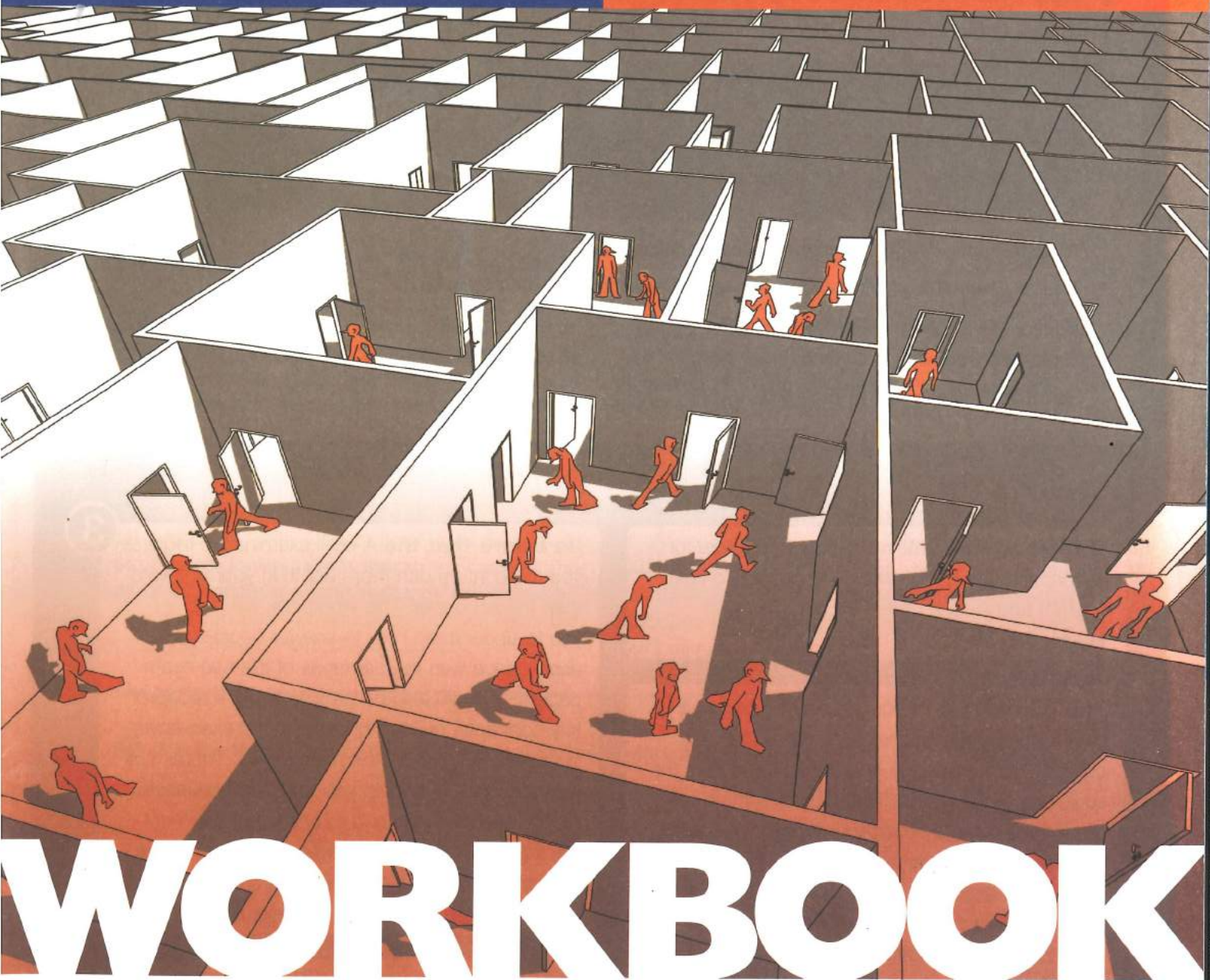


AQA

AS/A LEVEL



# WORKBOOK

## Sociology 1

Education with methods

Hollie Wyllie



PHILIP ALLAN FOR  
**HODDER**  
EDUCATION  
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# Section A Education

