



CAMBRIDGE
International Education

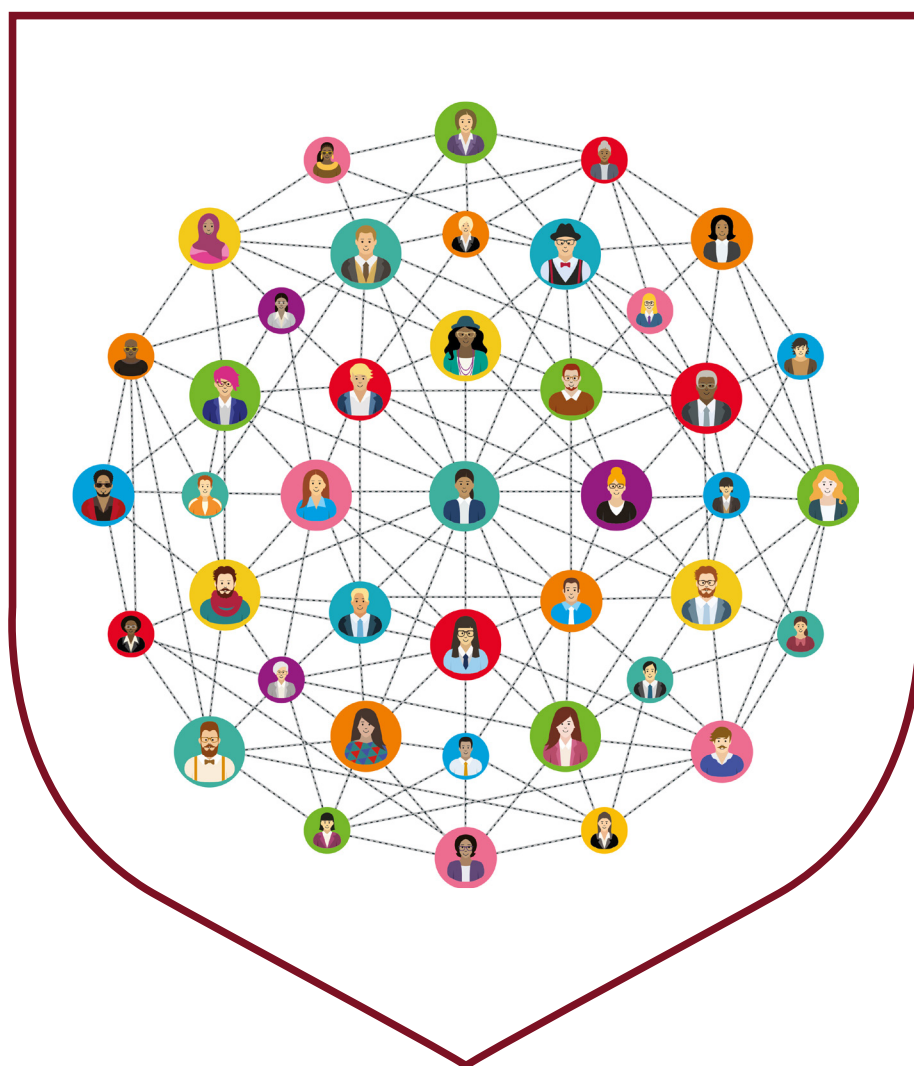
Syllabus

Cambridge International AS & A Level Sociology 9699

Use this syllabus for exams in 2029, 2030 and 2031.

Exams are available in the June and November series.

Exams are also available in the March series in India.



Version I

For the purposes of screen readers, any mention in this document of Cambridge IGCSE refers to Cambridge International General Certificate of Secondary Education.

Why choose Cambridge?

We work with schools worldwide to build an education that shapes knowledge, understanding and skills. Together, we give learners the confidence they need to thrive and make a positive impact in a changing world.

As part of the University of Cambridge, we offer a globally trusted and flexible framework for education from age 3 to 19, informed by research, experience, and listening to educators.

With recognised qualifications, high-quality resources, comprehensive support and valuable insights, we help schools prepare every student for the opportunities and challenges ahead.

Qualifications that are recognised and valued worldwide

From the world's top-ranked universities to local higher education institutions, Cambridge qualifications open doors to a world of opportunities.

Setting a global standard

With over 160 years of experience in delivering fair, valid and reliable assessments to students worldwide, we offer a global, recognised performance standard for international education.

Your path, your way

Schools can adapt our curriculum, high-quality teaching and learning resources and flexible assessments to their local context. Our aligned offer helps Cambridge schools support every learner to reach their potential and thrive.

Learning with lasting impact

Cambridge learners build subject knowledge and conceptual understanding, and develop a broad range of skills, learning habits and attributes to help make them ready for the world.

Improving learning outcomes through data-led insight and action

Our trusted baseline and diagnostic assessments, together with our insights and evaluation service, help schools turn data into knowledge and actionable insights, to inform teaching decisions and improve learner outcomes.

Bringing together a community of experts

We bring together the collective knowledge of experts and our diverse community of educators worldwide, supporting them to learn from one another and share ideas and information.

Tackling the climate crisis together

We believe that education is key to tackling the climate crisis. Together with Cambridge schools, we can empower young people with the skills and knowledge to take action on climate change, helping them be ready for the world.

School feedback: 'We think the Cambridge curriculum is superb preparation for university.'

Feedback from: Christoph Guttentag, Dean of Undergraduate Admissions, Duke University, USA

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Important: Changes to this syllabus

For information about changes to this syllabus for 2029, 2030 and 2031, go to page 39.



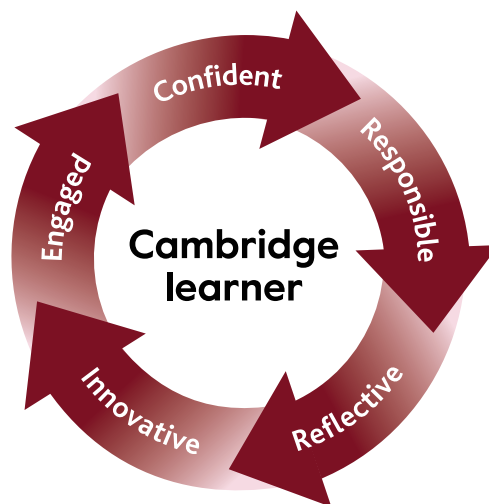
1 Why choose this syllabus?

Key benefits

The best motivation for a student is a real passion for the subject they are learning. Cambridge International AS & A Levels give schools flexibility to offer a broad and balanced curriculum with a choice of over 50 subjects. Students can select the subjects they love and that they are best at, enabling them to reach their potential and thrive.

Following a Cambridge International AS & A Level programme helps students develop abilities which universities value highly, including:

- a deep subject knowledge
- conceptual understanding and higher-level thinking skills
- presenting ordered and coherent arguments
- independent learning and research.



Cambridge International AS & A Level Sociology explores how societies work and how they have changed over time, why individuals and groups behave in different ways and how social structures shape our lives.

Candidates build an understanding of how sociologists investigate and explain society by developing knowledge of key sociological concepts and research. They gain an awareness of how sociological perspectives and approaches can help interpret society.

The syllabus develops learners that can critically evaluate evidence, challenge assumptions and interpret and analyse sociological research. Learners develop strong essay-writing skills and the ability to construct and communicate well-reasoned arguments.

Our approach in Cambridge International AS & A Level Sociology supports the development of learners who are:

confident, communicating sociological ideas and arguments to others, and exploring contemporary social issues with maturity and insight

responsible, recognising that there are inequalities in contemporary society and able to appreciate cultural differences and alternative perspectives on social issues

reflective, reviewing and refining their skills of critical thinking, analysis and evaluation, and making connections between specific real-world examples and wider issues

innovative, developing informed views about real-world issues, and an ability to think sociologically to suggest new ways of thinking about how society works

engaged, learning through independent study and using research findings to address sociological questions and engage in informed discussion and debate.

School feedback: ‘Cambridge students develop a deep understanding of subjects and independent thinking skills.’

Feedback from: Principal, Rockledge High School, USA

Key concepts

Key concepts are essential ideas that help students develop a deep understanding of their subject and make links between different aspects. Key concepts may open up new ways of thinking about, understanding or interpreting the important things to be learned.

Good teaching and learning will incorporate and reinforce a subject's key concepts to help students gain:

- a greater depth as well as breadth of subject knowledge
- confidence, especially in applying knowledge and skills in new situations
- the vocabulary to discuss their subject conceptually and show how different aspects link together
- a level of mastery of their subject to help them enter higher education.

