

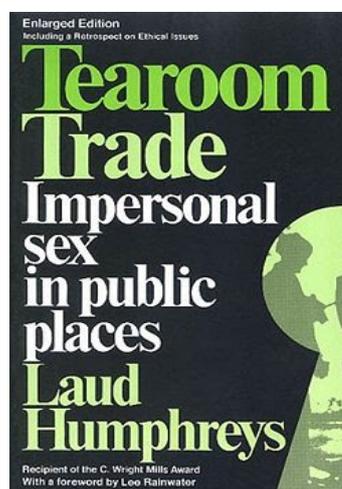
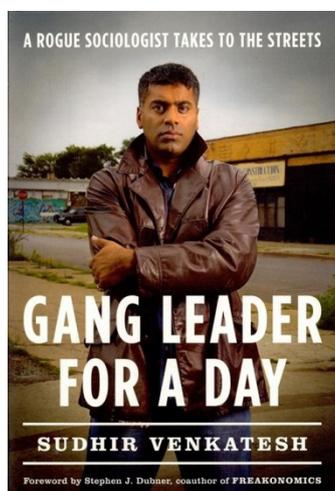
SOCIOLOGY DEPARTMENT AT BERKHAMSTED SCHOOL



# A Beginner's guide to Sociology A level

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AQA Sociology



## What is Sociology?

Sociology involves the study of human social life, groups and societies in a systematic way. Sociologists investigate and explain the social world and our behaviour in it. They are particularly interested in examining how society influences us and shapes our daily lives.

As a sociology student, you will explore and ask questions about the workings of the society you live in. The course will help you to understand how social behaviours are either **determined** by the culture of the society, or freely chosen by the individual within society. Sociology is **not** just 'common-sense'! This is an unfortunate assumption held by many who are 'ignorant' of the complexities and sophistication of the subject. Sociology is thought-provoking and challenging because it encourages you to be critical of what you read and see. In this course you will come across controversial social issues, which may encourage debate and disagreement, it can also mean you may never lose an argument ever again! To get to this point, like the individual sociologist, you will have to explore social processes by reading and analysing sociological research. We encourage you to read a quality newspaper (i.e., a broadsheet not a tabloid newspaper). That is the beauty of Sociology! It is dynamic and very contemporary.

Sociology focuses on group behaviour, social structures and social processes that influence us. Whereas the psychologist may explain individual behaviour in terms of innate (nature) personality traits, sociologists emphasise the role of social structures such as families, and social processes such as socialisation (nurture). Primary socialisation is the process whereby the child learns the norms and values essential for 'fitting into' society. A value refers to all the ideas and beliefs which people believe to be desirable and worth striving for, e.g., respect for others or privacy. A norm is a written or unwritten rule about what behaviours are 'appropriate' within contexts, e.g., clothes are not worn in the shower but will be expected in most public places, if you want to avoid being arrested for indecent exposure. Norms and values make up the culture of a particular society.

# Course Structure

The whole course will be assessed in 3 external exams taken at the end of year 13:

## Paper 1: Education with Theory and Methods (taught Yr 12)

- Education with Sociological Theory and Research Methods in context
- 4, 6, 10, 30 mark questions for Education
- 20 mark question for Methods in Context
- 10 mark question for Theory and Methods
- 33.3% of A- Level
- 2 hour exam at the end of Yr 13

## Paper 2: Topics in sociology (taught Yr 12 and 13)

- Beliefs in Society and Families and Households
- 2 sections (each with two 10 marker essays and one 20 marker essay)
- 33.3% of A-level
- 2 hour exam at the end of yr 13

## Paper 3: Crime and Deviance with Theory and Methods (taught Yr 13)

- Crime and Deviance with Sociological Theory and Research Methods
- 4, 6, 10, 30 mark questions for Crime and Deviance
- 10 and 20 mark questions for Theory and Methods
- 33.3% of A-level
- 2 hour exam at the end of yr 13

## Sociology Homework Task

### Submission will be in your first lesson back

In order to be successful in Sociology, it is important that you are aware of what is going on in our society. This involves knowing about current affairs and issues that may influence people or social behaviour. Part of Sociology is being apply the theories and concepts we will learn to contemporary affairs, so over the summer holidays, we would like you to keep up to date with the news.

Pick **3 British and/or global stories/topics/issues** from the news (either currently, or within the last three year) and analyse it from a **sociological point of view**.

