

HL extension: theory

IB DP Social and Cultural Anthropology HL extension: theory full package

1. Theory at a glance

Theory at a glance

IB Social and Cultural Anthropology HL extension: a fourth area of inquiry from any group, and theories used (not recited) to evaluate ethnographic materials and formulate arguments; paper 1 adds the ethics question from one of two stimuli.

Must-know: five theories as uses; the evaluation move (one material, two readings, a judgement argued from evidence); the ethics answer's three parts (principle, dilemma, case).

2. The five theories

The five theories

Functionalism: the practice's work for the group (the greeting re-ties the school daily).

Structuralism: deep patterns under surface variety (a who-defers-to-whom grammar).

Cultural materialism: ideas traced to material conditions (favour pricing scarcity).

Interpretive: culture as text (the shorthand greeting as insider meaning). Practice theory: structure and action making each other.

Worked: the greeting ritual read three ways (cohesion re-made; insider text; the form bent by age and familiarity).

3. Evaluating with theory

Evaluating with theory

One material, two theories, a judgement: which reading the material better supports and why. A reading that cannot be evidenced from the material is a recital. The fourth area (any group) supplies the breadth the judgement needs.

Worked: the greeting material supports interpretive and practice readings better than the functionalist one (insider meaning is observable; the cohesion claim is not), and the essay says so.

4. The ethics question

The ethics question

Paper 1 HL: one ethics question from one of two stimuli. The answer names the principle (consent, anonymity, harm, reciprocity), weighs the dilemma (knowledge against dignity), and argues a position with a case.

Worked: filming a crowded ritual: consent impossible person-by-person, so the filming is justified to the community as a whole, individuals anonymised, the gain weighed against embarrassment: a argued verdict, not a slogan.

Check yourself

Check yourself

Five theories, each a use with evidence.

One material, two readings, the judgement argued.

The fourth area adding breadth.

Ethics answered with principle, dilemma, case.