



GENERAL COMMENTS

Student responses to the 2010 Sociology examination included many contemporary examples that were used in a meaningful way to support discussion. Students who addressed all elements of questions demonstrated an understanding of key concepts and provided detailed examples in Section D performed well. Some students demonstrated a good understanding of theories and case studies but did not fully address each question. It is important that students do not rely on prepared answers.

SPECIFIC INFORMATION

Note: Student responses reproduced herein have not been corrected for grammar, spelling or factual information.

Section A

Question 1

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Average
%	4	3	5	7	13	18	18	16	10	5	2	5.4

Students were required to examine the factors that help to maintain and weaken a sense of community. They needed to refer to case studies that had been studied throughout the year. Good examples included the use of Roland Warren's five functions of community (mutual support, economic welfare, social control, socialisation and social participation), the negative yet unifying experience of racism, and the importance of having shared goals, such as within the carer community.

In order to address this question thoroughly students needed to:

- demonstrate an understanding of community and a sense of community (a feeling that members have of belonging and connection to one another and the group)
- identify and explain how two or more factors maintain and weaken a sense of community.

Some students struggled to explain how the identified factor maintains and weakens a sense of community and others confused the concepts of inclusion and exclusion with sense of community. Some students looked at ways communities could be strengthened or weakened, but did not explain how to create a sense of community.

The following is an excerpt from a good response.

A sense of community is when people are made to feel part of a community ... an example of this is joining a sporting club. Point Lonsdale Surf Lifesaving Club has over 300 members. It runs in the summer months teaching people about surf awareness through activities. The Surf Club prides itself on inclusion and even has an inclusion policy. Factors, such as, the annual barbeque and fund raising events help to maintain a sense of community. Even people who aren't members are invited to join events, such as, the toga parties and New Years eve fundraisers. Participating in Club activities also helps to maintain a sense of community ... doing activities such as the Bronze Medallion – which is a Lifesaving qualification allows people to make new friends and associate with people from the local community.

Exclusion is a factor that weakens a sense of community. People who are unable to participate in Lifesaving events such as the elderly or disabled may feel excluded ... If someone who can't swim wants to participate in activities like nipper training competitions this may cause both [groups], the members of the club and the person who can't swim to feel excluded and lose their sense of community.

Question 2

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Average
%	7	5	5	6	7	11	15	16	18	8	2	5.5

This question required students to discuss two different understandings of the concept of community. The range of acceptable definitions included sociology theory such as Ferdinand Tonnies's *Gemeinschaft* (traditional) and *Gesellschaft* (modern) groups, or generally accepted definitions that described the key features of traditional and modern groups.

To successfully address this question, students needed to:

- demonstrate an understanding of community



- outline two different concepts (understandings) of community and discuss the differences between them
- provide specific examples of community groups to support their discussion.

Good answers referred to specific theories such as Ferdinand Tonnies' or Roland Warren's five functions of community. Some responses lacked discussion of the features that were similar and/or different about the 'understandings' of community.

The following is an excerpt from a good response.

A traditional community refers to a group of people who share social relationships through being geographically close. German sociological Ferdinand Tonnies used the term 'Gemeinschaft' to describe traditional communities and [he] believes relationships are based on blood, mind or land, [are] close knit, culturally homogeneous and more exclusive. The indigenous [peoples] of Wadeye is an example of a traditional community as it is bound by its geographical location 350 kilometres south west of Darwin in the Northern Territory.

A modern community is a group of people who [share] social relationships through sharing similar interests, beliefs and activities. Tonnies describes this concept of community as a 'Gessellschaft' community and believes relationships are superficial and fleeting, culturally heterogeneous and more inclusive. An example of a modern community is the 'International Artist Academy' as members share the same interests in music.

An example of a gemeinschaft and a gessellschaft community would be the St. Johns Uniting Church of Essendon. It's based on traditional church values and beliefs and many of its members attend because they are geographically close ... yet it has [also] adapted to changes in technology, like the internet, and now has a webpage which can provide information to new members or old. It is also very culturally heterogeneous, with members from a diverse range of cultures and ethnicities ... [for example] they have a special sermon just for people of Pacific Islander background.

Section B

Question 3a.

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	Average
%	1	3	11	21	30	33	3.8

This question was well answered by many students. Students were required to make a clear statement, identifying that the Australian flag is not representative of all cultural groups and/or that the cartoons were a satirical statement about people's views about the flag. It was also necessary for students to provide two or more examples of how Australian attitudes about the flag were represented. For example, the Kudelka cartoon, suggesting that the flag was an 'outdated colonial relic', and Leunig's cartoon possibly displaying an attitude of disrespect by manipulating the Indigenous flag.

Some students misread this question and responded by identifying Australian attitudes about issues indicated in the representations of the flag (for example, the treatment of asylum seekers) rather than attitudes to the Australian flag.

The following is an excerpt from a good response.

