

# **Welcome to A Level Sociology!**

I am Ms Humphrey 😊

**Why is Sociology important?**

Speak to the person next to you about  
**Why you chose Sociology for your next steps?**  
**Why is it an important subject for you?**

The function of sociology, as of every science, is to reveal that which is hidden.

*Pierre Bourdieu*

Is this something which interests you – to find out more?  
Why?

# The Urinal Game

From the scenarios -  
Which is the proper urinal to use?

1



2



3



**Scenario 1-** Urinal 3 is occupied? Where do you go now?

**Scenario 2** - Urinal 1 and Urinal 3 are occupied. What do you do now?

**Scenario 3** - What would you do if someone deliberately stood next to you despite two empty urinals. How would this make you feel?

# Why do we make those choices?

Our family and other institutions such as school and religion **teach us how to behave/what is right and wrong....**

This process is called **Socialisation**.

## **Norms = what you do**

These are the rules about how you should **behave** in different situations, for example:

- how we should dress in different places
- how we should speak to different types of people in society (adults vs children)
- Where we stand in the loo!!!

**Norms are what we consider 'normal'.**

## **Values = what you think**

These are the **attitudes and beliefs** we are taught to have. These include:

- the difference between right and wrong
- what is good/bad
- what counts as 'success'
- Standing too close in the loo is rude (and weird!)

**Values are what we see as important**

# What will you study in A Level Sociology?

- **Two Year Course**
- **Three Exams (2 hours each)**

Paper 1: **Education with Theory and Methods**

Paper 2: **Culture and identity + Beliefs in Society**

Paper 3: **Crime and Deviance**

These will include assessment objectives such as:

**AO1** – Showing your knowledge of concepts/sociological theories/current trends and data.

**AO2** – Application of concepts/sociological theories/real life examples.

**AO3** – Evaluation and analysis.

You will be expected to show these skills in **short and extended writing (essays) questions.**

# What do we study at A-Level Sociology

Year 1 Units	Which Look to Answer Questions Like
<b>Culture and Identity</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- What is culture and why is it so hard to define?</li> <li>- What is the self?</li> <li>- Have we lost cultural diversity?</li> </ul>
<b>Education</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Is the education system biased? To who?</li> <li>- Does it teach you how to be independent or teach you how to obey?</li> <li>- Is the education system inclusive enough towards ethnic minorities?</li> </ul>
<b>Research Methods</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- What are the strengths and limitations of different methods of researching society?</li> </ul>

Year 2 Units	Which Look to Answer Questions Like
<b>Beliefs in Society</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Is religion still important in the UK today?</li> <li>- What pushes people towards religious fundamentalism?</li> <li>- Does religion help or hinder social change?</li> </ul>
<b>Crime &amp; Deviance</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Why do people commit crime?</li> <li>- Who is most likely to be a victim of crime?</li> <li>- What is the function of punishment?</li> </ul>
<b>Theoretical Approaches</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- What are the strengths and limitations of different theoretical approaches of viewing society?</li> <li>- How does ideology impact on our everyday living?</li> </ul>

**Do these questions interest you?**

# **‘Big Questions’ for A-Level Sociology**

- To what extent is the individual shaped by society?
- Are we powerless or do we have power to influence our world?
- Why is there inequality?

Lets have a look at some topic specific questions .....



What is the appeals  
of cults?

Why do  
people join  
cults?

Are some  
social groups  
more likely to  
join them?

