

Sociology (0950)

Test at a Glance

Test Name	Sociology		
Test Code	0950		
Time	2 hours		
Number of Questions	120		
Format	Multiple-choice questions		
	Content Categories	Approximate Number of Questions	Approximate Percentage of Examination
	I. Sociological Perspective and Methods of Inquiry	24	20%
	II. Socialization, Social Interaction, and Social Disintegration	30	25%
	III. Culture	18	15%
	IV. Social Structure, Urbanization, Industrialization, and Demography	30	25%
	V. Social Stratification	18	15%

About This Test

The Sociology test is designed for prospective teachers of sociology in secondary schools. The 120 multiple-choice questions assess knowledge of the major theories, theorists, and concepts of sociology, and the development of sociology as a discipline across the content areas of sociological perspective and methods of inquiry; socialization, social interaction, and social disintegration; culture; social structure, urbanization, industrialization, and demography; and social stratification. This test may contain some questions that do not count toward your score.

Topics Covered

Representative descriptions of topics covered in each category are provided below.

I. Sociological Perspective and Methods of Inquiry

- Sociological perspective:
 - definition of the field of sociology
 - units of analysis
 - major theoretical orientations
 - structural functionalism
 - symbolic interactionism
 - conflict theory
 - history of the discipline
 - major contributors, such as Weber, Durkheim, and Marx
 - careers in sociology
- Methods of inquiry:
 - purpose of research
 - scientific method and research processes
 - types of research, such as survey, experimental, case study, observational, and secondary analysis
 - hypotheses and dependent/independent variables
 - relationship between theory and method
 - ethics of research

II. Socialization, Social Interaction, and Social Disintegration

- Socialization:
 - definition of socialization
 - roles of heredity and environment
 - development of self
 - effects of social class, race, ethnicity, gender, and age on socialization
 - major theories of socialization, such as G. H. Mead and Cooley
 - types of socialization, including primary, secondary, anticipatory, and resocialization
 - agents of socialization
 - major stages of socialization

- Social interaction:
 - forms, such as conflict, cooperation, exchange, accommodation, assimilation, and segregation
 - contexts of interaction, including everyday life, as well as organizational and institutional contexts
 - major theories of interaction, including dramaturgical, symbolic interaction, role theory, and exchange theory
- Social disintegration:
 - definition of social disorganization
 - social problems
 - theories of social disorganization
 - deviant and criminal behavior
 - social control
- Social change:
 - collective behavior
 - social movements

III. Culture

- Definition of culture
- Material and nonmaterial culture
- Components of culture: values, norms, symbols, signs, sanctions, and language
- Subcultures and countercultures
- Ethnocentrism and cultural relativism
- Cultural change
- Cultural universals
- Cultural diversity
- Cross-cultural comparisons

IV. Social Structure, Urbanization, Industrialization, and Demography

- Social structure:
 - definitions of society and social structure
 - social institutions, including the family, religion, education, and political and economic institutions
 - groups, including primary, secondary, referent, voluntary, and involuntary groups
 - position, role, and status
 - structural changes from simple to complex
- Urbanization, industrialization, and demography:
 - definitions
 - city models, such as the concentric, sector, and multiple-nuclei models
 - rural-urban lifestyles
 - rural-urban characteristics
 - historical development
 - occupational environment, socialization, and trends
 - social change based on technology and modernization
 - globalization

V. Social Stratification

- Definition of social stratification
- Social class in terms of wealth, income, education, occupation, and lifestyle
- Concepts of power, prestige, and status, both ascribed and achieved
- Social inequality involving race, gender, class, age, prejudice, and discrimination
- Functional and conflict theories of stratification
- Horizontal, vertical, intergenerational social mobility
- Poverty/life chances

Sample Test Questions

The sample questions that follow illustrate the kinds of questions in the test. They are not, however, representative of the entire scope of the test in either content or difficulty. Answers with explanations follow the questions.

Directions: Each of the questions or statements below is followed by four suggested answers or completions. Select the one that is best in each case.

