9.6 Duck's Phase Model of Relationship Breakdown

AQA 7182 · about 55 minutes · Write-in edition

Total Marks

Name: _____ Date: ____ / ____ / _____

Answer ALL questions.

1 Describe one cultural or individual difference that could alter the progression through Duck's phases, using the example of a collectivist community where social opinion is highly influential.

(Total for Question 1 is 4 marks)

2 Sequence the stages of Duck's model including Rollie and Duck's later addition, starting from the first stage experienced by one partner who begins to think the relationship is unsatisfying.

(Total for Question 2 is 2 marks)

3 Describe one key interactional change that occurs during the dyadic phase, using the example of Kwame and his partner arguing more and raising issues they previously avoided.

(Total for Question 3 is 2 marks)

4 Outline what is meant by the social phase in Duck's model, in the context of a couple where Priya has started telling friends about problems and seeking their opinions.

(Total for Question 4 is 3 marks)

5 Describe the grave-dressing phase in Duck's model as it would apply to Callum after he has left a long-term relationship and begins to tell a post-breakup story about why the relationship ended.

(Total for Question 5 is 4 marks)

6 Give one limitation of Duck's original phase model related to its retrospective and descriptive nature, and explain why this limitation matters for using the model to predict breakups.

(Total for Question 6 is 3 marks)

7 Outline one practical application of Duck's phase model for relationship counselling or interventions, and explain how the model informs that application.

(Total for Question 7 is 4 marks)

8 Outline and evaluate one strength and one limitation of Duck's model for understanding relationship breakdown, each developed with a reasoned explanation.

(Total for Question 8 is 6 marks)

9 Discuss Duck's phase model of relationship breakdown as an explanation of how romantic relationships end. In your answer you should explain the main features of the model and Rollie and Duck's resurrection addition, apply the model to the idea of timing interventions to save relationships, and evaluate the model with reference to its descriptive and retrospective nature, cultural and individual differences, and any empirical support or contradictions. AO1 marks are for accurate description of the model and AO3 marks are for evaluation and application. Write a focused, balanced essay.

(Total for Question 9 is 16 marks)

Mark scheme · 9.6 Duck's Phase Model of Relationship Breakdown

Question 1

identifies a difference, e.g. collectivist versus individualist cultural norms or strong family involvement oe — **M1**

describes how this might change progression, e.g. social phase may occur earlier or be more decisive because third-party opinions carry more weight oe — **A1**

explains the consequence, e.g. partners may delay leaving due to familial pressure or conversely be forced into a public breakup sooner oe — **A1**

may note individual differences such as attachment style or personality that affect speed or order of phases oe — **A1**

Answer: In collectivist communities the social phase may occur earlier and be more decisive because family and community opinion is highly influential; this can lead partners either to delay a breakup because of pressure to stay, or to have the relationship ended publicly sooner, showing cultural differences can alter the timing and impact of Duck's phases.

Question 2

gives the correct sequence for the first three stages: intra-psychic, dyadic, social oe — **B1**

gives the correct sequence for the last two stages: grave-dressing, resurrection oe — **B1**

Answer: Intra-psychic, dyadic, social, grave-dressing, resurrection.

Question 3

states that partners begin to discuss dissatisfaction openly and conflicts increase oe — **B1**

explains that negotiation, attempts to repair, blame or confrontation occur between partners oe — **B1**

Answer: Dyadic phase: Kwame and his partner begin to discuss grievances openly, leading to more arguments, negotiation or blame, and attempts to repair the relationship.

Question 4

states that partners involve third parties such as friends or family and make the relationship troubles public oe — **M1**

states that external opinions, support or pressure influence decisions about the relationship oe — **A1**

refers to reputational or social consequences arising from discussing the breakup publicly oe — **A1**

Answer: Social phase: Priya tells friends about problems, the issues become public, and external opinions, support or pressure help shape what happens next with social consequences for reputations.

Question 5

states that partners construct a narrative to explain the breakup and present themselves in a favourable light oe — **M1**

mentions that the narrative is often self-protective, blaming the other or minimising one's own role oe — **A1**

mentions that the story serves social functions, managing reputation and allowing emotional closure oe — **A1**

may note that reinterpretation of events helps the individual move on emotionally oe — **A1**

Answer: Grave-dressing: Callum constructs a post-breakup story that makes the breakup socially acceptable, often protecting his self-image by blaming the other or reinterpreting events, which helps manage reputation and aids emotional closure.