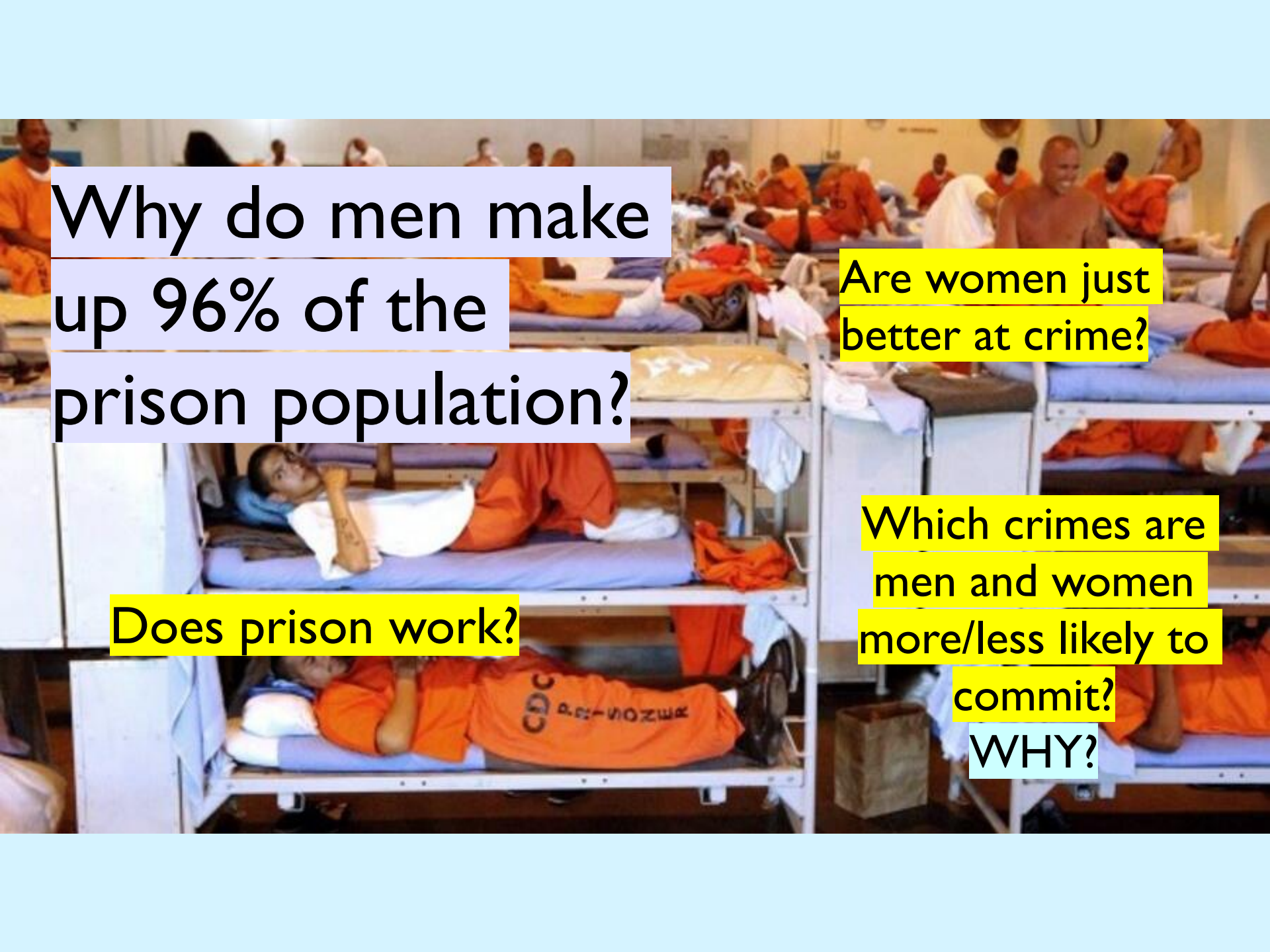
Why do cults separate  
themselves?



How does the  
Nike brand relate  
to education?

Why do people  
like/choose to  
wear brands?

Is the education  
system cater for  
all people?



Why do men make  
up 96% of the  
prison population?

Are women just  
better at crime?

Does prison work?

Which crimes are  
men and women  
more/less likely to  
commit?

WHY?