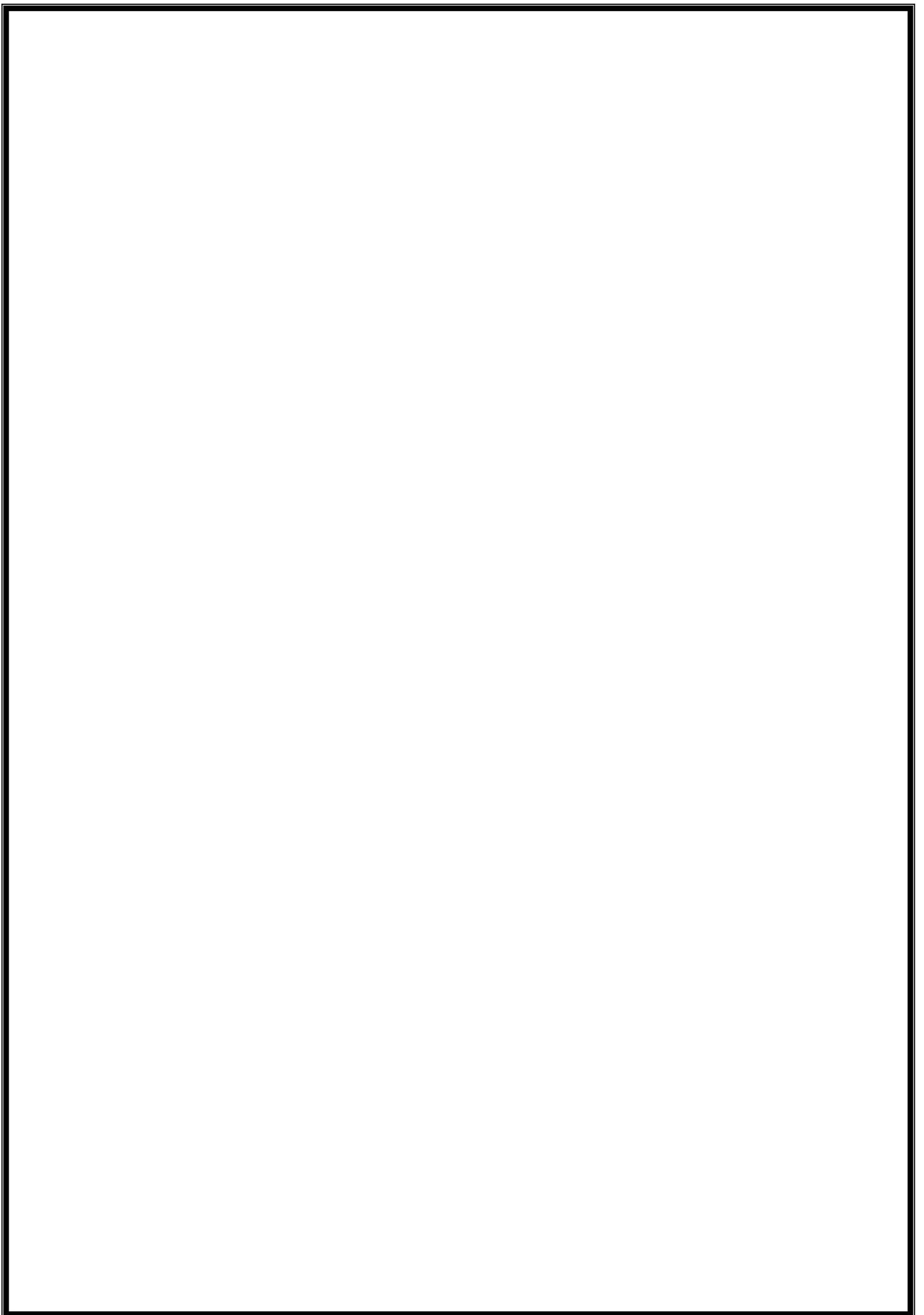
For each news item:

- Explain **what** is happening. Include statistics and evidence.
- Explain **why** you think it is happening.
- What does it show about **society**? (i.e., does it show inequality, poverty, racism, sexism, globalisation etc.) Can you link any **theoretical perspectives** to your explanation?
- Explain whether there is a **solution(s)** to this issue. Does everyone agree on the solution or is there a conflict of opinion?

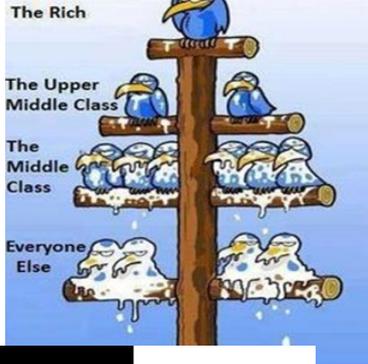
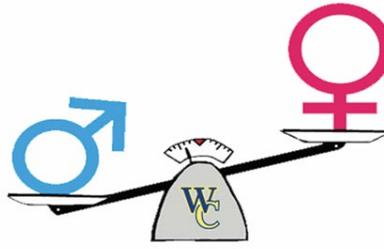
You can present your research as you wish:

- A written report
- A PowerPoint presentation
- A video
- A poster

In the first week back, you will present your research of the news to the rest of the class.



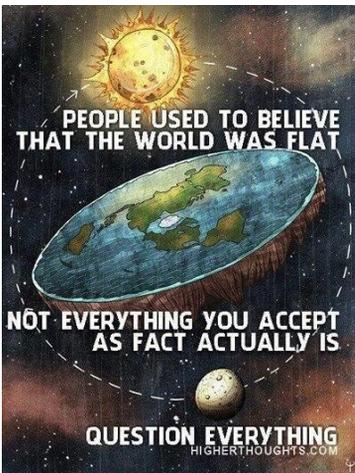
# A-Level Sociology booklet



Gender is...  a spectrum  a range of expression  how you relate to yourself HELLO my name is Me! a personal identity	Gender is not...  just male or female  defined by body parts  sexual orientation  determined by chromosomes
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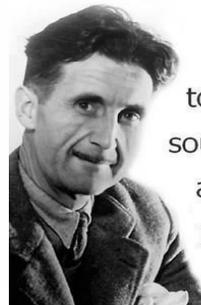


government the people

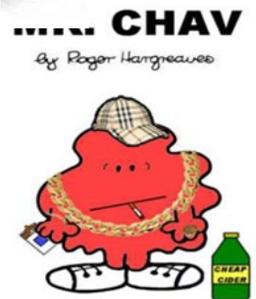


What race do you identify yourself as?

