



GSOC.ED2 Social Class and Educational Achievement

AQA 8192 · Calculators not allowed · about 75 minutes

Total Marks

Name: _____ Date: ____ / ____ / ____

Answer ALL questions. Use sociological vocabulary and name sociologists where you can.

- 1** Which concept did the sociologist Pierre Bourdieu use to describe the knowledge, tastes and ways of speaking that middle-class children tend to grow up with, which schools tend to reward?

- ☐ A) Cultural capital
☐ B) Social solidarity
☐ C) Correspondence principle
☐ D) Value consensus

(Total for Question 1 is 1 mark)

- 2** Sociologists sometimes explain class differences in achievement in terms of 'material deprivation'.

(Total for Question 2 is 2 marks)

- 3** Material deprivation can take several forms.

- (a)** Give two examples of material deprivation that might affect a pupil's achievement at school. (2)
- (b)** Explain one way material deprivation might affect a pupil's achievement, beyond simply lacking equipment. (2)

(Total for Question 3 is 4 marks)

- 4 The sociologist Pierre Bourdieu argued cultural, as well as material, factors help explain class differences in achievement.

(Total for Question 4 is 4 marks)

- 5 The sociologist Basil Bernstein distinguished between an 'elaborated code' and a 'restricted code' of speech.

(Total for Question 5 is 4 marks)

- 6 The sociologist J.W.B. Douglas carried out a long-term study of British children's education, published as *The Home and the School* (1964).

(Total for Question 6 is 4 marks)

- 7 More recent sociologists have continued to study how class shapes parents' involvement in their children's education.

(Total for Question 7 is 4 marks)

- 8** State one criticism that is often made of cultural deprivation explanations of class differences in achievement.

(Total for Question 8 is 2 marks)

- 9** State one way the school itself, rather than a pupil's home background, might disadvantage working-class pupils.

(Total for Question 9 is 2 marks)

- 10** Material and cultural factors can affect exam success in different ways.

- (a) Explain one material factor that might affect a pupil's success specifically at exam time. (2)
- (b) Explain one cultural factor, other than language, that might affect a pupil's achievement. (2)

(Total for Question 10 is 4 marks)

- 11** State one criticism that is often made of material deprivation explanations of class differences in achievement.

(Total for Question 11 is 2 marks)

12 A pupil lives in overcrowded housing, which makes it hard to find a quiet space to do homework.

- ☐ A) Material deprivation
- ☐ B) Cultural deprivation
- ☐ C) The correspondence principle
- ☐ D) The hidden curriculum

(Total for Question 12 is 1 mark)

13 A pupil from a low-income family may face several disadvantages at once.

Explain how material and cultural factors might combine to affect the achievement of a pupil from a low-income family.

(Total for Question 13 is 6 marks)

14 Some sociologists emphasise material deprivation as the main cause of class differences in achievement; others emphasise cultural factors such as cultural capital and language codes. Evaluate the view that material deprivation is the main reason why working-class pupils tend to achieve less well than middle-class pupils. In your answer you should refer to sociologists' views and consider more than one explanation.

(Total for Question 14 is 12 marks)

15 Sociologists distinguish 'cultural deprivation' from 'material deprivation' as an explanation of class differences in achievement.

(Total for Question 15 is 2 marks)

16 Government policies have tried to reduce the achievement gap linked to social class.

(Total for Question 16 is 2 marks)

Mark scheme · GSOC.ED2 Social Class and Educational Achievement

Question 1

- **B1** A (cultural capital)
- **Answer: A**

Question 2

- **B1** a lack of money or physical resources needed to succeed in education (oe)
- **B1** development, e.g. poorer families may be less able to afford things like a computer, educational trips or revision guides
- **Answer: A lack of money or physical resources needed to succeed in education, e.g. poorer families being less able to afford a computer, educational trips or revision guides.**

Question 3

- (a) **B1** one correct example, e.g. lack of money for equipment, books or a computer
- (a) **B1** a second, different correct example, e.g. overcrowded or poor-quality housing, or lack of money for school trips
- (a) **Answer: Any two of: lack of money for equipment/books/a computer; overcrowded or poor-quality housing; lack of money for school trips.**
- (b) **B1** identifies an indirect effect, e.g. some pupils from low-income families may need to take on part-time work, reducing time available for study and homework
- (b) **B1** development linking this to lower achievement, e.g. or poor housing affecting sleep, health and ability to concentrate at school
- (b) **Answer: Pupils from low-income families may need to work part-time, reducing time for study and homework, which can lower their achievement compared with pupils who do not need to work.**