- Sociology is a versatile subject that is particularly good in enhancing student's **critical thinking, essay writing, analytical and evaluative skills.**
- Victory A-Level Sociology students have gone on to study at University to study **Social Sciences, Law, Criminology, Psychology Philosophy and Economics.**

### **Future Courses/Careers:**

- Teaching
- Criminology
- Social Work
- Law
- Media
- Charity Work
- International Development
- Politics and Social Policy



## **Two minutes!**

- Consider all the people and groups you come into contact with on a daily basis
- How much do they influence your day ?



- Did your list include strangers?
- How much influence did you give them?



What do you think? .....Would you conform?

Sociologists look at how much individuals are influenced by society...  
and how much influence individuals have on their surroundings.



Sociologists want to try and understand why social events like this happen?



- Going **beyond common sense** and **thinking critically**.
- They want to understand the **debates from theoretical perspectives**. **How do different academics see this?**

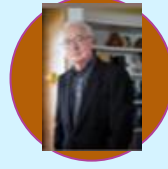
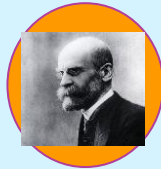
What do you think?

If you have studied Sociology before how might you explain this scenario ?

# Explaining the riots as a Sociologist

## Functionalists

They may argue that the unrest was the result of dysfunction in society where common values are no longer held by the majority. They may argue that crime is inevitable and helps us maintain moral boundaries and reset our laws.



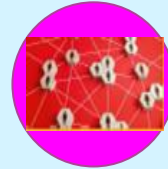
## Right Realists

They may argue that crime and deviance tough punishments. That people have rational choice and must face the consequences of their actions. The riots were caused by a lack of values and care for others. Get 'tough on crime' would be a typical response.



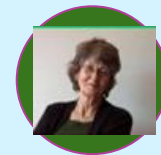
## Left Realists

Left Realists may argue that rioters were from the margins of society and from areas of deprivation. Lots of the riots occurred in poorer areas and reflects the frustration and anger that poorer people feel. They would suggest that political class has forgotten the most under-privileged.



## Interpretivists

They may argue that society is made up of micro interactions between people. That the rioters were seeking approval from others and acting on their instincts and in relation to others to create meaning and show their anger. Social action theories see people as having choice and agency.



## Postmodernists

They argue society is increasingly characterised by risk, instability and individual choice with people less influenced by traditions, conventions and society's expectations. They argue people can have a 'pick n mix' identity and that society is a hyper-reality. This drives people to behave in irrational and irresponsible ways.

## Marxists

They may be very critical of the riots and highlight how the working class were exploited, scapegoated and criminalised for their role in the disorder. They would point out the frustration of w/c with regards to their alienation. They would argue that false class consciousness drives their behaviour and the ruling class elite can maintain their power and authority

## The New Right

The New Right is a political movement that highlights the importance of personal responsibility and seeks to let neo-liberal economics organise the economy. They would argue that society is meritocratic and individuals attain status and wealth through effort, hard work and endeavour.

## Feminists

Feminists will point out that society remains patriarchal and most perpetrators of violent crime are men. They highlight the gender based roles that are expected of women and how men are more likely to engage in violent means to achieve their goals. They would argue that 98% of rioters were men, reflecting how society is gendered

# Lasting thoughts ....

We are all influenced by various things/people/institutions in our lives  
But to what extent?

As Sociologists our role is to explore the world **critically**.  
**Are you up for the challenge?**





## As Sociologists you will need to be **critical thinkers** to evaluate sociological theories about society

Practice your critical thinking skills in groups

- Would you rather be alive for the start or the world or the end of the world?
- Would you rather be in school longer hours but fewer days, or more days and less hours?
- Would you rather give £1 million to your worst enemy, or burn it?
- Would you rather steal essential medicine for your partner and go to jail, or not steal the medicine?
- Would you rather live in a world with gender, or without gender?
- Would you rather keep the national lottery, or abolish it?
- Would you rather live without electricity or without education?