Carefully introducing and developing key concepts at the right time will help to underpin teaching. You may identify additional key concepts which will also enrich teaching and learning.

The key concepts for Cambridge International AS & A Level Sociology are:

- **Inequality and opportunity**
Inequality has a major influence on people's opportunities and life choices. Sociologists study the different forms of inequality (age, ethnicity, gender and social class), seeking to understand why inequality exists and how it affects different sections of society.
- **Power, control and resistance**
Power is important in understanding how order and control are achieved in society. There are many different theories about who holds power and how power is used to shape human behaviour. Sociologists are also interested in the ways people oppose and resist the exercise of power.
- **Social change and development**
Understanding how societies have changed and developed helps sociologists to make sense of the way people live today. The change from traditional society to modern industrial society is particularly important. The terms 'modernity' and 'post-modernity' are used to reflect on this transition and on contemporary issues, such as how societies are affected by globalisation and the digital revolution in technology.
- **Socialisation, culture and identity**
Sociologists believe that people learn how they are expected to behave through socialisation. The norms and values learned through socialisation may vary between cultures, impacting on social identity. The study of different social identities is central to contemporary sociology.
- **Structure and agency**
A central debate in sociology explores the relationship between the individual and society: whether behaviour is shaped by wider social forces or whether individuals have agency in actively shaping the social world. Structural approaches focus on how people's behaviour is constrained by social systems and institutions (one-way process). Interactionist approaches emphasise how individuals establish meaning through social interaction (two-way process).

Qualifications that are recognised and valued worldwide

Cambridge qualifications prepare and equip learners with the skills they need to thrive at university and beyond. The world's best higher education institutions recognise our qualifications and value the critical thinking skills, independent research abilities and deep subject knowledge that Cambridge learners bring.

We continually work with universities and colleges in every part of the world to ensure that they understand and accept our qualifications. More than 2500 universities in over 90 countries formally recognise Cambridge qualifications, with many more accepting our qualifications on application.

UK ENIC, the national agency in the UK for the recognition and comparison of international qualifications and skills, has carried out an independent benchmarking study of Cambridge International AS & A Level and found it to be comparable to the standard of AS & A Level in the UK. This means students can be confident that their Cambridge International AS & A Level qualifications are accepted as equivalent, grade for grade, to UK AS & A Levels by leading universities worldwide.

A choice of assessment routes

Cambridge International AS & A Level offers a choice of assessment routes with staged assessment available in many subjects: Cambridge International AS Level can be offered as a standalone qualification or as part of a progression to Cambridge International A Level.

Cambridge International AS Level Sociology makes up the first half of the Cambridge International A Level course in sociology and provides a foundation for the study of sociology at Cambridge International A Level. The AS Level can also be delivered as a standalone qualification. Depending on local university entrance requirements, students may be able to use it to progress directly to university courses in sociology or some other subjects. It is also suitable as part of a course of general education.

Cambridge International A Level Sociology provides a foundation for the study of sociology or related courses in higher education. Equally it is suitable as part of a course of general education.

For more information about the relationship between the Cambridge International AS Level and Cambridge International A Level see the 'Assessment overview' section of the Syllabus overview.

Visit **www.cambridgeinternational.org/recognition-search** and university websites for the most up-to-date higher education entry requirements.

Learn more: **www.cambridgeinternational.org/recognition**

Supporting teachers

We believe education works best when teaching and learning are closely aligned to the curriculum, resources and assessment. Our high-quality teaching support helps to maximise teaching time and enables teachers to engage learners of all backgrounds and abilities.

We aim to provide the following support for each Cambridge qualification:

- Syllabus
- Specimen question papers and mark schemes
- Specimen paper answers
- Schemes of Work
- Example candidate responses
- Past papers and mark schemes
- Principal examiner reports for teachers.

These resources are available on the School Support Hub at <https://schoolsupporthub.cambridge.org>, our secure online site for Cambridge teachers. Your exams officer can provide you with a login.

Additional teaching and learning resources are also available for many syllabuses and vary according to the nature of the subject and the structure of the assessment of each syllabus. These can include ready-built lesson materials, digital resources and multimedia for the classroom and homework, guidance on assessment and much more. Beyond the resources available on the School Support Hub, a wide range of endorsed textbooks and associated teaching and learning support are available from Cambridge at www.cambridge.org/education and from other publishers. Resources vary according to the nature of the subject and the structure of the assessment of each syllabus.

You can also contact our global Cambridge community or talk to a senior examiner on our discussion forums.

Sign up for email notifications about changes to syllabuses, including new and revised products and services, at www.cambridgeinternational.org/syllabusupdates

Professional development

Find the next step on your professional development journey:

- **Introduction courses** – An introduction to Cambridge programmes and qualifications. For teachers who are new to Cambridge programmes or new to a specific syllabus.
- **Focus on Teaching courses** – These are for teachers who want to explore a specific area of teaching and learning within a syllabus or programme.
- **Focus on Assessment courses** – These are for teachers who want to understand the assessment of a syllabus in greater depth.
- **Marking workshops** – These workshops help you become more familiar with what examiners are looking for, and provide an opportunity to raise questions and share your experiences of the syllabus.
- **Enrichment Professional Development** – Transform your approach to teaching with our Enrichment workshops. Each workshop focuses on a specific area of teaching and learning practice.
- **Cambridge Professional Development Qualifications (PDQs)** – Practice-based programmes that transform professional learning for practising teachers. Available at Certificate and Diploma level.

For more information visit www.cambridgeinternational.org/support-and-training-for-schools

Supporting exams officers

We provide comprehensive support and guidance for all Cambridge exams officers.
Find out more at www.cambridgeinternational.org/eoguide



2 Syllabus overview

Aims

The aims describe the purposes of a course based on this syllabus.

You can deliver some of the aims using suitable local sociological examples.

Students following a course based on this syllabus will:

- develop a confident knowledge of key sociological concepts, theories and research, and how sociologists explain society
- explore contemporary social issues and debates, using sociological perspectives to understand change in society
- investigate social and cultural identities, and the factors shaping diversity and inequality
- examine how sociological research and evidence is produced and used, and how it supports or challenges sociological explanations
- apply sociological knowledge to real-world contexts, and consider possible responses to social issues
- critically evaluate sociological theories and perspectives, analysing their assumptions and evidence
- construct and communicate well-reasoned arguments, present ideas clearly and engage in informed discussion and debate – transferable skills to many academic and career paths
- build strong academic writing skills and critical thinking; plan and produce clear, evidence-based essays making supported judgements
- develop curiosity about how society works and why there are social inequalities and cultural differences, inspiring further study in sociology or related fields.

We are an education organisation and politically neutral. The contents of this syllabus, examination papers and associated materials do not endorse any political view. We endeavour to treat all aspects of the exam process neutrally.



Content overview

AS Level content

Candidates study all the content in Papers 1 and 2, focusing on the following key questions and focus points.

Paper 1 Socialisation, Identity and Methods of Research

- 1 How does society influence social identity?
 - 1.1 The process of learning and socialisation
 - 1.2 Social identity and change
- 2 How do sociologists conduct research, and how do we evaluate the results?
 - 2.1 Types of data, methods and research design
 - 2.2 Approaches to sociological research
 - 2.3 Research issues

Paper 2 The Family

- 3 What is the role and function of the family in society?
 - 3.1 Perspectives on the role of the family
 - 3.2 Family structure and diversity in changing industrial and global contexts
- 4 How is family life experienced by different groups in society?
 - 4.1 Gender equality and experiences of family life
 - 4.2 Age and experiences of family life

A Level content

Candidates study the AS Level content and the content in Papers 3 and 4, focusing on the following key questions and focus points.

Paper 3 Education

Candidates study all the content.

- 5 What is the role of education in society?
 - 5.1 Theories about the role of education
 - 5.2 The curriculum
- 6 What causes inequality in education?
 - 6.1 Social class and education
 - 6.2 Ethnicity and education
 - 6.3 Gender and education

Paper 4 Globalisation, Media and Religion

Paper 4 has three options: Globalisation, Media and Religion.

Candidates study **two** options.