## Topic 1 The role and functions of the education system

### Introduction to the topic

In the UK, it is compulsory for young people to be in education from the ages of 5–18. Structural sociologists such as Marxists and functionalists regard education as one of the most significant agents of **secondary socialisation** within society. They are interested in the processes which go on within schools, both via the delivery of the **overt curriculum** (the teaching of subjects) and the **hidden curriculum** (the underlying social processes within educational establishments). Structural sociologists take a **macro** approach to the study of education, meaning that they are interested in how the functions of education impact upon the mechanisms and structure of wider society.

It is important to note that different sociologists will hold different views regarding the role and functions of education within society. In an exam context, you will be required to demonstrate your knowledge of the major perspectives of education so as to achieve AO1 marks. However, you will also be expected to show how perspectives differ from one another in terms of their interpretations of the functions of education. You should be able to emphasise this in your answers, enabling you to achieve AO3 marks. You should also be able to identify limitations of each sociological perspective of education, using alternative perspectives as a basis for your critique.

**1** What is the difference between primary and secondary socialisation?

2 marks

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**2** What is the difference between a consensus perspective and a conflict perspective of society? Explain briefly.

6 marks

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# The functionalist perspective of education

Functionalists such as Durkheim and Parsons have identified important functions of education, emphasising how it contributes to the development of **value consensus and social order**. First, they point out that education plays a major role in passing on culture to younger generations, encouraging social solidarity.

Second, they describe education as bridging the gap between the **particularistic values and ascribed status** which dominate family life and the **universalistic values and achieved status** which is present in wider society.

A third function of education is that it provides young people with basic training and skills so that they can take their place in the **specialised division of labour** in adulthood. This links in to the fourth function, which is that education encourages **role allocation**. Education sifts and sorts people according to their abilities, reflecting the fact that in wider society people take on jobs which are appropriate to their ability levels. This is referred to as a **meritocracy**.

3 What is meant by the term 'value consensus'?

1 mark

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4 What is the 'specialised division of labour'?

1 mark

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5 Suggest two ways in which schools can pass on culture and encourage social solidarity.

2 marks

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6 Explain the difference between 'ascribed status' and 'achieved status'.

2 marks

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7 Functionalists believe that we live in a meritocratic society. What does this mean and how does education contribute towards meritocracy?

4 marks

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- 8 Suggest three criticisms which could be made of a functionalist perspective of education. Try to refer to other sociological perspectives in your answer.

6 marks

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## The Marxist perspective of education

Unlike functionalism, the Marxist view of education is somewhat more cynical. It regards education as being a major agent of social control, encouraging people to conform to rules and regulations set out by those in power. As the Marxist perspective takes a **conflict** approach to the study of society, it regards education as playing a key role in the **reproduction of inequalities** in wealth and power within society, maintaining the

**capitalist** system. Whereas functionalists regard society as meritocratic and education as fair, Marxists believe that meritocracy is a myth. People are wrongly made to believe that they have equality in opportunity and that their achievements are down to their own efforts, leading to working class people experiencing **false consciousness**.

- 9 What alternative terms are often used to describe the ruling classes and the working classes?

2 marks

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- 10 Briefly explain what is meant by the term 'capitalism'.

2 marks

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- 11 What is meant by the term 'false consciousness'?

2 marks

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- 12 Education is an example of an agent of social control. What is the difference between a formal and an informal agent of social control? Explain, using examples to illustrate.

4 marks

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13 Suggest two ways in which education could help to reproduce social class inequalities within society.

4 marks

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14 Identify and briefly explain two criticisms of the Marxist view that education reproduces social class inequalities.