- Asian
- White
- African American
- Hispanic
- Native American
- Human**



Political language is designed to make Lies sound Truthful and Murder respectable  
 - George Orwell,



We follow the AQA A-level specification

## Topics we Cover:

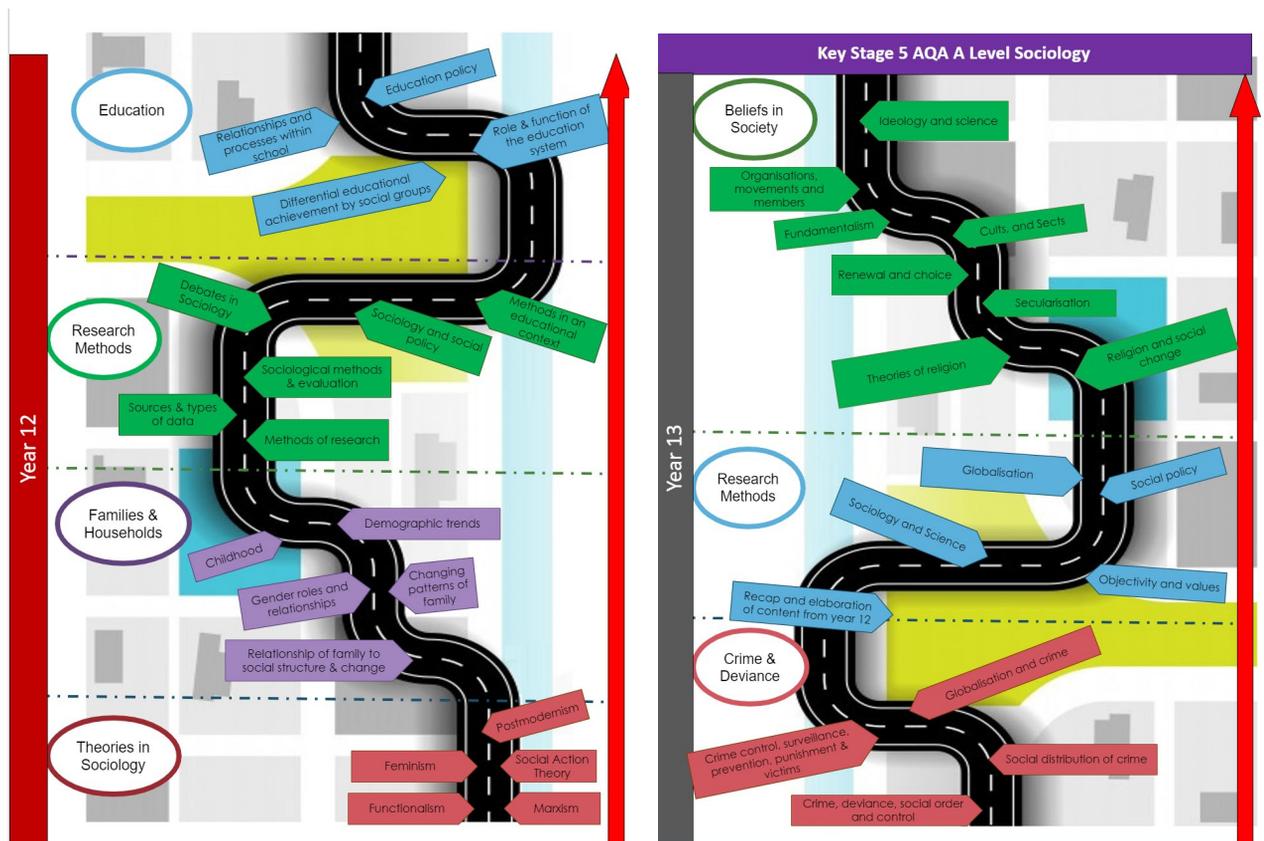
Family	Education	Theory & Methods	Beliefs	Crime
<b>Theories</b> 1. Functionalism 2. Marxism 3. Feminisms 4. Personal Life 5. Postmodernism 6. Govt Policies	<b>Perspectives</b> 1. Functionalism 2. New Right 3. Marxism 4. Conflict Views 5. Vocational Education	<b>Perspectives</b> 1. Functionalism 2. Marxism 3. Feminisms 4. Postmodernism 5. Social Action	<b>Theories</b> 1. Ideology & Science 2. Beliefs Systems 3. Functions – functionalism 4. Marxism 5. Functions 6. Feminism 7. Functions – Postmodernism	<b>Theories</b> 1. Functionalism 2. Marxism & Neo-Marxism 3. Interactionism 4. Control Theory 5. Realist Theory
<b>Diversity:</b> 1. Family Structures 2. Marriage 3. Divorce 4. Cohabitation 5. Child Bearing 6. Types of Diversity 7. Life Course Analysis	<b>Differential Achievement</b> 1. Social Class 2. Gender 3. Ethnicity	<b>Research Design</b> 1. Practical Considerations 2. Ethics 3. Theoretical Considerations	<b>Social Change and Stability</b> 1. Functionalism 2. Marxism 3. Weber 4. Marxism 5. Feminism 6. Fundamentalism	<b>Social Distribution</b> 1. Statistics 2. Gender 3. Ethnicity 4. Locality 5. Social Class
<b>Changing Roles</b> 1. Gender Roles 2. Domestic Division of Labour 3. Decision making 4. Power Relations 5. Domestic Violence	<b>Relationships &amp; Processes</b> 1. Organisation of teaching and learning 2. Labelling 3. Subcultures 4. Teachers 5. Curriculum and Subject Choice	<b>Sources and Types of Data</b> 1. Social Surveys 2. Interviews 3. Observations 4. Experiments 5. Official Statistics 6. Quantitative – Qualitative 7. Primary - Secondary	<b>Religious Organisations</b> 1. Typologies 2. New Religious Movements 3. New Age Movements	<b>Globalisation</b> 1. Globalisation 2. Mass Media 3. Green Crime 4. State Crime
<b>Childhood</b> 1. Social Construction 2. State of Childhood 3. Future of Childhood	<b>Educational Policies</b> 1. Independent Schools 2. Tripartite School 3. Comprehensive sation 4. Marketisation 5. Recent Policies	<b>Sampling</b> 1. Random 2. Systematic 3. Stratified 4. Quota 5. Snowball	<b>Social Groups and Religion</b> 1. Reasons for joining NRM & NAM 2. Gender 3. Ethnicity 4. Age 5. Social Class	<b>Control and Prevention</b> 1. Right Realism 2. Left Realism 3. Punishment 4. CJS 5. Prisons 6. Victimology
<b>Demographics</b> 1. Birth Rates 2. Infant Mortality 3. Death Rate 4. Life Expectancy 5. Aging Population 6. Family Size 7. Migration		<b>Debates</b> 1. Factors affecting research 2. Interpretivism V Positivism 3. Value Freedom 4. Sociology as a Science 5. Sociology and Social policy.	<b>Significance of Religion</b> 1. Globalisation 2. Spiritual Shopping 3. Secularisation 4. UK Religious Significance	

