

Subject: Sociology

Level: A Level

Exam Board: AQA

Subject Content

What is Sociology

Sociology is the study of social life, social change, and the cause and consequences of human behavior.

Sociologists investigate the structure of groups, organisations, and societies and how people interact with these concepts. It is likely to appeal to you if you are interested in:

- Learning more about human behaviour
- Studying and learning more about inequality in society
- Politics and current affairs

Year One

Education

During this topic you will study:

- Different perspectives on the role of the education system in society;
- Inequality in the education system: which class, gender and ethnic groups do well, which underachieve? Offer sociological explanations for these trends;
- Relationships and processes within schools: the impact of teachers, peers, streaming and the curriculum on pupils;
- Changes to educational policy and the impact of this on schools, pupils and parents.

Families and households

During this topic you will study:

- Different perspectives on the role of the family in society;
- Trends in marriage, cohabitation, separation, divorce, childbearing and the life course. Offer sociological explanations for these trends;
- Relationships in the family: gender roles, domestic labour and power relationships;
- The nature of childhood and changes in the status of children;
- Demographic trends since 1900: birth rates, death rates, family size, life expectancy, ageing population, migration and globalization.

Year Two

Beliefs in Society

During this topic you will study:

- ideology, science and religion, including both Christian and non-Christian religious traditions
- the relationship between social change and social stability, and religious beliefs, practices and organisations
- religious organisations, including cults, sects, denominations, churches and New Age movements, and their relationship to religious and spiritual belief and practice
- the relationship between different social groups and religious/spiritual organisations and movements, beliefs and practices
- the significance of religion and religiosity in the contemporary world, including the nature and extent of secularisation in a global context, and globalisation and the spread of religions.

Crime and Deviance

During this topic you will study:

- Understanding crime, deviance, social order and social control;
- Distribution of crime by ethnic, gender and class group. Offer sociological explanations for these trends;
- Crime in contemporary society: globalization, the media, green crime, human rights and state crimes;
- Criminal justice: control, prevention, surveillance, punishment, victims and the role of the criminal justice system.

Year One and Two

Theory and Methods

During this topic you will study:

- Different methods of sociological research;
- Practical, ethical and theoretical consideration in research;
- Positivism, interpretivism and the debate over whether sociology can be regarded as scientific;
- Key theories in depth: functionalism, Marxism, feminism, social action theories and postmodernism;
- The concepts of modernity and postmodernity;
- Debates over objectivity, subjectivity and value of freedom;
- The relationship between sociology and the creation of social policy.

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Skills required:

The following skills and interests are essential to success in the sociology course:

- **Communication and interpersonal skills:** the subject requires discussion and debate of a range of controversial issues, it is important that students are able to share and listen to ideas in a respectful manner.
- **High levels of literacy:** sociology is a subject, which relies heavily on students' ability to produce written work of a high quality. A prospective sociology student should already have started developing effective essay writing skills.
- **A strong ability to develop and use technical vocabulary:** learning sociology is just like learning a new language. You will be exposed to a raft of new words, terms and concepts every single lesson. You have to practice using these and test yourself on them regularly to be able to 'speak like' a sociologist.
- **An analytical approach:** sociology requires students to consider solutions to social problems, so problem solving and critical thinking are fundamental.
- **An evaluative approach:** further to this, students have to be able to examine situations from a range of different perspectives and identify limitations and problems with theories, studies and ideas put forward by sociologists.
- **A keen interest in reading:** the sociology course requires students to conduct a large amount of wider reading outside of class.
- **An interest in politics and current affairs:** sociology is all about studying contemporary society both in the UK and around the world. Successful students are interested in learning more about how the world works and human behavior, they are likely to watch and read the news regularly and form their own opinions about what they have seen.

Potential Careers

- Charity worker
- Counsellor
- Journalist
- Market Research
- Police Officer
- Probation Officer
- Social Policy Advisor
- Social Researcher
- Social Worker
- Teaching and Education
- Youth Worker

Complimentary subjects

Subjects in the field of social sciences and humanities are the most well-suited to a student studying sociology:

- History
 - Psychology
 - Economics
 - Politics
 - Geography
 - English Literature
 - Health and Social Care
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