

Key Stage 5 (12)

Course title: A-Level sociology

Exam board: AQA

Specification code: 7192/1, 7192/2, 7192/3

Family and Households

Students are introduced to what sociology is the study of, and the core themes of sociology e.g. culture and identity, socialisation, consensus and conflict, nature/nurture, diversity and identity and inequalities in society.

Following on from these introductory lessons on one side of the course students start the topic of Families and Households exploring the social structure and social change within this context. Students will develop an understanding of changing patterns of marriage, cohabitation and divorce as well as acknowledging the changing nature of childhood and gender roles.

Core topics

- The debate around equality between couples in families including questions such as 'Are couples becoming more equal?'
- Understand that childhood, as we know it, is a modern phenomenon. Childhood is different in different cultures and was different in the past. We explore the nature of childhood, and changes in the status of children in the family and society.
- To explore the different perspectives on the family. Functionalism, Marxism, feminism and the personal life perspective.
- Investigate how our population has changed over the last 100 years. Understand and be able to evaluate the reasons for population changes, including birth and death rates, family size, life expectancy, the ageing population, migration and globalisation.
- Understand that there have been major changes in family and household patterns over the last 50 years. We consider changes in marriage, divorce, cohabitation, civil partnerships, one person households and extended family households.
- Understand that different perspectives have different views on family diversity—some viewing it more positively and some less so. This includes looking at modernist and post-modernist approaches to family diversity.
- Understand the ways in which government policies (aimed directly and indirectly at the family) affect family life.

Education Part 1

Following on from the introductory lessons students then cover the first 3 topics in education: class differences in achievement (external and internal factors) and ethnicity and achievement.

Core topics

- Introduction to class differences in achievement focusing on external factors such as cultural and material deprivation, and cultural capital.
- Class differences in achievement - internal factors. We explore labelling theory, the self-fulfilling prophecy and issues of streaming. We then consider pupil subcultures and pupils' class identities and the school. Students are then asked to look at the interplay of both internal and external factors and how this affects achievement.
- Ethnic differences in achievement including the influence of internal and external factors such as institutional racism and the ethnocentric curriculum.

Education Part 2

Students will continue to explore educational achievement in terms of gender, exploring patterns of gender achievement. We then consider theories of education, including the Functionalist and Marxist views on education. The final section of this module considers educational policy.

- Gender differences in education including the gender gap, external factors such as impact of feminism and girls' changing ambitions. We then look at internal factors including girls' identities and how this affects achievement. Following this we consider why boys may be falling behind and finally the topic of gender and subject choice.
- The role of education in society including the Functionalist and Marxist perspective in education.
- Educational policy and inequality. We explore the main features of important educational policies and the impact these have had and continue to have on inequality of achievement.
- Consolidation of topic including exam technique and decoding questions.

Research methods

Students are introduced to the way sociologists investigate society by exploring a range of research methods. The key element is for students to gain an understanding of how sociologists gather sound evidence to test theories. They also investigate which methods are most suitable for the specific context being studied.

- How sociologists choose a research method.
- The research context—exploring education as a context for sociological research and how each of the five main groups may pose problems and opportunities for the sociologist.
- Experiments—types, evaluating the strengths and weaknesses, applying experiments to the context of education.
- Questionnaires - types of questions, evaluating the strengths and weaknesses, applying questionnaires to the context of education.
- Interviews— different types of interviews, evaluating the strengths and weaknesses, applying interviews to the context of education.
- Participant observation—different types of PO evaluating the strengths and weaknesses, applying PO to the context of education.
- Secondary sources - official statistics and documents.

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Crime and Deviance (part 1)

Introduction to crime and deviance rules and rule breaking. The course starts in the summer term of key stage 5 (year 12) so we cover the first two topics of the functions of crime and secondly interactionism and labelling. Students will be expected to make links with other C&D topics as they progress through the course. Synoptic links are continuously made. Students are encouraged to think how they could use theoretical arguments in their answers, so for example they would be asked to compare and contrast functionalism with class, power and crime. They will also be encouraged to use current example from the news and relevance to today's society.

Core topics

- Introduction to crime and deviance. Functionalist, strain and subcultural theories.
- Interactionism and labelling theory including understanding the labelling process and its consequences.
- Class, power and crime (Marxism). This topic considers why Marxists see crime as inevitable. We also explore crimes of the powerful and look at the nature and extent of white collar and corporate crime.
- Realist theories of crime and the main features of right and left approaches including their political context.
- Gender: crime and justice and understanding the debates about the treatment of men and women in the criminal justice system.
- Ethnicity, crime and justice. Understanding the relationship between the criminal justice process and ethnicity. Students also study the relationship between ethnicity, racism and victimisation.

Crime and Deviance (part 2)

Continue to develop knowledge and understanding of C & D. course Synoptic links are continuously made. Students are encouraged to think how they could use theoretical arguments in their answers so for example they would be asked to compare and contrast realist theories when looking at crime, prevention and control. They will also be encouraged to use current example from the news and relevance to today's society e.g. examples of current day moral panics.

Core topics

- Crime and the media - patterns of media representation, different views on the media as a cause of crime and know the role of the media in creating moral panics.
- Globalisation, green crime, human rights and state crime. We consider the global criminal economy, different types of green crime and sociological explanations of environmental harm. We then explore state crimes and human rights.
- Control, punishment and victims. Understand the range of crime prevention and control, different perspectives on punishment and surveillance and the patterns of victimisation.
- Consolidation of crime topic.

Theory and Methods

Students recap on the methods content covered in key stage 5 (12) to consolidate their disciplinary knowledge of how sociologists study society. Recap of qualitative and quantitative methods (topics 1 & 2). They then move on to the theory side of the course which they will have already covered in relation to the education, family and households so will have a good knowledge base of these. Topics 3 & 4 examine whether sociology can be considered a scientific study that produces unbiased, objective knowledge. We then consider four 'modernist' theories of society beginning with the enlightenment philosophical movement that believed in the power of reason and science to explain how the world works and how it might help to produce a better society. The final two sections look at major changes in today's society, linked to globalisation, and lastly the relationship between sociology and social policy.

- Quantitative research methods.
- Qualitative research methods - understanding society by interpreting the meanings people give to their actions.
- Sociology and science. A range of views on natural science & their implications for sociology as a science.
- Objectivity and values in sociology.
- Functionalism.
- Marxism.
- Feminist theories—main types and similarities and differences between them.
- Action theories—the difference between structural and action theories and evaluation of them.
- Globalisation, modernity and post modernity.
- Sociology and social policy.

Beliefs in Society

Students are introduced to the topic of Beliefs in society and in particular, the impact beliefs have on individuals and society as a whole.

Core topics

- Theories of religion including functionalist, marxist and feminist theories and understand the functions of religion from different perspectives (those that see it as positive and those that have a negative view of religion).
- Understand that religion can be conservative or a force for social change. It can also be both (regressive) or it can be progressive.
- Know how to define secularisation. Understand that the debate is nuanced. Understand that statistical evidence is simplistic.
- Religion, renewal and choice. Understand why some sociologists reject the idea of secularisation and analyse the alternative interpretations of the nature and position of religion today.
- Understand religion in a global context. Know the characteristics of fundamentalism.
- Understand some of the reasons why fundamentalism develops.
- Know the main types of religious organisation— how they developed. Explain why new religious movements became popular. Who joins?
- Understand science as a belief system. Can differentiate between open and closed systems. Understand that Marxism is a belief system.