1. The population pyramid of a population that has had a slightly larger birth rate than death rate for several generations will most likely have which of the following shapes?
 - (A) Wider at the top than in the middle
 - (B) Wider at the bottom than at the top
 - (C) Bulging in the middle
 - (D) Having parallel sides
2. A researcher mailed 1,000 questionnaires to members of a labor union and received 300 back. Most of those who returned the questionnaires indicated that they were dissatisfied with the union. Results based only on the returned questionnaires are most likely contaminated by
 - (A) response rate bias
 - (B) researcher bias
 - (C) confusing correlation and causation
 - (D) statistical regression
3. From the perspective of labeling theory, which of the following would be the most important factor in the development of a deviant identity by an individual?
 - (A) Escaping punishment for deviant behavior
 - (B) Being rewarded for deviant behavior
 - (C) Having the individual's deviant behavior observed by others
 - (D) Belonging to a group that approves of and encourages deviant behavior
4. The concept of political culture refers to the
 - (A) way that cultural products, such as novels or paintings, reflect the political ideologies of their creators
 - (B) basic beliefs and orientation toward politics that are shared widely by the members of a culture
 - (C) political beliefs and attitudes shared by people in public offices
 - (D) ideological biases of the mass media
5. Which of the following sociological perspectives views society as a system of interdependent and coordinated parts?
 - (A) Functionalism
 - (B) Conflict theory
 - (C) Symbolic interactionism
 - (D) Role theory
6. Seven people standing silently while waiting for a bus at a bus stop is an example of which of the following?
 - (A) A primary group
 - (B) A secondary group
 - (C) An aggregate
 - (D) A social category
7. Which of the following best describes the practice of placing the blame for the problems of a society on one particular group?
 - (A) Ethnocentrism
 - (B) Stereotyping
 - (C) Scapegoating
 - (D) Institutionalization

8. Which of the following best describes the definition of poverty used by the United States government?
- (A) It specifies the poverty line at a level set in the 1960s and adjusted since to reflect inflation.
 - (B) It includes the value of government services, such as Medicaid or public housing, when setting the poverty line.
 - (C) It is based on the concept of relative deprivation, and the poverty line changes as the distribution of income changes.
 - (D) It is based on the concept of lifestyle, and the poverty line varies according to the needs of the individual.
9. Charles Cooley's theory of the looking-glass self emphasizes
- (A) the manner in which young children come to a realization that they have a separate identity
 - (B) the difficulty one experiences in seeing oneself as others do
 - (C) how one's self-concept is based on one's perception of how others see one
 - (D) how one's self-concept is heavily influenced by one's physical appearance
10. Someone who gains a higher (or lower) social position than he or she was born into has experienced
- (A) absolute poverty
 - (B) relative poverty
 - (C) vertical mobility
 - (D) horizontal mobility
11. Children who are still sucking their thumbs when they enter kindergarten are often subject to teasing and ridicule for this behavior. What type of social sanction is applied in this instance?
- (A) Formal positive sanction
 - (B) Formal negative sanction
 - (C) Informal positive sanction
 - (D) Informal negative sanction
12. Robert and Tanya are married and have three children. Their family unit is called
- (A) a family of orientation
 - (B) a nuclear family
 - (C) an extended family
 - (D) a communal family
13. Religious organizations such as the Church of Norway, Islam, the Church of England, and the Church of Greece have which of the following characteristics in common?
- (A) They are cultures as well as churches.
 - (B) They practice separation of church and state.
 - (C) They exclude women as clergy.
 - (D) They are monotheistic.
14. Which of the following is consistent with results of current research conducted in the area of gender roles and the workplace?
- (A) In about a quarter of households with children, men stay home with the children so their wives can work.
 - (B) Most women believe that there is equal opportunity today between men and women in career choice, advancement, and income.
 - (C) Most men believe that women should be homemakers because men earn more money.
 - (D) Most men married to working women do not share housework and childcare obligations equally with their working wives.

15. According to W. E. B. Dubois, progress for African Americans in the aftermath of slavery
- (A) depended on the small group of African Americans receiving the same thorough and extensive education as the most talented White Americans were able to access
 - (B) involved their use of skills they already had from farming, domestic work, and labors of rural life rather than being forced to learn new skills in the late 1800s
 - (C) required that they be trained and prepared as craftspeople and service employees so they could become immediately self-sufficient
 - (D) required them to move to large cities where they would be accepted as equals in government, religion, and education
16. A sociologist is conducting research on institutional power relations at a local hospital. The sociologist is on site at the hospital for several weeks, collecting data through field notes. This method of research is called
- (A) experimentation
 - (B) secondary data analysis
 - (C) participant observation
 - (D) survey administration
17. Which of the following groups or organizations can be identified as having the characteristics of a bureaucracy?
- (A) An extended or consanguine family, including all the relatives by blood, marriage, or adoption
 - (B) The city government of each of the five largest cities in a country
 - (C) A book club in which books are chosen by members who take turns alphabetically to lead discussion
 - (D) The volunteers who gather annually to clean the neighborhood
18. Statistics about rural, suburban, and urban patterns of development and mobility are almost always reported based on a geographical area labeled as Metropolitan Statistical Areas (MSA). What constitutes an MSA?
- (A) It includes only the ten largest cities in the United States.
 - (B) It is composed of at least one central city with a population of at least 50,000, and it surrounds densely urbanized counties.
 - (C) It is an area that experiences strong storms at least 50 percent of the year.
 - (D) It is a large city with a population of at least one million and is immediately surrounded by suburbs.

