2018 VCE Sociology examination report

General comments

Student responses to the 2018 Sociology examination included a range of engaging case studies. Students who referenced a variety of sources and examples tended to generate higher-scoring responses.

The questions required students to apply their knowledge in very specific ways. Students who paid careful attention to the various parts of complex questions and the associated key instructional terms scored highly.

It is important that students are aware that examination questions can be drawn from all parts of the study design, including the introductions to each Area of Study. Students should use relevant case studies to support their responses. It was of concern that some students drew upon a single case study as evidence across questions relating to Australian Indigenous culture, ethnicity and community. The study design makes it clear that Australian Indigenous groups cannot be used as case studies for ethnicity or community. In addition, there were some inappropriate social movement case studies used. For example, the study design notes that social movements need to be studied within their 'current context', therefore, responses that referred to the suffragettes as a case study were inappropriate.

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

Question 1

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	Average
%	1	6	21	43	29	2.9

This question was well answered by many students. Answers needed to make reference to the major issue in Representation 1 and comment on the awareness of Australian Indigenous culture. To receive full marks for this question, students needed to:

- identify the issue in the representation of one of the following:

  - the Change the Date campaign
  - Triple J's decision to change the Hottest 100 event in order to be inclusive

- demonstrate an understanding of the term 'awareness'
- use evidence from Representation 1 to support their explanation.

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

In representation 1, Triple J builds awareness about Australian Indigenous culture, by 'moving the countdown to one day later … to a date less antagonistic to Australia's first people'. Moving the date of the countdown builds awareness for non-Indigenous Australians that the current date can be seen as Invasion Day for many Indigenous Australians and is not yet 'inclusive respectful … for all Australians'.

Question 2

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	Average
%	5	9	19	29	22	12	5	**3.1**

This question required students to explain how responses from Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians in Representation 1 supported the process of reconciliation. Higher-scoring responses noted that the action involved symbolic reconciliation. To receive full marks for this question, students needed to:

- demonstrate an understanding of reconciliation
- identify that the reconciliation demonstrated in the representation was symbolic
- identify one or more Australian Indigenous responses from the representation and explain how this was likely to support reconciliation
- identify one or more non-Indigenous responses from the representation and explain how this was likely to support reconciliation.

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

Reconciliation refers to unity and justice among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders and non-Indigenous people. It promotes respect and understanding among all Australians. Representation 1 supports symbolic reconciliation, as it highlights past injustices and promotes the rights of Indigenous people. Non-Indigenous people from Triple J support reconciliation as they 'want the Hottest 100 to be an inclusive and respectful event for all Australians', illustrating how they are considering Indigenous voices and promoting respect and understanding of the Indigenous viewpoint.

Question 3

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	Average
%	4	9	34	29	25	**2.6**

This question required students to explain the difference between the sociological concepts of race and ethnicity. To fully address this question it was necessary for students to provide a full exploration of the two concepts. Two definitions with the word 'whereas' in between was not adequate for full marks.

Students were required to:

- demonstrate an understanding of the concept of race
- demonstrate an understanding of the concept of ethnicity
- identify and elaborate upon a difference between the two concepts.

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

The difference between the two concepts is that race allows for a shallow surface level perception of a person, hence promoting generalisations and stereotypes which are ethnocentric. Ethnicity, however is a concept that allows one to look at a group of people at a

deeper level, promoting a culturally relative standpoint which is preferred by sociologists, as it allows for understanding and consideration of multiple characteristics of a group.

Question 4

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	Average
%	10	8	13	24	18	20	7	**3.2**

This question required students to demonstrate an understanding of the purpose and application of ethical methodology. Lower-scoring responses overlooked the purpose of ethical methodology, and did not show how methods were or should be applied.

Students were required to:

- explain the purpose of ethical methodology
- demonstrate an understanding of two or more aspects of ethical methodology drawn from voluntary participation, informed consent, privacy or the confidentiality of data
- show how each method was or could be applied to an ethnic group.

The following are excerpts from high-scoring responses.

Excerpt 1

Ethical methodology is a set of guidelines for teachers, students, sociologists and researchers to following when conducting sociological enquiry, set by TASA (The Australian Sociological Association). There are four parts to follow: voluntary participation, informed consent, privacy and maintaining the confidentiality of data. The purpose of ethical methodology is to ensure that no harm will come to the participants in the research, and that their privacy is kept, and respect is maintained throughout the whole process.

Excerpt 2

Privacy would be upheld through the use of pseudonyms in the report of findings, and not using names or addresses, or any information the participant considers private in any publication.

Finally, confidentiality would be upheld through the holding of findings in a password protected document, and the destroying of evidence once it has been used.

