16.1 Defining and Measuring Crime, and Offender Profiling

AQA 7182 · about 55 minutes · Write-in edition

Total Marks

Name: _____ Date: ____ / ____ / _____

Answer ALL questions.

1 Outline forensic awareness with an example.

(Total for Question 1 is 2 marks)

2 Outline cultural relativism and provide an example.

(Total for Question 2 is 2 marks)

3 Explain marauder versus commuter and an implication for police.

(Total for Question 3 is 4 marks)

4 Outline a strength of official statistics for measuring crime.

(Total for Question 4 is 3 marks)

5 Outline a limitation of victim surveys for measuring crime.

(Total for Question 5 is 3 marks)

6 Outline an advantage of offender self-report surveys.

(Total for Question 6 is 2 marks)

7 Explain the dark figure of crime and its importance.

(Total for Question 7 is 3 marks)

8 Discuss the strengths and limitations of offender profiling, covering top-down and bottom-up approaches and implications for policing.

(Total for Question 8 is 16 marks)

9 Outline organised offender characteristics.

(Total for Question 9 is 4 marks)

10 Outline disorganised offender characteristics.

(Total for Question 10 is 4 marks)

Mark scheme · 16.1 Defining and Measuring Crime, and Offender Profiling

Question 1

definition: forensic awareness is when an offender has knowledge of police procedures and takes steps to avoid detection oe — **B1**

example: e.g. wearing gloves or wiping surfaces to remove fingerprints, or staging the scene to mislead investigators oe — **B1**

Answer: Forensic awareness is when an offender knows about police methods and tries to hide evidence, for example by wearing gloves, removing traces, or staging the scene.

Question 2

outline: cultural relativism is the idea that definitions of crime vary between cultures, depending on local norms and values oe — **B1**

example: e.g. in some countries drinking alcohol may be illegal or heavily restricted while in others it is lawful and socially accepted oe — **B1**

Answer: Cultural relativism: crime definitions depend on cultural norms; for example, alcohol consumption may be legal and normal in one country but illegal in another.

Question 3

explains marauder: offender operates close to their home or base, leaving offences clustered near the offender's anchor point oe — **M1**

explains commuter: offender travels from their base to offend, producing crime sites further from their home and less clustered oe — **A1**

states implication: for a marauder focus searches and enquiries close to offence cluster, for a commuter expand radius and look for travel routes oe — **A1**

adds reasoning: this guides resource deployment and screening of local CCTV and witness accounts oe — **A1**

Answer: A marauder operates near their home so offences are clustered close together; a commuter travels to offend so sites are more dispersed. Police therefore concentrate local searches and enquiries for marauders but examine travel routes and wider areas for commuters.

Question 4

identifies a strength, e.g. they provide consistent, standardised records over time across large areas oe — **M1**

explains how this helps, e.g. allows trends to be tracked and resources to be allocated by police and policymakers oe — **A1**

adds consequence: this can support planning and comparison between regions oe — **A1**

Answer: Official statistics are routinely collected and standardised, allowing trends to be tracked over time and comparisons across regions, which helps police and policymakers allocate resources.

Question 5

identifies a limitation, e.g. they rely on recall and honesty so memory errors and dishonesty can bias results oe — **M1**

explains impact, e.g. victims may forget details or under-report incidents such as sexual offences, leading to an underestimation of true crime levels oe — **A1**

links to consequence, e.g. this affects the accuracy of the dark figure estimate and policy responses oe — **A1**

Answer: Victim surveys rely on respondents remembering and reporting incidents; memory errors or under-reporting of sensitive crimes can bias results, meaning victim surveys may still underestimate true crime.

Question 6

advantage: they can reveal offences not recorded by police, capturing part of the dark figure of crime oe — **B1**

brief explanation: useful for studying minor or hidden offences that do not usually lead to arrest oe — **B1**

Answer: Self-report surveys can uncover offences that were not recorded by police, helping researchers study minor or hidden offending that official statistics miss.