## How the Course is Assessed:

Students sit an internal Progression exam at the end of Year 12. All three papers for AQA are sat at the end of Year 13. Each exam is equally weighted.

Sociology is regarded as a Social Science, largely because it uses a number of research methods to examine society in more detail.

A major part of gaining success in Sociology is by learning the main ideas, concepts and terms used – the language of the subject – and then being able to use this language when you are discussing the topics and issues relevant to the study of society.



## Year 13

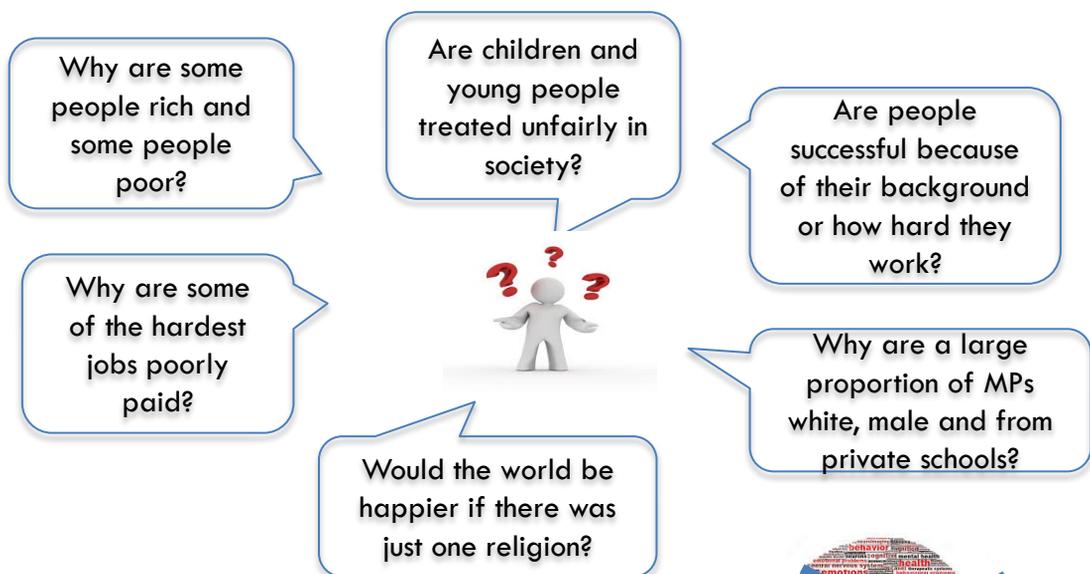
Paper One:	Paper Two:	Paper Three:
Education Methods in Context Theory and Methods	Families Beliefs in Society	Crime and Deviance Theory and Methods
- 33% of A Level	- 33% of A Level	- 33% of A Level

# Sociology is...

1. The study of society, large groups of people and individuals.
2. It studies how and why people behave the way they do in society
3. Looks at how structures such as family and Government influence human behaviour
4. A social science which uses research to investigate and predict human behaviour to help governments improve the lives of its citizens
5. A critical and radical subject, it is about questioning why society is as it is. It is about digging under the surface, looking at what is really going on.