Question 5

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	Average
%	2	9	23	46	19	**2.7**

Many students answered this question well. It required students to describe the sociological concept of community. Students also needed to make reference to the theory of Ferdinand Tönnies in their response.

Students were required to:

- demonstrate an understanding of the concept of community
- provide an overview of Tönnies's theory, making reference to both Gemeinschaft (community) and Gesellschaft (society) using appropriate descriptions and examples.

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

Sociologists define community as a group of people who share social relations through being geographically close to each other and/or being in regular contact with each other. German sociologist Ferdinand Tonnies first became interested in the study of communities at a time of social change due to the Industrial Revolution.

… Tonnies developed two concepts to describe these differences; Gemeinschaft, which described those living in villages with features of being strongly tied to kinship and family bonds, and Gesellschaft, used to describe communities that are urbanised, stating that they are less close and lead to relationships that are weaker than those of Gemeinschaft.

Question 6

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	Average
%	9	19	27	25	14	5	2	**2.4**

This question required students to explore how a geographical characteristic could affect the experience of a community. In doing so, it was necessary for students to make reference to a specific community group they had studied that year.

Many students did not appear to understand the nature of 'geographical characteristics' and wrote about why people were not able to join particular communities due to the group's location. High-scoring responses noted how geographical features such as specifically designed features of a building improved the groups' experience of community.

Students were required to:

- provide a description of a specific community
- identify and elaborate upon a geographical characteristic
- explain the relationship between the geographical characteristic and experience of community
- demonstrate an understanding of the notion of an experience of community
- use evidence studied throughout the year to support their response.

The following is a possible response.

One community studied this year was the Sampson Soccer Club based in the southern suburbs of Melbourne. This interest-based community includes 40 girls from the Club's senior girls' league. The age of the members ranges from 15 to 22 years of age. This league is relatively new. Prior to 2016, the girls would need to join other clubs if they wanted to play beyond the junior program.

There are many geographical characteristics that could affect the experience of community. This includes proximity and accessibility, climate, scenic quality, landforms and natural resources, or built features such as community centres. Built features include modifications that people have made to the land. The 'built feature' of an extension of the training facilities had a positive impact on the Sampson Soccer Club community in 2017. The notion of an 'experience of community' refers to what it is like for individuals to belong to and participate in a community group.

In 2015, in order to address the ongoing loss of membership, Sampson Soccer Club commenced fundraising for a significant extension of their building to accommodate senior girls by 2017. The Club's administration team successfully acquired a 'Keep Girls in Sport' government grant from the Victorian department of 'Sport and Recreation'. In addition, the players and their families engaged in a range of fundraising activities, including sausage sizzles, raffles, cinema and trivia nights, over 18 months in order to acquire enough funding for their project.

Over the summer of 2016–2017 the Sampson Soccer Club building was dramatically altered. The building was extended and a purpose-built gym was added as a girls-only training space and meeting room. The impact of the new building has been significant. The girls' coach stated that 'the girls now feel like they fully belong to the Club in their own right'. This feeling of connection was also noted by the under-16s captain, Jessie. She said, 'We love it', and stated that 'The younger girls now feel less self-conscious when we do weights and stretches'. In addition, one player, Clare, who had considered leaving the Club stated that the space 'feels like ours, rather than a place that the boys let us use'.

Overall, the development and use of a new building for the senior girls at the Sampson Soccer Club has helped the girls to fully participate in all elements of the community. It helped them to feel as if they fully belong.

Question 7

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	Average
%	10	27	21	28	10	5	**2.2**

This question required students to classify a specific social movement in Representation 2 according to its type, specifically, alternative or reformative. Students who scored highly justified the reasoning for their assessment.

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

- select and accurately identify one of the social movements in the representation
- classify the social movement as either alternative or reformative
- justify their assessment by identifying key differences between the two categories
- use evidence from Representation 2 to support their position.

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

The social movement in representation 2 is reformative … A reformative movement aims to create moderate change, within existing political systems. The social movement 'changes to the Residential Tenancies Act', which is an existing political Act. The social movement wants to create change for more than individuals … so it is not alternative. While the movement does wish to amend the current 'Residential Tenancies Act', the movement does not wish to overthrow the entire political system.

Question 8

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	Average
%	11	12	24	29	18	6	**2.5**

This question required students to examine two factors that had contributed to the success of the social movement referenced in Representation 2. High-scoring answers made clear connections between each factor and their role in achieving social change.

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

- demonstrate an understanding of social change
- make reference to a specific social movement from Representation 2
- identify and describe two factors that contributed to the success of the social movement
- show how each factor potentially led to the social change of the movement.