The Union Jack on the Australian flag is described as an 'out dated colonial relic', which suggests that this illustrator wants a more modern ... representation rather than this loan [from the] United Kingdom ... The 'Great New Aussie Flag' shows a more patriotic attitude to what Australia stands for with the 'blue sky, football' and 'beer stabbie'.

Question 3b.

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	Average
%	2	7	18	38	22	13	3.1

This question required students to present a clear contention and provide at least two examples relating to whether the attitudes represented on the flags reflected the culture and aspirations of multicultural Australia.

Appropriate answers included:

- yes, the Indigenous perspective is often overlooked despite Australia being a multicultural nation, and the republican debate suggests that many Australians feel the flag needs to be updated
- no, the Australian flag is considered to be an important symbol of national identity for many Australians (for example, the use of the flag on Australia Day and at sporting events).



Some students did not demonstrate an understanding of key terms such as culture or multiculturalism, or refer to both flags.

The following is an excerpt from a good response.

The first, 'Know Your Australian Flag' [cartoon] ... represents the attitude that the Australian Flag does not reflect the culture and aspirations of multicultural Australia. It references 'boat people', a negative term used to describe asylum seekers and the 'Outdated Colonial Relic', pointed toward the English flag in the corner, this suggest[s] that the Australian flag represents a more monocultural society.

The second, 'Great New Aussie Flag' reflects a narrow, monocultural view of what Australian culture is. It does not reflect the culture and aspirations of multicultural Australia. It does not reflect our indigenous people[s] or our culturally, religiously and ethnically diverse society.

Question 3c.

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Average
%	11	3	7	11	13	17	14	12	7	3	2	4.6

This question required students to discuss a controversial aspect of Australian national culture. In order to address this question thoroughly, students needed to:

- demonstrate an understanding of national culture
- identify a controversial aspect of national culture (for example racism, the treatment of asylum seekers and problems relating to federal/state relations)
- outline and briefly discuss both sides of the debate
- use evidence from both representations or material studied throughout the year to support their discussion.

Many students discussed the experience of racism by Melbourne's Indian international students, Australia's response to asylum seekers and the treatment of Indigenous peoples. Some students did not examine both sides of the debate or wrote about more than one controversy.

The following is an excerpt from a good response.

National culture refers to the physical characteristics of a nation including: language, lifestyle, events and icons. A controversial aspect of Australian national culture is multiculturalism, and whether we can manage to have a unifying national culture ... As sociologist, Hugh McKay believes, Australia is a young nation, one which is constantly evolving ... Despite racial disparity, the growth of knowledge and understanding that comes with meeting people from differing backgrounds rewards Australia with a unifying national culture ... Australia [embracing] 'Harmony Day' which occurs annually, [reflects that we] embrace diversity as we are a nation of equality of opportunity for all.

[This diversity can present challenges, such as, racism, including] ... the 2005 Cronulla Riots where anyone who did not look 'Australian' was targeted and bashed, and the recent attacks on Indian students in Melbourne.

Section C

Question 4a.

Marks	0	1	2	Average
%	4	11	85	1.8

Most students responded very well to this question. They were required to provide specific examples of democratic beliefs from the representation.

Examples included:

- respecting other people's differences and choices
- treating people fairly
- respecting people's rights and liberties
- citizens freely choosing representatives to govern the country and make laws on their behalf
- giving all Australians equal opportunities and freedom no matter where they come from, what their traditions are, or whether they are male or female.

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Question 4b.

Marks	0	1	2	Average
%	3	17	80	1.8

Many students answered this question very well. They were required to identify and describe two examples of rights or liberties.

Appropriate examples of rights or liberties included:

- peace, respect, freedom and equality
- social justice and egalitarianism
- basic wage
- universal social welfare benefits
- centralised industrial relations system
- respecting other people's differences and choices
- treating people fairly
- giving all Australians equal opportunities and freedom
- the right to a passport
- the right to vote.

Question 4c.

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	Average
%	9	9	15	22	21	11	12	3.2

This question required students to discuss the experience of citizenship among different Australian community groups. It was necessary for students to demonstrate an understanding of the concept of citizenship, give an overview of at least two community groups, and provide detailed examples about the experiences of each group.

Some students referred to broad social groups as one community, for example, being a woman or an Indigenous person. It is important for students to avoid making generalisations about the experiences of a broad collection of people.

The following are excerpts from good responses.

The Rainbow Families community is a volunteer ... organisation that helps to create awareness and assist Gay, Lesbian, Transgender, Bisexual and Intersex (GLBTI) families. This community does not experience its citizenship rights well as GLBTI people have been discriminated against, which impacts on their civic rights. 53% of GLBTI people have stated that they were subject to inappropriate comments about their sexuality in the workplace.

Women still remain disadvantaged ... in the workforce. Women, in some [senior] jobs are still only paid 84 cents to every dollar earned by a man ... [they] only represent 2% of CEO [positions] in Australia, and they are [underrepresented] in government.

