

Sociology GCSE

- Sociology is the study of society and how it works, how it is organised and how we experience life
- Helps students to understand how people fit into a wider social network and encourages you to question beliefs about society.
- Provides an understanding of reasons for social differences, including differences in behaviour and enables you to learn how important factors such as family, gender and religion can play a role in how society is constructed (made up). You will also look at how our own behaviour and opportunities can be shaped by our social class, age, disability, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation and religion.

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GCSE Topics:

- The Sociological Approach
- Social structures, processes and issues
- Families
- Education
- Crime and Deviance
- Social Stratification
- Sociological research methods



Exam Board AQA- Specification here: [AQA | GCSE | Sociology | Specification at a glance](#)

Paper 1: Sociology of families and education

Functions of the **family**, the changing roles within a family and how relationships between people have changed through history due to shift in the law and attitudes to things such as same sex relationships and divorce.

Roles and functions of **Education**, different structures of education, the relationship between education and the government, processes in schools and educational achievement.

Data

Paper 2: Sociology of crime, deviance and social stratification

The social construction of concepts like **crime and deviance**, explanations of crime and deviance, the impact of labelling and the creation of subcultures.

How is society controlled? Formal and informal methods of **control**.

Different factors that affect criminal behaviour and ways in which both criminal and deviant behaviour have generated public debate.

Data

The Sociological Approach

Students must know and understand:

- Debates within sociology including conflict versus consensus.
- How sociological knowledge and ideas change over time and inform our understanding of the world.
- The contextualised work of key classical sociologists Durkheim, Marx and Weber.
- Different sociological perspectives on social structures, social processes and social issues, including those informed by: feminism, functionalism, interactionism and Marxism.
- How to use sociological research methods and how they apply in the specified contexts i.e. families, education, crime and deviance, social stratification.

Students will undertake small-scale research projects in order to develop their understanding of the practical difficulties faced by the sociologists working in the field.

- Sociological terms and concepts about social structures, social processes and social issues and the explanation of social phenomena including: society, socialisation, norms, values, roles, labelling, discrimination, power and authority.

Social Structures, Processes and Issues

- For each topic area students are asked to critically evaluate and compare and contrast theories or explanations.
- Students are expected to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of key sociological theories by reading and responding to extracts which illustrate the different views of sociologists. They should be able to critically analyse and evaluate how the issues have been interpreted by these sociologists.
- For each topic area students are expected to demonstrate an understanding of relevant methods and methodological issues, for example the use of official statistics, qualitative and quantitative approaches and the use of mixed methods.
- They will explore and debate contemporary social issues in order to be able to challenge everyday understandings of social phenomena from a sociological perspective. The knowledge, understanding and skills they develop will provide a basis for further study and career choices.

Families

- Differing views of the functions of families.
- Parsons' functionalist perspective on primary socialisation and the stabilisation of adult personalities.
- How family forms differ in the UK and within a global context.
- The work of the Rapoport reports on family diversity.
- Different views of conjugal role relationships.
- The feminist perspective of Oakley on the idea of the conventional family.
- Changing relationships within families.
- How relationships within families have changed over time.
- The theory of the symmetrical family and the principle of stratified diffusion developed from the functionalist perspective of Willmott and Young.
- Different criticisms of families (isolation and unrealistic idealisation, loss of traditional functions, lack of contact with wider kinship networks, the status and role of women within families, marital breakdown, dysfunctional families).
- The work of Zaretsky on developments in families from a Marxist perspective and Delphy and Leonard's feminist critique of families.
- Changes in the pattern of divorce in Britain since 1945 and the consequences of divorce for family members and structures.

Education

- Different views of the role and functions of education.
- The functionalist perspective of Durkheim on education as the transmission of norms and values and Parsons on achieved status and the operation of schools on meritocratic principles.
- Different views of the correspondence principle on the relationship between education and capitalism as developed from a Marxist perspective by Bowles and Gintis.
- Factors affecting educational achievement.
- The work of Halsey on class-based inequalities and Ball on parental choice and competition between schools.
- Processes within schools affecting educational achievement.
- The work of Ball on teacher expectations and Willis on the creation of counter school cultures.

Crime and Deviance

- The social construction of concepts of crime and deviance and explanations of crime and deviance.
- The work of Merton on the causes of crime from a functionalist perspective and Becker from an interactionist perspective
- Formal and informal methods of social control.
- The work of Heidensohn on female conformity in male dominated patriarchal societies.
- Factors affecting criminal and deviant behaviour and ways in which criminal and deviant behaviour have generated public debate.
- The work of Albert Cohen on delinquent subcultures and Carlen on women, crime and poverty.
- The usefulness of the main sources of data on crime, the collection of official data on crime, patterns and trends in crime figures and the 'dark figure'.

Social Stratification

- Different views of the functionalist theory of social stratification.
- The work of Davis and Moore on social stratification from a functionalist perspective.
- Different views of socio-economic class.
- The work of Marx and Weber on socio-economic class.
- Different views on factors affecting life chances.
- The work of Devine revisiting the idea of the affluent worker.
- Different interpretations of poverty as a social issue.
- The work of Townsend on relative deprivation and Murray on the underclass.
- Different forms of power and authority.
- The work of Weber on power and authority.
- Describe and explain different views on factors affecting power relationships.

• The work of Walby on patriarchy

Sociological Research Methods



Content	Additional information
Research design	Describe and explain the processes involved in research design: the establishment of appropriate aims and relevant hypotheses, the use of pilot studies, the selection of appropriate sampling methods and the analysis of data.
Qualitative and quantitative methods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Describe and explain qualitative and quantitative methods (questionnaires, interviews, observations) and assess the value, application, and strengths and weaknesses of different methods. Assess the usefulness of the mixed methods approach.
Different types of data	Assess the usefulness of different types of data, qualitative and quantitative data, and official and non-official statistics.
Primary and secondary sources	Describe and explain primary and secondary sources of data.
Interpretation of data	Demonstrate the ability to interpret graphs, diagrams, charts and tables to discern patterns and trends in statistical data.
Practical issues	Practical issues including time, cost and access.
Ethical issues	Ethical issues are consent, confidentiality and harm to participants and how the issues can be addressed.