Question 4

- **B1** identifies cultural capital as the knowledge, tastes, vocabulary and ways of behaving that are valued by the education system (oe)
- **B1** explains that middle-class children are, on average, more likely to grow up with this cultural capital already present in family life
- **B1** development, e.g. this can help pupils feel more confident and comfortable navigating school rules, classroom discussions and teachers' expectations
- **B1** further development, e.g. Bourdieu argued schools present this culture as 'normal' or 'correct', giving pupils who already possess it a built-in advantage
- **Answer: Bourdieu's cultural capital is the knowledge, tastes and ways of behaving valued by schools; middle-class children are more likely to already have this from home, helping them navigate school rules and expectations, because schools treat this culture as the 'normal' or 'correct' one.**

Question 5

- **B1** identifies restricted code as a more limited way of speaking, using shorter sentences and assuming shared context/meaning, which Bernstein linked to some working-class homes
- **B1** identifies elaborated code as a more explicit, wider-vocabulary way of speaking that spells out meaning fully, which Bernstein linked to some middle-class homes
- **B1** development, e.g. Bernstein argued schools mainly use and expect the elaborated code, in lessons, textbooks and exam answers
- **B1** further development, e.g. pupils less familiar with the elaborated code may therefore be at a disadvantage in understanding and expressing themselves in the way school requires
- **Answer: Bernstein argued some working-class homes use a restricted code (shorter, context-dependent speech) while some middle-class homes use an elaborated code (fuller, explicit speech), and because schools mainly use and expect the elaborated code, pupils less familiar with it can be disadvantaged.**

Question 6

- **B1** identifies that Douglas studied a large group of British children over a long period of time (a longitudinal study)
- **B1** finding, e.g. he found parental interest and involvement in a child's education, such as attending parents' evenings or encouraging schoolwork, was linked to how well the child achieved
- **B1** development, e.g. this link appeared even when comparing children of broadly similar measured ability, suggesting parental attitudes made an independent difference
- **B1** further development, e.g. Douglas's findings supported cultural deprivation explanations, that home attitudes towards education matter alongside material resources
- **Answer: Douglas's longitudinal study of British children found parental interest and involvement in education was linked to achievement, even among children of similar ability, supporting cultural deprivation explanations that home attitudes matter alongside material resources.**

Question 7

- **B1** identifies that the sociologist Diane Reay's research examined how parents from different class backgrounds get involved in their children's schooling
- **B1** development, e.g. she found middle-class parents were often more able to draw on their own economic resources, such as time and money, to support their children
- **B1** further development, e.g. and on their own social and cultural capital, such as confidence dealing with teachers and understanding of how the school system works
- **B1** further development, e.g. this could include help such as informal support with schoolwork, choosing between schools, or challenging decisions made by the school
- **Answer: Diane Reay's research found middle-class parents were often more able to draw on economic resources (time and money) and on social and cultural capital (confidence with teachers, understanding of the school system) to support and intervene on behalf of their children.**

Question 8

- **B1** identifies a recognised criticism, e.g. it can be seen as blaming working-class families or their culture for underachievement, rather than examining how schools themselves may disadvantage working-class pupils
- **B1** brief development, e.g. or that critics argue material deprivation (lack of money and resources) may be a more significant factor than culture or attitudes
- **Answer: Critics argue cultural deprivation explanations can unfairly blame working-class families or their culture, rather than examining how schools themselves disadvantage working-class pupils, and that material deprivation may matter more than culture.**

Question 9

- **B1** identifies a school-based factor, e.g. that the school's own culture, curriculum or way of communicating may already be closer to middle-class ways of speaking and behaving
- **B1** brief development linking this back to Bourdieu's or Bernstein's ideas, e.g. so working-class pupils have more to adjust to in order to succeed
- **Answer: The school's own culture and expected way of speaking may already be closer to middle-class norms (linking to Bourdieu's cultural capital and Bernstein's elaborated code), meaning working-class pupils have more to adjust to in order to succeed.**

Question 10

- (a) **B1** identifies a relevant material factor, e.g. being unable to afford revision guides, private tutoring, or a quiet space at home to revise
- (a) **B1** brief development linking it to exam performance
- **(a) Answer: A pupil unable to afford revision guides or a quiet space at home to revise may be less well prepared for exams than a pupil with these resources.**
- (b) **B1** identifies a relevant cultural factor, e.g. differing value placed within a family on staying in education after 16, or confidence engaging with teachers and school staff
- (b) **B1** brief development linking it to achievement
- **(b) Answer: A family that places a strong value on staying in education after 16 may encourage a pupil more actively to aim for further study, supporting higher achievement.**

