

**ANSWER KEY & MARKING SCHEME · CBSE CLASS 11****Understanding Social Institutions**

Sociology · Chapter 3 · 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. Define a social institution in one sentence. [1 mark]**

**Ans:** A social institution is a stable cluster of norms, values, statuses and roles organised around a basic social need (e.g. the family, the economy, the state).

**Q2. What is the difference between polygyny and polyandry? [1 mark]**

**Ans:** Polygyny is the marriage of one man to more than one woman; polyandry is the marriage of one woman to more than one man.

**Q3. Who are 'affinal' kin? [1 mark]**

**Ans:** Affinal kin are relatives related by MARRIAGE — for example, one's spouse and in-laws.

**Q4. According to Durkheim, into which two categories does religion divide the world? [1 mark]**

**Ans:** Into the SACRED (things set apart and treated with awe) and the PROFANE (the ordinary, everyday world).

**Section B — Short Answer (2 marks each, 3 Qs)****Q5. Distinguish between a nuclear family and an extended/joint family. [2 marks]**

**Ans:** A NUCLEAR family consists of a couple and their unmarried children only. An EXTENDED or JOINT family contains members beyond the nuclear unit — typically more than two generations (grandparents, married children and their families) sharing a household. The distinction is one of STRUCTURE, not size.

**Q6. Distinguish between consanguineal and affinal kinship with one example each. [2 marks]**

**Ans:** CONSANGUINEAL kin are related by BLOOD or descent — e.g. parents, siblings, children. AFFINAL kin are related by MARRIAGE — e.g. one's spouse or mother-in-law. Memory hook: consanguineal = by blood, affinal = by affinity (marriage).

**Q7. Distinguish between power and authority. [2 marks]**

**Ans:** POWER is the capacity to impose one's will on others, even against resistance. AUTHORITY is power regarded as LEGITIMATE — accepted as rightful and obeyed willingly. The key difference is legitimacy: power may rest on force, whereas authority rests on consent.

**Section C — Long Answer I (4 marks each, 2 Qs)****Q8. Explain the different forms of marriage with examples. [4 marks]**

**Ans:** Marriage is a socially approved, relatively stable union between adults that establishes rights, duties and kinship. By the number of spouses it takes two broad forms. MONOGAMY is marriage to one spouse at a time — the most widespread form today. POLYGAMY is the umbrella term for marriage to more than one spouse, with two sub-types: POLYGyny, the marriage of one man to more than one woman (historically the commoner form); and POLYANDRY, the marriage of one woman to more than one man, a rarer arrangement found among some communities such as those in parts of the Himalayas and the Toda. Thus polygamy is the genus, polygyny and polyandry its two species.

**Q9. Explain the sociological study of religion with reference to Durkheim's distinction between the sacred and the profane. [4 marks]**

**Ans:** Sociology studies religion NOT to judge whether its beliefs are true, but as a social institution — asking what religion DOES in society. Emile Durkheim argued that the essence of all religion is the division of the world into two categories: the SACRED — things set apart, treated with awe and reverence and surrounded by ritual prohibitions (a deity, a temple, a holy book) — and the PROFANE — the ordinary, mundane, everyday world. Religion is a unified system of beliefs and practices relating to sacred things which binds believers into a single moral community. By gathering people in shared ritual around the sacred, religion generates SOCIAL SOLIDARITY, reaffirming the collective values that hold society together.

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

**Q10. Compare the functionalist and conflict perspectives on social institutions, using the family to illustrate your answer. [6 marks]**

**Ans:** A social institution is a stable cluster of norms, values, statuses and roles organised around a basic social need; the family is the institution organised around reproduction and the care of children. Two perspectives read such institutions differently. The FUNCTIONALIST perspective views society as a system of interconnected parts, each performing a function that maintains stability, and asks what NEED an institution meets. Applied to the family, it performs vital functions — reproduction, the socialisation of children into shared values, emotional support, and the regulation of sexual relations — which keep society cohesive and stable. The CONFLICT perspective, drawing on Marx, views society as marked by inequality and competing interests, and asks WHOSE interests an institution serves. Applied to the family, it can reproduce PATRIARCHY through unequal gender roles and the unpaid domestic labour of women, and it transmits property and privilege across generations, perpetuating class inequality. The two perspectives are not rivals but complementary lenses: the family simultaneously meets genuine needs (functionalist) AND can entrench inequality (conflict). A complete sociological account holds both truths together rather than choosing one.

**Q11. Describe education as a social institution, explaining its functions and the idea of the 'hidden curriculum', and noting how it can also reproduce inequality. [6 marks]**

**Ans:** Education is the social institution through which a society transmits its knowledge, skills, norms and values to new generations. From the FUNCTIONALIST standpoint of Emile Durkheim, education's central role is to instil in the young the shared values and discipline that bind a society together, creating the social cohesion on which collective life depends, while also teaching the specific skills a complex society needs and allocating people to roles in the division of labour. Beyond the formal subjects on the timetable, schools transmit a HIDDEN CURRICULUM — the unstated norms, values and dispositions students absorb simply by being in school: punctuality, obedience to authority, competition, gender roles and national identity. Whether or not anyone intends it, the daily routines of schooling teach these lessons powerfully. The CONFLICT perspective, however, points out that education can also REPRODUCE INEQUALITY: advantaged children enter better-resourced schools and acquire the cultural style schools reward, so 'merit' can quietly track prior privilege of class, caste and gender, while the hidden curriculum schools the less powerful into accepting their place. Education thus appears at once as an integrator of society and a transmitter of its inequalities — and the strongest account holds both readings together.

