

Exercise walk-through

1.4

Critical Analysis of Sources

GAC Social Science

You must be able to

- explain operationalisation
- identify the definition behind a statistic
- evaluate a source beyond whether it sounds accurate

1

The method

Method — Ask what the number counted

Operationalisation 操作化 turns an abstract idea into something measurable.

A statistic about unemployment depends on the definition used, so different definitions can produce different rates.

Check **authority** 权威性, currency, and **bias** 偏见. Bias can appear in what a source measured or left out, not only in its wording.

2

Practice

Practice 2.1 ■ 1 mark

Define operationalisation.

Solution 2.1

Worked steps

- Turning an abstract idea into something measurable. **B1**

Practice 2.2 ■ 1 mark

State one question to ask about a source's authority.

Solution 2.2

Method: Ask what the number counted — p.4

Worked steps

- Who produced it and what relevant knowledge they have. **B1**

Practice 2.3 ■ 2 marks

Explain why changing a definition can change a statistic.

Solution 2.3

Method: Ask what the number counted — p.4

Worked steps

- The definition decides which people or cases are included. **B1**
- A different group counted produces a different total or rate. **A1**

3

Exam-style

Exam-style 3.1 ■ 4 marks

Explain why a researcher should ask what an unemployment statistic counted before using it as evidence.

Solution 3.1

Method: Ask what the number counted — p.4

Worked steps

- Unemployment is an abstract idea that needs a definition. (B1)
- The measure may include or exclude particular job-seekers. (A1)
- This changes what the rate actually describes. (A1)
- The researcher can judge whether it answers their question only after checking this. (B1)

Exam-style 3.2 ■ 4 marks

Evaluate a recent report funded by a company selling a product connected to the report's conclusion.

Solution 3.2

Worked steps

- The report may be recent, which supports currency. **B1**
- The company's financial interest creates a possible bias. **A1**
- Check the method, definitions, and evidence as well as the conclusion. **A1**
- Compare it with independent sources before relying on it. **B1**