Question 11

- **B1** identifies a recognised criticism, e.g. it cannot fully explain why some low-income pupils still achieve highly, or why some wealthy pupils still underachieve
- **B1** brief development, e.g. suggesting cultural or school-based factors must also play a role
- **Answer: Material deprivation cannot fully explain why some low-income pupils still achieve highly, or why some wealthy pupils underachieve, suggesting cultural and school-based factors also play a role.**

Question 12

- **B1** A (material deprivation)
- **Answer: A**

Question 13

- **B1** identifies a material factor, e.g. lack of money for equipment, a computer or a quiet space to study
- **B1** development of the material factor, e.g. this can directly reduce the quality of homework or revision a pupil can produce
- **B1** identifies a cultural factor, e.g. less familiarity at home with the elaborated code the school expects, or less cultural capital
- **B1** development of the cultural factor, e.g. this can make the pupil feel less confident or comfortable in lessons and discussions
- **B1** explains how the two factors can combine/reinforce each other, e.g. a pupil facing both material and cultural disadvantage may find it especially hard to catch up compared with a pupil facing only one
- **B1** clear, accurate use of sociological terminology throughout (e.g. material deprivation, cultural capital, elaborated code)
- **Answer: A low-income pupil may lack material resources such as a computer or quiet study space, directly limiting homework quality, while also having less familiarity with the school's elaborated code and cultural capital, reducing classroom confidence; these material and cultural disadvantages can combine to make catching up especially difficult.**

Question 14

- **Level 4** (10-12): A detailed, well-balanced evaluation that accurately explains BOTH material deprivation AND cultural explanations (e.g. cultural capital, language codes), supported by accurate reference to named sociologists. Strengths and weaknesses of each explanation are analysed, and a reasoned, supported judgement is reached. Sociological terminology is used accurately and consistently throughout.
- **Level 3** (7-9): A clear evaluation that explains both material and cultural explanations, with some accurate reference to sociologists. Some analysis of strengths/weaknesses. An attempt at a conclusion, which may be only partly supported.
- **Level 2** (4-6): Some relevant explanation of material and/or cultural factors, with limited development or accuracy. Little clear evaluation or comparison between explanations.
- **Level 1** (1-3): One or two isolated, undeveloped points about class and achievement, with little or no sociological terminology or accurate detail.
- **Level 0** (0): No relevant content.
- **Indicative content:**
 - Material deprivation case: a lack of money and resources (equipment, housing, revision materials) can directly limit a pupil's ability to study effectively, and can force some pupils into part-time work that reduces study time.
 - Cultural deprivation case: Bourdieu's cultural capital and Bernstein's elaborated/restricted code suggest schools reward knowledge, tastes and language that middle-class children are more likely to already have from home.
 - Supporting evidence for cultural explanations: J.W.B. Douglas's longitudinal study found parental interest linked to achievement even among children of similar ability; Diane Reay's research found middle-class parents often draw on economic, social and cultural capital to support and intervene for their children.
 - Evaluation of material deprivation: critics note it cannot fully explain why some low-income pupils achieve highly or some wealthy pupils underachieve, suggesting other factors also matter.
 - Evaluation of cultural explanations: critics argue cultural deprivation theory can unfairly blame working-class families and their culture, and underplays how the school's own culture and curriculum already favour middle-class ways of speaking and behaving.
 - A balanced conclusion should note that material and cultural factors are difficult to separate in practice, since poverty can also limit a family's cultural resources (e.g. time for parental involvement), and both may operate together rather than as rival single causes.

Question 15

- **B1** a lack of the attitudes, knowledge or language valued by the education system, said to result from a pupil's home/family culture (oe)
- **B1** development, e.g. this is different from material deprivation, which refers to a lack of money or physical resources rather than culture or attitudes
- **Answer: Cultural deprivation is a lack of the attitudes, knowledge or language valued by schools, said to result from a pupil's home culture; unlike material deprivation, it is not about a lack of money or physical resources.**

Question 16

- **B1** identifies a genuine UK education policy aimed at reducing class-based inequality, e.g. the Pupil Premium, extra funding given to schools for disadvantaged pupils
- **B1** brief accurate development of how the policy is intended to work
- **Answer: The Pupil Premium gives schools extra government funding for each disadvantaged pupil they teach, intended to help close the achievement gap linked to social class.**