

Sixth Form transition pack

Name:

QUALIFICATION	A-level Sociology
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Exam board and link	AQA www.aqa.org.uk
Specification details	7192
Recommended online	https://revisesociology.com/ https://www.senecalearning.com/ https://www.tutor2u.net/sociology https://www.aqa.org.uk/subjects/sociology/as-and-a-level/sociology-7191-7192 https://thesociologyguy.com/a-level-sociology/ https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC6VpoZj33Df_rNb8KymCczw
Recommended reads – see last page	

Welcome to A-level Sociology!

Read through, annotate, highlight key points or make a note of any questions you may want to ask in September

Complete activities in this booklet for a strong start when we return.

Have fun learning the best subject ever!

- **The Victory Sociology Department** 😊



Overview of the course:

This is a two-year course.

Topics we will cover will include:

Year 12

Introduction to Sociology
Education and Methods in context.
Culture and identity

Year 13

Beliefs in Society
Crime & Deviance and theory and methods

Look at the specification for more detail about these topics. You can find this at:

<https://filestore.aqa.org.uk/resources/sociology/specifications/AQA-7191-7192-SP-2015.PDF>

Assessment Objectives AO's:

You will be expected to **know and understand (AO1)** the information about the topics, to be able to **apply (AO2)** that knowledge and understanding and to be able to analyse and **evaluate (AO3)** that knowledge and understanding.

Exams

3 Papers. 2 hours.

Paper 1 – Education with Theory and Methods

Paper 2 – Topics in Sociology - Culture and Identity and Beliefs in Society

Paper 3 – Crime and Deviance with Theory and Methods

Expectations of the course:

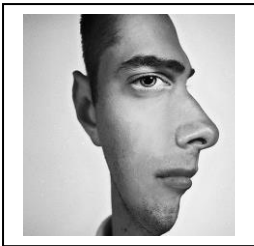
- It is your responsibility to keep organised. This includes your folder, work and items needed for each lesson.
- Lessons consist of written tasks, discussions, watching relevant documentaries and PowerPoint presentations.
- Homework – you will receive some formal homework tasks but you will also need to complete independent reading, research and ensure you keep up with current affairs and debates.
- The list below will give you an idea about who to follow on Instagram to get more of a flavour of the subject.

@thesociologyguy
@tutor2usoc
@everydayracism_
@simplepolitics
@laura-bates__
@the_female_lead

Podcasts are also a great way to expand your knowledge and thinking. They also offer opportunities to hear from some big voices in Sociology. There is so much on offer so take a wander online.

An introduction to A Level Sociology

In its simplest form Sociology is the study of human social life.



Look at this photograph; not everything is as it seems!

There is usually another way of looking at things – and that is what we do as sociologists.

We take normal life and break it down and look for meanings.

However, it is **evidence-based**; this means that it's not just about people's opinions.

Sociologists conduct research and experiments to try to find out about society.

From this, sociologists create theories to explain aspects of society, for example why girls do better than boys at school.

These are then open to scrutiny and evaluation by other sociologists like us!

Sociology also has practical applications.

Governments use sociological research to design **social policies** such as Free School Meals.

This policy was introduced after sociological research found a link between poor diet and not doing well at school.

There are some key concepts in Sociology.

Understanding these will give you a good basis for further learning in the topics we study.

1. The Individual and Society

Sociologists are really interested in how far society completely controls what an individual does or, alternatively, how far individuals can cause changes to society. These ideas are represented by two views:

- *The Structural View*
- *The Social Action View*

The Structural View

- This suggests that we are completely controlled by the structure of society. It sees us as completely internalising society's norms.

- It is called a ‘macro’ (large-scale) approach because it focuses on how wider society affects us.
- It is criticised for seeing people as puppets with no sense of agency.

The Social Action View

- This suggests we have **free will and choice**
- It says that individuals have the power to change society through their actions and interactions
- It’s called a ‘micro’ (small-scale) approach because it looks at individual’s actions.

