2022 VCE Sociology external assessment report

General comments

Student responses to the 2022 Sociology examination reflected detailed knowledge about the diversity of Australian Indigenous cultures, as well as referencing engaging evidence about ethnic groups, communities and social movements. High-scoring responses included primary evidence and/or an array of secondary sources. In addition, these students were able to apply their knowledge. For example, to outline how ethical methodology is used or how emergence theories explain the formation of social movements.

Following are some important features of the VCE Sociology study design that can assist with examination preparation.

* Definitions of most key concepts and theories are explained in the introduction to each Area of study.
* Representation material used in past examinations is often hypothetical or modified sources. Therefore, these examples are not suitable to use as case study evidence.
* When selecting an ethnic group as a case study, religions are not a suitable choice. This is because a religion is a subset of one’s ethnicity. For example, being an Italian Australian who follows the Catholic faith.
* It is best to be specific when selecting a community group as a case study. For example, the LGBTIQA+ category is extremely broad. A better choice would be to investigate the experiences of a local LGBTIQA+ youth group.
* When using evidence to support a response the use of quotation marks and/or the acknowledgement of the source(s) is recommended.

Specific information

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 |
| % | 0.3 | 2 | 19 | 40 | 39 | 3.2 |

This question required students to define and provide an example of Australian Indigenous material and non-material culture. Many students answered this question well. Higher-scoring responses included accurate definitions and elaborated on the examples of culture.

For full marks, students were required to include:

* the definition of material culture (for example, material culture refers to physical objects, artefacts, resources and spaces of a society that are passed onto subsequent generations)
* an example (for example, possum-skin cloak, boomerang, flag, artwork, cave painting, musical instrument, hunting instrument, utensils and craftwork)
* the definition of non-material culture (for example, non-material culture refers to the non-physical creations and ideas of a society, such as knowledge, values, beliefs, languages, symbols and social norms, which are transmitted across generations)
* an example (a specific language, such as Yorta Yorta, creation stories, such as Bunjil the Eagle, symbolism of a flag or painting and elaboration upon the meaning of a Dreaming story).

Question 2

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Marks | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | Average |
| % | 10 | 6 | 11 | 17 | 23 | 21 | 12 | 3.5 |

This question required students to explain and provide examples of two public misconceptions about Australian Indigenous culture. Higher-scoring responses linked to the specific misconceptions outlined in the *VCE Sociology Study Design* rather than referring to general stereotypes about Indigenous Australians. They also supported their responses with specific evidence.

For full marks, students were required to:

* identify and describe two misconceptions. These include:
* the perception that Australia was land that belonged to no one prior to European arrival
* the perception that Australian Indigenous people share one culture
* the perception that Australian Indigenous people mainly live in arid areas of Australia
* explain how each misconception fails to accurately describe Australian Indigenous culture
* provide two examples to support the explanation. This may have related to the misconception or the reality.

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

One public misconception about Australian Indigenous (AI) culture is the past perception that the land belonged to no one prior to European arrival ... This fails to accurately reflect AI culture as it ignores 65,000 years of inhabitancy prior to colonisation, where there were 600-700 tribal groups, who spoke 250 languages. Australia was claimed under the doctrine of “terra nullius” meaning ‘land belonging to no one’.

Question 3

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Marks | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | Average |
| % | 6 | 33 | 33 | 28 | 1.8 |

This question required students to describe the purpose of ethical methodology when conducting sociological research. Higher-scoring responses made links to the professional association The Australian Sociological Association (TASA) and clearly explained why ethical principles are important.

For full marks, students were required to:

* demonstrate an understanding of ethical methodology. For example, the steps or a process in sociological research that ensure correct ethical guidelines are followed
* refer to TASA and/or acknowledge that ethical methodology involves a set of formal guidelines. For example, TASA provides guidelines for ethical practice and decision‐making with respect to research, teaching, distribution of results and publishing
* explain the purpose of ethical methodology. For example, the need to respect and protect the welfare and privacy of research participants to ensure that participants are respected and come to no harm.

