

A-level Sociology

at The Blue Coat Sixth Form

Part of the Social Sciences Department



Welcome Sociologists! This is a Bridging course aimed to get you ready for your A level Sociology course.

The idea behind the bridging course is to give you a head start and so that you are already familiar with some of the key concepts and terms you will be using throughout the course. It doesn't matter whether you have studied Sociology at GCSE- we are going to get you all ready for A-Level.

You have chosen a subject that will 'keep you on your toes' and make you think in ways you couldn't imagine. You will certainly have a very different outlook on society by the end of your course.

Tasks:

In this booklet are 10 tasks which must be completed and handed in during your first lesson. You can complete them digitally or on paper. Remember these will help form first impressions of your work ethic so put in your best efforts.

Section A- What is Sociology?

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, centuries; and across countries, societies.

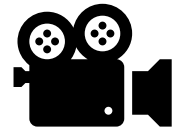
Task 1: Answer the following questions

- Give 3 different ways society has changed over the last 100yrs – think about the different areas of social life and work.
- Name 3 ways in which British society is different to another (America, Italy etc.)
- Why has society changed? Why are societies different?

Task 2: What is Sociology?

Watch the video clip on YouTube: What is Sociology?
Crash Course Sociology

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YnCJU6PaCio> and
note down what you understand about Sociology.



Task 3:

Find the definitions for the following key sociological terms:

- Socialisation (primary socialisation and secondary socialisation)
- Norms
- Values
- Culture
- Social Class
- Gender
- Ethnicity

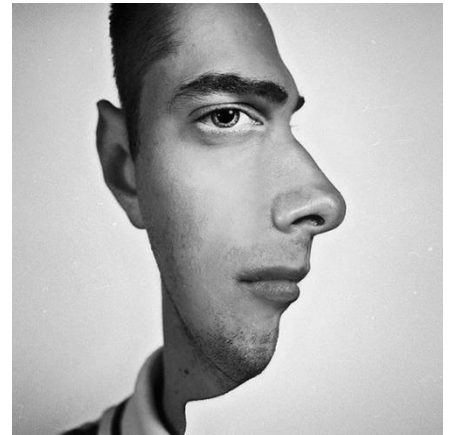
Section B – Differing opinions on society

Sociology is the study of human social life. There are many different aspects of Sociology, so you must be curious and attentive when looking at the world.

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.



Task 4:

A theory is something that explains the relationship between two or more things. A perspective can be defined as a way of looking at and seeing something. To have a perspective, therefore, means to look at something (whatever that thing might be) in a particular way. When we talk about the sociological perspective, therefore, we are talking about the particular way those sociologists, as opposed to non-sociologists to try to understand human social behaviour.

Use the internet to find out about the main sociological theories. For each one, explain the main idea and concepts and the key sociologists:

- Functionalism
- Marxism
- Feminism
- Action Theories
- Postmodernism
- Which sociological perspective do you agree with? Why?

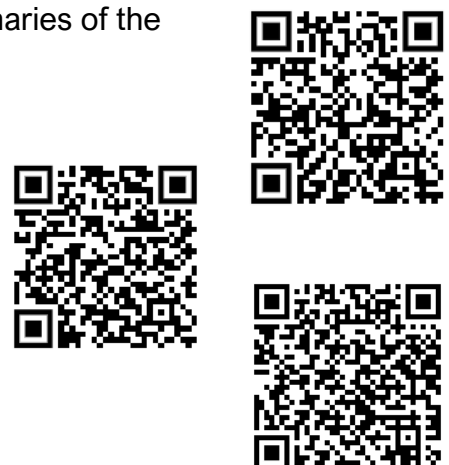
The YouTube channel and websites below are good for summaries of the main theories:

https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL8dPuuaLjXtMJ-AfB_7J1538YKWkZAnGA

<https://revisesociology.com/sociology-theories-a-level/>

[tutor2u | Theory & Methods: Student Revision Videos](#)

If you're finding it tricky, just note down some key terms for each perspective and make sure you look them up.



Section C- The sociology of families and households

One of the first areas you will study is the sociology of the family. Our concept of what a family is has changed throughout history and is a fascinating area of study for sociologists. It is the first place we develop our values and has a huge and lasting impact on the rest of our lives.



Task 5: Find the definitions for the following key family terms:

- Monogamy
- Bigamy
- Polygamy
- Maternal
- Nuclear family
- Empty nest
- Empty shell marriage
- Extended family
- Kinship
- Cohabitation

Task 6: How has the family changed over time?