Globalisation

- 7 What is globalisation?
 - 7.1 Understanding globalisation
 - 7.2 Perspectives on globalisation and global development
- 8 What are the impacts of globalisation?
 - 8.1 Impacts of globalisation on the life chances of individuals
 - 8.2 Impacts of globalisation on cultures and identities

Media

- 9 How is the media organised and who controls the media?
 - 9.1 Media types
 - 9.2 Power and control in the media
- 10 How does the media influence human behaviour and societal reactions?
 - 10.1 Media effects
 - 10.2 Media as an influence on group identities

Religion

- 11 Does religion maintain social order or is it a source of social change?
 - 11.1 Religion and social order
 - 11.2 Religion and social change
- 12 How significant is religion in contemporary societies and how do people experience religion today?
 - 12.1 The significance of religion in societies today
 - 12.2 Religion and social groups

Skills development

Through the study of the course content, learners develop critical thinking skills. Learners:

- examine theories and concepts
- present evidence and examples to support points
- analyse and evaluate social issues from different perspectives (for example, Marxism, feminism or functionalism)
- construct and communicate well-reasoned arguments, present complex ideas clearly and engage in informed discussion and debate
- evaluate arguments and evidence to form well-supported judgements and conclusions
- build independent viewpoints and counter arguments supported by evidence
- build strong academic writing skills and critical thinking; plan and produce clear, evidence-based essays.

School feedback: ‘Cambridge International AS & A Levels prepare students well for university because they’ve learnt to go into a subject in considerable depth. There’s that ability to really understand the depth and richness and the detail of a subject. It’s a wonderful preparation for what they are going to face at university.’

Feedback from: US Higher Education Advisory Council

Assessment overview

AS Level candidates take Papers 1 and 2.

A Level candidates take Papers 1, 2, 3 and 4.

Paper 1

Socialisation, Identity and
Methods of Research 1 hour 30 minutes
60 marks
Candidates answer four questions:
Section A: three compulsory structured
questions
Section B: one essay from a choice of two.
Questions are based on the Paper 1 content.
Externally assessed
50% of the AS Level
25% of the A Level

Paper 3

Education 1 hour 15 minutes
50 marks
Candidates answer four compulsory questions.
Questions 1, 2 and 3 are structured questions.
Question 4 is an essay.
Questions are based on the Paper 3 content.
Externally assessed
21% of the A Level

Paper 2

The Family 1 hour 30 minutes
60 marks
Candidates answer four questions:
Section A: three compulsory structured
questions
Section B: one essay from a choice of two.
Questions are based on the Paper 2 content.
Externally assessed
50% of the AS Level
25% of the A Level

Paper 4

Globalisation, Media
and Religion 1 hour 45 minutes
70 marks
Candidates answer three questions:
Section A: two structured questions from a
choice of three
Section B: one essay from a choice of three.
Each section has questions from the three
options of Globalisation, Media and Religion.
Questions are based on the Paper 4 content.
Externally assessed
29% of the A Level

Information on availability is in the **Before you start** section.

There are three routes for Cambridge International AS & A Level Sociology:

Route	Paper 1	Paper 2	Paper 3	Paper 4
1 AS Level only (Candidates take all AS components in the same exam series)	yes	yes	no	no
2 A Level (staged over two years) Year 1 AS Level*	yes	yes	no	no
Year 2 Complete the A Level			yes	yes
3 A Level (Candidates take all components in the same exam series)	yes	yes	yes	yes

* Candidates carry forward their AS Level marks subject to the rules and time limits described in the *Cambridge Handbook*. See **Making entries** for more information about carrying forward marks.

Candidates following an AS Level route are eligible for grades a–e. Candidates following an A Level route are eligible for grades A*–E.

Assessment objectives

The assessment objectives (AOs) are:

AO1 Knowledge and understanding

Candidates should be able to:

- Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of sociological concepts, theories, evidence, research methods and the factors that influence sociological research, arguments and debates.
- Explain arguments in support of sociological theories and views.

AO2 Interpretation and application

Candidates should be able to:

- Interpret and apply sociological concepts, theories and evidence to answer an issue or question.
- Use relevant sociological concepts, theories and evidence to support a point or argument.

AO3 Analysis and evaluation

Candidates should be able to:

- Explain the strengths and limitations of sociological theories, research methods and views.
- Explain arguments against sociological theories and views.
- Analyse and evaluate sociological theories, research methods, evidence and views.
- Make judgements and reach a conclusion.

Weighting for assessment objectives

The approximate weightings allocated to each of the assessment objectives (AOs) are summarised below.

Assessment objectives as a percentage of the qualification

Assessment objective	Weighting in AS Level %	Weighting in A Level %
AO1 Knowledge and understanding	40	37
AO2 Interpretation and application	32	31
AO3 Analysis and evaluation	28	32
Total	100	100

Assessment objectives as a percentage of each component

Assessment objective	Weighting in components %			
	Paper 1	Paper 2	Paper 3	Paper 4
AO1 Knowledge and understanding	40	40	36	31
AO2 Interpretation and application	32	32	28	34
AO3 Analysis and evaluation	28	28	36	35
Total	100	100	100	100

3 Subject content

This syllabus gives you the flexibility to design a course that will interest, challenge and engage your learners. Where appropriate, you are responsible for selecting resources and examples to support your learners' study. These should be appropriate for the learners' age, cultural background and learning context as well as complying with your school policies and local legal requirements.

Candidates study the subject content for Papers 1 and 2 at AS Level and Papers 3 and 4 at A Level.

The content is structured into key questions and focus points. Key content is specified under each focus point.

Each key question is provided to prompt reflection and encourage candidates to approach the study of the content in an evaluative way.

Candidates are expected to demonstrate an understanding of the subject content using their knowledge of relevant sociological material. Sociological material includes sociological concepts, theories and evidence (for example, sociological studies, data and case studies).

Candidates should take a holistic approach to the learning of the content in each paper, making connections across the content in the key questions for each paper.

In each of Papers 1, 2, 3 and 4, content learned in one key question can also be used in questions testing content from a different key question in the same paper.

Candidates are encouraged to use case studies from their local or national contexts, as well as consider examples from both the Global North and Global South.

Where 'including' is used in the subject content, candidates must study everything listed but there may be other relevant examples or additional content that could be studied.

Where 'for example' is used, candidates may study the given example(s) but they are not compulsory. You can choose other relevant examples with your candidates. Content prefaced by 'for example' will not be directly assessed in the exam but would be credited if used in a relevant way to answer questions.

Paper 1 – Socialisation, Identity and Methods of Research

Paper 1 has two areas of study.

Key question 1 focuses on the role of socialisation in the creation of social identities.

Key question 2 introduces key research methods and approaches used in sociology, including their strengths and limitations, and the evaluation of the relevance and accuracy of sociological findings.

Paper 1 is designed to be taught in 90 guided learning hours.

1 How does society influence social identity?

1.1 The process of learning and socialisation

- Culture, roles, norms, values, beliefs, customs, consensus, ideology, power and status as elements in the social construction of reality.
- The importance of socialisation in influencing human behaviour, including the nurture versus nature debate.
- Agencies of socialisation:
 - family
 - education
 - peer group
 - media
 - religion.
- Factors explaining why individuals conform to social expectations, including social control (formal, informal, positive and negative social sanctions).
- Factors explaining deviance and non-conformity to social expectations:
 - under-socialisation
 - marginalisation
 - subcultures.
- The role of structure and agency in shaping the relationship between the individual and society, including the differences between a one-way (structural) view of socialisation and a two-way (interactionist) view of socialisation.

1.2 Social identity and change

- How identities are socially constructed in relation to:
 - social class
 - gender
 - ethnicity
 - age.
- The influence of agencies of socialisation on identities.
- How traditional social class, gender, ethnicity and age identities may be changing due to globalisation, increased choice and the creation of new/hybrid identities.

2 How do sociologists conduct research, and how do we evaluate the results?

2.1 Types of data, methods and research design

- The differences between primary and secondary sources of data and between quantitative and qualitative data.
- The strengths and limitations of different secondary sources of data:
 - official statistics, for example data on births, deaths, marriage, divorce and crime
 - personal documents, for example diaries, letters, photographs and autobiographies
 - digital content, for example social media posts and websites
 - media sources, for example television, films, newspapers and magazines.
- The strengths and limitations of different primary quantitative and qualitative research methods:
 - questionnaires, including open, closed, online and postal
 - interviews, including structured, unstructured, semi-structured and group
 - experiments, including field and laboratory
 - observations, including overt, covert, participant and non-participant
 - content analysis.
- Stages of research design frequently used:
 - deciding on research strategy
 - formulating research questions and hypotheses
 - selecting representative sampling techniques, including stratified, quota and random
 - selecting non-representative sampling techniques, including snowball and volunteer
 - conducting pilot studies
 - conducting research and interpreting results.

2.2 Approaches to sociological research

- The positivist approach, including the scientific method, objectivity, reliability and value-freedom.
- The interpretivist approach, including verstehen, meaning, subjectivity and validity.
- The debates about whether sociology can/should be based on the methods and procedures of the natural sciences and the role of values in sociological research.
- The mixed methods approach to research, triangulation and methodological pluralism.
- The use of approaches to sociological research drawing on different research methods:
 - social surveys
 - longitudinal studies
 - indigenous research methodologies.

