3.5 Childhood and Its Social Construction: 30-minute Pack

AQA 8192 · about 30 minutes

Total Marks

Name: _____ Date: ____ / ____ / _____

Answer ALL questions. Show your understanding by using sociological vocabulary and, where asked, your own examples.

1 State one strength of comparing childhood across different time periods, as Aries did.

(Total for Question 1 is 2 marks)

2 Explain two ways ideas about childhood can differ between different cultures or societies today.

(Total for Question 2 is 4 marks)

3 Explain one way growing up with widely available internet access could support Postman's argument that childhood is disappearing.

(Total for Question 3 is 2 marks)

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4 The idea that children have their own rights has developed over time.

(a) Explain how the idea of children's rights has developed, referring to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989). **(2)**

(b) Explain how this contrasts with historical views of children. **(2)**

(c) State one strength of having internationally agreed children's rights. **(2)**

(Total for Question 4 is 6 marks)

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5 The historian Philippe Aries (1962) studied ideas about childhood in the past.

(a) Explain Aries' claim about childhood in medieval Europe. **(2)**

(b) Explain how Aries argued the idea of childhood changed in more modern times. **(2)**

(Total for Question 5 is 4 marks)

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6 The sociologist Neil Postman (1982) argued that childhood, once created, could also disappear again.

(a) Explain Postman's main claim about childhood in the modern media age. **(2)**

(b) Explain why Postman thought this mattered for the idea of childhood as a protected stage. **(2)**

(Total for Question 6 is 4 marks)

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7 Sociologists disagree about whether childhood has generally improved over time. Explain two views about whether childhood has generally improved over time.

(Total for Question 7 is 4 marks)

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Mark scheme · 3.5 Childhood and Its Social Construction: 30-minute Pack

Question 1

identifies a genuine strength, e.g. it shows that ideas about childhood are not fixed or natural, but have changed over time **B1**

brief development, e.g. this supports the wider sociological argument that childhood is a social construction rather than simply a biological stage **B1**

Answer: Comparing childhood across time periods shows ideas about childhood are not fixed but have changed, supporting the argument that childhood is a social construction rather than simply a biological stage.

Question 2

identifies one way, e.g. in some societies children take on more responsibility for paid work or family duties at a younger age than is typical in the UK **B1**

development **B1**

identifies a second, different way, e.g. the age at which someone is considered an adult, and the rules that apply to children, can vary between different countries and cultures **B1**

development **B1**

Answer: In some societies children take on more paid work or family responsibility at a younger age than is typical in the UK, and the age at which someone is considered an adult, and the rules applying to children, vary between cultures.

Question 3

identifies, e.g. children today can access adult-oriented information or content online that was harder for children to access before mass media **B1**

development, e.g. this can narrow the information gap Postman argued used to separate children from adults **B1**

Answer: Children today can access adult-oriented information online more easily than before mass media, narrowing the information gap Postman argued used to separate children from adults.

Question 4

(a) identifies that children today are increasingly seen as having their own rights, such as the right to safety, education and to be heard in decisions that affect them **B1**

(a) development, e.g. this is reflected in international agreements such as the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) **B1**

(a) Answer: Children today are increasingly seen as having their own rights, such as to safety, education and to be heard in decisions affecting them, reflected in international agreements such as the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989).

(b) identifies that historically children were often seen mainly as the property or responsibility of parents, with few rights of their own (oe) **B1**

(b) development, e.g. decisions about a child's upbringing, work or education were traditionally left almost entirely to parents or guardians **B1**

(b) Answer: Historically, children were often seen mainly as the property or responsibility of parents, with few rights of their own, and decisions about their upbringing were left almost entirely to parents or guardians.

(c) identifies a genuine strength, e.g. it set out shared standards for how children should be treated and protected, agreed by most of the world's countries **B1**

(c) development, e.g. this reinforced the idea globally that children have needs and rights different from adults **B1**

(c) Answer: Internationally agreed children's rights set out shared standards for how children should be treated and protected, reinforcing the idea globally that children have needs and rights different from adults.

Question 5

(a) identifies that Aries argued there was no separate concept of childhood as a protected life stage **B1**

(a) development, e.g. once children no longer needed constant physical care, they were treated much like small adults, working and socialising alongside adults **B1**

(a) Answer: Aries argued medieval Europe had no separate concept of childhood; once children no longer needed constant care, they were treated much like small adults, working and socialising alongside adults.

(b) identifies that Aries argued a distinct, protected idea of 'childhood' gradually developed from around the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries onward (oe) **B1**

(b) development, e.g. children came to be seen as innocent and in need of protection, education and nurture, separate from the adult world **B1**

(b) Answer: Aries argued a distinct, protected idea of childhood gradually developed from around the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, with children increasingly seen as innocent and needing protection, education and nurture.

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Question 6

(a) identifies that Postman argued the boundary between childhood and adulthood is blurring or disappearing again (oe) **B1**

(a) development, e.g. he linked this to television and media giving children access to the same information as adults, which used to be kept separate **B1**

(a) Answer: Postman argued the boundary between childhood and adulthood is blurring again, linking this to television and media giving children access to information that used to be kept separate from them.

(b) identifies that keeping some information/knowledge separate from children helped mark them out as different from adults, needing protection **B1**

(b) development, e.g. if children have access to the same knowledge as adults, Postman argued this special protected status becomes harder to maintain **B1**

(b) Answer: Keeping some knowledge separate from children helped mark them as different from adults, needing protection; if children access the same knowledge as adults, Postman argued this protected status becomes harder to maintain.

Question 7

identifies the 'march of progress' view: children today are generally more protected, valued and cared for than in the past (oe) **B1**

development, e.g. supported by changes such as compulsory schooling and laws against child labour **B1**

identifies the conflict/critical view: not all children experience the benefits of modern childhood equally (oe) **B1**

development, e.g. some children still live in poverty, face abuse or neglect, or take on heavy responsibilities such as caring for a family member (a young carer) **B1**

Answer: The 'march of progress' view says children today are generally more protected and valued, supported by compulsory schooling and child labour laws; the conflict view argues not all children benefit equally, since some still face poverty, neglect or heavy caring responsibilities.

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