Today, most sociologists think that society can be explained by a **mixture of the two approaches**.

Giddens calls this ‘**Structuration Theory**’ (see what he did there?)

Question: Which one do you think explains society better? Explain your choice.

2. Theories of Society - Consensus or Conflict?

So, as we’ve seen in the previous section, there is a group of sociologists who believe that **society shapes our behaviour**.

They are known as **Structural Sociologists**. However, there is big difference in opinion over the kind of structure and its effects. There are two groups:

<p>Consensus – suggests social structures keep society in harmony. Social structures create positive effects, like giving people a shared culture.</p>	<p>Conflict – social structures are sources of inequality. The structure of society makes life unfair for some groups. Society needs to be changed.</p>
<p>Example: Functionalism Society is like a body. All the different parts fit together and work together. Each part performs a function that contributes to the well-being of society as a whole. e.g.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the family socialises people to have similar norms and values • the education system teaches people the knowledge and skills needed for work 	<p>Example: Marxism Society is divided into two groups:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Bourgeoisie who own all the land, factories and businesses (and therefore have lots of money) • The Proletariat who have to work for the Bourgeoisie and can only earn ‘wages’ (and therefore have little money) <p>Marx believed the Proletariat are exploited by the Bourgeoisie, and that all the social institutions (education, the media, religion) tell us that it’s normal for some people to have lots of money and for others not too. Marx called this ‘false consciousness’. He thought everyone should share things more fairly. An equal distribution of wealth.</p> <p>Example: Feminism Society is patriarchal (controlled by men) and social institutions are biased towards men.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are far more men in Parliament • The family is unfair as women do most of the housework and childcare • Women are still not given equal chances
<p><i>A Level Sociology expects evaluation throughout in your thinking and written work. Let’s practice now...</i></p>	<p>Activity - Evaluate each of the approaches above- Consider</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are they realistic? • Can they be applied to society to help us understand it better? • Can they back up their claims with evidence? • Do they apply to all groups in society? • Are there any contrasting or critical points to be made



Activity – Research current affairs around these perspectives.



- Where do you see society working together towards a common goal? (Functionalism)
- Where can you see and unequal distribution of wealth where some have a lot and others have none?
- How does society justify this? Can you find examples of false class consciousness?
- What is happening in modern society that shows women still do not have equality with men?

Challenge – Further research – how have individuals put social action in action? What ways have people tried to change society. A good place to start is inequality in various forms.

Some of you might be reading the perspectives above and disagreeing. Good.

There's another group who also disagree with Structural Theories. They are called Postmodernists

<u>Postmodernism</u>		
<p>Postmodernists say that Structural perspectives are old and out-dated, and don't properly represent society today. They think that society today is too complicated to explain with one theory.</p> <p>An individual's identity is not imposed by social structures, but is constantly created and re-created as a result of choice.</p> <p>They think that we choose who we are and how we live our lives by picking our own religion, sexuality, doing what we want and living where we want.</p> <p>Hobsbawm says identity is like a shirt we wear rather than the skin we were born in. Dominant culture is being replaced with 'taste groups' and a diversity of lifestyles.</p>	<p>Evidence to Support the Postmodern View:</p> <p>Society is based on an array of choices.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This can be as simple as consumer choice to relationships, gender identity, education, global living. • We can create our lives to suits our preferences. • Previous social rules about identity, roles, etc are relaxing. 	<p>Evidence against the Postmodern View:</p> <p>The conflict structuralists say you can choose what you like, but fixed aspects of your identity and life still matter.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Marxists say that your class e.g. the job you do, still have a huge impact on your chances in life. • Feminists say that your gender e.g. male/female still has a huge influence on what you can do in life. • Other groups point out that being black/white can have a huge impact on your life.
<p>You will be invited to learn, analyse and critically evaluate these concepts in our topics.</p>		

Another skill to master in A level is **content analysis**. This is when you look at a source such as a piece of sociological literature or a media report, break down its parts and analyse what it has to say.