4 marks

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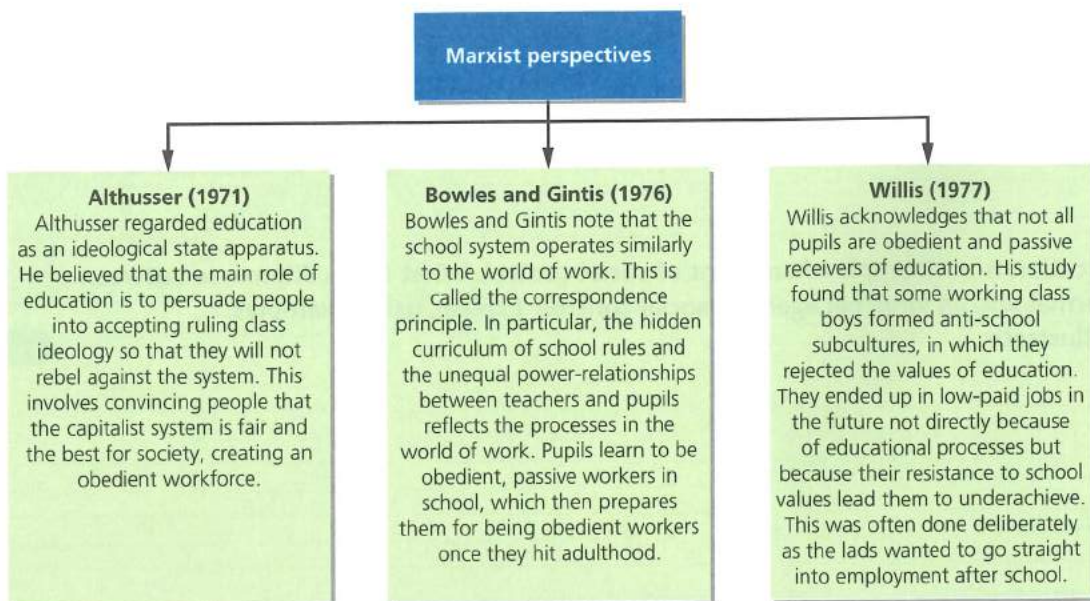
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## Marxist theorists

Three major Marxist sociologists have proposed arguments as to how education can be seen to reproduce class inequalities within society:











# Topic 2 Differential educational achievement across social groups

## Introduction to the topic

When looking at patterns in educational achievement and progress, there appear to be clear differences between pupils of different social class, gender and ethnic backgrounds. It is important that you can explain the reasons for these differences, considering factors

both inside and outside of school which may impact upon pupils' performance. Additionally, you should be aware that there are overlaps across the three groups, for example minority ethnic pupils are also likely to be of a working class background.

## Social class differences in educational achievement

Evidence seems to suggest that there are major differences in the academic achievements of children across the social class spectrum, with underachievement and a lack of progression being more likely in pupils from working class backgrounds. There are three main categories of explanations for these differences. First, **cultural** explanations focus on

the values and behaviours associated with people from different social class backgrounds which may impact upon their educational experiences. Second, **material** explanations focus on the socioeconomic status of individuals outside of school. Third, sociologists are also interested in **factors within the school** itself and how these may affect pupils' performance.

**1** What is meant by the term 'cultural capital'?

2 marks

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**2** Identify and briefly explain one material factor which could prevent working class parents from effectively supporting their children's education.

2 marks

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**3** Bernstein proposes that speech and language play a key role in educational performance. Explain the difference between the restricted and the elaborated codes.

4 marks

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- 4 Identify and briefly explain two things which could happen in schools which may impact negatively on the achievements of pupils from working class backgrounds.

4 marks

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- 5 Think back to the work that you did in the previous topic. How might sociologists from a functionalist, Marxist or New Right perspective explain the inequalities in achievement between social class groups? Briefly outline one explanation for each perspective.