2.3 Research issues

- The theoretical, practical and ethical considerations influencing the choice of topic, choice of method(s) and conduct of research.
- How research findings may be biased by the actions and values of the sociologist and by choices made in funding, designing and conducting the research.
- Validity, reliability, objectivity, representativeness and ethics as important concepts in assessing the value of different research methods.

Paper 2 – The Family

Paper 2 develops candidates' understanding of the family in a social context. Candidates explore different sociological perspectives on the role of the family and family diversity to understand the way social change influences family life and different family members.

Candidates are encouraged to use examples from their local or national contexts.

Paper 2 is designed to be taught in 90 guided learning hours.

3 What is the role and function of the family in society?

3.1 Perspectives on the role of the family

- Definitions of the family, including as a social construction versus fixed/universal structure and difficulties of defining the family.
- Functionalist perspectives on the role and function of the family; how the family benefits its members and society, including, social solidarity, social cohesion, value consensus, warm bath theory and primary socialisation.
- Functionalist perspectives on how the functions of families have changed over time, including the 'loss of functions' debate.
- Marxist perspectives on the role and function of the family; how the family benefits capitalism and the ruling class, including ideological control, reproduction of labour and unit of consumption.
- Feminist perspectives on the role and function of the family, including patriarchal control and reserve army of labour.
- New Right and postmodernist responses to functionalist, Marxist and feminist views of the family.

3.2 Family structure and diversity in changing industrial and global contexts

- The causes and consequences of changing patterns of marriage, cohabitation, divorce and separation.
- Types of family and household forms, including extended (vertical and horizontal families), nuclear and lone parent families. If appropriate to the local context and not restricted by law or regulation, other family and household forms may also be taught.
- Variations of family diversity, including cultural and class diversity.
- Views on the positive and negative impacts of family diversity, including New Right and postmodernist views.
- The impact of industrialisation, urbanisation, and de-industrialisation on family structure and roles in the Global North and Global South.
- Creation and characteristics of transnational families due to different forms of global migration.
- The impact of globalisation and technology on the structure, role and relationships of transnational families, including economic dependency and the role of digital communication.

4 How is family life experienced by different groups in society?

4.1 Gender equality and experiences of family life

- Different feminist perspectives on equality and power in the family:
 - Liberal feminist perspectives, including the impact of gender socialisation, policy reform and the 'march of progress' thesis
 - Radical feminist perspectives, including patriarchy and the oppression of women
 - Marxist feminist perspectives, including the dual burden and triple shift.
- Conjugal roles and debates about gender equality in the family, including housework, childcare, power, decision making and emotion work.
- Debates about whether the experiences of gender within family life have a positive or negative impact on family members.

4.2 Age and experiences of family life

- The social construction of childhood; social distinctions between childhood and adulthood, including child protection laws and policies, changes in the social position of children, child-centred families and debates surrounding the disappearance of childhood.
- Social class, gender and ethnicity as factors affecting the experiences of children in the family.
- The impact of increasing life expectancy on family forms and relationships, including beanpole families and the sandwich generation.
- Cultural comparisons of the significance of the role of grandparents in family life, including the impact of social policies, for example pensions.
- Changes in the concepts of parenthood, motherhood and fatherhood.

Paper 3 – Education

Candidates study different perspectives on the role of education in the wider society, the factors that influence the curriculum and the factors affecting educational achievement and inequality.

Candidates are encouraged to use examples from their local or national contexts.

Paper 3 is designed to be taught in 72 guided learning hours.

5 What is the role of education in society?

5.1 Theories about the role of education

- Functionalist views about how education contributes to value consensus and social solidarity, meritocracy and role allocation.
- Marxist views about how education maintains capitalism, enforces ideological control and cultural reproduction, including the correspondence theory and the myth of meritocracy.
- Feminist views about how education contributes to the maintenance of a patriarchal system and as an instrument of ideological control and cultural reproduction.
- New Right views on the relationship between education and the economy.
- Social democratic views on equal opportunity and the relationship between education and the economy, life chances and social mobility.

5.2 The curriculum

- Influences on the social construction and content of the curriculum:
 - power
 - status
 - culture
 - economic demands
 - gender
 - digital technology.
- Education and cultural reproduction:
 - the hidden curriculum
 - social class
 - the ethnocentric curriculum
 - the gendered curriculum.

6 What causes inequality in education?

6.1 Social class and education

- Out-of-school material factors relating to social class and educational attainment:
 - material deprivation
 - diet and housing
 - household income.
- Out-of-school cultural factors relating to social class and educational attainment:
 - cultural deprivation
 - parental attitudes
 - speech codes
 - cultural capital.
- In-school factors relating to social class and educational attainment:
 - labelling
 - ability grouping, including setting and streaming
 - pupil subcultures
 - impact of cultural environment of the school, including habitus.
- Policies attempting to reduce social class inequality, for example compensatory education programmes.
- Effects of digital technology on the quality of learning and access to education:
 - greater access to resources through digital technology
 - the digital divide.

6.2 Ethnicity and education

- Out-of-school material factors relating to ethnicity and educational attainment, including material deprivation.
- Out-of-school cultural factors relating to ethnicity and educational attainment:
 - parental attitudes
 - family structure
 - cultural aspirations
 - language.
- In-school factors relating to ethnicity and educational attainment:
 - classroom interaction
 - labelling
 - ability grouping, including setting and streaming
 - pupil subcultures
 - racism.
- Policies attempting to reduce ethnic inequality, for example anti-racism initiatives and language support.

6.3 Gender and education

- Out-of-school material and cultural factors relating to gender and educational attainment:
 - gendered socialisation
 - cultural expectations
 - gendered norms.
- In-school factors relating to gender and educational attainment:
 - classroom interaction
 - labelling
 - pupil subcultures
 - subject choice
 - the feminisation of education.
- Policies attempting to improve equal opportunities, for example compulsory schooling and national curriculum requirements.
- Wider social changes and gendered educational achievement:
 - changing occupations
 - female expectations
 - the crisis of masculinity.
- The relationship between gender, social class and ethnicity.

Paper 4 – Globalisation, Media and Religion

Paper 4 has three options: Globalisation, Media and Religion.

Candidates study the content from **two** options.

Globalisation

Candidates explore sociological explanations and perspectives on the impact of globalisation. Candidates should make connections between the local and the global, a 'glocal' approach, and examine the impact of globalisation on the life chances of individuals and on cultures and identities.

Candidates are encouraged to explore contemporary global issues using local or national examples.

The Globalisation option is designed to be taught in 54 guided learning hours.

7 What is globalisation?

7.1 Understanding globalisation

- Definitions of globalisation.
- Introduction to the different dimensions of globalisation and their relative importance:
 - economic, including global capitalism, transnational corporations and trade
 - cultural, including pluralism, hybridisation, Westernisation and Mcdonaldisation
 - political, including international institutions: for example, the European Union (EU) and the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

7.2 Perspectives on globalisation and global development

- Theories of global development, including Modernisation Theory, Dependency Theory and World Systems Theory.
- Pro and anti-globalisation views:
 - Hyperglobalist: globalisation as a powerful, positive force leading to a borderless world, including neoliberal views on the benefits of economic globalisation
 - Transformationist: globalisation as a fundamental change that brings new opportunities and challenges
 - Sceptic: views that question the extent to which globalisation benefits all groups in society, including Marxist and feminist views on how globalisation reinforces inequalities for some groups.
- Challenges to Western models of globalisation:
 - Neocolonial perspectives: globalisation as a continuation of colonialism
 - Decolonial perspectives: globalisation giving agency to the Global South.
- Social movements and attempts to oppose globalisation.

8 What are the impacts of globalisation?

8.1 Impacts of globalisation on the life chances of individuals

- Migration: sociological explanations of the impact of global migration.
- Health: sociological explanations of global patterns of health inequalities and the global spread of disease.
- Education: sociological explanations of education as development or ideological control and global educational inequality.
- Technology: sociological explanations of global inequalities arising from the digital divide.
- Climate change: sociological explanations of inequalities caused by climate change.

8.2 Impacts of globalisation on cultures and identities

- Postmodernist views of choice, individualism, consumerism and hybrid identities.
- Cultural convergence, including Westernisation and cultural imperialism; versus cultural divergence, including resistance, nationalism and cultural defence.
- Cultural hybridity: glocalisation, transnational identities and the role of hybridity within the convergence/divergence debate.

