Captivate
EDUCATION

SAMPLE QUESTIONS
One question from each section of this exam, with its marking scheme, so teachers can see what the full paper is like. Full exam and solutions: captivateeducation.com.au/trial-exams

Sociology

Question and Answer Book

Practice examination 1 – 2027

- Reading time is 15 minutes
- Writing time is 2 hours

Materials supplied

- Question and Answer Book

Instructions

- Answer all questions in the spaces provided.
- Write your responses in English.
- Use the additional space at the end of this book if you need extra space to complete an answer.

Students are not permitted to bring mobile phones and/or any unauthorised electronic devices into the examination room.

Contents

11 questions (80 marks)

Assessment criteria

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Practice material in the layout of the 2025 VCAA paper – generated 2027. Not a VCAA examination.

Sample – Question 1 of the 11 questions in this section.

Australian Indigenous cultures

Use the following information to answer Question 1.

Representation 1a

Welcome to Red Gum Crossing (visitor brochure, 2013 edition)

Long before the first European settlers arrived, wandering tribes roamed the plains around Red Gum Crossing. Their simple stone tools and a few faded rock paintings are all that remain of this ancient people.

Today Red Gum Crossing is a thriving modern town, built by pioneer families who cleared the wild bush and turned it into rich farmland. Visit the Pioneer Museum to see how civilisation[1] came to the district, then enjoy a picnic at Settlers' Bend on the river.

Invented material written for this practice examination.

[1]**civilisation** – an advanced stage of social and cultural development

Representation 1b

Red Gum Crossing visitor guide (2025 edition, developed with the local Traditional Owners)

Red Gum Crossing is on the Country[2] of the local Traditional Owners, whose cultures have been practised here for many thousands of years and are practised today.

The scar trees[3] beside the river show where bark was carefully removed to make canoes, shields and containers; the trees continue to grow. Join a walk led by a Traditional Owner ranger, who explains the seasonal calendar her family uses to know when eels are running and when wattle seed is ready to harvest.

Signs along the river track give the language names of plants and animals beside their English names. Please respect the sites marked as closed: some places have cultural restrictions on who may enter them.

Invented material written for this practice examination.

[2]**Country** – the lands, waters and skies to which Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are connected

[3]**scar trees** – trees from which bark was removed for cultural use, leaving a scar

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Question 1 (6 marks)

a. Identify **one** feature of Representation 1a that could be interpreted as ethnocentric. 2 marks

b. Explain how Representation 1b could be interpreted as a culturally relativistic representation of Australian Indigenous cultures. Use **two** examples from Representation 1b to support your explanation. 4 marks

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End of sample questions

Assessment criteria

The extended-answer questions worth 10 marks will be assessed against the following criteria, as appropriate:

- explanation and application of sociological concepts, theories and methods
- knowledge and/or analysis and/or evaluation of sociological experience, perspectives and change
- use and/or evaluation of a range of relevant evidence/sources
- synthesis of evidence to draw conclusions

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Marking scheme for the sample questions

Question 1a. (2 marks)

*Identify **one** feature of Representation 1a that could be interpreted as ethnocentric.*

To be awarded full marks, students were required to:

Identify one feature of Representation 1a that judges Australian Indigenous cultures by the standards of the writer's own (European) culture.

Common errors: explaining at length when the command term was 'identify'; quoting Representation 1b; naming a misconception instead of a feature of the representation.

Mark allocation: 2 marks: 1 mark for a relevant feature taken from Representation 1a; 1 mark for identifying it in a way that shows why it could be read as ethnocentric (judging another culture by the standards of one's own).

Responses could have included:

- describing Indigenous tools as 'simple' (judged against European technology)
- calling the people 'wandering tribes' (implying they had no connection to particular places)
- the claim that tools and paintings 'are all that remain' (presenting living cultures as gone)
- the idea that 'civilisation came to the district' with settlers
- describing the bush as 'wild' land that pioneers 'cleared' and improved

Sample full-mark response

> The brochure says that 'civilisation came to the district' with the pioneers, which judges Australian Indigenous cultures as uncivilised by European standards.

Question 1b. (4 marks)

*Explain how Representation 1b could be interpreted as a culturally relativistic representation of Australian Indigenous cultures. Use **two** examples from Representation 1b to support your explanation.*

To be awarded full marks, students were required to:

Demonstrate an understanding of cultural relativism (understanding a culture by its own standards rather than those of another culture); use two examples from Representation 1b; explain how each example presents Australian Indigenous cultures on their own terms.

Higher-scoring responses explained why each example reflects the culture's own standards (for example, that respecting restricted sites accepts Indigenous law rather than treating all land as open to visitors) rather than simply calling the examples 'positive'.

Common errors: describing Representation 1b as 'positive' or 'accurate' without reference to cultural relativism; giving more than two examples; contrasting it with Representation 1a at length when the

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question asked about 1b.

Mark allocation: 4 marks: 1 mark for an accurate understanding of cultural relativism; 1 mark for each of two relevant examples from Representation 1b (2 marks); 1 mark for explaining how the examples make the representation culturally relativistic. Qualifying language ('could be interpreted') is appropriate.

Responses could have included:

- the guide was developed with the local Traditional Owners, so the cultures are described from their own perspective
- cultures 'are practised today' — presented as living and continuous, not as relics
- scar trees explained by their cultural use, showing the skill and purpose behind them
- the ranger explains her family's seasonal calendar, a knowledge system valued on its own terms
- language names given beside English names
- visitors asked to respect cultural restrictions on sites, accepting the culture's own rules

Sample full-mark response

> Cultural relativism means understanding a culture by its own standards rather than judging it by the standards of another culture. Representation 1b could be interpreted as culturally relativistic because it presents Australian Indigenous cultures from the perspective of the people who practise them: it was 'developed with the local Traditional Owners', and the walk is led by a Traditional Owner ranger who explains her family's seasonal calendar, so the knowledge is explained in its own terms rather than through a European lens. It also asks visitors to 'respect the sites marked as closed' because of cultural restrictions, accepting the culture's own rules about land rather than assuming that every place should be open to tourists.

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