental warmth and parent involvement are very important in improving children's wellbeing. For example if a parent doesn't encourage reading from a young age this can affect their child's education for many years.
- 29. Identify and explain one strength of the survey questionnaire used by Young and Willmott to research symmetrical families (4)** They used a structured interview which meant set questions on key aspects about family life. This involved closed questions which gave them quantitative data. This makes it easier to make comparisons and look for patterns. They can put the results into charts and graphs and use them to make conclusions about symmetrical families.
- 30. Identify and explain one factor that has caused a rise in the divorce rates in the UK over the last 30 years (4)** There are many factors including changes in the law, secularisation, feminism and changing social attitudes. One factor that caused a rise is the change in the divorce laws which made it easier and cheaper to obtain a divorce especially for certain reasons like irreconcilable differences or empty shell marriages. This gave women a reason to not stay in empty shell marriages or to separate from a violent partner.