Media

Candidates examine how the media is being transformed by developments, such as the growth of digital media, and the implications this has for the wider society. Candidates develop an understanding of where power lies in relation to the media and how individuals are influenced by media effects.

When the term 'media' is used on its own, it includes both traditional and digital types of media.

The Media option is designed to be taught in 54 guided learning hours.

9 How is the media organised and who controls the media?

9.1 Media types

- Differences and similarities between traditional media and digital media, including access, usage and forms:
 - traditional media refers to, for example, broadcast television, print newspapers, radio and cinema
 - digital media refers to, for example, websites/apps, streaming services, digital news and social media.
- Global and local media:
 - the spread of global media influence, including digital streaming platforms, global news networks and the Hollywood/Bollywood film industry
 - localised alternatives to global media influence, including citizen journalism, community-based media, independent filmmaking and the ongoing influence of national and regional media forms.

9.2 Power and control in the media

- Trends in the organisation of traditional media and digital media:
 - cross-media ownership and media conglomerates
 - media moguls and technology giants
 - influences on media content by individuals, including citizen journalists in digital media; and by groups, including journalists and editors in traditional media.
- Marxist and neo-Marxist theories:
 - the media as an ideological tool serving the interests of capitalism
 - concepts of mass manipulation and hegemony as different ways of understanding the production of media content and its impact.
- Pluralist theories:
 - control through consumer choice and demand-led content, editorial freedom and diverse ownership
 - the positive democratic impact of the media through, for example, representing competing interests and views.
- The power of the state to control the media:
 - state ownership as a form of media control
 - state manipulation and propaganda as means of control
 - legal and regulatory controls, including censorship and laws restricting media freedom
 - state repression and coercion of journalists, editors and media owners.
- How the existence of digital media impacts debates about control, including digital optimism versus digital pessimism.

10 How does the media influence human behaviour and societal reactions?

10.1 Media effects

- Direct effects of media influence:
 - hypodermic syringe model
 - Bandura's social learning theory.
- Indirect effects of media influence:
 - uses and gratification model
 - two-step flow model / selective filter model
 - cultural effects model
 - postmodernist views of audience effects and how the media constructs culture.

continued

10.1 Media effects continued

- Evidence about the extent to which human behaviour is influenced by the media:
 - the impact of moral panics on behaviour, including deviancy amplification
 - the impact of the media on voting behaviour, including agenda setting, opinion polls and news reporting
 - fake news or false narratives, for example misleading health information
 - empowerment of disadvantaged social groups and raising awareness of social issues, for example environmental issues
 - social media and identity creation, for example the contribution of the media to the rise of ethnic nationalism.
- Postmodernist views of the media:
 - how the media constructs versions of reality, including hyperreality, simulacra and intertextuality
 - fragmentation and diversity in narratives about truth, perspectives and identities (fluidity in identities)
 - consumerism and image culture.

10.2 Media as an influence on group identities

- Media influences on the social construction of gender identity:
 - gender stereotyping in the media
 - visual and body ideals communicated through the media
 - the normalisation of power imbalances through media representations of gender
 - gender performativity (media pressure to perform gender in specific ways)
 - changes in media representations of gender today.
- Media contributions to the social construction of ethnic identity:
 - stereotyping and typecasting of ethnic groups in the media
 - the underrepresentation of some minority ethnic groups in the media and how this influences how members of these groups see themselves and respond
 - cultural appropriation and tokenism in media representations of minority ethnic groups
 - the media as a tool for reclaiming ethnic identity and challenging mainstream misrepresentations.
- Media contributions to the social construction of age identity:
 - media stereotyping of different age groups
 - media idealisation of youth and the identification of other age identities in a negative light by comparison
 - the negative portrayal of youth culture in the media
 - narratives of decline and crisis in the media portrayal of the elderly
 - cross-cultural comparisons in media representations of age identities.

Religion

Candidates study the role of religion for different groups of people in their national or local context and from a personal/individual viewpoint. They study different explanations of the role of religion in society and the nature of religious movements and the factors influencing the level of religiosity in particular communities.

Candidates are encouraged to use examples from their local or national contexts.

The Religion option is designed to be taught in 54 guided learning hours.

11 Does religion maintain social order or is it a source of social change?

11.1 Religion and social order

- Ways of defining religion:
 - Substantive (exclusive)
 - Functional (inclusive)
 - Social constructivist approaches.
- Evidence (or arguments) on whether religion supports social order or contributes to social conflict.
- Functionalist views on how religion contributes to social order, social solidarity, social cohesion, and value consensus, including the concepts of civil religion, sacred and profane.
- Marxist views on the relationship between religion, oppression, false consciousness, capitalism and hegemony.
- Feminist views on how religion maintains gender inequality and patriarchy:
 - Liberal feminist views
 - Radical feminist views.

11.2 Religion and social change

- Weber's view of how religion could act as a catalyst for social change, including the contribution of Protestantism to the rise of capitalism in western societies.
- The role of religion in economic development in non-western societies:
 - the contribution of faith-based organisations (FBOs) to reduce poverty and support local economies
 - economic activity conducted as a religiously motivated duty.
- The influence of religion as a source of social and political change, for example:
 - Liberation theology in Latin America
 - the Evangelical movement in US politics and the civil rights movement
 - the Dalit Buddhist Movement in India
 - Christian resistance to apartheid in South Africa.

12 How significant is religion in contemporary societies and how do people experience religion today?

12.1 The significance of religion in societies today

- Secularisation in western societies:
 - evidence for the decline in religious participation
 - arguments about the declining role of established religious organisations in society, including the concepts of structural differentiation, rationalisation, science, and the declining moral and symbolic authority of established religious organisations
 - difficulties in measuring religious belief.
- Evidence and arguments about the continuing influence of religion in non-western societies, including the role of religion in shaping individual identity, community cohesion, and wider social and political structures in non-western societies today.
- Different views, including postmodernist, about whether resacrilisation and religious revival is occurring in society today.
- Evidence of changing forms of participation and worship:
 - New Age ideas
 - new religious movements (NRMs)
 - spiritual shopping
 - privatised religion
 - digital religion.
- Explanations for the growth in religious fundamentalism as a reaction to:
 - secularisation
 - rationalisation
 - globalisation, including migration and the spread of global capitalism.

12.2 Religion and social groups

- How gendered social roles and religious expectations differently shape the religious beliefs, practices and participation of men and women, including gender inequality and patriarchy, and religious feminism and its influence on liberation and empowerment.
- How individuals from different ethnic groups experience religion variably, depending on majority or minority context, including minority experiences shaped by cultural defence, transition, and marginality, and majority experiences influenced by cultural affirmation.
- How age shapes the religious beliefs, practices, and participation of the young and older people, including differences in ritual involvement and transmission of beliefs.

Faculty feedback: ‘Understanding how and why our climate is changing and providing the knowledge and skills to explore the challenges plays a key role in every student’s education.’

Feedback from: Dr Amy Munro-Faure, Head of Education and Student Engagement of Cambridge Zero

4 Details of the assessment

AS Level candidates take Papers 1 and 2.

A Level candidates take Papers 1, 2, 3 and 4.

Questions in the assessment can test content from the subject content where 'including' is used.

Content prefaced by 'for example' will not be directly assessed in the exam but would be credited if used in a relevant way to answer questions. Teachers should decide whether to teach the content prefaced by 'for example', taking into account learners' ages, cultural backgrounds, learning contexts, school policies and local legal requirements.

Candidates should carefully look at the command words used in questions to help them understand what is expected from them in the exam. Please refer to the 'Command words' section. For example, a question using the command word 'Describe' has a different requirement to a question using the command word 'Explain' or 'Evaluate'.

Paper 1 – Socialisation, Identity and Methods of Research

Written paper, 1 hour 30 minutes, 60 marks

Candidates answer **four** questions:

- Section A: three compulsory structured questions
- Section B: one essay from a choice of two.

Questions are based on the Paper 1 content.

Section A

Candidates answer **all** questions.

- Question 1 is a short knowledge recall 4-mark question, starting with the command word 'Describe'. It asks candidates to describe two of something. For example, describe **two** ways/factors/reasons/changes/characteristics. Candidates should identify two examples and briefly describe each one.
- Question 2 has two parts, (a) and (b):
 - Question 2(a) is a 6-mark question testing AO1 Knowledge and understanding and AO2 Interpretation and application, starting with the command word 'Explain'. It asks candidates to explain two of something. For example, explain **two** ways/factors/reasons/features/characteristics. Candidates answers should be structured as two separate paragraphs. In each paragraph candidates should identify a relevant point with a clear explanation. They should support the point with relevant sociological material, for example a sociological concept or example of research method.
 - Question 2(b) is a 6-mark question testing AO1 Knowledge and understanding and AO3 Analysis and evaluation, starting with the command word 'Explain'. It asks to evaluate a research method by either explaining two strengths, or two limitations or one strength and one limitation of the research method. Candidates answers should be structured as two separate paragraphs. In each paragraph candidates should identify a strength/limitation of the research method with a supported explanation of the strength/limitation.