Answers

1. The correct answer is B. A long-term pattern of larger birth rate than death rate would produce greater numbers of people in the younger age categories than in the older age categories. Not only would the population of the society increase, but also the population pyramid would be increasingly broad at its base.
2. The best answer is A. The researcher cannot assume that persons responding to the questionnaire are representative of the whole sample. In fact, one would expect just the opposite, that those responding to the questionnaire differ significantly on relevant variables (e.g., dissatisfaction with the union) from those not responding.
3. The correct answer is C. From the labeling theory perspective, a deviant identity results from the detection and labeling of deviant behavior. Much deviance is unobserved, well concealed, or so occasional that it is not labeled as deviant. According to labeling theory, persons whose nonconformity is of this type will likely escape being labeled or considering themselves deviant. A person whose deviance is observed and who is labeled deviant, however, will face restricted options and may be forced into a deviant lifestyle.
4. B is the correct answer. Social scientists use the concept of political culture as a particular aspect of the broader concept of culture. Culture is defined as a design for living or orientation toward life. Thus, political culture is seen as an orientation or set of basic beliefs about politics that is held widely by persons in a society and that influences the approaches taken by that society to issues of politics and governance.
5. The correct answer is A. Functionalists tend to view society as a set of interrelated structures and institutions performing functions in a system. The emphasis is on stability and consensus.
6. C is the correct answer. A group of people waiting for a bus is merely a collection of individuals. They do not necessarily share any common trait or characteristic other than the chance occurrence of waiting for the bus together. They are thus an aggregation of separate individuals.
7. The correct answer is C. Scapegoating is the practice of placing blame for the troubles of a society on an individual or group.
8. The correct answer is A. The United States government defines poverty according to a level that was set in the early 1960s based on what was then perceived to be a poverty level income. The poverty line has been adjusted since to reflect inflation, but not economic growth.
9. The correct answer is C. The looking-glass self theory refers to the interactive process by which individuals develop a sense of self. It posits that individuals develop a self-image through imagining how others perceive them; the others, in effect, acting as a mirror for them.
10. The best answer is C. Vertical mobility is the movement up or down in the social hierarchy, resulting in a change of class. For example, vertical mobility occurs when a factory worker undergoes training and enters a professional career. Horizontal mobility is a change in social status occurring without a change of class, such as a change in occupation that does not result in a change in power or economic status. Poverty is not relevant to this definition.
11. The best answer is D. Formal sanctions are rewards or punishments that are applied by a social authority; examples include awarding a prize or imposing a fine. Informal sanctions are spontaneous responses to an individual's behavior with little or no influence of authority, such as praise or ridicule. Positive sanctions involve rewards for approved behavior, and negative sanctions involve punishments for behavior that violates social norms or customs. In this case, informal negative sanctions (teasing and ridicule) are being imposed as a result of children's violation of developmental norms (sucking their thumbs in kindergarten).
12. The best answer is B. A nuclear family is made up of parents and their children. Extended families include additional relatives, communal families include nonrelatives, and the term "family of orientation" refers to the family in which an individual is born and raised.
13. The correct answer is D. All of the organizations listed are monotheistic. Each of the other options is not true for all organizations listed.
14. The correct answer is D. Of the options given, the only one consistent with research findings is that in families in which both parents work, women have the majority of responsibility for housework and child care.
15. The correct answer is A. W. E. B. Dubois believed that education was extremely important in giving African Americans better opportunities and improving their social status in a White-dominated society. None of the other options are consistent with Dubois' writings.
16. The best answer is C. The example provided demonstrates participant observation, a method in which the researcher participates to some extent in the situation being studied.
17. The best answer is B. Large city governments have the characteristics of a bureaucracy, including hierarchical organization, rules and regulations, impersonality, formal written communications, specialization of tasks, and technical legitimacy required for appointment or advanced in positions.
18. The best answer is B. The answer provides the Census Bureau definition of MSA.



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