6 marks

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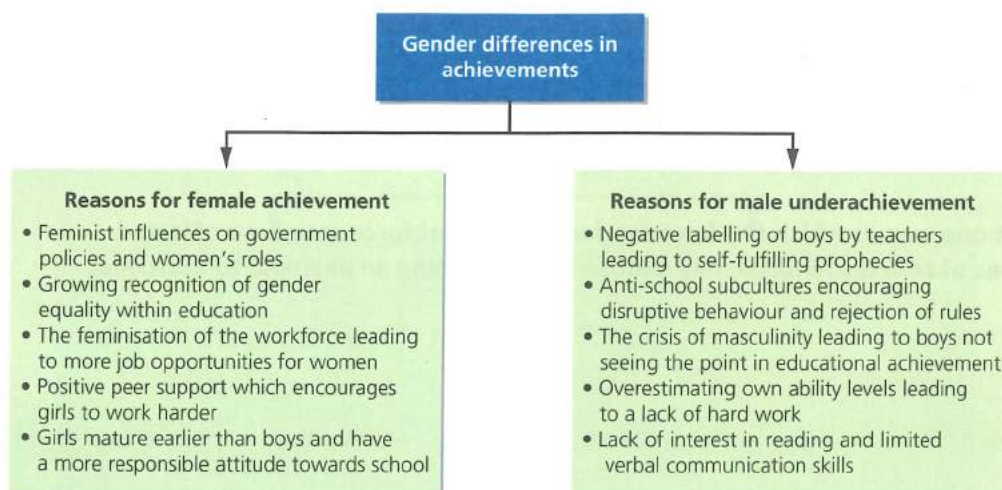
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## Gender differences in educational achievement

### Differences in performance between boys and girls

Since the 1990s, girls have been outperforming boys in most school-level assessments and have overtaken them in terms of numbers in both further and higher

education. Sociologists have looked at the actions, attitudes and experiences of both males and females in education to assess why this may be occurring.



**6** What is meant by the term 'feminisation of the workforce'?

2 marks

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**7** What is meant by the term 'genderquake'?

2 marks

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**8** Suggest two things which girls may be more likely to do than boys which could make them more effective students.

2 marks

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**9** What is meant by the term 'crisis of masculinity' and how might it be linked to boys losing interest in school?

2 marks

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### Differences in subject choice

When it comes to choosing which subjects to study in the later years of education, there still appears to be a gender divide in place. Boys will typically study subjects which are technological or science based, whereas girls tend to be more interested in subjects which are arts or humanities based. Sociologists have pointed out that these differences may signify a continuing inequality between males and females in society, as those subjects which are more likely to be female-dominated are often regarded as having a lower academic status compared to those dominated by male students.

A number of explanations have been offered as to why there is still a gender divide in terms of academic interests. Feminists believe that children are socialised from a young age into having particular norms and values which are appropriate for their gender. It has also been suggested that schools persist in advising students to study courses which are typical for their gender. Consequently, through both primary and secondary socialisation processes, pupils associate particular subjects with particular genders. This puts boys and girls under a great deal of social pressure to study subjects which are suitably masculine or feminine.

**10** Suggest one way in which the feminisation of the workforce may have affected the types of courses females may choose to study, using an example to illustrate.

3 marks

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- 11 Identify and briefly explain two ways in which studying in a mixed-sex classroom may be disadvantageous for female pupils.

4 marks

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- 12 What gender roles do boys and girls learn from their parents in the family and how might this impact upon their subject choices in education?

6 marks

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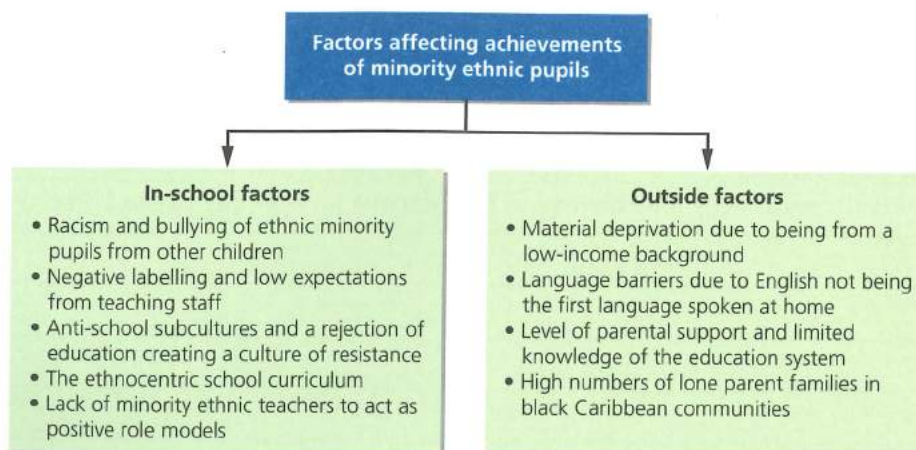
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## Ethnic differences in educational achievement