- Question 3 has two parts, (a) and (b), based on a sociological view expressed in a quotation:
 - Question 3(a) is a 12-mark question testing AO1 Knowledge and understanding and AO2 Interpretation and application, starting with the command word ‘Explain’.
It asks candidates to explain a sociological view presented in a quotation by using **two** arguments to support it. Candidates should present **two** different explanations in support of the view expressed in the quotation. Each explanation should be separated into a different paragraph. Candidates should include relevant sociological material such as a sociological concept, theory or research evidence to support **each** explanation.
 - Question 3(b) is a 6-mark question testing AO2 Interpretation and application and AO3 Analysis and evaluation, starting with the command word ‘Evaluate’.
It asks candidates to evaluate a sociological view presented in a quotation using **one** argument against it. Candidates should include relevant sociological material such as a sociological concept, theory or research evidence to support their answer.

Section B

Candidates answer **one** essay question from a choice of two. (Either Question 4 or Question 5).

Questions 4 and 5 are 26-mark essay questions testing AO1 Knowledge and understanding, AO2 Interpretation and application and AO3 Analysis and evaluation, starting with the command phrase ‘Evaluate the view that...’.

Candidates are required to evaluate a sociological view by providing well-developed points in support of and against the view. All points should be supported with sociological material, such as concepts, theories, studies or examples of research methods, and applied to the specific view in the question.

Marking guidance

Questions 1, 2(a) and 2(b) are marked using point marking, which means marks are awarded for specific points, and these points are added up to give a total mark.

Questions 3(a), 3(b), 4 and 5 are marked using generic levels of response marking grids, which allow a range of acceptable responses to be credited. The mark scheme is divided into several levels, each reflecting a different level of performance in the response.

The marking criteria is published in the specimen Paper 1 mark scheme which accompanies the syllabus. This is available on the syllabus page at www.cambridgeinternational.org/9699 and our School Support Hub.

The marking grids should be read in conjunction with the indicative content for each question in the mark scheme.

Paper 2 – The Family

Written paper, 1 hour 30 minutes, 60 marks

Candidates answer **four** questions:

- Section A: three compulsory structured questions
- Section B: one essay from a choice of two.

Questions are based on the Paper 2 content.

Section A

Candidates answer **all** questions.

- Question 1 is a short knowledge recall 4-mark question, starting with the command word 'Describe'. It asks candidates to describe two of something. For example, describe **two** ways/factors/reasons/changes/characteristics. Candidates should identify two examples and briefly describe each one.
- Question 2 has two parts, (a) and (b):
 - Question 2(a) is a 6-mark question testing AO1 Knowledge and understanding and AO2 Interpretation and application, starting with the command word 'Explain'. It asks candidates to explain two of something. For example, explain **two** ways/factors/reasons/features/characteristics. Candidates answers should be structured as two separate paragraphs. In each paragraph candidates should identify a relevant point with a clear explanation. They should support the point with relevant sociological material, for example a sociological concept or example of a sociological study.
 - Question 2(b) is a 6-mark question testing AO1 Knowledge and understanding and AO3 Analysis and evaluation, starting with the command word 'Explain'. It asks to evaluate a sociological theory by either explaining two strengths, or two limitations or one strength and one limitation of the theory. Candidates answers should be structured as two separate paragraphs. In each paragraph candidates should identify a strength/limitation of the theory with a supported explanation of the strength/limitation.
- Question 3 has two parts, (a) and (b), based on a sociological view expressed in a quotation:
 - Question 3(a) is a 12-mark question testing AO1 Knowledge and understanding and AO2 Interpretation and application, starting with the command word 'Explain'. It asks candidates to explain a sociological view presented in a quotation by using **two** arguments to support it. Candidates should present **two** different explanations in support of the view expressed in the quotation. Each explanation should be separated into a different paragraph. Candidates should include relevant sociological material such as a sociological concept, theory or research evidence to support **each** explanation.
 - Question 3(b) is a 6-mark question testing AO2 Interpretation and application and AO3 Analysis and evaluation, starting with the command word 'Evaluate'. It asks candidates to evaluate a sociological view presented in a quotation using **one** argument against it. Candidates should include relevant sociological material such as a sociological concept, theory or research evidence to support their answer.

Section B

Candidates answer **one** essay question from a choice of two. (Either Question 4 or Question 5).

Questions 4 and 5 are 26-mark essay questions testing AO1 Knowledge and understanding, AO2 Interpretation and application and AO3 Analysis and evaluation, starting with the command phrase 'Evaluate the view that...' or 'Evaluate the Marxist/functionalist/feminist/postmodernist view that...'.

Candidates are required to evaluate a sociological view by providing well-developed points in support of and against the view. All points should be supported with sociological material, such as concepts, theories and research evidence, and applied to the specific view in the question.

Marking guidance

Questions 1, 2(a) and 2(b) are marked using point marking, which means marks are awarded for specific points, and these points are added up to give a total mark.

Questions 3(a), 3(b), 4 and 5 are marked using generic levels of response marking grids, which allow a range of acceptable responses to be credited. The mark scheme is divided into several levels, each reflecting a different level of performance in the response.

The marking criteria is published in the specimen Paper 2 mark scheme which accompanies the syllabus. This is available on the syllabus page at www.cambridgeinternational.org/9699 and our School Support Hub.

The marking grids should be read in conjunction with the indicative content for each question in the mark scheme.

Paper 3 – Education

Written paper, 1 hour 15 minutes, 50 marks

Paper 3 has four questions, worth an increasing number of marks. Candidates answer **all** questions.

Questions are based on the Paper 3 content.

- Question 1 is a short knowledge recall 4-mark question, starting with the command word 'Describe'. It asks candidates to describe two of something. For example, describe **two** ways/factors/reasons/changes/characteristics. Candidates should identify two examples and briefly describe each one.
- Question 2 is a 6-mark question testing AO1 Knowledge and understanding and AO2 Interpretation and application, starting with the command word 'Explain'. It asks candidates to explain two of something. For example, explain **two** ways/factors/reasons/features/characteristics. Candidates answers should be structured as two separate paragraphs. In each paragraph candidates should identify a relevant point with a clear explanation. They should support the point with relevant sociological material, for example a sociological concept or example of a sociological study.
- Question 3 is based on a sociological view expressed in a quotation. It's a 10-mark question testing AO2 Interpretation and application and AO3 Analysis and evaluation, starting with the command word 'Evaluate'. It asks candidates to evaluate the view in the quotation using **two** arguments against it. Candidates answers should be structured as two separate paragraphs. In each paragraph candidates should include a different argument against the view with an explanation. Candidates should include relevant sociological material such as a sociological concept, theory or research evidence to support the explanation.
- Question 4 is a 30-mark essay question testing AO1 Knowledge and understanding, AO2 Interpretation and application and AO3 Analysis and evaluation, starting with the command phrase 'Evaluate the view that...' or 'Evaluate the Marxist/functionalist/feminist/postmodernist view that...'. Candidates are required to evaluate a sociological view by providing well-developed points in support of and against the view, and reaching a reasoned conclusion. All points should be supported with sociological material, such as concepts or studies, and applied to the specific view in the question.

Marking guidance

Questions 1 and 2 are marked using point marking, which means marks are awarded for specific points, and these points are added up to give a total mark.

Questions 3 and 4 are marked using generic levels of response marking grids, which allow a range of acceptable responses to be credited. The mark scheme is divided into several levels, each reflecting a different level of performance in the response.

The marking criteria is published in the specimen Paper 3 mark scheme which accompanies the syllabus. This is available on the syllabus page at www.cambridgeinternational.org/9699 and our School Support Hub.

The marking grids should be read in conjunction with the indicative content for each question in the mark scheme.

Paper 4 – Globalisation, Media and Religion

Written paper, 1 hour 45 minutes, 70 marks

Candidates answer **three** questions:

- Section A: two structured questions from a choice of three
- Section B: one essay from a choice of three.

Questions are based on the Paper 4 content.

Section A

Candidates answer **two** questions from a choice of three.

