

# IGCSE Sociology Practice Exam (Sample)

## Study Guide



**Everything you need from our exam experts!**

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# Introduction

Preparing for a certification exam can feel overwhelming, but with the right tools, it becomes an opportunity to build confidence, sharpen your skills, and move one step closer to your goals. At Examzify, we believe that effective exam preparation isn't just about memorization, it's about understanding the material, identifying knowledge gaps, and building the test-taking strategies that lead to success.

This guide was designed to help you do exactly that.

Whether you're preparing for a licensing exam, professional certification, or entry-level qualification, this book offers structured practice to reinforce key concepts. You'll find a wide range of multiple-choice questions, each followed by clear explanations to help you understand not just the right answer, but why it's correct.

The content in this guide is based on real-world exam objectives and aligned with the types of questions and topics commonly found on official tests. It's ideal for learners who want to:

- Practice answering questions under realistic conditions,
- Improve accuracy and speed,
- Review explanations to strengthen weak areas, and
- Approach the exam with greater confidence.

We recommend using this book not as a stand-alone study tool, but alongside other resources like flashcards, textbooks, or hands-on training. For best results, we recommend working through each question, reflecting on the explanation provided, and revisiting the topics that challenge you most.

**Remember:** successful test preparation isn't about getting every question right the first time, it's about learning from your mistakes and improving over time. Stay focused, trust the process, and know that every page you turn brings you closer to success.

Let's begin.

# How to Use This Guide

**This guide is designed to help you study more effectively and approach your exam with confidence. Whether you're reviewing for the first time or doing a final refresh, here's how to get the most out of your Examzify study guide:**

## **1. Start with a Diagnostic Review**

**Skim through the questions to get a sense of what you know and what you need to focus on. Your goal is to identify knowledge gaps early.**

## **2. Study in Short, Focused Sessions**

**Break your study time into manageable blocks (e.g. 30 - 45 minutes). Review a handful of questions, reflect on the explanations.**

## **3. Learn from the Explanations**

**After answering a question, always read the explanation, even if you got it right. It reinforces key points, corrects misunderstandings, and teaches subtle distinctions between similar answers.**

## **4. Track Your Progress**

**Use bookmarks or notes (if reading digitally) to mark difficult questions. Revisit these regularly and track improvements over time.**

## **5. Simulate the Real Exam**

**Once you're comfortable, try taking a full set of questions without pausing. Set a timer and simulate test-day conditions to build confidence and time management skills.**

## **6. Repeat and Review**

**Don't just study once, repetition builds retention. Re-attempt questions after a few days and revisit explanations to reinforce learning. Pair this guide with other Examzify tools like flashcards, and digital practice tests to strengthen your preparation across formats.**

**There's no single right way to study, but consistent, thoughtful effort always wins. Use this guide flexibly, adapt the tips above to fit your pace and learning style. You've got this!**

## Questions

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- 1. Which of the following is an example of formal social control?**
  - A. Informal social pressure from peers**
  - B. Social norms judged by peers**
  - C. Subtle sanctions in everyday life**
  - D. Formal social control**
  
- 2. Which term describes factors in the home background that affect how well students do in school?**
  - A. Cultural deprivation**
  - B. Home factors**
  - C. Streaming**
  - D. Elaborate code**
  
- 3. The behaviour that societies expect of their members in particular situations is called what?**
  - A. Norms**
  - B. Beliefs**
  - C. Culture**
  - D. Trends**
  
- 4. Which term refers to an unexamined opinion that a group is inferior or different?**
  - A. Prejudice**
  - B. Racism**
  - C. Lifestyle**
  - D. Capitalism**
  
- 5. A society in which individuals achieve the level that their talents and abilities deserve.**
  - A. Welfare state**
  - B. Minority ethnic group**
  - C. Distribution of wealth**
  - D. Meritocracy**