Question 6

states a limitation: the model is largely descriptive and based on retrospective accounts oe — **M1**

explains that retrospective reports can be biased by memory or self-justification, reducing the model's predictive power oe — **A1**

explains that because it describes stages after the event it may not reliably predict which relationships will end or when oe — **A1**

Answer: Limitation: the model is descriptive and often based on retrospective accounts, which can be biased by memory or self-justification and therefore limit the model's ability to predict which relationships will break up and when.

Question 7

identifies a practical application, e.g. timing of interventions at the dyadic phase to improve communication or designing repair strategies oe — **M1**

explains why that phase is an appropriate point for intervention, e.g. partners are discussing issues and can be helped to negotiate more constructively oe — **A1**

explains how the model guides the intervention, e.g. counsellors focus on conflict resolution skills, improving communication and preventing escalation into the social phase oe — **A1**

may mention that awareness of stages helps practitioners tailor support and timing, improving chances of repair oe — **A1**

Answer: Application: counsellors can target the dyadic phase to teach communication and conflict-resolution skills because partners are openly discussing problems; the model guides when and how to intervene to prevent escalation into public breakdown.

Question 8

outlines one strength of the model, for example its usefulness in identifying stages and guiding interventions oe	**M1**
explains why this is a strength, linking to practical counselling or timing of support oe	**A1**
outlines one limitation, for example its descriptive and retrospective nature or failure to account for cultural/individual differences oe	**M1**
explains why this is a limitation, e.g. retrospective bias, lack of predictive power, or limited generalisability oe	**A1**
provides an evaluative comment linking the strength and limitation, for example that usefulness for intervention is constrained by limited predictive validity oe	**A1**
may support evaluation with brief reference to Rollie and Duck's resurrection phase as an improvement or to empirical evidence that shows variability in how breakups proceed oe	**A1**

Answer: Strength: the model identifies recognisable stages which helps practitioners target interventions at appropriate points, for example helping couples with communication during the dyadic phase. Limitation: it is largely descriptive and based on retrospective accounts so it may not predict breakups well and may not generalise across cultures or individual differences. Overall, while useful for structuring interventions, its limited predictive validity and variability in real-world progress reduce its explanatory power.

Question 9

Level 4 Knowledge of Duck's model and the resurrection phase is accurate and detailed, showing clear understanding. Discussion is thorough and balanced, including both strengths and limitations, and evaluates evidence and implications. Application to intervention timing is integrated and persuasive. The essay is coherent, well organised and uses appropriate specialist terminology.	**13-16**
Level 3 Knowledge of the model is clear with some detail. Discussion includes several relevant evaluation points and some application to interventions. Evaluation is effective but may lack depth in places. Answer is organised and uses specialist terms appropriately.	**9-12**
Level 2 Knowledge of the model is present but may be partial or contain minor inaccuracies. Limited evaluation is present, with one or two relevant points such as descriptive nature or cultural differences. Application to interventions is attempted but not fully developed. The answer may lack organisation in parts.	**5-8**
Level 1 Basic or sparse knowledge of Duck's model, which may be muddled or fragmentary. Evaluation is minimal or superficial, with weak or no application to interventions. Limited use of terminology and poor organisation.	**1-4**
Level 0 No creditable content.	**0**

Indicative content:

- AO1: Outline the four original stages: intra-psychic (private dissatisfaction and weighing up), dyadic (open discussion, confrontation, attempts at repair), social (involving third parties, public discussion, social pressure), grave-dressing (creating post-breakup narratives to protect self and reputation).
- AO1: Describe Rollie and Duck's resurrection phase: revising self-narrative, learning from the relationship, preparing for new relationships and re-engaging with life.
- AO2: Application to interventions: the model suggests counselling or communication training is most useful in the dyadic phase when partners are discussing problems; public involvement in the social phase may reduce options for repair, so early private interventions could be prioritised.
- AO3: Evaluation - descriptive and retrospective nature: many studies that inform the model rely on retrospective accounts which can be biased by memory and self-justification, reducing predictive validity and raising questions about stage order and timing.
- AO3: Cultural and individual differences: progression through phases may differ across collectivist and individualist cultures, and between people with different attachment styles or personalities, so the model may not be universally applicable.
- AO3: Empirical support and contradiction: some qualitative interview studies support stage-like processes and the usefulness of staged accounts for counselling, but quantitative longitudinal studies show considerable variability in order and timing of events and some relationships end rapidly without clear staging.
- AO3: Usefulness for practice: the staged account provides a clear framework for practitioners to time interventions and to help clients reframe narratives in grave-dressing and resurrection phases, but its limitations mean interventions should be flexible and culturally sensitive.
- AO3: Overall judgement: the model is valuable as a heuristic and for guiding practice but limited as a strong explanatory theory because it is largely descriptive, relies on retrospective data and underplays variability between individuals and cultures.