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

One factor from representation 2 that contributed to the success of the movement was the face of the movement, 'celebrity vet Dr Chris Brown'. Having a celebrity vet would have increased publicity for the social movement, and raised more awareness. The public may have seen 'Dr Chris Brown' as a credible source, so could have joined or supported the movement.

Section B

Question 1

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Average
%	18	13	19	19	13	7	5	3	2	1	0	**2.8**

This question required students to examine two Australian Indigenous responses to the historical suppression of culture. Students were also required to comment on the effectiveness of these responses in protecting Australian Indigenous culture.

Many responses to this question were low-scoring. Those students who examined how each response contributed to the preservation of Australian Indigenous culture produced higher-scoring responses. Some students chose examples that were contemporary in nature, such as the Close the Gap campaign, and did not make links to the historical suppression of culture. In addition, some responses related to non-Indigenous actions.

Students were required to:

- select and briefly describe responses that were related to the suppression of Australian Indigenous culture through the implementation of the interrelated protection and segregation policies and/or the policy of assimilation
- demonstrate an understanding of cultural suppression
- describe two Australian Indigenous responses to historical suppression
- examine the effectiveness of the responses to the attempted suppression
- use detailed evidence to support their response.

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

In response to the assimilation policy … Charles Perkins, an Indigenous leader, led an event called the 'Freedom Rides' … he led a group of Indigenous students from the University of Sydney around NSW. The purpose of the rides was to highlight the injustice and oppression faced by Indigenous Australians. The response was effective in that it raised awareness about Australian culture … However, the rides were met with local hostility from many of the towns, and on at least one occasion, violence.

A response to Protection and Segregation … was outright rebellion by some Indigenous Australians. On reserves … Some would rebel, by meeting in secret to … practice customs together to keep their culture alive … Overall, the response was effective at keeping culture alive, since in 2018 many of the past suppressed Indigenous cultures are still being practiced today.

Question 2

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Average
%	7	9	15	21	18	15	11	4	1	0	0	**3.5**

This question required students to analyse barriers and enablers to the experience of belonging within Australian society, with reference to a specific group. Higher-scoring responses examined the group's sense of belonging within Australian society rather than within the ethnic group.

Students were required to provide an overview of the barriers and enablers to be explored, drawing on one or more of the following:

- customs and traditions, social attitudes, media or political factors
- an overview of an ethnic group
- explanation of how two or more barriers can or may influence the experience of belonging using examples from one ethnic group

- explanation of how two or more enablers can or may influence the experience of belonging using examples from one ethnic group

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

The vocal opinions of politicians have limited a sense of belonging for Chinese Australians. Due to the power and prestige associated with a position of political power, the opinion of a politician can greatly influence the views of people … Pauline Hanson, in her maiden speech created fear in Australians of being 'swamped by Asians'. Such comments that portray Chinese as living in 'ghetto's and assimilate' acts as a barrier by preventing feelings of warmth and acceptance from fellow Australians.

Question 3

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Average
%	8	8	14	24	18	13	9	5	2	1	0	**3.1**

This question required students to explain why feelings of inclusion and exclusion can vary within a specific community group. Higher-scoring responses included case study quotations from a range of participants.

Student responses needed to:

- provide an overview of a specific community group
- show an understanding of the terms inclusion and exclusion
- identify a position that specifies why feelings of inclusion and exclusion vary within a community group
- identify factors that may have caused feelings of inclusion and exclusion
- explain how and why these factors may cause inclusion and exclusion within the specific community group
- use detailed evidence to support their explanation.

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

The small local community of Wayout Wodonga … functions as a government funded organisation to support LGBT+ youth and educate the wider community on LGBT+ issues. Due to its government support, the group is required to only include those between the ages of 12 and 21 as a condition of its funding, and so it's ability to be inclusive is restricted to a narrow age range.

Question 4

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Average
%	11	12	19	19	16	10	6	4	2	0	0	**3.1**

This question required students to evaluate the degree to which an opposition affected a social movement's capacity to achieve its goals. Higher-scoring responses focused on the actions of the opposition and engaged in an evaluation rather than a discussion.

Student responses needed to:

- demonstrate an understanding of the concept of power, according to Max Weber
- provide an overview of a social movement and their opposition
- provide an outline of the social movement's goals (desired social change)
- provide an overview and evidence of the actions used by the opposition to prevent the social movement from achieving its goals
- evaluate and draw conclusions about the effectiveness of the opposition and its efforts to prevent the social movement achieving its goals.

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

The Ban Live Export movement … campaigned for by Animals Australia ... has not achieved effective alteration to legislation … The government's use of power to control legislation means they have been notably successful in denying the goals of the social movement. This is most evident in Sussan Ley, a member of Parliament's, failed to introduce a bill to ban live exports to Parliament in 2018.