

Ethnicity and achievement patterns - Humanities Exam Skills

AO1 / AO2 / AO3 and evaluative argument development

AO1, AO2 and AO3 in this lesson

AO	What it looks like
AO1	Accurate concepts such as disaggregation, intersectionality, ecological fallacy; accurate dated evidence.
AO2	Apply the exact statistic, group and item detail to this question.
AO3	Analyse what the pattern means, test rival variables, evaluate inference and reach a qualified judgement.

Before writing

1. Circle the command word.
2. Underline the outcome being measured and the groups being compared.
3. Check whether the evidence is broad or disaggregated.
4. Choose an item hook or statistic that directly answers the question.
5. Plan a rival variable or evidence test.

Build evaluation that earns its place

Weak move	Stronger evaluative move
"This ignores class."	Explain how FSM differences within the same ethnic group could alter the inference.
"The data are old."	State why a dated pattern may not represent current cohorts and use the 2024/25 release to check direction of change.
"There are exceptions."	Use subgroup variation to show exactly which generalisation fails.
"Correlation is not causation."	Specify the mechanism or additional evidence needed to distinguish rival explanations.

Argument structure without a mechanical acronym

Claim → evidence → explanation of what the evidence shows → precise application → rival/intersecting variable → evidence test → qualified judgement. Evaluation should change the strength or scope of the claim, not merely add "however".

Worked paragraph progression

Stage	Example
Description	Black Caribbean pupils averaged 40.0 in 2022/23.
Explanation	This identifies a lower group average than the England total.
Analysis	Because Black African pupils averaged 48.7, the broad Black category conceals internal variation.
Evaluation	A causal claim needs within-group comparisons by class, gender, school and other conditions; the category alone does not specify the mechanism.