When looking at the educational performance of minority ethnic pupils, there are some notable differences across ethnic groups. Pupils of Chinese or Indian origin are most likely to perform highly in education compared to all other ethnic groups, including the white majority.

By contrast, pupils of Bangladeshi, black Caribbean, Pakistani and traveller backgrounds tend to have lower levels of educational achievement. Sociologists are interested in the factors both inside and outside of schools which may be causing these differences.



**13** What is meant by the term 'ethnocentric curriculum'? Illustrate, using an example.

**3 marks**

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**14** What is meant by the term 'institutional racism' and how might it be applied to the education system?

**3 marks**

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**15** Identify and explain one reason why lone parenthood may be linked to educational underachievement among black Caribbean pupils.

**3 marks**

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**16** Identify and briefly explain two ways in which family life may impact negatively on the educational achievements of some minority ethnic pupils.

**4 marks**

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**17** How could you apply theories of social class inequalities in education to the differences in the achievements between minority ethnic groups? Suggest three ideas.

**6 marks**

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# Topic 3 Relationships and processes in schools

## Introduction to the topic

As addressed in the previous topic, there are clear inequalities in the educational performance of different social groups of pupils. So far, you have studied a variety of factors which may help to explain why those differences occur. This section of the workbook will look in more depth at the specific processes which go

on inside schools and the impact that these may have on pupils' learning and their experiences of education. **Interactionist** sociologists in particular are interested to know how the actions and organisation of a school can affect the behaviours and attitudes of pupils in either a positive or a negative way.

## The impact of the hidden curriculum on pupils.

Sociologists have different opinions about the role of the hidden curriculum. As you have seen in Topic 1, sociologists from a functionalist perspective generally regard the hidden curriculum of school rules and processes as playing a mostly positive role in preparing pupils to make the transition into wider society when they reach adulthood. By contrast, Marxist sociologists

such as Bowles and Gintis perceive it to be a means of preparing people to take their place in the capitalist economy as passive and obedient workers. Feminists perceive school processes as reinforcing gender inequalities by promoting particular sex-typed subjects or extra-curricular activities to males and females separately.

- 1** Suggest one way in which the hidden curriculum may encourage pupils to be passive and obedient workers in the future.

1 mark

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- 2** Suggest one way in which the hidden curriculum may reinforce traditional gender roles in pupils, using an example to illustrate.

1 mark

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- 3** Suggest one way in which a school's processes can impact positively on pupils.

1 mark

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# The impact of setting and streaming on pupils

It is common for schools to divide their pupils into classes in which they study alongside others who are of a similar ability level. This can have differential impacts upon pupils in terms of how they view themselves and how they are treated by school staff.

**Interactionist** sociologists are concerned that those pupils who fall into lower sets or streams are more likely to fall victim to negative labelling and low expectations from teachers, which can create negative self-fulfilling prophecies and low levels of achievement.

**Conflict** sociologists point out that certain types of

pupils are more likely to be allocated into lower sets or streams, such as working class boys and minority ethnic pupils. This could therefore be applied to the differences in achievement which were addressed in the previous topic.

Additionally, it has been pointed out by researchers such as Keddie that the quality of teaching and depth of information provided to pupils in low ability groups tends to be poor, which further reduces their chances of success.

**6** What is the difference between setting and streaming?

2 marks

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**7** What is meant by the term 'educational triage' and why might some schools adopt this approach?

3 marks

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**8** Suggest one advantage and one disadvantage of segregating pupils according to ability level.