## Is sociology for me?

Yes, if you're interested in questions like these...



## Sociology is NOT...

- An easy subject
- Just common sense
- Wishy-washy and unscientific
- Psychology

~~easy!~~



1. The defining characteristic of human behaviour is:

- A) Their gender/ sex
- B) Their social class
- C) Their Race
- D) Their integration into society
- E) Their culture

2. We have the freedom to choose our own behaviour

- A) Yes
- B) No
- C) Depends
- D) Doesn't matter
- E) What is freedom?

3. What are your views on the family....

- A) Family is oppressive to women and teaches us to conform to gender roles
- B) Family is a tool of the ruling class teaching us to obey authority
- C) Family is a vital part of socialisation that teaches us norms and values
- D) Family is what you make it, everyone has a different view on it
- E) Family – what is a family? You can't define it

4. When it comes to inequality

- A) Gender is the most serious issue!
- B) Money and power the rich exploit the poor!
- C) Inequality is normal part of society
- D) Inequality is a label that has different meanings to people
- E) You make your own reality up

5. When it comes to Crime

- A) The justice system is more lenient on women
- B) Criminal laws protect the rich and powerful
- C) Crime is good for society as it reminds us of the rules
- D) Crimes are actions labelled as wrong to influence our behaviour
- E) Crime – what is a crime? Can we really define what a crime is?

6. When it comes to religion

- A) Religion oppresses and controls women – telling us to cover up and be obedient
- B) Religion is a tool used by those with power to control us
- C) Religion is a useful institution which unites people who share a common set of beliefs
- D) Religion means different things to different people
- E) Religion is just another meta-narrative (big story) people use to explain reality

What kind of  
Sociologist will  
you be?



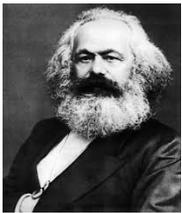
# What kind of Sociologist will you be?

## Mostly A – Our Feminist



You are most likely to turn into our Feminist Sue Sharpe. Feminism looks at how society is structured in a way that benefits men while oppressing women – this is known as patriarchy (male domination.). The theory is often a misunderstood as stereotypes and misconceptions about it exists. Many people do not realise that there are several types of feminism such as black, radical feminism and liberal.

## Mostly B – Our Marxist



You are most likely to turn into Karl Marx. Marxism looks at how society is constructed is a way that produces class conflict with the rich having all the power and control whilst the poor are oppressed. Marx argues that the root cause of class inequality is down to capitalism as it encourages people to be greedy and materialistic. Just as capitalism replaced feudalism, Marx argues that capitalism will one day be replaced with communism

## Mostly C- Our Functionalist



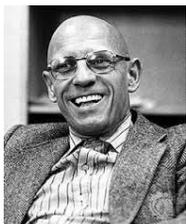
You are most likely to turn into Emile Durkheim. Functionalism is theory which argues that members of society are united together by a shared set of idea and beliefs called 'norms' (normal behaviour.) These norms are accepted by all members in society and are enforced by structures such as family and education. They see society like a human body – with all parts needed in order for it to 'function' and work effectively.

## Mostly D- Our interactionist



You are most likely to turn into Becker/ Mead. Interactionism looks at how people create meaning during social interactions, how they present and construct the self (or identity) as well as how they define situations. One of the perspectives key ideas is that people act the way they do because of how they define situations. Becker uses the example of nudity to illustrate how timing, place and audience can influence how people see an action or idea.

## Mostly E – Our post-modernist



You are most likely to turn into Foucault. Post-modernism is a more recent Sociological theory which seeks to question and de-construct existing structures and understandings of reality. Post modernism rejects the idea that one theory such as functionalism, Utilitarianism, religion or even science can explain reality!

# Which statements do you agree with and why?

- Each group of statements represents a sociological theory. Say which ONE statement out of each group you agree with and give reasons why you have chosen it.

**Statement 1:**

- Men dominate.
- Gender inequalities exist.
- Women are systematically disadvantaged.
- All men hate women some of the time. Some men hate women all of the time.
- Women are the takers of shit.
- I agree with .....
- .....
- .....

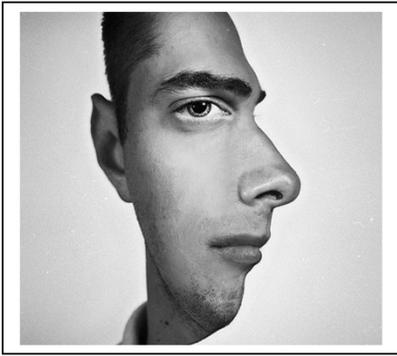
**Statement 2:**

- Society exists in a state of balance.
- Society works for the benefit of all.
- Structures in society exist to help people and the smooth operation of society.
- We live in a democracy.
- People are judged only in terms of their merit / skills / intelligence.
- I agree with .....
- .....
- .....

**Statement 3:**

- Life is unfair.
- People are not paid enough.
- The world is run for a very small group of people.
- Most people cannot see that they spend their entire lives being exploited.
- Our current system for organising the economy does not work.
- I agree with .....
- .....
- .....

