

How to tackle a 20 mark 'debate' question

1

Debate questions will present a viewpoint in sociology – you need to identify both sides of the debate

2

Mine the item for clues as to the different sides of the debate – here we see it is Functionalism vs Marxism and Interactionism, although we could also include feminism

3

Present at least 2 points for each side of the debate: Identify a positive contribution, explain what that contribution is and why it is useful. Then make a judgement on whether it is useful or not – consider the relevance of the contribution and apply it to areas of the specification – e.g. education, family or crime

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Read **Item C** below and answer the question that follows.

Item C

Some sociologists take a consensus approach to the study of society. For example, functionalists see society as based on shared values and with all its parts working harmoniously together to meet the needs of the social system.

Other sociologists take a conflict approach. For example, Marxists see society as divided by a fundamental conflict in which one class uses its power to exploit the other. Labelling theory and Weber's social action theory also highlight the importance of conflict and power.

Applying material from **Item C** and your knowledge, evaluate the view that conflict approaches are more useful than consensus approaches to our understanding of society.

[20 marks]

Question taken from AQA A level Sociology Paper 3 June 2017

5

Often there is a 'third way' in debates – e.g. modernity vs postmodernity = late or high modernity. Make sure you suggest, using evidence one side of the debate as being stronger.

4

Repeat for other perspectives in the debate. Identify a contribution, explain the contribution and why it is useful. Then evaluate that contribution