

<b>Specification Area(s):</b>	<b>Youth and Class, Gender and Ethnicity</b>
<b>You will need:</b>	<b>Kirby et al (“Sociology in Perspective”) p. 229 -232</b>
<b>Total Marks:</b>	<b>40</b>

1. A basic belief of Functionalism is that everything in society exists for a purpose (the function(s) it satisfies). Complete the following table by briefly explaining some of the key functions of youth subcultures according to this perspective (4).

<b>Key Function</b>	<b>How and why youth subcultures perform this function</b>
<b>1. To manage the transition from childhood to adulthood</b>	
<b>2. Management of social pressures</b>	
<b>3. Management of psychological stresses</b>	

2. Briefly explain why advanced industrial societies develop youth subcultures (4)

3. The meaning of age categories (such as child, youth, adult, etc.) changes from society to society and over time in the same society. This means that categories such as “youth” are social constructions. Complete the following table to demonstrate your understanding of this idea (4)

Example	Explanation
<b>Historical:</b>	One example of how has the “meaning of youth” changed over time in our society is:
<b>Cross-cultural</b>	One example of how has the “meaning of youth” may be different from one society to the next is:

4. Identify and briefly explain two examples of youth subcultures that do not appear to have had a “tension-management” function (4)

5. Identify and explain two problems faced by working-class youth not faced by middle-class youth (4)

Identified Problem	Explanation
1.	
2.	

6. Using two examples of youth subcultures, briefly explain how, according to the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies (CCCS), each is an attempt by some youth to gain social status (6)

7. Using the following table, briefly explain how / why youth subcultures can be seen as “magical” or “symbolic” forms of resistance (8)

<b>Resistance Against?</b>	<b>Example of how subculture is a magical / symbolic form of resistance</b>
Upper / middle class values and norms	
Unemployment / dead-end jobs	
Lack of political representation	
Decline in working class community / extended family life.	

8. Some writers have criticised the above views (that youth subcultures can be explained in terms of their symbolic resistance to something). Read the following (adapted from **Stan. Cohen (Folk Devils and Moral Panics:1980)**)

“Both these themes of *resistance* and *symbols* are rich and suggestive. I have only the space to mention, somewhat cryptically, a few of the problems they raise.

The first arises from the constant impulse to decode the style in terms *only* of opposition and resistance. This means that instances are sometimes missed when the style is conservative or supportive. In other words, not reworked or reassembled but taken over intact from dominant commercial culture.

There is also a tendency in some of this work to see the historical development of a style as being wholly internal to the group - with commercialisation and co-option as something which just happens afterwards. In the understandable zeal to depict the kids as creative agents rather than manipulated dummies, this often plays down the extent to which changes in youth culture are manufactured changes, dictated by consumer society.

An allied problem is the often exaggerated status given to the internal circuit of English working-class history. The spell cast on the young by American cultural imperialism is sometimes downgraded.

This is inevitable if the subculture is taken to denote some form of cumulative historical resistance. Where we are really being directed is towards the 'profound line of historical continuity' between today's delinquents and their 'equivalents' in the past.

Historical evidence is cited to prove that mass proletarian resistance to the imposition of bourgeois control did not after all die out. It lives on in certain forms of delinquency which - though more symbolic and individualistic than their progenitors - must still be read as rudimentary forms of political action, as versions of the same working-class struggle which has occurred since the defeat of Chartism. To justify this claim, a double leap of imagination is required. In Pearson's example, the 'proof that something like Paki-bashing is a 'primitive form of political and economic struggle' lies not in the kids' understanding of what it is they are resisting but in the fact that the machine smashers of 1826 would also not have been aware of the real political significance of their action.

This seems to me a very peculiar sort of proof indeed”.

Summarise Cohen's criticisms under the following headings:

- a. Researcher bias in the interpretation of the meaning of youth styles / behaviour (3)
- b. The romantic search for evidence of “working class resistance” (3)