# WHAT IS SOCIOLOGY?



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, taken-for-granted life and turn it upside down, looking for meanings. And very often we end up seeing things very differently.

## Social Change

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

Think of 3 different ways society has changed over the last 100 years. Try to be specific about the change eg. homosexuality is no longer illegal.

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Now, name 3 ways in which British society is different to another (America, Italy etc.)

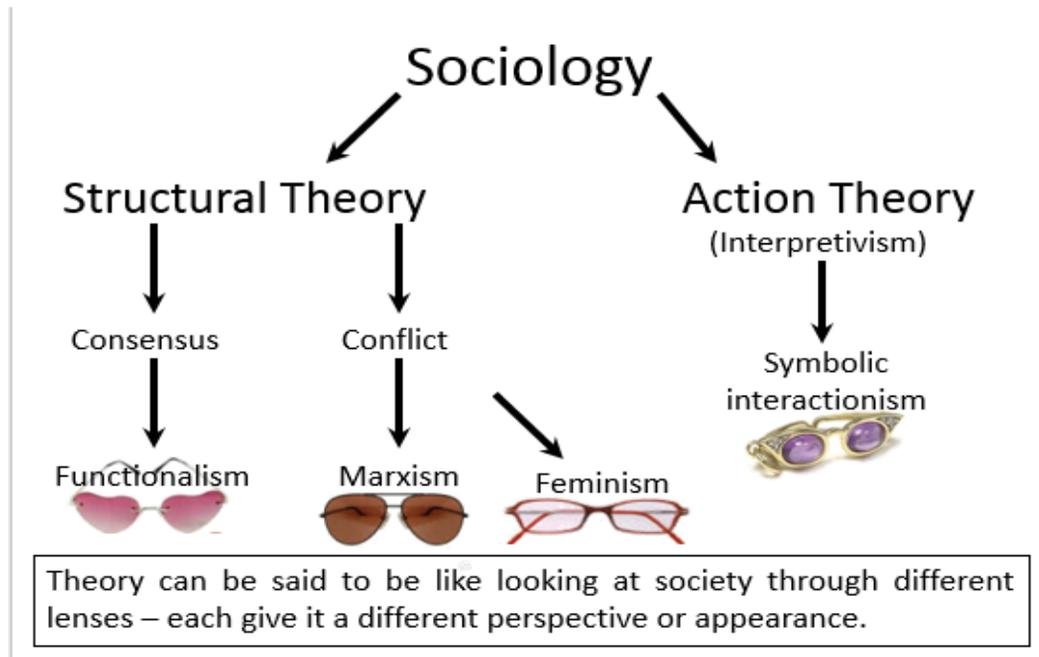


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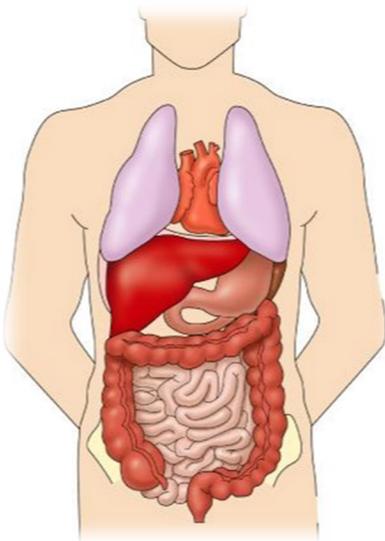
Why do you think has society changed? Why are societies different?

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# Theory is a big part of Sociology!



## Theory 1: Functionalism



1. Write Definitions for Free Will and Determinism.
2. Watch this clip and make a note of key words <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dhhdPgVzkwU>
3. Research Functionalism and produce a fact sheet outlining the “Organic Analogy”
  - Write a paragraph on the strengths on the theory
  - Write another on the weaknesses of the theory

# Theory 2: Feminism



everyday  
sexism  
project

1. Watch this clip:  
[https://www.ted.com/talks/roxane\\_gay\\_confessions\\_of\\_a\\_bad\\_feminist?referrer=playlist-talks\\_on\\_feminism#t-111873di0](https://www.ted.com/talks/roxane_gay_confessions_of_a_bad_feminist?referrer=playlist-talks_on_feminism#t-111873di0)  
Define all reasons why being a Feminist can be problematic.
2. Research Feminism (there are different branches) and produce a fact sheet outlining the definitions and provide examples.
3. Research @ or #EverydaySexism
  - What is the project?
  - What examples do they give of modern sexism?
  - Do you think sexism is still a problem today? Why?
  - Do ALL women have the experience? Explain your answer? Explain!