- Question 1 tests content from the Globalisation option
- Question 2 tests content from the Media option
- Question 3 tests content from the Religion option

Questions 1, 2 and 3 have two parts, (a) and (b), based on a sociological view expressed in a quotation. Candidates must answer both the part (a) and part (b) questions from the two questions they have chosen.

- The part (a) question is a 10-mark question testing AO1 Knowledge and understanding and AO2 Interpretation and application, starting with the command word 'Explain'.
It asks candidates to explain a sociological view presented in a quotation by using **two** arguments to support it.
Candidates should present **two** different explanations in support of the view expressed in the quotation. Each explanation should be separated into a different paragraph. Candidates should include relevant sociological material such as a sociological concept, theory or research evidence to support **each** explanation.
- The part (b) question is a 10-mark question testing AO2 Interpretation and application and AO3 Analysis and evaluation, starting with the command word 'Evaluate'.
It asks candidates to evaluate the view in the quotation using **two** arguments against it.
Candidates answers should be structured as two separate paragraphs. In each paragraph candidates should include a different argument against the view with an explanation.
Candidates should include relevant sociological material such as a sociological concept, theory or research evidence to support the explanation.

Section B

Candidates answer **one** question from a choice of three.

- Question 4 tests content from the Globalisation option
- Question 5 tests content from the Media option
- Question 6 tests content from the Religion option

Questions 4, 5 and 6 are 30-mark essay questions testing AO1 Knowledge and understanding, AO2 Interpretation and application and AO3 Analysis and evaluation, starting with the command phrase ‘Evaluate the view that...’ or ‘Evaluate the Marxist/functionalist/feminist/postmodernist view that...’.

Candidates are required to evaluate a sociological view by providing well-developed points in support of and against the view, and reaching a reasoned conclusion. All points should be supported with sociological material, such as concepts or studies, and applied to the specific view in the question.

Marking guidance

Questions are marked using generic levels of response marking grids.

The marking criteria is published in the specimen Paper 4 mark scheme which accompanies the syllabus. This is available on the syllabus page at www.cambridgeinternational.org/9699 and our School Support Hub.

The marking grids should be read in conjunction with the indicative content for each question in the mark scheme.

Command words

Command words and their meanings help candidates know what is expected from them in the exams. The table below includes command words used in the assessment for this syllabus. The use of the command word will relate to the subject context.

Command word	What it means
Describe	state the points of a topic / give characteristics and main features
Evaluate	judge the quality, importance, or value of something
Explain	set out purposes or reasons / make the relationships between things clear / say why and/or how and support with relevant evidence

Questions using the command word 'Evaluate' are followed by 'the view': i.e. 'Evaluate this/the view...' or 'Evaluate the Marxist/functionalist/feminist/postmodernist view that...'

5 What else you need to know

This section is an overview of other information you need to know about this syllabus. It will help to share the administrative information with your exams officer so they know when you will need their support. Find more information about our administrative processes at www.cambridgeinternational.org/eoguide

Before you start

Previous study

We do not expect learners starting this course to have previously studied sociology.

Guided learning hours

We design Cambridge International AS & A Level syllabuses to require about 180 guided learning hours for each Cambridge International AS Level and about 360 guided learning hours for a Cambridge International A Level. The number of hours a learner needs to achieve the qualification may vary according to each school and the learners' previous experience of the subject.

Availability and timetables

All Cambridge schools are allocated to one of six administrative zones. Each zone has a specific timetable. Find your administrative zone at www.cambridgeinternational.org/adminzone

You can view the timetable for your administrative zone at www.cambridgeinternational.org/timetables

You can enter candidates in the June and November exam series. If your school is in India, you can also enter your candidates in the March exam series.

Check you are using the syllabus for the year the candidate is taking the exam.

Private candidates can enter for this syllabus. For more information, please refer to the *Cambridge Guide to Making Entries*.

Combining with other syllabuses

Candidates can take this syllabus alongside other Cambridge International syllabuses in a single exam series. The only exceptions are:

- syllabuses with the same title at the same level.

Group awards: Cambridge AICE Diploma

Cambridge AICE Diploma (Advanced International Certificate of Education) is a group award for Cambridge International AS & A Level. It encourages schools to offer a broad and balanced curriculum by recognising the achievements of learners who pass exams in a range of different subjects.

Learn more about Cambridge AICE Diploma at www.cambridgeinternational.org/aice

Making entries

Exams officers are responsible for submitting entries. We encourage them to work closely with you to make sure they enter the right number of candidates for the right combination of syllabus components. Entry option codes and instructions for submitting entries are in the *Cambridge Guide to Making Entries*. Your exams officer has access to this guide.

Exam administration

To keep our exams secure, we produce question papers for different areas of the world, known as administrative zones. We allocate all Cambridge schools to an administrative zone determined by their location. Each zone has a specific timetable.

Some of our syllabuses offer candidates different assessment options. An entry option code is used to identify the components the candidate will take relevant to the administrative zone and the available assessment options.

Support for exams officers

We know how important exams officers are to the successful running of exams. We provide them with the support they need to make entries on time. Your exams officer will find this support, and guidance for all other phases of the Cambridge Exams Cycle, at **www.cambridgeinternational.org/eoguide**

Retakes and carrying forward marks

Candidates can retake Cambridge International AS Level and Cambridge International A Level as many times as they want to.

Learn more about retake entries, including definitions and information on entry deadlines, at **www.cambridgeinternational.org/retakes**

Candidates can carry forward their Cambridge International AS Level marks from one series to complete their Cambridge International A Level in a following series. The rules, time limits and regulations for carry-forward entries can be found in the *Cambridge Handbook* for the relevant year of assessment and the *Carry-forward regulations supplement* at **www.cambridgeinternational.org/eoguide**

To confirm what entry options are available for this syllabus, refer to the *Cambridge Guide to Making Entries* for the relevant series.

Language

This syllabus and the related assessment materials are available in English only.

Accessibility and equality

Syllabus and assessment design

At Cambridge we recognise that our candidates have highly diverse linguistic, cultural and socio-economic backgrounds, and may also have a variety of protected characteristics. Protected characteristics include special educational needs and disability (SEND), religion and belief, and characteristics related to gender and identity.

We apply accessible design principles to make our syllabuses and assessment materials as accessible and inclusive as possible. This includes reviewing the accessibility of language, layout, contexts and visual content. Using this approach means that we give all candidates the fairest possible opportunity to demonstrate their knowledge, skills and understanding.

Access arrangements

Our design principles aim to make sure our assessment materials are accessible for all candidates. To further minimise barriers faced by candidates with SEND, illness or injury, we offer a range of access arrangements and modified papers. This is the principal way in which we comply with our duty to make 'reasonable adjustments', as guided by the UK Equality Act 2010.

Important:

Requested access arrangements should be based on evidence of the candidate's barrier to taking an assessment and should also reflect their normal way of working. For Cambridge to approve an access arrangement, we need to agree that it constitutes a reasonable adjustment and does not affect the security or integrity of the assessment. Our access arrangement regulations can be found in section 1.3 of the *Cambridge Handbook* www.cambridgeinternational.org/eoguide

Applying for access arrangements

- Details of our standard access arrangements and modified question papers are available in section 1.3 of the *Cambridge Handbook* www.cambridgeinternational.org/eoguide
- Centres are expected to check the availability of access arrangements and modified question papers at the start of the course. Check the *Cambridge Handbook*, the assessment objectives listed in the syllabus document and, where applicable, any access arrangement restrictions listed in the syllabus document.
- Contact us at the start of the course to find out if we can approve an access arrangement that is not listed in the *Cambridge Handbook*.
- All applications should be made by the deadlines published in the *Cambridge Handbook*.

After the exam

Grading and reporting

Grades a, b, c, d or e indicate the standard a candidate achieved at Cambridge International AS Level. 'a' is the highest and 'e' is the lowest grade.

Grades A*, A, B, C, D or E indicate the standard a candidate achieved at Cambridge International A Level. A* is the highest and E is the lowest grade.

'Ungraded' means that the candidate's performance did not meet the standard required for the lowest grade (E or e). 'Ungraded' is reported on the statement of results but not on the certificate.

In specific circumstances, your candidates may see one of the following letters on their statement of results:

- Q (PENDING)
- X (NO RESULT).

These letters do not appear on the certificate.

If a candidate takes a Cambridge International A Level and fails to achieve grade E or higher, a Cambridge International AS Level grade will be awarded if both of the following apply:

- the components taken for the Cambridge International A Level by the candidate in that series included all the components making up a Cambridge International AS Level
- the candidate's performance on the AS Level components was sufficient to merit the award of a Cambridge International AS Level grade.

