

NZQA Assessment Support Material

Unit standard	8990				
Title	Examine sociological theories				
Level	2	Credits	5	Version	3

Note

The following guidelines are supplied to enable teachers to carry out valid and consistent assessment using this internal assessment resource. In time, as quality examples of assessment activities become available naturally through the moderation process, these materials may be modified to include a variety of assessment activities and assessment schedules.

Teachers must manage authenticity for any assessment from a public source, because students may have access to the assessment schedule or to student exemplar material.

This assessment resource will need to be modified before it is used. The teacher needs to ensure that the assessment materials given to the student state the unit standard number, the title and the version of the standard being assessed, and the conditions under which the assessment is to take place (for example, as an in-class test or as a homework activity). The teacher may need to set an appropriate context, select relevant resources and modify tasks. The teacher will need to develop an appropriate assessment schedule by adding evidence and judgement statements.

Teacher guidelines

Context/setting

A sociological theory is a body of ideas that attempts to explain the structure of groups, organisations, and societies, and how people interact in these contexts. In this activity students will examine at least two sociological theories about human behaviour and social organisation.

Students undertaking an assessment activity for this standard will require an understanding of the characteristics and purposes of scientific theories, in general, and of sociological theory in particular. This should be part of the teaching and learning prior to the assessment.

The student will: identify and define the key concepts of each theory; compare the theories in terms of their application to an aspect(s) of society (e.g. inequality); and apply the different theories to the same aspect(s) of society (e.g. inequality).

THIS UNIT STANDARD CAN BE AWARDED WITH AN ACHIEVED, MERIT, OR EXCELLENCE GRADE

AWARD OF GRADES

- For award with **Achieved**, students must be able to identify and define at least two key concepts of each of the theories, identify at least one difference and one similarity between the theories, compare their application to an aspect(s) of society and show how the different theories can be applied to the same aspect(s) of society.
- For award with **Merit**, students must be able to support their examination of sociological theories *in detail*, by: defining the concepts in detail; describing and explaining differences and similarities between the theories; and explaining in detail an aspect(s) of society using the different theories.
- For award with **Excellence**, the student provides a comprehensive examination of two or more sociological theories.

Assessment activity

The teacher selects two appropriate sociological theories. (It may be practicable to allow students some choice as to which theories they will explain and apply.)

It is possible to select more than two sociological theories, but teachers need to consider if that creates more work for the student than is appropriate for 5 credits at level 2. Teachers should also avoid having students simply 'doing more of the same'.

This assessment activity has three tasks.

Task One

Students identify and define the key concepts and explain how they apply to the chosen theories.

Task Two

Students compare the theories to identify similarities and differences between them.

Task Three

The student applies the theories to an explanation of an aspect(s) of society. The teacher may determine which aspect(s) of society is to be explained. The theories are to be applied to the same aspect(s) of society.

Resource requirements

There are no specific resources required for this assessment.

Possible topics

The broad theoretical perspectives of 'consensus theory', 'conflict theory' and 'interpretivist theory' are sufficient at this level as possible theories to be examined and compared.

Other possibilities could include structural/functional theories, conflict/critical theories, and inter/actionist theories. The table below offers a simple breakdown of major sociological theories (adapted from Ritzer, 2013: 52).

Structural/Functional Theories	Conflict/Critical Theories	Inter/actionist Theories
Structural functionalism Structuralism	Conflict theory Critical theory Feminist theory Queer theory Critical theories of colonialism, race and racism Postmodern theory	Symbolic interactionism Ethnomethodology Exchange theory Rational choice theory

Recommended resources

Clear explanations of sociological theory in general and the above mentioned classical theories can be found in the following general introductory textbooks:

Giddens, Anthony. 2013. *Sociology*. 7th edition. Cambridge, UK. Polity Press.

Ritzer, George. 2013. *Introduction to sociology*. Thousand Oaks, CA. Sage Publications.

Furze, B., Savy, P., et al (eds.) 2012. *Sociology in today's world*. 2nd edition. Melbourne. Centage Learning.

McLennan, G., McManus, R., Spoonley, P. 2010. *Exploring Society: sociology for New Zealand students*. 3rd edition. Auckland. Pearson Education New Zealand.

Additional information

Teaching and learning guidelines that inform sociology as it is taught in New Zealand can be found at www.nzqa.govt.nz/sociology.

Assessment Schedule

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Teachers will need to develop an assessment schedule that is appropriate to the assessment activity and the context, by adding evidence and judgement statements. Evidence is examples of acceptable student responses to the various tasks being assessed; judgements indicate the quality and/or quantity of the student response needed to meet the requirements of the unit standard.

It may be convenient (but it is not compulsory) to format an assessment schedule as a table.

Judgements and evidence for Achievement	Judgements and evidence for achievement with Merit	Judgements and evidence for achievement with Excellence
[Teacher to insert judgement and evidence statements.]	[Teacher to insert judgement and evidence statements.]	[Teacher to insert judgement and evidence statements.]
Examples of acceptable student responses:	Examples of acceptable student responses:	Examples of acceptable student responses:

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Student Instructions Sheet

Introduction

A sociological theory is a body of ideas that attempts to explain the structure of groups, organisations, and societies, and how people interact in these contexts. The purpose of social theory is to study and interpret social phenomena based on empirical evidence.

Your teacher will select two sociological theories that you will apply to an explanation of an aspect(s) of society. You will be assessed on your ability to examine the sociological theories by: identifying and defining at least two key concepts for each theory; identifying similarities and differences between the theories; and applying the different theories to the same aspect(s) of society.

THIS UNIT STANDARD CAN BE AWARDED WITH AN ACHIEVED, MERIT, OR EXCELLENCE GRADE

AWARD OF GRADES

- For award with **Achieved**, you must be able to identify and define at least two key concepts of each of the theories, identify at least one difference and similarity between the theories, compare their application to aspect(s) of society and show how at least two different theories can be applied to the same aspect(s) of society.
- For award with **Merit**, you must be able to support your examination of the theories with relevant detail, such as, the groups and/or institutions involved, particular facts, events or processes, and at least two key concepts identified and defined in detail (or more than two key concepts in less detail).
- For award with **Excellence**, you must provide a comprehensive examination of two or more sociological theories. The theories must be used to explain an aspect(s) of society (as for *Merit*). Your explanation will include appropriate evidence and examples.

**Conditions of assessment**

The timeframe and conditions for assessment will be set by the teacher.

Assessment activity

This assessment activity has three tasks.

Task One

Identify and define the key concepts of two sociological theories and explain how they apply to the two theories.

Task Two

Compare the theories to identify similarities and differences between them.

Task Three

Apply the theories to an explanation of an aspect(s) of society.