**Key points to note**

* *Command word:* ‘Discuss’
* *Assessment Objective breakdowns:* AO1 – 4, AO2 – 4, AO3 – 4
* *Advised structure:* Introduction, 2 paragraphs ‘for’, 2 paragraphs ‘against’, conclusion

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| **Area of essay** | **What you need to do** | **What this might look like** |
| **Introduction**𝥁 Key terms𝥁 Reference to question𝥁 Reference to theories you’ll use | * Define key terms in question
* Refer to (but don’t fully explain) potential arguments you will use in the essay
* Mention sociological theories by name that you are going to bring up
 | *‘Discuss how far sociologists agree that social class is the main factor affecting educational achievement [12]’*“Social class refers to your position in the social hierarchy, often measured by occupation or salary amongst other measures.”“Marxists emphasise the importance of social class in achievement in education, however other theories see divisions such as gender and ethnicity as being as important.” |
| **Paragraph 1***Have I…?*𝥁 Argued FOR the question using wording from the question𝥁 Key terms𝥁 Development𝥁 Sociologists𝥁 Theory𝥁 Example𝥁 Link | * Your first argument ‘for’ the question
* E.g. if the question is asking you to discuss reasons why female criminality is lower, this is where you’d argue that it IS lower (AO1)
* Your arguments should contain as much of the following as possible: key terms, sociologists, theories, examples, links to other related ideas – the use of sociological ideas will ensure you gain AO2 marks (there are 4 available)
* Make sure to develop points out as much as you can
 | “Marxists agree with the idea that your social class is the main factor affecting educational achievement.”“Willis, who did a study entitled ‘Learning to Labour’ on a group of teenage ‘lads’ found that their working class background and expectation of getting a working class job without the need for qualifications was the biggest determinant in their levels of attainment.”“Their main interest was in having as much fun in school rather than gaining qualifications. For example, they played games on the hard-working students they nicknamed ‘earoles’ and took pride in getting in trouble with teachers.”“Furthermore, the Correspondence Principle is a Marxist idea that the workplace mirrors the education system. This is further evidence that social class is the most important factor affecting educational achievement as you’re the whole purpose of education is therefore to prepare you for a life of boring, repetitive working class work if you are in the proletariat.” |
| **Paragraph 2***Have I…?*𝥁 Argued FOR the question using wording from the question𝥁 Key terms𝥁 Development𝥁 Sociologists𝥁 Theory𝥁 Example𝥁 Link | * Now you need to go ‘against’ the question
* E.g. if the question is asking you to discuss whether the nuclear family is the most appropriate family type today, you are now arguing that it is NOT or another family type is instead (AO3)
* Your arguments should contain as much of the following as possible: key terms, sociologists, theories, examples, links to other related ideas – the use of sociological ideas will ensure you gain AO2 marks (there are 4 available)
* Make sure to develop points out as much as you can
 | “However, Feminists see gender as being a hugely important factor that affects educational achievement.”“Oakley, a Feminist, refers to how primary socialisation (where the family teaches individuals the norms and values of society) equips females with the skills to succeed in education.”“For example, girls are socialised to be passive, non-argumentative and more organised than boys – skills that translate to a more positive and successful experience in education.”“Furthermore, it is argued that girls experience verbal appellation which is the use of feminine nicknames to reinforce their position as softer, more considerate members of society.” |

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| **Area of essay** | **What you need to do** | **What this might look like** |
| **Paragraph 3***Have I…?*𝥁 Argued FOR the question using wording from the question𝥁 Key terms𝥁 Development𝥁 Sociologists𝥁 Theory𝥁 Example𝥁 Link | * Return to your ‘for’ argument (AO1) – argue on the side of what the question originally asked
* You are now going to state your second reason/factor/cause etc. in relation to the question
* You still need to include as much of the key content required in your first argument as you did in this one: key terms, sociologists, theories, examples, links to other ideas (all gaining AO2 marks)
 | *‘Discuss how far sociologists agree that social class is the main factor affecting educational achievement [12]’*“Furthermore, there are a number of issues faced by the working class which means that it can be described as the main factor affecting educational achievement.”“Material deprivation is not having the resources needed to succeed in education. For example, textbooks, uniforms, stationary, space to revise etc.”“Marxists argue that this affects the working classes but not the middle class, causing them to miss school due to uniform exclusions or not prepare for exams due to lack of revision materials or an area to prepare for exams in. Flaherty (2004) reinforces this idea by arguing that money problems are often the reason for working class children not attending school which widens the attainment gap.”“This may also link to Bernstein’s ideas about language and the working class’s use of the Restricted Code compared to the middle class’s use of the Elaborated code.” |
| **Paragraph 4***Have I…?*𝥁 Argued FOR the question using wording from the question𝥁 Key terms𝥁 Development𝥁 Sociologists𝥁 Theory𝥁 Example𝥁 Link | * This is your final paragraph and your second ‘against’ argument (AO3)
* You are criticising the statement/idea offered in the question or presenting evidence that would suggest it’s not true
* Just like the previous paragraphs, you need to include as much theory, sociologists, key terms, examples and links to other ideas to round off the AO2 marks
 | “Conversely, ethnicity may be deemed to be a greater factor affecting an individual’s achievement in education.”“Whilst certain ethnic minority groups in Britain achieve highly on average in education, for example, Chinese and Indian students. Other ethnic minorities, including Black Caribbean and Pakistani students, on average achieve less in education.”Sociologists such as Bourdieu argue that this is due to a lack of cultural capital, not knowing the workings and ‘tricks’ of the education system and being able to use them to your advantage many families not from minority ethnic backgrounds.”Others argue that the curriculum is ethnocentric, meaning that it places greater importance on one ethnicity/culture than another – for example, through the History taught or languages focused on in British schools.” |
| **Conclusion**𝥁 Key terms𝥁 Made reference to question𝥁 Giving ‘the extent’ or ‘how far’ it is agreed | * Don’t use “I”
* It doesn’t have to be too long
* Don’t bring in new ideas that would have been relevant and beneficial to your actual essay
* Refer to the question – use words from it to show the marker you are really focused on what’s being asked!
* Use your best sociological language to round off a complete essay
 | “Overall, it is clear that social class plays a huge part in an individual’s achievement in education.”“Whilst theoretical groups may not agree on the main factor, and ethnicity and gender play a part, it is undeniable from [theorist’s] evidence that social class is the main factor.”“However, it could be argued that the intersection of class, gender and ethnicity plays a huge part and therefore it is difficult to only focus on one of these areas.” |