Question 4a.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Marks | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | Average |
| % | 5 | 14 | 43 | 38 | 2.1 |

This question required students to describe one action that should have been taken in the research scenario. Students who paired the action with an accurate description of a specific ethical guideline scored highly.

For full marks, students were required to:

* describe and explain two actions (ethical methods) that the student in the scenario might take to protect the welfare and privacy of the volunteers. For example:
* to ask the children’s parents if it is okay to photograph their child, thus demonstrating informed consent and protecting privacy
* having a responsible adult translate where that might be necessary to ensure informed consent
* to treat the participants with respect and adhere to anonymity in terms of the private conversations.

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

The “Sociology student” discussed in Representation 1 should have sought consent from a parent, guardian or carer of the “children between 8 and 16 years old”. One key aspect of the ethical methodology is informed consent procedures which outlines that consent must be sought for those who cannot provide it for themselves, such as those under the age of 18.

Question 4b.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Marks | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | Average |
| % | 10 | 7 | 20 | 29 | 34 | 2.7 |

This question required students to describe two research activities in which ethical methodology should have been applied. Students who answered this well accurately identified and described the ethical guidelines that were neglected. These included: voluntary participation, informed consent, privacy and confidentiality of data.

For full marks, students were required to:

* describe two research activities from Representation 1 and explain why ethical methodology should have been applied for each activity identified. For example:
* Photographing volunteers at the distribution centre. Privacy is essential to protect their anonymity and confidentiality is essential to ensure the photographs are safely stored.
* Engaging with and photographing underage volunteers. Informed parental consent is essential.
* Being present at private conversations. Privacy is essential to protect their anonymity and confidentiality is essential to ensure deeply personal information is not shared.

The following is an excerpt from a high-scoring response that elaborates upon the ethical guideline.

One research activity mentioned in Representation 1 includes listening to “conversations between volunteers and refugees” which contained “deeply personal private information”. Ethical methodology should have been applied in respect to maintaining privacy … The student should have used pseudonyms in order to protect the privacy of the person.

Question 5a.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Marks | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | Average |
| % | 5 | 5 | 15 | 23 | 34 | 13 | 4 | 3.4 |

This question required students to explain, using examples, the difference between the concepts of Gemeinschaft and Gesellschaft. Higher-scoring responses went beyond using the word ‘whereas’ in between two definitions when exploring these differences.

For full marks, students were required to:

* demonstrate an understanding of Ferdinand Tonnies’ concept of Gemeinschaft. For example, ‘Tonnies described Gemeinschaft as rural and agrarian communities that involved relationships focusing on close, long-lasting and personal connections, such as a family or neighbourhood’
* provide an overview of Gemeinschaft communities
* demonstrate an understanding of Tonnies’ concept of Gesellschaft. For example, ‘Tonnies described Gesellschaft as social groupings that are more urban, diverse and based on fleeting and impersonal interactions. During the Industrial Revolution there was a shift from close knit village life to an urban life that lacked depth and warmth and was influenced by personal and superficial relationships’
* provide an overview of Gesellschaft societies
* explore how the concepts differ using examples. For example, ‘The meaning of the terms, the degree of intimacy, the nature and strength of personal relationships, geographical location, pre- or post-industrialisation and group size’.

The following is an excerpt from a high-scoring response that attempted to explain the difference between the concepts.

What Tonnies labelled ‘society’ (Gesellschaft) was viewed critically, as it indicated a loss of traditional community relationships found in Gemeinschaft. An example would be the metropolitan city of Melbourne.

Question 5b.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Marks | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | Average |
| % | 13 | 16 | 31 | 26 | 14 | 2.1 |

This question required students to assess the relevance of Ferdinand Tonnies’ Gemeinschaft in a contemporary context. In doing so, students needed to support their answer with two examples. High-scoring responses articulated a clear contention and drew on detailed examples to support their position.