On the statement of results, Cambridge International AS & A Levels are shown as General Certificates of Education Advanced Subsidiary Level and Advanced Level, GCE Advanced Subsidiary Level (GCE AS Level) and GCE Advanced Level (GCE A Level).

On the certificates, Cambridge International AS & A Levels are shown as General Certificate of Education.

School feedback: 'Cambridge International A Levels are the 'gold standard' qualification. They are based on rigorous, academic syllabuses that are accessible to students from a wide range of abilities yet have the capacity to stretch our most able.'

Feedback from: Director of Studies, Auckland Grammar School, New Zealand

How students, teachers and higher education can use the grades

Cambridge International A Level

Assessment at Cambridge International A Level has two purposes:

- 1 to measure learning and achievement
The assessment confirms achievement and performance in relation to the knowledge, understanding and skills specified in the syllabus.
- 2 to show likely future success
The outcomes help predict which students are well prepared for a particular course or career and/or which students are more likely to be successful.
The outcomes help students choose the most suitable course or career.

Cambridge International AS Level

Assessment at Cambridge International AS Level has two purposes:

- 1 to measure learning and achievement
The assessment confirms achievement and performance in relation to the knowledge, understanding and skills specified in the syllabus.
- 2 to show likely future success
The outcomes help predict which students are well prepared for a particular course or career and/or which students are more likely to be successful.
The outcomes help students choose the most suitable course or career
The outcomes help decide whether students part way through a Cambridge International A Level course are making enough progress to continue
The outcomes guide teaching and learning in the next stages of the Cambridge International A Level course.

Changes to this syllabus for 2029, 2030 and 2031

The syllabus has been reviewed and revised for first examination in 2029.

You must read the whole syllabus before planning your teaching programme.

Changes to syllabus content

- We have included more detail to guide teaching. Each paper specifies the key questions and focus points that need to be taught. Key Content is specified under each focus point.
- We have included new guidance in the introductory section to the subject content on which aspects of the content are mandatory and which parts are included as exemplification. Candidates are encouraged to use case studies from their local or national contexts, as well as consider examples from both the Global North and Global South.
- Changes to Paper 1:
 - We have reduced the content in Paper 1 to make it more manageable. The reduction in content has resulted in some of the content being reordered.
 - We have included additional guidance to help teaching. For instance, the sampling techniques in the stages of research design have been specified.
 - We have broadened the approaches to research methodology to include indigenous research methodologies, ensuring the content reflects a wider range of sociological traditions.
 - The concepts of self-interest, social exchange and cultural deprivation have been removed.
- Changes to Paper 2, focus point 3.2:
 - We have revised the content to give teachers greater flexibility in how they exemplify different family arrangements.
 - We have included content on global migration and transnational families, reflecting contemporary family arrangements and ensuring the syllabus remains aligned with global trends.
 - We have included content on the impact of industrialisation, urbanisation, and de-industrialisation on family structure and roles in the Global North and Global South to ensure the content remains up to date with societal changes.
 - Focus point 3.2 has been renamed 'Family structure and diversity in changing industrial and global contexts' to reflect the new content.
- Other changes to Paper 2:
 - We have included additional guidance and restructured the content to help teaching.
 - The concept of parenthood has been added under focus point '4.2 Age and experiences of family life' for completeness.

continued

Changes to syllabus content

continued

- Changes to Paper 3:
 - We have added additional guidance to make the content more explicit and to enhance clarity. For instance, the concepts of ‘out-of-school’ and ‘in-school’ factors have been specified more explicitly to aid teaching.
 - The content has been reorganised to help with the order of teaching.
 - Content on digital technology in education has been added to focus points 5.2 and 6.1. The concept of ‘digital divide’ has been added to 6.1.
 - Content on intelligence and educational attainment has been removed.
- Changes to Paper 4:
 - We have retained the choice of content options. Candidates can continue to choose to study two options from a choice of three: Globalisation, Media and Religion.
 - We have specified the recommended guided learning hours for each option.
- Changes to Paper 4, Globalisation:
 - We have reduced the content to make it more manageable. The reduction in content has resulted in some of the content being reordered.
 - We have restructured the content to include a greater focus on the impacts of globalisation.
 - We have included additional guidance on the theories that candidates need to study in the new focus point ‘7.2 Perspectives on globalisation and global development’.
 - The sections on ‘Globalisation, power and politics’, ‘Globalisation and migration’ and ‘Globalisation and crime’ have been removed, with some of the content being incorporated to other aspects of the Globalisation content and into the revised content in Paper 2, focus point 3.2.
- Changes to Paper 4, Media:
 - We have updated the media content to ensure that it remains up to date with changes in the media.
 - We have reordered and refreshed the content for clarity and to provide a more coherent structure for teaching.
 - We have provided additional guidance to the content to aid teaching.
 - The terminology has been updated to reflect changes in the media. For example, the term ‘new media’ has been replaced with ‘digital media’.

continued

Changes to syllabus content
 continued

- Changes to Paper 4, Religion:
 - We have reordered and refreshed the content for clarity and to provide a more coherent structure for teaching.
 - We have provided additional guidance to the content to aid teaching.
 - Content on the significance of religion in societies today has been updated to incorporate a wider range of views from western and non-western societies.
 - New content (economic activity conducted as a religiously motivated duty, plus digital religion) has been introduced to ensure that the content remains up to date.
 - The list of recommended case studies under the key content on 'The influence of religion as a source of social and political change' has been expanded.
 - Skills development:
 - The skills gained from the study of the syllabus have been more explicitly articulated in the 'Aims' and 'Content overview' sections of the syllabus.
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**Changes to assessment
 (including changes to
 specimen papers)**

- We have updated the syllabus aims to better articulate the knowledge and skills that students develop during the study of the course.
- We have updated the assessment objectives to make them more concise and clear.
- The weightings of the assessment objectives in the qualification and across the components have been updated.
- Changes to assessment in Papers 1 and 2:
 - Question 2(a): The number of marks has reduced from eight to six marks.
 - Question 3(a): The number of marks has increased from ten to twelve marks.
The instructions have changed from 'Explain this view' to 'Explain this view by using two arguments to support it'.
 - Question 3(b): The instructions have changed from 'Using sociological material, give one argument against this view' to 'Evaluate this view by using one argument against it'.
 - Marking grids: We have updated the marking grids for Questions 2(a), 2(b), 3(a), 3(b) and the essay marking grids for Questions 4 and 5 to enhance clarity.

continued

**Changes to assessment
(including changes to
specimen papers)** continued

- Changes to assessment in Paper 3:
 - Question 2: The number of marks has reduced from eight to six marks.
 - Question 3: The number of marks has reduced from twelve to ten marks.
The instructions have changed from ‘Using sociological material, give two arguments against this view’ to ‘Evaluate this view by using two arguments against it’.
 - Question 4: The number of marks has increased from 26 to 30 marks.
 - Marking grids: We have updated the marking grids for Questions 2, 3 and 4 to enhance clarity.
 - Changes to assessment in Paper 4:
 - We have introduced shorter structured questions alongside the essay question for each of the three Paper 4 options of Globalisation, Media and Religion.
 - The paper has revised sections. In Section A, candidates answer two structured questions from a choice of three. Each question is divided into part (a) and part (b) questions each worth ten marks. In Section B, candidates answer one essay question from a choice of three. The number of marks for the essay question has reduced from 35 to 30 marks.
 - Marking grids: We have introduced new marking grids for the structured questions in Section A. The marking grids for the essay question in Section B have been updated to enhance clarity.
 - The command word ‘Give’ has been removed from the list of command words for use in the assessment of this syllabus.
 - Additional guidance has been added to the ‘Details of assessment’ section of the syllabus.
 - Updated specimen papers and mark schemes are published to accompany the new syllabus. These exemplify the changes to the subject content and assessment.
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Carry forward arrangements

- AS Level marks achieved in 9699 AS & A Level Sociology in 2028 **can** be carried forward to future series of 9699 AS & A Level Sociology in 2029, subject to the regulations set out in the *Cambridge Handbook* for the relevant year of assessment and the Carry-forward regulations supplement at www.cambridgeinternational.org/eoguide
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In addition to reading the syllabus, you should refer to the updated specimen assessment materials. The specimen papers will help your students become familiar with exam requirements and command words in questions. The specimen mark schemes show how students should answer questions to meet the assessment objectives.



Any textbooks endorsed to support the syllabus for examination from 2029 are suitable for use with this syllabus.

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Feedback from: Zhai Xiaoning, Deputy Principal, The High School Affiliated to Renmin University of China

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