2016 VCE Sociology examination report

General comments

Most responses to the 2016 Sociology examination included references to specific and detailed case studies, community groups and contemporary social movements. Students who supported their answers with insightful and accurate evidence from these groups gave higher-scoring responses.

Students need to be familiar with both the key knowledge and key skills being assessed. Many responses contained appropriate examples of content explored throughout the year.

Many students did not pay sufficient attention to key instructional terms. Students need to understand the difference between the instructional terms as these indicate the type of response required. The requirement to 'compare' and 'evaluate' in Sections C and D, for example, was overlooked by many students.

Specific information

Note: Student responses reproduced in this report have not been corrected for grammar, spelling or factual information.
This report provides sample answers or an indication of what answers may have included. Unless otherwise stated, these are not intended to be exemplary or complete responses.

The statistics in this report may be subject to rounding resulting in a total more or less than 100 per cent.

Section A

There were many high-scoring responses to this section of the examination. These responses included detailed examples and discussion of the perception of Australian Indigenous culture in a respectful and insightful way.

Question 1a.

Marks	0	1	2	Average
%	10	31	59	**1.5**

This question required students to provide an example of material culture and non-material culture from any of the three representations.

The following is an excerpt from a high-scoring response.

An example of material culture is the "sacred land" mentioned in Representation 1. An example of the non-material value of kinship ties is displayed through Roach's anger at being taken "from our mums and dads Our sisters and our brothers".

Question 1b.

Marks	0	1	2	Average
%	10	35	54	**1.5**

This question required students to describe one example of how government policy suppressed Australian Indigenous culture according to Representation 1. It should be noted that the 'stolen generations' is a group of people rather than a government policy.

To receive full marks students were required to:

- identify and briefly describe one of the following policies

  - protection and segregation policies (1800s to early 1900s)
  - assimilation policy (1951)
  - integration policy (1965)

- describe how the policy suppressed culture
- use evidence from Representation 1 to support their response.

The following is an excerpt from a high-scoring response.

Representation 1 recognises the assimilation policy as it mentions that children "stole[n]" from their "mums and dads". The Assimilation policy was introduced in 1951 and it was where the Australian government were taking those 'not of full blood' … and forcibly placing them in white Anglo-Saxon Australian homes in order to get rid of the "Aboriginal problem".

Question 1c.

Marks	0	1	2	Average
%	21	60	19	**1**

This question required students to outline the ways that Australian Indigenous people responded to the government policy identified in Question 1b.

High-scoring responses made reference to the following:

- more than one way that Australian Indigenous people responded to the suppression policy
- evidence from one of the representations or other material studied throughout the year.

An example of a response to the assimilation policy might be to elaborate briefly on the statement from Representation 1 'take your education, And find our own way home'. An example from other material could have included reference to the 1965 Freedom Ride or lobbying prior to the 1967 Referendum.

Question 2

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	Average
%	6	11	23	36	24	**2.6**

This question required students to explain how at least one of the representations might affect how an Australian Indigenous person perceives themselves. Students needed to explain how non-Indigenous Australians may perceive Australian Indigenous culture.

Low-scoring responses tended to focus on awareness rather than perception. High-scoring answers included ideas such as stereotyping, reconciling and empathising. They also made use of qualifying language; for example, 'likely' or 'may'.

To receive full marks for this question, students needed to:

- demonstrate an understanding of perception
- explain an Indigenous person's likely perception
- explain a non-Indigenous person's likely perception
- connect the exploration of ideas to evidence from at least one representation.

The following is an excerpt from a high-scoring response.

> *It may promote empathy and understanding as they realise how the … Australian Government policies left children in "foster homes. Thus they gain an understanding and view Australian Indigenous culture in a more positive light.*

Question 3

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	Average
%	22	11	17	17	14	10	10	**2.6**

This question required students to discuss the impacts of one national factor and one international factor that have supported and/or limited perceptions of Australian Indigenous culture.

In order to answer this question fully, students were required to:

- identify and discuss a valid national factor
- identify and discuss a valid international factor
- explore how each factor supported and/or limited the perception of Australian Indigenous culture
- use evidence from the representations and/or material studied throughout the year to support their discussion.

Examples of appropriate national factors explored included: reconciliation, the Apology (2008), the Redfern Park speech and the Northern Territory intervention. Reference to the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples is an example of a valid international factor.

Many students did not fully explore the potential impacts on the perception of Australian Indigenous culture. In addition, many responses did not include an example of an international factor.

The following are excerpts from high-scoring responses.