4. Research examples of gender inequality within the UK in contemporary society.

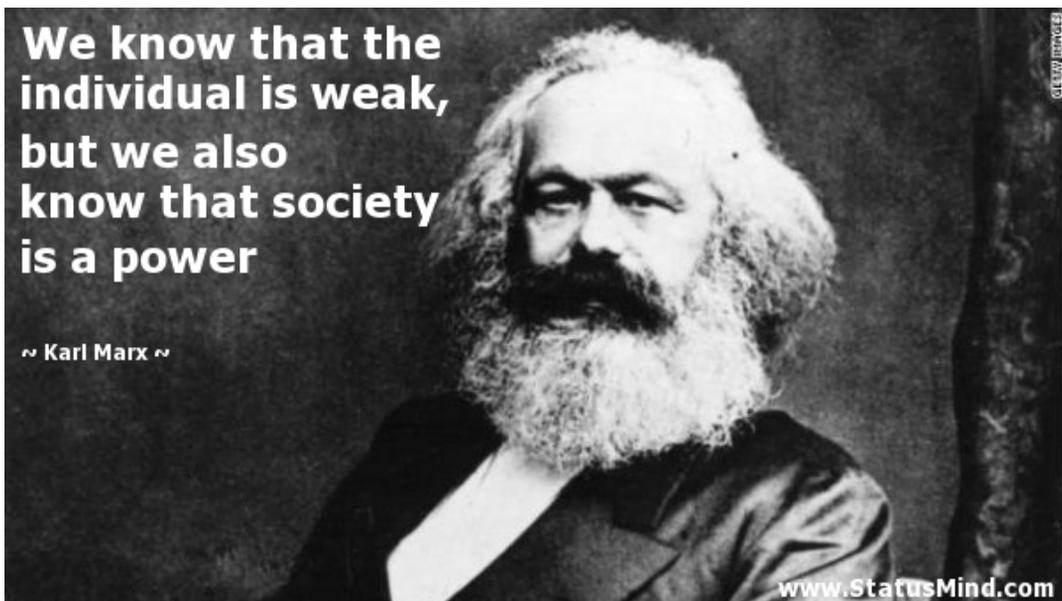
# Theory 3: Marxism

1. Watch YouTube clip:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Vz3eOb6Y1Is>



2. Define all key words on the video clip.
3. Research Marxism and produce a fact sheet outlining the difference between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat.
4. Research examples of class inequality within the UK in contemporary Society.
5. Choose one of the examples and explain how a Marxist would interpret the situation
6. How would a functionalist counter this approach?



# Theory 4: Social Action Theory

Functionalism	Feminism	Marxism

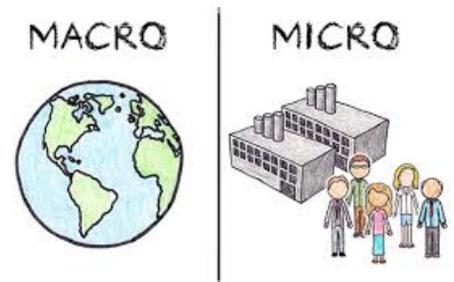
1. Complete a Summary table for your notes outlining each approach and stating whether they are:

- **Consensus** or **Conflict Theories**
- **Macro** or **Micro Approaches**
- **Structural** or **Social Action**

Ensure that you define which words in bold go with which theory! Add the strengths and weaknesses of each to the table too!



2. Watch the following you tube video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yJrnwOPC2f8> Define Social Action Theorist approach to society.



3. Do you think we have free will within society? What perspective would Social Action Theorist take on this question?



4. How would a structuralist respond to the idea of free will? Do you agree? Explain

## Theory 5: Post-modernism

1. Watch the following YouTube video:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QqsP0vQJJ44>

Produce a factsheet outlining what post-modernism is and what it says about society

2. Produce a table outlining the differences between a modern and post-modern society. (you may need to do more research!)

Modern	Post-Modern

3. Find examples of post-modern changes in society within the Media. For example Same Sex Marriages in the USA.

4. Do some further research on Post-modernism.

- Write a paragraph on the strengths on the theory
- Write another on the weaknesses of the theory

5. Out of the 5 theories you have researched - Which Sociological theory do you most and least agree with and why? Explain your reasons in detail making sure you explain what it was about that particular theory (at least a side of A4)!



**There are a lot of key terms that you need to know for your exams and to make sure you write great essays! Lets start off with the basics:**

**Task 6:** define the following sociological key terms:

1. Norms
2. Values
3. Socialisation
4. Society
5. Culture
6. Identity
7. Social differentiation
8. Stratification
9. Status
10. Subculture
11. Cultural diversity
12. Consensus
13. Conflict

Now for each of the key terms add a picture and an example to go with them

### **Task 7:**

As a sociology student you will also be expected to keep up to date with the news and current events – research a social issue that interests you!

1. Explain what why that particular issue (what interests you about it?)
2. Create a media collage of articles on your issue and annotate them
3. Apply what the theories might say about the issue!
4. Any research or policy laws which deals with your issue? Name and explain them!

### **Task 9: How do you see society?**

Draw (or build a model) of how you view society (use shapes / key words / images where possible)

Provide a written explanation of your work (**At least** a side of A4) to explain your work. What are main issues/ problems/ solutions you feel as a society we face and why!

### **Task 10: watch some TV!**

Sociology is everywhere, so you'll be able to see aspects of it in all forms of media. Try searching for the following titles and make notes on any videos you watch, try to keep it relevant to the topics taught in Sociology (see above).

- School Swap documentary
- Stacey Dooley documentaries

(BBC iPlayer/YouTube)

- Black Mirror (Netflix)
- Reggie Yates documentaries
- Dispatches documentaries (4OD)
- Panorama documentaries (BBC iPlayer)

**BBC iPlayer**

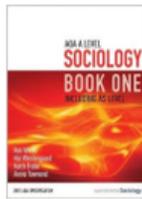


**YouTube**

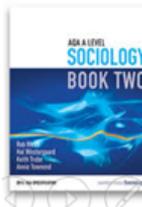
# Useful Resources & Further Reading

## To help you on your way...

It is also recommended that you take an active interest in the news and what is going on around you in the wider world as a lot of the concepts and ideas covered in lessons will relate to what is going on. The ability to be able to draw upon contemporary examples will also help illustrate your application and understanding skills which will be vital in order for you to achieve the higher grades in this subject.



