

**ANSWER KEY & MARKING SCHEME · CBSE CLASS 11****Sociology and Society**

Sociology · Chapter 1 · Use this with the Board Paper · Companion to Quick Drill

**HOW TO USE**

Attempt the Board Paper first (closed-book, full time). Then come here. For 2-mark+ questions, compare your answer to the model. For 3-4 mark questions, also consult the **Topper Templates** below — these show the exact step-by-step structure that scores full marks per CBSE marking-scheme conventions.

**MODEL ANSWERS · BOARD PAPER****Section A — Very Short Answer (1 mark each, 4 Qs)****Q1. Who coined the term 'sociology' and in which year? [1 mark]**

| **Ans:** Auguste Comte coined the term 'sociology' in 1838 (he had first proposed 'social physics').

**Q2. Who introduced the concept of the 'sociological imagination'? [1 mark]**

| **Ans:** C. Wright Mills (in 1959).

**Q3. Name the four founding pioneers of sociology. [1 mark]**

| **Ans:** Auguste Comte, Karl Marx, Emile Durkheim and Max Weber.

**Q4. Name the intellectual movement that formed the intellectual context for the emergence of sociology. [1 mark]**

| **Ans:** The Enlightenment — which placed reason, science and the individual at the centre of thought.

**Section B — Short Answer (2 marks each, 3 Qs)****Q5. Distinguish between a 'personal trouble' and a 'public issue' with one example each. [2 marks]**

| **Ans:** A personal trouble is a private matter lying within the individual and their immediate setting, solvable by personal effort — e.g. one person being jobless in a city full of work. A public issue transcends the individual and is rooted in society's structure, affecting many and solvable only by collective action — e.g. mass unemployment after factories close.

**Q6. Give two ways in which sociological knowledge differs from common-sense knowledge. [2 marks]**

| **Ans:** (i) Sociology is SYSTEMATIC and follows defined methods, whereas common sense is casual and taken-for-granted. (ii) Sociology is EVIDENCE-BASED and self-critical — its claims are tested against data and can be proved wrong — whereas common sense is unverified and assumed to be self-evident.

**Q7. Why is it said that 'society is more than a collection of individuals'? [2 marks]**

| **Ans:** Because society is the web of social relationships, institutions, norms and values that connect people. This web exists BEFORE any individual is born and PERSISTS after they die, and it shapes individuals (through language, gender roles, beliefs). Society is therefore a reality in its own right, not merely the arithmetic sum of separate individuals.

**Section C — Long Answer I (4 marks each, 2 Qs)****Q8. Explain how sociology differs from common sense, giving one example where sociology overturns a common-sense belief. [4 marks]**

| **Ans:** Common-sense knowledge is naturalistic, individualistic and unverified — it treats social arrangements as natural and self-evident. Sociology differs because it is (i) systematic, following defined methods of enquiry; (ii) evidence-based, testing claims against data; (iii) comparative, studying many societies; and (iv) self-critical, questioning its own assumptions. Sociology often overturns common sense: common sense treats suicide as a purely private, individual act, but Durkheim's study of suicide RATES showed they vary systematically with social integration (religion, marital status). A seemingly personal act was thus shown to have a social structure — knowledge common sense could never reach.

**Q9. Examine the relationship of sociology with economics and with history. [4 marks]**

**Ans:** Sociology overlaps with economics and history but takes a broader view. Economics studies the production, distribution and consumption of goods, often using narrow models of the rational individual; sociology studies the economy as EMBEDDED in social relations — showing how class, family and custom shape economic behaviour, so the market is itself a social institution. History traditionally focuses on UNIQUE events and individuals, whereas sociology seeks GENERAL patterns and recurring structures; yet the boundary has blurred, since understanding any society requires understanding its history, and the sociological imagination itself links biography to history. Sociology thus contextualises and generalises where the sister sciences specialise.

**Section D — Long Answer II (6 marks each, 2 Qs)**

**Q10. Explain C. Wright Mills' concept of the 'sociological imagination', clearly distinguishing personal troubles from public issues, and illustrate with an example. [6 marks]**

**Ans:** The sociological imagination, a term given by C. Wright Mills (1959), is the capacity to see the connection between an individual's personal life (biography) and the wider society and history in which they live. It reveals that experiences which feel purely personal are in fact shaped by large social and historical forces. Mills distinguishes two ways of viewing any situation. A PERSONAL TROUBLE is a private matter that lies within the individual and their immediate surroundings; it can be addressed through personal effort. A PUBLIC ISSUE transcends the individual; it is rooted in the STRUCTURE of society, affects many people, and can only be addressed through collective or institutional change. The classic example is unemployment: if one person is jobless in a city full of jobs, it may be a personal trouble — perhaps a matter of skills. But when factories close and millions lose work across the country, unemployment becomes a public issue rooted in the economy's structure, which no individual effort can solve. The same fact can therefore be a trouble or an issue depending on its scale and cause, and the sociological imagination is the skill of seeing which lens applies.

**Q11. Describe the intellectual and material contexts that led to the emergence of sociology as a discipline. [6 marks]**

**Ans:** Sociology emerged in 19th-century Europe from the meeting of two contexts. The MATERIAL context was a period of dramatic upheaval. The INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION transformed production from hand-work to machine-work, drove mass migration from villages to crowded, polluted cities (urbanisation), and created a new industrial working class living in harsh conditions. The FRENCH REVOLUTION of 1789 overturned the old feudal-monarchical order in the name of liberty, equality and fraternity, showing that society could be remade by human action and raising urgent questions about social order. COLONIALISM brought Europeans into contact with very different societies, forcing comparative questions about human diversity. These disruptions made the old, taken-for-granted understanding of society inadequate. The INTELLECTUAL context was the ENLIGHTENMENT — an 18th-century movement that placed reason, science and the individual above faith and tradition. Inspired by the success of the natural sciences, thinkers asked whether society too could be studied scientifically. From this emerged Auguste Comte, who coined the term 'sociology' in 1838 (first calling it 'social physics') and argued society could be studied with the rigour of the physical sciences. The material upheavals supplied the problems; the intellectual climate supplied the scientific method and confidence — together they gave birth to sociology.