For full marks, students were required to:

* outline a contention. This may have been that the concept of Gemeinschaft was relevant, was not relevant or somewhat relevant
* provide two examples that support their contention by providing elements of Gemeinschaft and/or Gesellschaft to justify their position. For example:
* relevant: there are many elements of Gemeinschaft even in contemporary communities, such as Neighbourhood Watch, religious communities, rural towns and sporting communities. These elements may include close knit, intimate, long-lasting relationships typical of small geographical or religious communities, where relationships may be intimate and personal and unified by kinship and tradition, and minimal geographic mobility common to pre-industrial society
* not relevant: there are many elements of Gesellschaft in contemporary communities, such as large cities, economic-based communities and workplace communities. These elements may include impersonal, individualistic or anonymous, typical of suburbs/urban groupings, where relationships are practical and impersonal, and based on self-interest and demonstrate less unity due to social diversity and greater geographic mobility common to post-industrial society
* somewhat relevant: there are elements of both Gemeinschaft and Gesellschaft features in contemporary communities
* support the response with evidence studied this year.

The following is an excerpt from a high-scoring response that outlines a clear contention.

Tonnies concept of Gemeinschaft referring to communities based primarily on geographic proximity and mutual needs is less relevant today. His concepts are ideal types, and most communities contain elements of both … such as the Bendigo Muslim community brought together by shared religion but relating by geographic proximity as well.

Question 6

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Marks | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | Average |
| % | 4 | 10 | 20 | 20 | 22 | 14 | 11 | 3.3 |

This question required students to describe the nature, purpose, type and stage of WWF’s Earth Hour social movement. High-scoring responses accurately identified and used representation material that the movement is reformative and in the bureaucratisation stage.

For full marks, students were required to:

* describe the purpose of WWF’s Earth Hour. For example:
* an environmental social movement that encourages people to turn off their lights for one hour to show support for planet
* provide evidence from Representation 2 to demonstrate the purpose of the social movement. For example:
* grassroots movements for the environment
* to address the climate and nature crises
* positive environmental impact, driving major legislative changes by harnessing the power of the people and collective action
* accurately identify the type of social movement as reformative
* provide evidence from Representation 2 to justify this position. For example:
* individuals, influential leaders, celebrities, youth groups and businesses
* engages millions … to turn off their lights
* 6.7 billion impressions globally on social media channels and other platforms
* positive environmental impact, driving major legislative changes by harnessing the power of the people and collective action
* accurately identify the stage of the social movement as bureaucratisation
* provide evidence from Representation 2 to justify this position. For example:
* Started by WWF and partners in 2007 … engages millions … 190 countries and territories
* The movement, which is in its 15th year, saw individuals, influential leaders, celebrities, youth groups and businesses shine a virtual spotlight on our planet
* 6.7 billion impressions globally on social media channels and other platforms.

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

WWF’s Earth Hour is currently in bureaucratisation due to how thoroughly established it is. With “millions of people” joining to be part of the movement. It also has established offices as well as appointed leaders such as “Marco Lambertini, the Director General at WWF International”. It can further be shown to be in bureaucratisation due to it being at its most powerful.

Question 7

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Marks | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | Average |
| % | 11 | 17 | 31 | 26 | 15 | 2.2 |

This question required students to explain how power according to Max Weber had been exercised by WWF’s Earth Hour social movement. Many students provided appropriate examples of the use of power, however, often answers did not link to Weber’s theory.

For full marks, students were required to:

* demonstrate an understanding of the concept of power, with reference to Max Weber. For example:
* Max Weber claimed that every society is based on power, which he defined as the ability to achieve desired ends despite resistance from others.
* demonstrate an understanding of the concept of social change. For example:
* Social change refers to the alteration of culture and social institutions over time, reflected in social behaviour.
* Identify and explain the use of power by WWF’s Earth Hour, supported by evidence from Representation 2. For example:
* Use of information and communication technologies: ‘generated 6.7 billion impressions globally on social media channels and other platforms including TikTok and LinkedIn and its related hashtags trended across 42 countries on Twitter or Google’; ‘The Virtual Spotlight video … garnered 2.4 million views in 24 hours …’
* Use of human resources: ‘engages millions to turn off their lights’; ‘harnessing the power of the people’; and ‘influential leaders, celebrities’
* Use of legal power: ‘catalyst … driving legislative change’.

