

# Sociology

## Overview:

Exam Board: AQA

Sociology is the study of society – how it works, why it works, and how it could change. It's a fascinating subject that covers all aspects of modern life. Studying sociology at A Level will give you an awareness of the social, political and economic issues that shape society. It will help you develop greater understanding empathy towards communities that differ from your own and open your mind to a diverse range of ideas, experiences and beliefs.

A Level sociology will leave you with a greater appreciation of the world around you and the diversity of contemporary society.

You will be able to recognise and help find solutions to issues that specific communities and groups face and help build a fairer society for all, as a result.

## Content:

Key Units:

### Families and Households

You will study the relationship of the family to social structures. You'll identify changing patterns in marriage, divorce, cohabitation and separation and investigate the diversity of contemporary household structures and family units. You will also explore the UK's demographic trends (e.g. birth and death rates) over the last 120 years.

### Education

This topic introduces you to the education system's functions and role and its relationship to society's class structures and economy. You will explore how an individual's academic achievement is influenced by their social group, age, gender and ethnicity. You will also become aware of the significance of educational policies in improving access to education and equality within the system.

### Crime and Deviance

This module explains the social reasons for crime and deviance and will help you understand the concept of social control. By investigating recent crime patterns and trends, you will discover how identity and culture influence the social distribution of crime. You will also develop an understanding of the criminal justice system and the prevention techniques to reduce the prevalence of crime in society.

### The Media

You will investigate the role of the media within society and how its content can shape our perception of specific communities. You will scrutinise the representation of gender, sexuality, ethnicity, disability, age and social class in the media and understand the relationship between content and audience.

### Theory and Methods

Alongside your topic-specific studies, you will develop a knowledge of the theories and research methods that underpin sociology. You will understand how research is conducted to gain an insight into society, assess the value of different types of data and consider the ethics behind sociological study.

## Key Skills

Studying sociology will definitely help develop your essay skills, allowing you to discuss different views on social issues in a critical and evaluative way. Being able to draw on a range of perspectives, evidence and

contemporary issues is excellent preparation for university and employment. Sociology provides a strong understanding of social and political issues, past and present.

### Knowledge and Understanding

This means knowledge and understanding of sociological theories, concepts and evidence

### Application

This means applying sociological theories, concepts, evidence and research methods to a range of issues. It also means being able to apply material from the items that are attached to some questions!

### Analyse and evaluate

You need to be able to analyse and evaluate concepts, evidence and research methods in order to:

- present arguments
- make judgements
- draw conclusions.

Analysis means being able to pick apart arguments and evidence in a nuanced way and showing that you know the logic behind arguments, and how all the pieces of a theory fit together.

Evaluation means showing the strengths and limitation of research studies and theories.

Sociology is an essay based subject.

## **Entry Requirements:**

English Language GCSE at Grade 5 or above.

## **How Assessed:**

There are a range of forms of assessment, all exam based. These range from short answer to longer essay questions. There is no coursework. Assessment will take place at the end of the two-year course.

How many exams:

Paper 1 – 2 hour exam, 80 marks – Education, Methods in Context, Theory and Methods

Paper 2 – 2 hour exam – 80 marks – Families and Households, The Media

Paper 3 – 2 hour exam 80 marks – Crime and Deviance, Theory and Methods

## **Progression:**

A Level Sociology is very good preparation for university, where strong essay writing skills are very important. Universities recognise that sociology A Level provides students with a very good foundation in social, political and policy knowledge. Sociology is regarded as a demanding and rigorous A Level which combines well with any other combination of subjects.

A Level sociology can help you find work in a variety of exciting and challenging roles:

- Youth worker
- Police officer
- Social research
- Community development officer
- Probation officer
- Civil Service

You could go on to study sociology further at university or study a related social science degree. These include criminology, psychology, human geography and even politics. A sociology, or related degree, can create opportunities in the public and private sectors and within charities. It can also lead to work in research and teaching, where you can specialise in a certain area of sociology, advance study in the field and help others to better understand the ever-changing world we live in.