★ **TOPPER TEMPLATE — 5-6 mark question: 'Explain C. Wright Mills' concept of the sociological imagination, distinguishing personal troubles from public issues with an example.'**

Almost every SQP / annual paper

<b>Step 1</b> [2 marks]	<b>Define the sociological imagination</b>	Open with the definition: 'The sociological imagination, a term given by C. Wright Mills (1959), is the capacity to see the connection between an individual's personal life (biography) and the wider society and history in which they live. It lets us grasp that private experiences are shaped by large social and historical forces.' Name Mills explicitly — examiners look for the attribution.
<b>Step 2</b> [2 marks]	<b>Distinguish personal troubles from public issues</b>	Draw the distinction precisely: 'A PERSONAL TROUBLE is a private matter that lies within the individual and their immediate surroundings, which the individual can address with personal effort. A PUBLIC ISSUE transcends the individual; it is rooted in the STRUCTURE of society and affects many people, so it can only be addressed by collective / institutional change.' Pairing the two in one sentence each scores cleanly.
<b>Step 3</b> [2 marks]	<b>Apply with a worked example</b>	Use the unemployment example (or a fresh one): 'If one person in a city of healthy employment is jobless, it may be a personal trouble — perhaps a question of their skills. But when factories close and millions across the country lose work, unemployment becomes a public issue rooted in the economy's structure — no individual effort can solve it; only economic policy can.' A second fresh example (exam stress, divorce) earns a presentation edge.

**COMMON LOSS OF MARKS:**

- Defining the imagination but never giving an example of the troubles/issues distinction (-2 marks).
- Not attributing the concept to C. Wright Mills (-0.5 to -1 mark).
- Treating the same fact as ALWAYS a trouble OR always an issue — the topper shows it can be either, depending on scale and cause.

★ **TOPPER TEMPLATE — 4-mark question: 'How does sociological knowledge differ from common-sense knowledge?'**

Recurring

<b>Step 1</b> [1 mark]	<b>Characterise common sense</b>	'Common-sense knowledge is naturalistic and individualistic — it is taken for granted, learned informally, rarely questioned, and assumed to be self-evident (e.g. "it is natural for women to do housework").' Frame it as unexamined, everyday belief.
<b>Step 2</b> [2 marks]	<b>Contrast with sociology on at least three axes</b>	Lay out the contrasts cleanly: 'Sociology, by contrast, is (i) SYSTEMATIC — it follows defined methods of enquiry; (ii) EVIDENCE-BASED — claims are tested against data, not assumed; (iii) SELF-CRITICAL and COMPARATIVE — it questions its own assumptions and compares across societies and time.' Three sharp axes = full marks here.
<b>Step 3</b> [1 mark]	<b>Clinch with an example where sociology overturns common sense</b>	'For instance, common sense treats suicide as a purely private act; Durkheim's study showed suicide RATES vary systematically with social integration (religion, marriage) — proving a "personal" act has social patterning. Sociology thus questions what common sense takes for granted.'

**COMMON LOSS OF MARKS:**

- Listing features of sociology only, with no comparison to common sense (-1 to -2).
- Giving no concrete example of sociology overturning a common-sense belief (-1).
- Confusing 'common sense' with 'wrong' — common sense isn't always false; it is simply UNTESTED.

**★ TOPPER TEMPLATE — 6-mark question: 'Describe the intellectual and material contexts that led to the emergence of sociology.'**

Recurring long-answer

**Step 1**  
[3  
marks]

**Material context**

'The MATERIAL context was the upheaval of 19th-century Europe: the INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION transformed production, drew people from villages into crowded, polluted cities (urbanisation), created a new industrial working class and harsh factory conditions; the FRENCH REVOLUTION (1789) overturned the old feudal-monarchical order with ideals of liberty, equality and fraternity; and COLONIALISM exposed Europeans to radically different societies. These disruptions made the old ways of understanding society inadequate.' Name all three drivers.

**Step 2**  
[3  
marks]

**Intellectual context**

'The INTELLECTUAL context was the ENLIGHTENMENT — an 18th-century movement that placed REASON, SCIENCE and the individual at the centre of thought, replacing faith and tradition as the source of authority. The success of the natural sciences inspired thinkers to study society scientifically. From this emerged Auguste COMTE, who coined the term "sociology" in 1838 and argued society could be studied with the same rigour as the physical sciences (he first called it "social physics").'

**COMMON LOSS OF MARKS:**

- Mentioning only material OR only intellectual context, not both (-2 to -3).
- Forgetting Comte / the year 1838 in the intellectual paragraph (-1).
- Listing events without explaining WHY they made a new discipline necessary (the analytical link is what earns marks).

**MARKING SCHEME — GENERAL NOTES**

- Names and dates (Comte 1838; Mills 1959; pioneers Comte/Durkheim/Marx/Weber) must be correct — wrong attribution loses the mark.
- For the sociological imagination, both the DEFINITION and a worked troubles-vs-issues EXAMPLE are required for full marks; definition alone caps at half.
- For sociology vs common sense, at least THREE distinguishing features plus one overturning example are needed for full 4 marks.
- For the emergence question, BOTH material and intellectual contexts must appear; covering only one caps at half marks.
- Long answers should support every definition with at least one concrete example; bare definitions are awarded partial credit only.