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

Sociologist Max Weber believed that all societies were built on power – the ability to meet desired ends in spite of resistance. Earth Hour uses multiple forms of power. The collective action of “switching off their lights” uses legitimate power to collectively act and demonstrate the “weight of public desire” for action.

Section B

In preparing students for their examination, students are reminded that the extended response answers are assessed against specific assessment criteria. The assessment criteria are outlined in the [VCE Sociology examination specifications](https://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/assessment/vce-assessment/past-examinations/Pages/Sociology.aspx), as well as being listed on the last page of the examination paper.

Students who sourced a range of evidence and examples tended to produce higher-scoring responses. In addition, they wrote in accordance with the command term and addressed all features of more complex questions.

Question 1

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Marks | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | Average |
| % | 15 | 14 | 18 | 19 | 14 | 10 | 6 | 3 | 1 | 0.3 | 0.04 | 2.9 |

This question required students to evaluate one implication of the assimilation policies for shaping public views of Australian Indigenous culture. Many students found this question challenging and did not explore how views are shaped or described the government policy without engaging in an evaluation.

Students were required to:

* demonstrate an understanding of the assimilation policy. For example:
* The Assimilation policy (~1937-1965) was a former Australian Government policy, which stated that Indigenous peoples ‘not of full blood’, should be absorbed into the wider population. The aim of the policy was to make the ‘Aboriginal problem’ gradually disappear so that Indigenous Australians would lose their cultural identity (1937). The Federal Minister for Territories described the policy to Parliament in the following way: ‘all persons of Aboriginal blood or mixed blood in Australia will live like white Australians do’
* demonstrate an understanding of the concept of ‘public views’ (i.e., opinions or perception)
* demonstrate an understanding of how views may be shaped (i.e., by supporting and/or limiting awareness)
* identify a potential implication of the assimilation policy for shaping views. For example:
* implications at the time of the policy
* implications of Australian Indigenous responses to the policy
* implications of contemporary responses to the policy by both Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples
* describe the likely view: For example:
* reinforcing ethnocentric views
* perpetuating stereotypes and/or misconceptions
* challenging ethnocentric views and stereotypes
* evaluate the impact of the assimilation policy on public views. For example:
* the shaping of negative views
* the shaping of positive views
* the degree of influence on views (i.e., profound, limited, significant)
* the people whose views have been likely shaped (i.e., Indigenous or non-Indigenous)
* use relevant evidence to support their evaluation.

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

First Nations people were forced to abandon their culture, language and traditions and adopt a new way of life. This cultural suppression (dominance of culture) caused a significant loss of languages, traditions and stories.

At the time, the assimilation policies had a negative impact on public views (opinions and perspectives) because it implied that First Nations people were inferior and needed to change their ways.

Question 2

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Marks | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | Average |
| % | 6 | 11 | 18 | 22 | 19 | 12 | 6 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0.1 | 3.3 |

This question required students to discuss the role of the media as both a barrier and an enabler to belonging and inclusion for Australian ethnic groups. High-scoring responses referred to specific ethnic groups (e.g., South-Sudanese Australians), rather than collections of ethnic groups (e.g., African Australians). In addition, they referenced specific forms of media (e.g., the name of an SBS documentary) rather than general examples (e.g., on the news).

Students were required to:

* demonstrate an understanding of the following concepts:
* barrier: refers to obstacles that prevent people from feeling a sense of belonging and inclusion in Australia’s multicultural society.
* enabler: refers to opportunities and options that make inclusion possible for people living in Australia’s multicultural society.
* belonging: refers to when a person or group feels accepted and supported.
* inclusion: occurs when a person or group can fully access and participate in all aspects of society.
* multicultural Australian society: refers to a society comprised of people from diverse ethnic backgrounds who can live as equals in the one place and celebrate each other’s cultural identities, free from racial discrimination.
* identify two appropriate media-related examples connected to specific ethnic groups. For example:
* social media apps, chat groups and posts, and websites
* documentaries and news articles (print or digital)
* films, television programs
* explain how a media-related example was a barrier to belonging and inclusion
* explain how a media-related example was an enabler to belonging and inclusion
* use relevant sourced evidence to support their discussion.