- 6. What is a list of members of the population from which the sample is chosen?**
- A. Survey population**
  - B. Sampling frame**
  - C. Hypothesis**
  - D. Objectivity**
- 7. What is the term for the period of growing up between childhood and adulthood?**
- A. Infancy**
  - B. Adolescence**
  - C. Puberty**
  - D. Maturation**
- 8. Which term refers to a system where social positions are allocated by merit rather than background?**
- A. Distribution of wealth**
  - B. Income**
  - C. Meritocracy**
  - D. Dependency culture**
- 9. Institutions in which people are socialised are called?**
- A. Family units**
  - B. Cultural institutions**
  - C. Institutions of socialisation**
  - D. Agencies of socialisation**
- 10. Which term describes the exclusion of individuals from social goods and opportunities due to marginalization?**
- A. Lifestyle**
  - B. Social exclusion**
  - C. Racism**
  - D. Privileged groups**

## Answers

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1. D
2. B
3. A
4. A
5. D
6. B
7. B
8. C
9. D
10. B

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## **Explanations**

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**1. Which of the following is an example of formal social control?**

- A. Informal social pressure from peers**
- B. Social norms judged by peers**
- C. Subtle sanctions in everyday life**
- D. Formal social control**

Formal social control relies on official rules and institutions to regulate behavior, such as laws enforced by police and courts, with formal penalties like fines or imprisonment. The best example here is the one that names formal social control itself, because it points to these official mechanisms rather than everyday social influence. The other statements describe informal social control, which operates through peer pressure, shared norms among peers, and subtle sanctions in daily life rather than through codified rules and official sanctions.

**2. Which term describes factors in the home background that affect how well students do in school?**

- A. Cultural deprivation**
- B. Home factors**
- C. Streaming**
- D. Elaborate code**

The main idea being tested is how the home environment influences a student's school performance. The best term for this is home factors because it directly labels the influences that come from the home background—things like parental involvement, resources available at home, routines, and overall financial stability—that can affect how well a student does in school. Other terms point to different ideas: streaming is about grouping students by ability for classes, and elaborated code refers to a specific linguistic style used in communication. Cultural deprivation describes a broader theoretical explanation about lacking cultural resources, but the straightforward label for the home background influences is simply home factors.

**3. The behaviour that societies expect of their members in particular situations is called what?**

- A. Norms**
- B. Beliefs**
- C. Culture**
- D. Trends**

Norms are the expected ways of behaving in particular situations. They are the shared rules that tell people what counts as appropriate conduct in everyday life, guiding actions so interactions run smoothly and predictably. Norms are learned through family, peers, and society, and they are reinforced by social approval or sanctions when someone deviates. For example, queueing, greeting someone politely, or dressing suitably for a setting are typical norms. Beliefs are about what people think is true or important, culture is the broader system of shared meanings and practices, and trends are patterns of change over time. Because the question focuses on the behavior societies expect in specific situations, norms are the best fit.

**4. Which term refers to an unexamined opinion that a group is inferior or different?**

- A. Prejudice**
- B. Racism**
- C. Lifestyle**
- D. Capitalism**

Prejudice is an unfounded negative attitude toward a group, seeing them as inferior or inherently different without evidence. This captures the idea of an unexamined opinion about others, formed through stereotypes and social learning. It sits behind discriminatory actions but is about the attitude itself. Racism would involve beliefs of racial superiority tied to power, and discrimination involves acting on beliefs. The other terms don't describe that evaluative stance, so prejudice is the best fit.

**5. A society in which individuals achieve the level that their talents and abilities deserve.**

- A. Welfare state**
- B. Minority ethnic group**
- C. Distribution of wealth**
- D. Meritocracy**

The statement describes meritocracy: a system in which advancement and rewards are based on talent, abilities, and achievements rather than background or status. In such a society, individuals reach the level their talents deserve because opportunities and rewards are tied to demonstrated merit, assuming fair competition and access to opportunities. It's not about welfare provisions or social protection (that would be a welfare state), nor is it about a demographic group (minority ethnic group), nor simply how wealth is distributed (distribution of wealth).

