



Sociological Research Methods



3.7 Sociological research methods

In the context of the various social structures, social processes and social issues detailed in the specification, students should be able to:

- identify, describe and explain various methods and methodological issues
- identify and explain the advantages and disadvantages, strengths and weaknesses of a particular method for a specific area of research
- demonstrate an understanding of the process of research design for a specific area of research, including practical difficulties and ethical issues
- demonstrate an understanding of the relevance and usefulness of various primary and secondary sources for a specific area of research
- demonstrate the ability to interpret data presented in a variety of forms.

Content	Additional information
Research design	Describe and explain the processes involved in research design: the establishment of appropriate aims and relevant hypotheses, the use of pilot studies, the selection of appropriate sampling methods and the analysis of data.
Qualitative and quantitative methods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describe and explain qualitative and quantitative methods (questionnaires, interviews, observations) and assess the value, application, and strengths and weaknesses of different methods. • Assess the usefulness of the mixed methods approach.
Different types of data	Assess the usefulness of different types of data, qualitative and quantitative data, and official and non-official statistics.
Primary and secondary sources	Describe and explain primary and secondary sources of data.
Interpretation of data	Demonstrate the ability to interpret graphs, diagrams, charts and tables to discern patterns and trends in statistical data.
Practical issues	Practical issues including time, cost and access.
Ethical issues	Ethical issues are consent, confidentiality and harm to participants and how the issues can be addressed.

The information above is from your exam specification.

It tells you exactly what you need to know about Sociological Research Methods before the exam!



Design a Sociological Study!

1. **Generate some hypotheses you might wish to test.** Refer to each section of the GCSE course.
 - a. A hypothesis is a statement (not a question)
 - b. A hypothesis must be testable: it is a statement you will show to be either true or false through your study.
 - c. Most hypotheses involve positing a correlation or causal relationship between two sociological factors. For example:
 - i. "Poverty predicts low educational attainment"
 - ii. "Parental values are the main cause of crime"
 - iii. "The more unequal a society is, the more crime there will be"

Education

6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____

Family

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Hypotheses are testable explanation of a problem, phenomenon, or observation. Both quantitative and qualitative research involve formulating a **hypothesis** to address the research problem". For example, a sociological researcher might make a prediction about what they think will happen or is happening in their experiment or suggest a link between two sociological factors.



Crime & Deviance

16. _____
17. _____
18. _____
19. _____
20. _____

Social Stratification

11. _____
12. _____
13. _____
14. _____
15. _____



In this workbook you are going to design 4 research projects
Pick 4 of the hypotheses you have written, or come up with some new ones!
You will need to design a research project for each one: stating the research
methods you will use and justifying your choices.

1

2

3

4

Sociology Research Project 1

Hypothesis

Research Method 1

Advantages

Disadvantages

Why did you choose this method?

What is your sample method, size and demographic? Why?

Research Method 2

Advantages

Disadvantages

Why did you choose this method?

What is your sample method, size and demographic? Why?

Ethical Concerns

Practical Concerns



Draw a diagram, picture, or flow-diagram
or your research in action!
Show each stage of research and how it tests the hypothesis...

A large, empty rounded rectangular box with a blue border, intended for drawing a diagram, picture, or flow-diagram of the research process.

What secondary sources will you use to bolster your research? Be specific...

A large, empty rounded rectangular box with a blue border, intended for listing secondary sources used to bolster research.

What do you predict your research findings will be? Why?

A large, empty rounded rectangular box with a blue border, intended for predicting research findings and explaining the reasons.

How to improve this study... (to be completed by a peer)

A large, empty rounded rectangular box with a red border, intended for providing suggestions on how to improve the study.

Sociology Research Project 2

Hypothesis

Research Method 1

Advantages

Disadvantages

Why did you choose this method?

What is your sample method, size and demographic? Why?

Research Method 2

Advantages

Disadvantages

Why did you choose this method?

What is your sample method, size and demographic? Why?

Ethical Concerns

Practical Concerns



Draw a diagram, picture, or flow-diagram
or your research in action!
Show each stage of research and how it tests the hypothesis...

What secondary sources will you use to bolster your research? Be specific...

What do you predict your research findings will be? Why?

How to improve this study... (to be completed by a peer)

Sociology Research Project 3

Hypothesis

Research Method 1

Advantages

Disadvantages

Why did you choose this method?

What is your sample method, size and demographic? Why?

Research Method 2

Advantages

Disadvantages

Why did you choose this method?

What is your sample method, size and demographic? Why?

Ethical Concerns

Practical Concerns



A large, empty rounded rectangular frame with a blue border, intended for a student to write their response to the question above.

What secondary sources will you use to bolster your research? Be specific...

A large, empty rounded rectangular frame with a blue border, intended for a student to write their response to the question above.

What do you predict your research findings will be? Why?

A large, empty rounded rectangular frame with a blue border, intended for a student to write their response to the question above.

How to improve this study... (to be completed by a peer)

A large, empty rounded rectangular frame with a red border, intended for a student to write their response to the question above.

Sociology Research Project 4

Hypothesis

Research Method 1

Advantages

Disadvantages

Why did you choose this method?

What is your sample method, size and demographic? Why?

Research Method 2

Advantages

Disadvantages

Why did you choose this method?

What is your sample method, size and demographic? Why?

Ethical Concerns

Practical Concerns



Draw a diagram, picture, or flow-diagram
or your research in action!
Show each stage of research and how it tests the hypothesis...

What secondary sources will you use to bolster your research? Be specific...

What do you predict your research findings will be? Why?

How to improve this study... (to be completed by a peer)

Topic/Ability	Shade RED/AMBER/ GREEN	Confidence Rating 1-10
Research design		
Describe and explain the processes involved in research design: the establishment of appropriate aims and relevant hypotheses, the use of pilot studies, the selection of appropriate sampling methods and the analysis of data.		
Qualitative and quantitative methods		
Describe and explain qualitative and quantitative methods (questionnaires, interviews, observations) and assess the value, application, and strengths and weaknesses of different methods.		
Assess the usefulness of the mixed methods approach		
Different types of data		
Assess the usefulness of different types of data, qualitative and quantitative data, and official and nonofficial statistics.		
Primary and secondary sources		
Describe and explain primary and secondary sources of data		
Interpretation of data		
Demonstrate the ability to interpret graphs, diagrams, charts and tables to discern patterns and trends in statistical data		
Practical issues including time, cost and access		
Ethical issues such as consent, confidentiality and harm to participants and how the issues can be addressed		



Congratulations on reaching the end!
To check progress, rate your understanding and confidence for each section of the 'Research Methods' aspect of the course!