> *One national factor is the Apology (2008). The Apology … delivered by Prime Minister Kevin Rudd, acknowledged the past wrong doings of the Federal government in suppressing Australian Indigenous culture. The Apology contributed to a perception of Australian Indigenous culture as one of strength and resilience. Kevin Rudd noted the story of "Nanna Nugala Fejo, involving how children were hidden in a "creek bank" from the "welfare men" before they were taken "in the name of protection" … As it was broadcast in schools and on the television, all of Australian society could be impacted by the Apology.*

> *An international factor studied this year was the United Nations Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples ... This was adopted on the 3rd of April 2009 in Australia and was important as it was created with the assistance of Indigenous people. This supports perceptions of Indigenous people as it acknowledges the past suppressive actions of governments.*

Question 4

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	Average
%	5	12	25	44	14	**2.5**

This question required students to explain how the concepts of ethnocentrism and cultural relativism are different. Students needed to provide examples from Australian Indigenous culture to support their response.

In order to answer this question fully, students were required to:

- demonstrate an understanding of the concepts of ethnocentrism and cultural relativism
- provide evidence relating to Australian Indigenous culture
- outline one or more differences between these sociological terms.

The following is an excerpt from a high-scoring response.

Ethnocentrism refers to the practice of judging another culture by the standards of one's own culture. Whereas, cultural relativism refers to the practice of judging a culture by its own standards. Ethnocentrism promotes prejudicial and subjective views. Whereas, cultural relativism promotes an objective view that allows for respect and understanding of different cultures.

Section B

Some students referred to religions such as Muslims or Sikhs as ethnic groups. It should be noted that religions are not ethnic groups.

Question 5

Marks	0	1	2	Average
%	9	43	48	**1.4**

This question required students to provide two examples of Australia's ethnically diverse population by referring to the representation and other material studied.

The following is an example of a high-scoring response.

Ethnic diversity refers to the wide range of cultures, languages and religions of a country or society. One example of Australia's ethnic diversity is demonstrated in the representation's statement that people from "Afghanistan, Iraq, Liberia, Iran and Sierra Leone" have come to "Blacktown"… Additionally, Australia's ethnic diversity is evident in its migration rate of 5.74 per 1,000 of its population.

Question 6

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Average
%	9	13	20	21	18	9	6	2	2	**3**

This question required students to explain how one ethnic group they had studied had experienced and addressed challenges.

In order to answer this question fully, students were required to:

- make reference to a specific ethnic group
- explain challenges (e.g. language barriers, loneliness, seeking employment, racism, othering)
- explain the actions involved in addressing the challenges (e.g. provision of friendship and support groups, attending a language program)
- use evidence to support the explanation of challenge.

Many students did not provide examples of more than one challenge. In addition, students often neglected to outline the specific methods used to address the challenges identified.

The following is an excerpt from a high-scoring response.

The Hazara people are a group from Afghanistan who fled to Australia due to being persecuted by the Al-Qaeda. They live in the Sunraysia region (north west Victoria) and predominantly speak Dari. They are Shia Muslims ... This group upon arrival in Australia had been challenged

by mental health problems due to suffering trauma from their experiences in their former country and their struggle to come to Australia … They addressed these challenges through help from local social institutions such as Tristar Mildura Medical Clinic who have multilingual doctors who can speak Dari, therefore making it less intimidating to open up about their mental health.

Question 7

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Average
%	21	14	16	14	14	8	8	4	**2.6**

This question required students to provide examples of how social institutions respond to ethnic diversity at local, state and national levels.

To achieve a high score, students needed to:

- demonstrate an understanding of the concept of ethnic diversity (through a definition or reference to Australia comprising many cultural groups)
- provide descriptive details of local, state and federal social institutions
- explain how each institution responds to the needs of ethnic groups (i.e. the specific support that they provided)
- use evidence from the representations and/or material studied throughout the year to support their discussion.

Many students did not provide an example of each type of social institution. Some students described only the social institutions, without exploring how they interacted with the various ethnic groups.

The following are examples of excerpts from high-scoring responses.

Blacktown City Local Government Area responded to ethnic diversity by assisting with the resettling of Sudanese Australians. With the assistance of "Church and organisations such as SydWest Multicultural Services Inc.", Sudanese-Australians and other newly arrived migrants can get help to cope with the trauma from their original country.

AMES Australia is a state institution which has responded to ethnic diversity by offering ways for job seekers who have recently migrated from other countries to find work. They work with individuals from different ethnic groups such as Greek Australians to find employment and become productive members of society.

The AFL is a federal institution that has addressed ethnic diversity in Australia. The league runs a Youth Partnership program and the 'Unity Cup' … Founded by the Essendon Football Club, the Unity Cup gives all cultures an opportunity to participate … welcoming all cultures and ways of life.

Question 8

Marks	0	1	2	3	Average
%	6	19	46	29	**2**

This question required students to explain how race and ethnicity differ.