**6. What is a list of members of the population from which the sample is chosen?**

- A. Survey population**
- B. Sampling frame**
- C. Hypothesis**
- D. Objectivity**

The main idea here is the sampling frame. It's the actual list or device that defines who can be chosen for the study. In practice, you translate the broad population you're interested in into a concrete set of elements you can sample from—like a complete student roster, a voter list, or a directory. This frame should represent the population you want to learn about, so everyone in that population has a known chance of being selected. If the frame is incomplete or outdated, some groups may be left out or double-counted, which biases the results. It's helpful to keep in mind the difference between the population you want to study and the frame you use to select people. The frame is the practical tool for sampling, while the population is the entire group of interest. The other terms don't fit this concept: a survey population refers to the group you aim to study, a hypothesis is a statement to be tested, and objectivity concerns unbiased measurement rather than how the sample is drawn.

**7. What is the term for the period of growing up between childhood and adulthood?**

**A. Infancy**

**B. Adolescence**

**C. Puberty**

**D. Maturation**

Adolescence is the period of growing up between childhood and adulthood. It covers a time of rapid physical changes as puberty begins, but it also includes important psychological and social changes. During this stage, individuals form their identities, explore who they want to be, and start taking on more responsibility and independence, all while still not being fully independent like adults. Puberty refers specifically to the biological changes that lead to reproductive maturity, such as growth spurts and hormonal changes. Infancy describes the early years of life, and maturation is a general term for becoming fully developed, not a distinct life-phase. So adolescence best fits the question because it encompasses the broader developmental period between childhood and adulthood.

**8. Which term refers to a system where social positions are allocated by merit rather than background?**

**A. Distribution of wealth**

**B. Income**

**C. Meritocracy**

**D. Dependency culture**

The idea being tested is meritocracy: a system in which social positions are allocated by merit—qualities like ability, effort, and achievement—rather than by family background. This concept emphasizes that who ends up in certain roles or levels of prestige is determined by what a person demonstrates they can do, not who they were born to. In theory, meritocracy suggests equal opportunity lets talent rise to the top, linking status and rewards to individual merit. The other terms don't describe a system of placement based on ability: distribution of wealth is about how resources are spread in society, not how social positions are earned; income refers to money earned, not the method by which positions are assigned; and dependency culture is a term about reliance on welfare and social support, not about merit-based allocation of roles.

## 9. Institutions in which people are socialised are called?

- A. Family units
- B. Cultural institutions
- C. Institutions of socialisation
- D. Agencies of socialisation**

People are socialised through agencies of socialisation—the channels through which society teaches individuals how to think, behave, and fit into social life. These agencies are institutions like the family, schools, peer groups, the media, religion, and community organisations. The word “agencies” is key because it highlights these are active sources or organisations that carry out the socialising process, not just places where it happens. Among the options, this general label best fits because it covers all the channels of socialisation rather than naming a single example or simply restating the idea. The other choices are less precise: a single example like family units represents only one channel; cultural institutions is a broad term that doesn’t specifically denote the socialising process; and “institutions of socialisation” is essentially repeating the idea rather than providing the standard term.

## 10. Which term describes the exclusion of individuals from social goods and opportunities due to marginalization?

- A. Lifestyle
- B. Social exclusion**
- C. Racism
- D. Privileged groups

Social exclusion describes the exclusion of individuals from social goods and opportunities because they are marginalized by structural factors like poverty, discrimination, or limited access to education, housing, or healthcare. It captures both the barriers people face and the resulting lack of participation in everyday life, which can lead to ongoing disadvantage and isolation. This fits the prompt because it names the process by which people are kept out of social benefits, not just a specific prejudice or a pattern of living. The other options describe either ways people live (lifestyle), a cause of exclusion (racism) in a specific form, or the groups that have access (privileged groups), rather than the overall process of being pushed out of social life.

## Next Steps

**Congratulations on reaching the final section of this guide. You've taken a meaningful step toward passing your certification exam and advancing your career.**

**As you continue preparing, remember that consistent practice, review, and self-reflection are key to success. Make time to revisit difficult topics, simulate exam conditions, and track your progress along the way.**

**If you need help, have suggestions, or want to share feedback, we'd love to hear from you. Reach out to our team at [hello@examzify.com](mailto:hello@examzify.com).**

**Or visit your dedicated course page for more study tools and resources:**

**<https://igcsesociology.examzify.com>**

**We wish you the very best on your exam journey. You've got this!**

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