The main textbook used in AQA A level Sociology AS and Year 1. Written by Robb Webb et al Napier press



The main textbook used in AQA A level Year 2. Written by Robb Webb et al Napier press

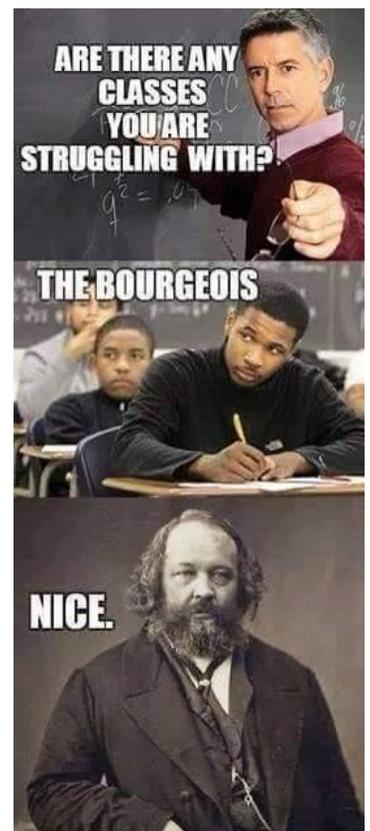
### Websites:

- AQA New Specification – <http://www.aqa.org.uk/subjects/sociology/as-and-a-level/sociology-7191-7192/introduction>
- AQA - Example Assessment Material - <http://www.aqa.org.uk/subjects/sociology/as-and-a-level/sociology-7191-7192/assessment-resources>
- S-Cool Revision Materials - <http://www.s-cool.co.uk/a-level/sociology>
- Every Day Sexism Project - <http://everydaysexism.com/index.php/about>
- Who Needs Feminism - <http://whoneedsfeminism.com/about.html>
- He for She Campaign - <http://www.heforshe.org/>
- <https://www.tutor2u.net/sociology/reference>
- <http://politybooks.com/kenbrowne/resources.asp>
- <https://napierpress.com/book-one-workbooks>
- <https://napierpress.com/book-two-workbooks>
- <http://www.earlhamsociologypages.co.uk>
- <https://www.sociologystuff.com>

For your first lesson... We expect you to have the following:

- Your summer homework
- All of your work completed from this booklet.
- A fully charged device
- An open mind!

Well done! You're all set ready to embark on your Sociology A Level course. We look forward to seeing you in September!



# Enrichment: Reading / Listening / Watching List



	<p><a href="http://www.theguardian.com/education/sociology">www.theguardian.com/education/sociology</a>  <a href="http://www.nytimes.com/topic/subject/sociology">www.nytimes.com/topic/subject/sociology</a>  <a href="http://www.tutor2u.net/sociology/blog">www.tutor2u.net/sociology/blog</a>  <a href="http://www.nortonbooks.typepad.com/everydaysociology/">www.nortonbooks.typepad.com/everydaysociology/</a>  <a href="http://www.soc.washington.edu/news">www.soc.washington.edu/news</a></p>	<p><a href="http://www.sociologysal.blogspot.com">www.sociologysal.blogspot.com</a>  <a href="http://www.gendersociety.wordpress.com">www.gendersociety.wordpress.com</a>  <a href="http://www.creativesociology.blogspot.com">www.creativesociology.blogspot.com</a>  <a href="http://www.sociologylens.net">www.sociologylens.net</a>  <a href="http://www.blogs.lse.ac.uk/impactofsocialsciences/">www.blogs.lse.ac.uk/impactofsocialsciences/</a></p>
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	<p><a href="http://www.anchor.fm/allsociology">www.anchor.fm/allsociology</a>  <a href="http://www.measureradio.libsyn.com/podcast">www.measureradio.libsyn.com/podcast</a>  <a href="http://www.socialsciencespace.com/author/socialsciencebites">www.socialsciencespace.com/author/socialsciencebites</a></p>	<p><a href="http://www.thesocialbreakdown.com">www.thesocialbreakdown.com</a>  <a href="http://www.soundcloud.com/thesociologicalreview">www.soundcloud.com/thesociologicalreview</a>  <a href="http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b006qy05">www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b006qy05</a>  <a href="http://www.anchor.fm/digital-sociology-podcast">www.anchor.fm/digital-sociology-podcast</a></p>
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	<p><a href="http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/topics/Sociology_of_culture">www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/topics/Sociology_of_culture</a>  <a href="http://www.channel4.com/programmes/dispatches">www.channel4.com/programmes/dispatches</a></p>	<p>Poor Kids: Life on the Breadline (Child Poverty Documentary)_ _Real Stories  <a href="http://www.ted.com/talks?topics%5B%5D=sociology">www.ted.com/talks?topics%5B%5D=sociology</a>  <a href="http://www.bbc.com/panorama">BBC Panorama</a></p>
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