

QUESTION 8

Outline and explain **two** reasons quantitative methods may be preferred to qualitative methods in sociological research (10 marks)

This question is asking you to compare and contrast quantitative methods and qualitative methods in sociological research. In your response you need to consider why some sociologists might prefer to use quantitative methods. From the list below, highlight the reasons that might support the use of quantitative methods.

Large in scale	Use of research to inform policy	Interpretivist approaches
Theoretical preferences	Structural explanations	Investigating small groups
Trying to establish trends across a population	High in validity	High in reliability

Select two reasons from those highlighted and explain why each of these reasons would be useful explanations for the use of quantitative data.

Reason selected	Explanation of why quantitative methods are better

Provide two examples of areas of social research where quantitative methods are used and explain why these are used to investigate this topic area.

Topic area	Why quantitative methods are used

Note: The item for 20-mark questions tends to be quite vague, often only indicating the direction your essay should take. As such, it is not essential to quote information from the item. However, it is best practice to always use the item as it may give you a hint about a point or concept you had not considered.

Applying your knowledge to the debate

As the question is based upon a statement, it is useful to be able to apply your knowledge of sociology to the different sides of the debate. There are at least two sides to each debate, but often there is a third option – either a compromise position that could be useful as a conclusion, or an alternative approach to the topic area.

From the list below, place each concept/idea into the relevant category – supporting the statement, against the statement or adopting an alternative view.

Social democratic and realist approaches	Lobbying groups	International cooperation
Small scale research	Costs of implementing research	Competing ideologies between state and researcher
Use of government funding to allow universities to conduct research	Use of quantitative data that impacts on broad sections of society	Politicians being held accountable by the electorate
Supporting the debate	Against the debate	Alternative view

Applying material from the specification

The theory and methods questions are a good opportunity to demonstrate your synoptic skills. Apply your knowledge of the topic area to different areas from the specification.

Topic area	Application to question
Crime and deviance	Left and right realism; crime prevention policies.
Education	Marketisation of education; compensatory education.
Research methods	Quantitative data and official statistics preferred by state.
Optional topic areas	Family: social policies that impact on family life.

HOW TO ORGANISE PARAGRAPHS

At tutor2u we have two recommended paragraph structures, the **sociology sandwich** and the **sociology shake**.

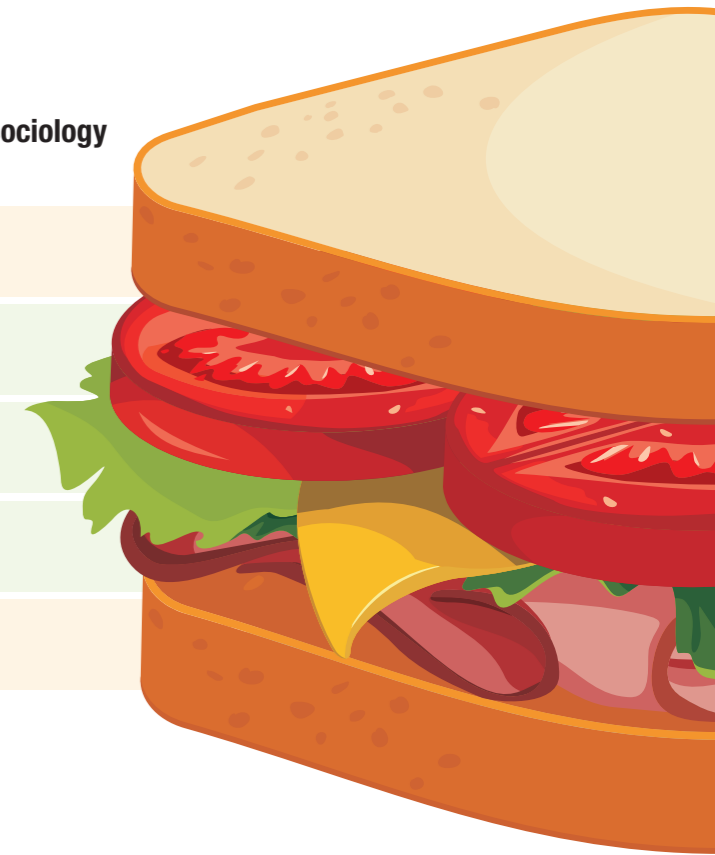
Top Slice: Your main point

Filling 1: Explanation of the point

Filling 2: An example or illustration

Filling 3: Some evaluation (think SCALE)

Bottom Slice: Clear link to the question



The shake version (you start from the bottom!):

Cherry on top: A link to the next paragraph

The close: Therefore...

Evaluation and elaboration: Think SCALE, but make sure to develop the point)

Elaboration: Developing the initial point (this can include examples and application of knowledge)

The Point: The initial point

The two are very similar really!