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

The media can also be an enabler as it can raise awareness on certain issues, and highlight positive aspects on certain ethnicities, shaping positive views, and making these ethnicities feel like they belong in Australian society. An example of this is in the article published in the ABC on the ‘community garden in Mildura’. This article helped highlight views of people from different ethnicities … This includes the view of Mr Rezan, a Hazara man, who said that he was able ‘to learn new skills as well as build new connections’. This raises awareness for the importance of community run initiatives for refugees, hence fostering feelings of inclusion.

Question 3

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Marks | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | Average |
| % | 12 | 7 | 14 | 20 | 19 | 15 | 7 | 3 | 2 | 0.3 | 0.04 | 3.3 |

This question required students to examine the interplay between one geographical characteristic and one feature of information and communications technology on the experience of a specific community. Higher-scoring responses examined the interplay between the geographical characteristic and example of information and communication technology. For example, that the proximity of a geographical community to communication towers meant that they had poor access to the internet.

Students were required to:

* demonstrate an understanding of the following concepts:
* community: refers to a group of people who share social relationships through being geographically close to each other and/or being in regular contact with each other, and through having similarities such as mutual interests and/or shared ideology.
* experience of community: refers to the active participation within a community in a meaningful way.
* geographical characteristics: refer to proximity and accessibility, climate, scenic quality, landforms and natural resources, or built features such as community centres or other relevant characteristics.
* information and community technology: refers to technology used to engage in and manage online communications.
* provide a brief overview of a specific community studied throughout the year
* identify and explain how a geographical characteristic had influenced the group’s experience of community
* identify and explain how a feature of information and communications technology had influenced the group’s experience of community
* examined a connection between the geographical characteristic and the example of information and communications technology. For example:
* the active physical and online involvement of community members
* the impact of the geographical characteristic and example of information and communication technology on the sense of community.
* use relevant sourced evidence to support their response.

The following is an excerpt from a high-scoring response in which the student has attempted to link the factors explored in their answer.

One specific community studied this year was [our local netball club]) … The netball courts that [our club] play and trains at is very close. … Every team has a messenger group chat with all team members where they can organise training times, communicate game times and chat and connect with one another.

Both proximity as a geographical characteristic and group chats as an ICT feature have a positive influence on the experience of community for [our club] members, as they allow members to connect regularly and built positive relationships.

Question 4

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Marks | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | Average |
| % | 8 | 12 | 20 | 22 | 16 | 12 | 6 | 2 | 1 | 0.4 | 0.04 | 3.1 |

This question required students to analyse how a social movement emerged with reference to deprivation and new social movement theories. Higher-scoring responses examined both emergence theories in their answer. Many students when exploring deprivation theory were able to identify what factor(s) people felt deprived of. However, many responses overlooked the need to include the ‘relative’ component of this theory.

Students were required to:

* demonstrate an understanding of the concept of social movement. For example:
* an organised group or activity that encourages or discourages social change through collective action.
* demonstrate an understanding of deprivation and new social movements theories. For example:
* Deprivation asserts that social movements arise among people who feel unjustly treated, particularly economically. These social movements generally emerge when there is a belief that genuine differences exist when comparisons of deprivation are made and a group believes they have the right to similar opportunities and cannot achieve these through conventional methods, therefore they take action to acquire equality.
* New social movements theory asserts that people who join social movements are motivated by quality-of-life issues rather than economic concerns.
* provide a description of why social movements emerge according to deprivation theory
* provide a description of why social movements emerge according to new social movements theory
* an explanation of how and why one of the theories best accounts for the emergence of a specific social movement studied this year
* use of relevant sourced evidence to support their response.

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

The Fight for the Bight campaign is a social movement … who have come together to resist the social change of oil drilling in the Great Australian Bight. …

The New Social Movement theory can be applied to First for the Bight as a reason to emerge. This theory suggests that the social movements arise due to quality of life issues rather than economic concerns … Fight for the Bight is an informal network of social activist groups that joined together in response to … concerns for the environment … The movement arose post the 1960s and members of the movement have a shared identity. …