Try this for practice.

Task:

Let's look at a modern example.

Yes, Meghan Markle married Prince Harry. But did 'society' like it?

Read the following article that compares the way the media treated Meghan (black American) and Kate (White, English, married to Prince William).

<https://www.buzzfeednews.com/article/ellievhall/meghan-markle-kate-middleton-double-standards-royal>

<https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/meghan-markle-kate-negative-racist-press-coverage-guardian-a9289531.html>

Break it down, look at the language used and the message it aims to express.

What does this show about society?

3. Nature vs. Nurture

There is a big debate around what causes you to behave in the way that you do;

- a) Nature – our behaviour is natural and in-built. We act on instinct.
- b) Nurture – our behaviour is the result of what society has told us to think and do.

Activity: What are your initial thoughts about this debate? Use the table below to record your initial ideas:

Our behaviour is instinctive and automatic (nature)	Our behaviour is the result of what we learn from society (nurture)
<p>Evaluate the reality of both these ideas. Which seems more likely to you and why?</p>	

Biologists think that we are mainly shaped by **natural instincts**. These are not thought about, we just do them, just like animals. Just how Lions chase and kill zebras, birds migrate, most dogs like to fetch sticks, humans are programmed to follow their instincts too. For example, females are programmed to look after children.

However ...

Sociologists think it's more interesting than this. They argue that most of our behaviour is actually **learned**.

The key evidence is the **differences between cultures** around the world. How can we be acting on instinct, if we're doing things differently in different places?

All societies have their own **culture, norms and values**:

- **Culture** = all the things that are learned and shared by a society, or group of people, and transmitted from generation to generation. This includes language, customs, traditions, knowledge, beliefs, norms and values.
- **Values** = the general principles or goals of a society. These tell us what is good/bad and what we should aim for.
- **Norms** = the rules about how you should **behave** in different situations. These cover how we should dress, speak to who you can marry etc. Norms are what we consider 'normal'.

4. Socialisation

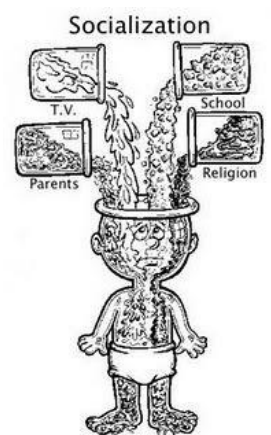
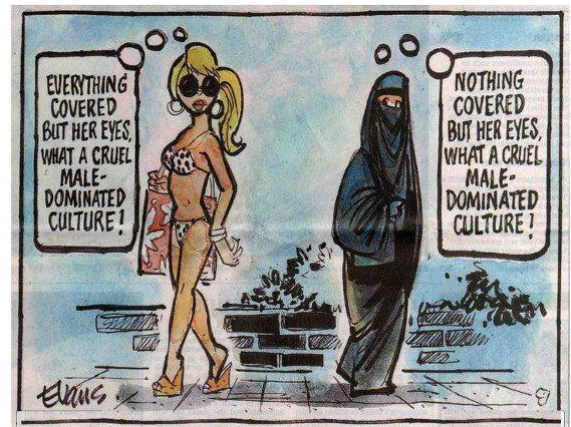
The process through which we learn the norms and values of our culture.

Sociologists divide socialisation into two stages:

- **Primary Socialisation**: this happens from an early age in our family
- **Secondary Socialisation**: this happens as we get older, in school, the workplace, through the media and from our friends.

Each of these helps to teach us the things we need to know to perform our roles in society.

- Some norms are **informal**, such as table manners. If you break this norm you may receive an **informal sanction**, such as someone frowning at you.
- Some norms are **formal**. These are rules or laws. If you break them you might get a **formal sanction**, such as an official warning, a fine, or a prison sentence.
- **Positive sanctions** are **rewards** for sticking to norms. If you work hard at school you get a prize.