★ **TOPPER TEMPLATE — 5-6 mark question: 'Compare the functionalist and conflict perspectives on social institutions, illustrating with the family (or education).'**

Almost every SQP / annual paper

<b>Step 1</b> [1 mark]	<b>Define a social institution</b>	Open with the definition: 'A social institution is a stable cluster of norms, values, statuses and roles organised around a basic social need — such as the family (reproduction and socialisation), the economy (production), the polity (order) or religion (meaning and solidarity).' This frames the comparison.
<b>Step 2</b> [2 marks]	<b>State the functionalist view</b>	'The FUNCTIONALIST perspective asks what NEED an institution meets and how it maintains social order. It sees institutions as integrated parts of a working whole. Applied to the family: the family performs vital FUNCTIONS — reproduction, the socialisation of children, emotional support, and the regulation of sexual behaviour — which keep society stable and cohesive.' Name the functions explicitly.
<b>Step 3</b> [2 marks]	<b>State the conflict view</b>	'The CONFLICT perspective asks WHOSE INTERESTS an institution serves and how it reproduces inequality and power. Applied to the family: it can reproduce PATRIARCHY (unequal gender roles, the unpaid domestic labour of women) and transmit property and privilege across generations, perpetuating class inequality. What is 'functional' for society may be oppressive for some of its members.'
<b>Step 4</b> [1 mark]	<b>Synthesise — both lenses together</b>	'A complete sociological account uses BOTH lenses: the family simultaneously meets real needs (functionalist) AND can entrench inequality (conflict). The two perspectives are not rivals to be scored but complementary tools that reveal different faces of the same institution.'

**COMMON LOSS OF MARKS:**

- Describing only ONE perspective (functionalist OR conflict), not both (-2 to -3 marks).
- Stating the perspectives in the abstract but never APPLYING them to the family or education (-1 to -2).
- Forgetting to define what a social institution IS before comparing (-1).

★ **TOPPER TEMPLATE — 4-mark question: 'Distinguish between the different forms of marriage with examples.'**

Recurring

<b>Step 1</b> [1 mark]	<b>Define marriage and monogamy</b>	'Marriage is a socially approved and relatively stable union between adults that establishes rights, obligations and kinship. MONOGAMY is marriage to ONE spouse at a time — the most widespread form today.' Anchor the typology in a clear definition first.
<b>Step 2</b> [2 marks]	<b>Lay out polygamy and its two sub-types</b>	'POLYGAMY is the umbrella term for marriage to more than one spouse. It has two forms: POLYGyny, where one man is married to more than one woman (historically the more common form); and POLYANDRY, where one woman is married to more than one man (rarer, found among some Himalayan communities such as the Khasa/Toda and parts of the Himalayas).' Keep the umbrella-and-branches structure visible.
<b>Step 3</b> [1 mark]	<b>Clinch with a clear contrast / table</b>	'Thus monogamy = one spouse; polygyny = one husband, many wives; polyandry = one wife, many husbands; both polygyny and polyandry are sub-types of polygamy.' A two-line table earns a presentation edge and removes any ambiguity.

**COMMON LOSS OF MARKS:**

- Treating 'polygamy' and 'polygyny' as the same thing (-1 to -2).
- Giving no examples / no community reference for polyandry (-0.5 to -1).
- Listing terms without defining marriage itself first (-0.5).

★ **TOPPER TEMPLATE — 5-6 mark question: 'Explain the sociological study of religion, with reference to Durkheim's distinction between the sacred and the profane.'**

Recurring long-answer

<b>Step 1</b> [2 marks]	<b>How sociology approaches religion</b>	'Sociology studies religion NOT to judge whether its beliefs are true, but as a SOCIAL INSTITUTION — examining what religion DOES in society: how it binds people into moral communities, shapes identity and values, and relates to power and social change. The sociologist brackets the question of truth and asks about religion's social role.' Establishing this neutrality scores the framing marks.
<b>Step 2</b> [2 marks]	<b>Durkheim's sacred vs profane</b>	'Emile Durkheim argued that the essence of all religion is the division of the world into two categories: the SACRED — things set apart, treated with awe and reverence and surrounded by ritual prohibitions (a temple, a holy book, a deity); and the PROFANE — the ordinary, everyday, mundane world of routine life. Religion is the system of beliefs and practices relating to sacred things that unites believers into a single moral community he called a 'church'.' Attribute to Durkheim explicitly.
<b>Step 3</b> [2 marks]	<b>What religion does for society (function + conflict note)</b>	'For Durkheim, by gathering people in shared ritual around the sacred, religion creates SOCIAL SOLIDARITY — it reaffirms the collective values that hold society together. (A conflict view adds that religion can also legitimise existing inequalities and power.) Thus religion is studied as a force that integrates society and expresses its deepest collective sentiments.'

**COMMON LOSS OF MARKS:**

- Discussing whether religious beliefs are true/false instead of religion's social role (-1 to -2).
- Defining sacred but not profane (or vice versa) — both halves of the distinction are needed (-1).
- Not attributing the sacred/profane distinction to Durkheim (-0.5 to -1).

**MARKING SCHEME — GENERAL NOTES**

- Definitions of typologies (nuclear/extended; patrilineal/matrilineal; monogamy/polygyny/polyandry; affinal/consanguineal) must be precise — confusing polygamy with polygyny, or affinal with consanguineal, loses the mark.
- For functionalist-vs-conflict questions, BOTH perspectives must appear and be APPLIED to the named institution; covering only one perspective caps at half marks.
- For the religion question, both the SACRED and the PROFANE must be defined and the distinction attributed to Durkheim; one half alone earns partial credit.
- For the education question, the functions, the hidden curriculum, and the conflict/inequality point should all appear for full marks.
- Long answers should support every definition with at least one concrete example or community reference; bare definitions are awarded partial credit only.