In order to fully address this question, students needed to:

- demonstrate an understanding of the concepts of race and ethnicity, for example:
  - race refers to an outdated concept used to classify people based on perceived visible physical characteristics, such as skin colour or facial features
  - ethnicity is a category used to describe the shared culture or distinctive way of life of a group of people

- explain the difference between the concepts
  - for example, ethnicity allows for a greater range of factors to be considered when grouping people; race has a biological focus, whereas, ethnicity has a social focus; race is ethnocentric and ethnicity is culturally relative.

Section C

This section of the examination paper was not answered well by many students. The main area of concern related to the lack of comparison. When comparing, answers must show similarities and differences between factors.

Question 9

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Average
%	14	13	16	15	16	12	9	3	1	0	0	3.1

This question required students to compare the success of two factors that affect the ability of social movements to create change.

Low-scoring responses identified two social movements but did not make direct comparisons between the groups. High-scoring responses compared how two different movements used methods such as the media, a charismatic leader, supporters, financial resources, vandalism, petitions, protest marches or celebrity endorsements to attempt to achieve change.

Students' responses needed to:

- demonstrate an understanding of the concepts of social movement and social change
- make reference to two specific social movements
- describe the factors employed by the social movements
- explore the level of success achieved by each movement
- engage in a comparison of the movement's ability to achieve social change using the two factors
- use detailed evidence to support their comparison.

The following is an example of an excerpt from a high-scoring response.

Two examples of social movements are Greenpeace Australia Pacific and the 19th Century women's suffrage movement … Both movements utilised legitimate power. Greenpeace Australia used it through boycotting unethical products, peaceful protests and demonstrations, and petitions. The suffrage movement utilised it through demonstrations and petitions … Use of legitimate power has led these movements to enact significant social change (e.g. providing environmental sustainability and granting women the right to vote …).

Question 10

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Average
%	18	14	18	15	12	10	7	3	2	0	0	2.8

This question required students to compare the characteristics of two types of social movements in the emergence stage. Students needed to refer to material studied throughout the year to support their comparison.

Students' responses needed to:

- demonstrate an understanding of the concepts of social movement, emergence and social movement lifecycle
- accurately identify two movements in the emergence stage of the social movement lifecycle

- accurately identify two different types of movements (from the four types of social movements: alternative, redemptive, reformative, revolutionary)
- compare the characteristics of each movement in the first stage of the lifecycle (e.g. person[s] who initiated the movement, time period, area[s] of concern, degree of social change desired)
- use detailed evidence to support the comparison.

High-scoring responses accurately identified two different types of social movements and included detailed evidence to enhance the description. Many responses, however, did not compare any features about the social movements. They simply described each group and not did not make any links about the features of each in the emergence stage.

The following is an example of an excerpt from a high-scoring response.

A reformative social movement such as Animal Liberation Victoria (ALV) differs from a revolutionary movement like the Russian Revolution as one in the emergence stage sought to change an entire society (Russia), while ALV sought holistic change in specific areas. While reformative movements and revolutionary ones both seek to influence all members of a society, their emergence was founded on different principles. While the Russian revolution sought to change an entire society, ALV's emergence was much smaller and less radical, with the belief to promote veganism.

Section D

Question chosen	0	11	12
%	3	36	62

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	Average
%	5	7	11	9	8	8	10	5	7	6	4	4	5	2	3	2	1	1	1	0	0	6.3

This section was not answered well by many students. Many responses comprised a discussion rather than an evaluation. An evaluation refers to a process of careful appraisal, emphasising advantages and disadvantages and determining their importance.

When identifying communities for research, caution must be applied. Engaging in a superficial discussion about country towns like Nimbin or Korumburra based on a single documentary or referencing a whole social media application like Twitter or Instagram was not appropriate. In order to engage in a detailed case study, regardless of the form, a range of primary and/or secondary sources are required.

Question 11

This question required students to use sociological theories to evaluate a specific community experience. In doing so, students were required to refer to a specific community studied.

In order to answer this question fully, students needed to:

- demonstrate an understanding of the concept of community
- demonstrate an understanding of community experience (i.e. participation, belonging, feelings of inclusion and exclusion)
- make reference to more than one sociological theory (i.e. the theories of Ferdinand Tonnies and Manuel Castells)
- explore the factors that cause different community experiences (e.g. information and communication technology, community changes and sense of community)

- evaluate 'community experience', therefore making an assessment about whether, overall, the nature of this experience is positive, negative or both
- use detailed evidence studied throughout the year to support their response.

Question 12

This question required students to evaluate factors that influence a sense of community. In doing so, students were required to assess whether the factors selected strengthened or weakened the sense of community within a group they had studied.

In order to answer this question fully, it was necessary to:

- demonstrate an understanding of the concepts of community and sense of community
- make reference to a specific community
- explore two or more factors that influence a sense of community (e.g. political, economic, environmental, technological and social factors)
- evaluate each factor and their roles in supporting or compromising a sense of community
- use detailed evidence studied throughout the year to support their response.