4 marks

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**9** Suggest one advantage and one disadvantage of teaching pupils in mixed ability classes.

4 marks

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# Topic 4 Educational policies

## Introduction to the topic

Since 1944, the education system has been affected by a broad range of policy changes. Governments play a major role in determining factors such as curriculum content, assessment structure and overall organisation of schools. It is important that you understand that different political parties will hold different views regarding how education should be delivered, so when major changes occur within government, it is likely that adjustments will be made to the education system.

Early educational policies created by Conservative governments in the mid-twentieth century focused

on encouraging **selective education** and tailoring educational provisions to suit the talents and ability levels of individual students. Later Conservative policies influenced by New Right ideology were geared towards encouraging freedom of choice for parents in terms of deciding what type of school their children should attend. At the turn of the twenty first century, the ruling Labour party focused its attention on improving opportunities for pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds. However, the creation of a Conservative-dominated coalition government in 2010 has seen something of a return to marketisation and freedom of choice in education.

## Selective education policies

### Tripartite education

The idea behind selective schooling was first introduced in the **1944 Education Act** which established the **tripartite system**. The purpose of this system was to enable schools to select pupils according to their ability level, which was demonstrated through examination.

Although this system was practised for 20 years, it was widely criticised by the opposing Labour government. When Labour took control of government in 1964, they replaced the tripartite system with comprehensive education.

- 1** What was the name of the exam which pupils sat to determine what type of secondary education they would experience in the tripartite system?

1 mark

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- 2** After sitting the exam mentioned in question one, what were the three types of schools which pupils could attend depending on whether they passed or failed?

3 marks

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- 3** Identify and briefly explain three criticisms of the tripartite system. Try to refer to Marxist and Interactionist ideas in your answer.

6 marks

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## Comprehensive education

In 1964 a Labour government came into power and proceeded to replace the tripartite system with comprehensive education. The idea behind comprehensive education, which is still widely practised today, is that all pupils are welcome irrespective of ability level. The primary aim of this policy was to encourage genuine **equality of opportunity**. However, to cap numbers or to ensure certain types of pupils attend, such schools may still be selective based upon other criteria such as faith or catchment area. Additionally,

increasing numbers of secondary schools are awarded a 'specialist' status in a particular field, which enables them to take on a certain proportion of pupils regarded as skilful in the subject specialism of the school.

It is also important to note that critics of comprehensive education reject the view that it truly encourages equality of opportunity. Many schools may use **covert selection tactics** to ensure they get particular types of pupils.

4 What is meant by the term 'covert selection'?

2 marks

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5 Suggest two things which schools might do to ensure that they get the 'best' pupils to attend.

2 marks

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6 Identify and briefly explain two advantages of comprehensive schools.

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7 Identify and briefly explain two disadvantages of comprehensive schools.

4 marks

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## Marketisation policies

### Marketisation under the Conservative government 1979–1997

From the 1980s onwards, the ruling Conservative government sought to raise educational standards by encouraging the marketisation of education. This approach included three main features. First, schools would be required to compete with one another in terms of exam results and provision of

services. Second, parents would be able to choose which school to send their children to rather than being allocated places by the local authority. Third, individual schools were given more autonomy in terms of how to run themselves, with reduced governmental interference.

**8** What is meant by the term 'parentocracy'?

2 marks

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**9** Identify and briefly explain three policies from the 1980s and 1990s which encouraged the marketisation of education.

6 marks

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### Marketisation under the Labour government 1997–2010

In 1997, the Labour government took power and sought, as in 1964, to encourage equality of opportunity in education. Blair's 'New Labour' government retained the marketisation policies of the previous Conservative

government but placed an added emphasis on ensuring that pupils from the most disadvantaged backgrounds were given the same opportunities for educational success as their middle class peers.

**10** Identify and briefly explain three policies introduced by the Labour government which improved educational opportunities for pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds.

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**11** Briefly explain why the Labour government were criticised for trying to encourage more young people to progress into sixth form and higher education.