Activity:

How might being in Group 3 affect your life chances? Try to give as much detail as you can in your answer.

Gender

Although there have been changes, men and women are still not equal in society.

- On average, women earn about 15% less than men
- Women do more childcare and housework than men
- More women than men are in poverty



Task: Try to find a current discussion in society around gender inequality. Analyse what is said/shown. What does it say regarding the status of different genders?

Remember - It is not always as obvious as a difference in pay. Some inequalities are deeply embedded in our norms and values that we are not always aware it is happening.

Ethnicity

This refers to shared culture and identity. Everyone is part of an ethnicity.

Sociologists are interested in **ethnic minorities** and their **life chances**.

In Britain today, the dominant ethnic group is White British. This means that all other ethnicities are minorities.

There is inequality:

- Unemployment is almost twice as high for ethnic minorities than for whites
- Ethnic minority employees tend to earn less than whites and are more likely to work shifts
- The infant mortality rate (baby's dying) of African Caribbean and Pakistani babies is double that of whites

Activity: How might you explain these statistics? What could be influencing them? Try to give as much detail in your answer as possible.

Age

Age is an important factor affecting your status in society. Different societies view age differently.

- In traditional societies, older people have higher status. In contrast, modern societies give them low status
- In the UK, children are dependent on adults and, by law, are not allowed to work until they reach at least 16. This is not the same all over the world.
- The very old and very young are more likely to be poor.

SAGE Challenge Activity: Is UK society fair? Consider your reading and research so far. How far do you agree? Give details.

Social Change

The social world is always changing. The important point to grasp is: society does not remain static over time; it constantly changes - through decades and centuries and across countries, societies.

An awareness of changes -over the last 100 years will help no end in your study of sociology. Go get yourself some cultural capital!!

Try your hand at **3 of the following tasks** and complete them to a high standard.

Be prepared to hand these in on your first week of the course.

Challenge – Go for broke! Try your hand at them all for a super strong start to the best A level there is!!

(No bias I promise)

<p>Pick one of the following perspectives and create a mind map, summarising their views on society:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • -Feminism • -Functionalism • -Marxism • -New Right • -Postmodernism <p>You could include their views on family, education, crime and deviance, or politics.</p>	<p>Watch... and write a summary paragraph including the sociological issues/concepts you saw.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Black mirror - On the Basis of Sex (2018) - Pride (2014) - Brick Lane (2007) - Made in Dagenham - Girls Incarcerated - I, Daniel Blake - Freedom writers
<p>Read 2 news reports on societal issues.</p> <p>These can be on any media platform but they must be fairly current.</p> <p>What is the main story?</p> <p>Why does the report say it is happening?</p> <p>What language does it use to describe those involved or the events?</p> <p>What is the overall message you gained from the report?</p> <p>Do you think it was the one intended by the writer?</p>	<p>Produce a timeline which illustrates the development of women's rights in the UK over the last 200 years or so.</p> <p>You can present this in any way you wish, whether on A3/A4 paper, or using technology, PPT, Prezi etc</p> <p>Include images of prominent women in society and of the different ways in which women are depicted throughout time.</p>
<p>Challenge –</p> <p>Read one book (or more) from this selection.</p> <p>Natives By Akala Used & New 9781473661233 World of Books (wob.com)</p> <p>The Power By Naomi Alderman Used & New 9780670919963 World of Books (wob.com)</p> <p>https://www.wob.com/en-gb/category/all?search=laura%20bates</p> <p>Why I'm No Longer Talking to White People About Race By Reni Eddo-Lodge Used & New 9781408870587 World of Books (wob.com)</p> <p>The New Poverty By Stephen Armstrong Used 9781786634634 World of Books (wob.com)</p> <p>Poverty Safari By Darren McGarvey Used & New 9781529006346 World of Books (wob.com)</p>	