1.3 Norms and social status

Name: _____ Class: _____ Date: _____ **Total: 16 marks**

KEY WORDS norm • status • ascribed status • achieved status

Objective

Use norms and status to explain how groups organise social behaviour.

You must be able to:

- define a social norm
- distinguish ascribed and achieved status
- apply these ideas to a social situation

1 Key knowledge and worked examples

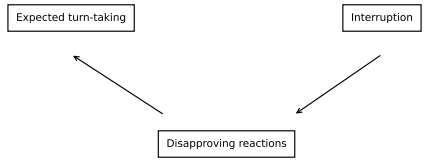
■ Rules can be unwritten

Norms are group rules or expectations, often unwritten, such as waiting your turn to speak. We often notice a norm only when someone breaks it.

Ascribed status is given, such as age or family background. **Achieved status** is earned, such as a qualification or team position.

■ Worked application: Use behaviour to identify the norm in this group

Original fictional case: a club expects speakers to raise a hand and wait, even though the expectation is not posted. Interruptions attract disapproving looks. The waiting rule is a norm, and the reactions are informal sanctions that encourage it. The elected chair has achieved status through selection; a member's age is an ascribed characteristic that may carry status in some groups. A rule that works in this club is not automatically universal. Norms may also be formally stated, and status does not always mean high rank. Explain the relationship in the supplied group rather than invent a value judgement about all members.



2 Practice

2.1 Define a social norm. [1]

2.2 State whether a university qualification is ascribed or achieved status. [1]

2.3 Explain why someone breaking a norm may be described as rude. [2]

3 Exam-style questions

3.1 Compare ascribed and achieved status. [4]

3.2 Explain how norms can make group behaviour predictable. [4]

3.3 A fictional group expects members to wait their turn. Its elected chair leads discussion. Identify the norm and chair's status, and explain how an informal reaction to interruptions may reinforce the norm. [4]