3 marks

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## Marketisation under the Coalition government 2010–2015

After a 13-year absence from power, the Conservative Democrat party, with a renewed focus on competition and raising standards in education.

- 12** Identify and briefly explain three policies introduced by the Coalition government which renewed the focus on competition and raising standards in education. **6 marks**

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- 13** Briefly explain why the Coalition government were criticised for allegedly encouraging social class inequalities in educational opportunities. **3 marks**

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## Private education

Only a small number of pupils attend private schools in the United Kingdom. The topic has created a fierce debate between sociologists. New Right sociologists regard private education as another option available

to parents in the free market of education, whereas Marxist sociologists regard it as an unfair system which advantages a small number of children due to the wealth of their parents.

- 14** What is meant by the term 'public school'? Briefly explain, using an example to illustrate. **2 marks**

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- 15** Briefly explain two reasons why parents may choose to send their children to private school. **4 marks**

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- 16** Briefly explain three reasons why Marxist sociologists may be critical of private education.

6 marks

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## Exam-style questions

Answer the following questions on a separate sheet of paper. You can plan your answer using the lines below.

- 1** AS question: Outline and explain two policies which have encouraged equality of opportunity in education since 1944.

10 marks

15

A-level question: Read Item A below and answer the question that follows.

### Item A

Since the introduction of the 1944 Education Act, successive governments have made it their aim to ensure that all young people have appropriate educational opportunities. Early policies focused on tailoring opportunities to the ability levels of individual students, though this idea was phased out and replaced by a system which encouraged mixing of pupils irrespective of ability level. Since the introduction of the 1988 Education Reform Act, government policies have focused on supporting pupils from disadvantaged socioeconomic backgrounds so as to ensure that material factors do not hinder their academic performance.

Applying material from Item A, analyse two policies which have aimed to encourage equality of opportunity in education since 1944.

10 marks

15

**Exam hint:** Note the difference in the wording of the above questions. The AS question is primarily assessing your knowledge and understanding of education policies, with emphasis on identifying and explaining two policies in a way which is relevant to the question (AO1). By contrast, the A-level question places more emphasis on your ability to analyse the effectiveness of education policies (AO3). For the second question, in addition to identifying and explaining two policies, you should also consider limitations of each policy.

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## Other exam-style questions (short questions and extended writing)

Throughout section A, you have been given examples of possible mid-length, 10 mark questions that could appear in both the AS and A-level versions of paper 1. However, the education section of both papers will also contain a range of short questions (totalling 10 marks on each paper) and one extended writing question as well.

Answer the following questions on a separate sheet of paper.

- 2** Define the term 'cultural deprivation'. 2 marks  15
- 3** Outline two external factors which may cause pupils from some minority ethnic backgrounds to underachieve in education. 4 marks  15
- 4** Outline three criticisms which have been made of comprehensive education. 6 marks  15

Read the Item below and answer the question that follows.

### Item

Functionalist sociologists regard education as playing a major role in meeting the functional prerequisites of society. It performs important functions which serve the purpose of keeping society operating smoothly for the benefit of all its members. The education system is also meritocratic in that pupils will succeed or fail based upon their own efforts and hard work, as education offers an equality of opportunity to all.

However, critics of the functionalist perspective question the view that the main purpose of education is to benefit society as a whole. Marxist sociologists believe that education reproduces class inequalities within society and statistics show that there are distinct inequalities between the achievements of pupils from different social groups.

- 5** Applying material from the item and your knowledge, evaluate the functionalist view that education performs important functions which benefit society as a whole.

The AS-level paper would award 20 marks for this question while the A-level paper would award 30 marks for this question. You would spend 30 minutes on the AS-level question and 40 minutes on the A-level question.

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**Exam hint:** You would be expected to follow a similar structure for your answer for both papers. However, the AS and A-level versions differ in that you would be required to include a broader range of arguments and go into more detail in the A-level paper compared to the AS version. As the question is asking you to evaluate a view, this means that you must look at a range of different arguments which support and reject the view. The item gives you huge hints as to what to include in your answer and how to structure it.

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