Question 7

defines the dark figure: offences that occur but are not reported to or recorded by the police oe — **M1**

explains why it matters: it means official statistics underrepresent true crime levels and may mislead policymakers oe — **A1**

gives consequence: reliance on official figures alone can lead to poor resource allocation or misunderstood crime patterns oe — **A1**

Answer: The dark figure refers to crimes that go unreported or unrecorded; it matters because official statistics then understate true crime levels, potentially misleading policy and policing decisions.

Question 8

Level 4 Knowledge of offender profiling is accurate and detailed. Discussion evaluates both top-down and bottom-up approaches using empirical evidence and methodological critique. Arguments are balanced and interactive, considering practical utility, limitations such as scientific basis and reliability, and ethical or operational implications. The answer is coherent, focused and uses specialist terminology effectively. — **13-16**

Level 3 Knowledge is generally accurate with some detail. Discussion includes strengths and limitations of one or both approaches and offers some evaluation, but may be less well balanced or detailed. Some application to policing practice is included. The answer is mostly clear and organised. — **9-12**

Level 2 Knowledge is present but limited. Evaluation is superficial or one-sided. Few links to evidence or practical implications are made. The answer may lack organisation and use specialist terms inconsistently. — **5-8**

Level 1 Knowledge is minimal and largely descriptive. Little or no critical evaluation or application to policing. The answer is fragmentary or list-like. — **1-4**

Level 0 No creditworthy material. **0**

Indicative content:

- AO1: Top-down approach origins and claims: developed from US FBI work with crime scene classification into organised and disorganised offenders, producing offender profiles that infer personality and background.
- AO1: Bottom-up approaches: investigative psychology builds profiles from statistical analysis of multiple offences and behaviours, focusing on interpersonal coherence and forensic awareness; geographical profiling analyses spatial patterns distinguishing marauders and commuters.
- AO3: Strengths supporting profiling: bottom-up approaches are more empirical and use data from many cases, allowing probabilistic, testable inferences; investigative psychology links behaviour to likely routines, aiding operational decision-making.
- AO3: Empirical support and limitations: some studies show useful investigative leads from bottom-up profiling, whereas top-down typology has been criticised for lacking empirical foundation and being based on anecdotal interviews with a limited sample.
- AO3: Methodological critiques: problems of validity and reliability, e.g. circularity in some top-down profiles, lack of inter-rater reliability, small or biased samples in original top-down work, and difficulties in testing many profiler predictions objectively.
- AO3: Practical utility: profiling can prioritise enquiries and narrow suspect pools, saving resources, but over-reliance can misdirect investigations when profiles are inaccurate; examples where profiling helped and where it may have hindered should be discussed.
- AO3: Ethical and legal concerns: risk of bias, stereotyping and confirmation bias leading to miscarriages of justice; importance of integrating profiling with traditional evidence and forensic science.
- AO3: Integration and improvement: combining bottom-up statistical methods with forensic evidence, ongoing validation, and training can increase usefulness; use of geographic information systems and behavioural databases improves accuracy.
- AO3: Conclusion: balanced judgement weighing profiling as a useful adjunct, especially bottom-up, but not a standalone solution; highlight need for empirical validation, caution in application and combination with other investigative methods.

Question 9

identifies organised features such as planned crime, control at the scene, and the offender bringing tools or restraints oe **M1**

identifies further features: above-average intelligence or social competence and attempts to avoid detection oe **A1**

explains that organised offenders often leave little forensic evidence and may target victims selectively oe **A1**

links traits to the typology: organised suggests premeditation and social competence rather than impulsivity oe **A1**

Answer: Organised offenders are thought to plan their crimes, show control at the scene, bring tools or restraints, select victims, have social competence and attempt to avoid detection, often leaving little forensic trace.

Question 10

identifies disorganised features such as spontaneous, impulsive behaviour and little or no planning oe **M1**

identifies further features: chaotic crime scene, body left in view, minimal attempt to conceal evidence oe **A1**

explains that disorganised offenders are thought to have lower social competence and possible mental health issues oe **A1**

links traits to typology: disorganised suggests lack of control and more likely to leave forensic clues oe **A1**

Answer: Disorganised offenders are seen as impulsive and unplanned, leaving chaotic scenes and little attempt to conceal the body, often displaying lower social competence and leaving more forensic evidence.