The Yorta Yorta people used active citizenship [method to] attempt to claim land rights ... In 1994 the Yorta Yorta (indigenous community along the Murray in the Echuca and Shepparton area) began a court case against the government. Although the High Court rejected the case in 2003, in 2004 the Yorta Yorta cooperative managed to reach an agreement. They now have a say in over 50,000 hectares of land.

Question 4d.

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Average
%	8	3	8	12	13	15	12	13	10	5	2	4.8

This question asked students to discuss how the government and media have promoted or eroded democracy and active citizenship in Australia. Students were required to:

- demonstrate an understanding of democracy and active citizenship
- describe an 'action' of each of the government and media
- explain how each action either promotes or erodes democracy and active citizenship.

Examples included:

- the government promoting democracy – compulsory voting and the introduction of the National Congress of Australia's First Peoples
- the government eroding democracy – branch stacking
- the media promoting democracy – exposing the misuse of power



- the media eroding democracy – ownership restrictions on media
- the government promoting active citizenship – the National Broadband Network and Education Revolution
- the government eroding active citizenship – Internet filters, police files on protestors
- the media promoting active citizenship – Internet blogs, WikiLeaks
- the media eroding active citizenship – the misuse of social networking sites.

The following is an excerpt from a good response.

The [Federal] government has significantly promoted the active citizenship and democratic rights of Australian Indigenous peoples through the creation of the 'National Congress of Australia's First Peoples' introduced in May 2010. This represents an act of symbolic and practical reconciliation as it gives indigenous peoples a voice in national affairs and policy development.

In 2005 the [former Federal government] introduced ... anti-terror laws, which directly challenged citizens rights of speech and movement. Some features of the anti-terror laws include police 'stop and search' rights, where police need no real reason to search someone, [and] the assumption of guilt until proven innocent – which goes against Article 11 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of which Australia is a signatory.

Question 5

Question chosen	none	a.	b.	c.
%	2	13	50	35

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	Average
%	3	1	1	1	4	4	4	6	7	5	7	7	11	9	8	8	5	3	3	2	1	10.7

Students approached the essay writing section of the examination well. Many essays contained a formal structure, definitions of key concepts, a detailed discussion of key ideas and appropriate examples. Students need to avoid formulaic or prepared answers. Many students needed to use more detailed evidence instead of general examples, and some students did not use Australian examples as required.

Question 5a.

In order to fully answer this question students needed to:

- explain the concept of globalisation (including the economic, social, political and technological dimensions)
- explain the concepts of citizens, communities and government
- address the quote stated in the question
- discuss the major arguments in the statement – for, against or both (rich richer and poor poorer)
- discuss the impact of globalisation on citizens, communities and government
- use Australian evidence.

This essay was a less common choice for students. Relevant examples included the following.

- The positive effects of globalisation: communications/travel revolution, expansion of markets/economies/consumers, higher standards of living/health throughout the world and major diseases being eradicated.
- Negative effects of globalisation: national economies being susceptible to the domino effect when economic problems develop in other countries, and environmental impacts.

Question 5b.

In order to fully answer this question students needed to:

- explain the concept of globalisation, including a clear definition and understanding of globalisation (addressing economic, social and political dimensions)
- have an identifiable position and agree or disagree (or both) with the statement or parts of the statement
- show an understanding of the 'significant changes'
- use Australian examples that supported their position
- provide an explanation of an area of Australian life and whether it is social, economic or political
- explore the impact of change on an area of Australian life and assess its significance.

Relevant examples included the following.

Social

- impact on native forests due to tourism such as Cape Tribulation in Queensland

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- greenhouse gas emissions
- water pollution due to rubbish
- theft of credit card details via the Internet
- the use of social networking sites to create awareness about social causes such as 'Reconciliation Australia'

Economic

- the greater global connectedness of economic activities through trade, capital flows and migration

Political

- multiculturalism, such as increased diversity and the high rate of intercultural marriage
- Human Rights Act (Victoria)/Framework (Federal)
- environmental standards
- labour standards

Question 5c.

In order to fully answer this question students needed to:

- explain the concept of globalisation, including a clear definition and understanding of globalisation (addressing economic, social, political and technological dimensions)
- show an understanding of 'serious threats'
- discuss the major arguments in the statement – agree, disagree or both
- identify the aspects of globalisation that have created 'threats' or benefits
- evaluate the degree of threat or benefit
- provide relevant evidence to support claims
- arrive at a logical conclusion that was consistent with the evidence provided.

The types of examples explored included the following.

Threats

- erosion of national sovereignty
- Americanisation
- threats via the Internet, such as violation of privacy, racism, cyber bullying and stalking,
- job losses, such as Pacific Brands
- changes to work, immigration, recreation and culture

Benefits

- trade, exports
- cultural diversity
- global agreements, for example, the Kyoto Protocol
- increased communications within Australia and internationally
- expansion of markets/economies
- improved agriculture, such as the sharing of beneficial practices
- changes to work, immigration, recreation and culture