Research the changing family in the UK and answer the following questions:

- a) How has the family structure changed over the past 100 years?
- b) How have the following policies affected the family?
 - i. The Divorce Act 1969 and 1984 (increasing divorce rates)
 - ii. The Paternity Act 2010 (more dad's taking time off work with a newborn)
 - iii. The Civil partnerships Act 2004 and the Marriage (Same-Sex Couples) Act 2013

Section D- The sociology of education

Sociologists have differing opinions about the role our education system plays; some think it is crucial for the smooth running of society, whereas other think it is a toll used to exploit certain groups. The statistics show that some groups do far better in our education system- do you think that's because they are more talented?



Task 7:

Find the definition of meritocracy.

Read the following news articles.

[Gap between poor and affluent students going to university widest for 14 years | Evening Standard](#)

<https://www.tes.com/news/few-one-20-born-poorest-areas-go-university>



Answer the following questions:

- Do these articles suggest we live in a meritocracy?
- Why is it important that 'poor' students go to university?

Section E- Social Variables

In sociology, students need to understand the following two core themes:

- socialisation, culture and identity
- social differentiation, power and stratification.



The themes apply to all areas of Sociology, like family and education which you have already looked at. To understand society and the way individuals behave within it, it is important to understand the threads that run through many areas of social life.

Task 8: Social variables can be remembered using the acronym CAGES. Find the definitions for each of the categories.

- Class (Socio-economic)
- Age
- Gender
- Ethnicity
- Sexuality

Focus on ethnicity

Task 9: Research and make brief notes on the following issues.

Black Lives Matter movement

**Please be aware that some of the footage you may see when researching BLM is upsetting and disturbing.*

- What is the Black Lives matter movement?
- When did it start?
- What are it's aims?
- What sparked the most recent protests by the movement in the US and the UK?
- What is meant by defund the police?
- Why was Edward Colston's statue thrown into Bristol harbor?



The Windrush scandal

- Who are the 'Windrush generation'?
- What was the 'scandal' that happened in 2018?
- What problems and difficulties have the Windrush generation encountered whilst living in the UK?
- What does the treatment of the Windrush generation indicate about the UK's attitude towards migration and ethnic minorities?



Task 10: Essay writing

Using some of the key themes and vocabulary that you have learned over the pre-course material, answer the question below. You are free to carry out wider research, but essays will be checked for plagiarism.

Success Criteria:

- Your essay should include an introduction, structured paragraphs and a conclusion.
- You should use some key vocabulary.
- You should aim to write around 1.5- 2 sides of A4.
- Your essay will be marked as fail/pass/merit/distinction.

Evaluate the extent to which institutional racism is still a feature of life in Britain today.

End of tasks

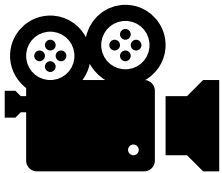
Excited to know more?

Some recommended reading

- Gang Leader for a Day by Sudhir Venkatesh
- Watching the English: The Hidden Rules of English Behaviour by Kate Fox
- Chavs: The Demonization of the Working Class by Owen Jones
- We Should All Be Feminists by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie



Watch the TED talk



- https://www.ted.com/talks/sherry_turkle_connected_but_alone
- https://www.ted.com/talks/chimamanda_ngozi_adichie_we_should_all_be_feminists
- https://www.ted.com/talks/roxane_gay_confessions_of_a_bad_feminist
- https://www.ted.com/talks/irene_mora_for_women_in_pursuit_of_motherhood_and_a_career

Listen to the podcast

- <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b05strvl>
- <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b03mg95w>



- <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b006qy05/episodes/player?page=36>

Read the articles



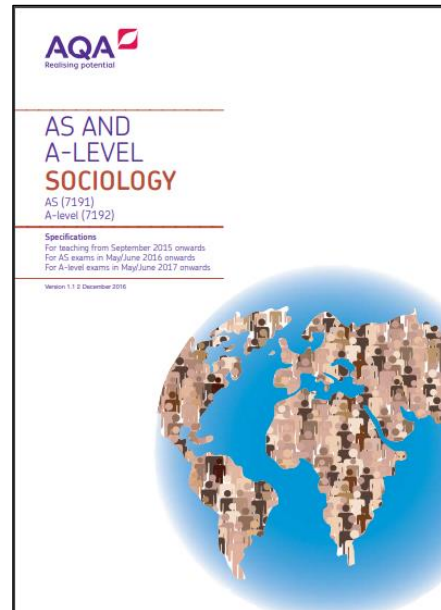
- <https://www.theguardian.com/education/2020/may/12/womens-research-plummets-during-lockdown-but-articles-from-men-increase>
- <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-52631222>
- <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-52492662>
- <https://www.tutor2u.net/sociology/blog/rise-in-corona-divorce-in-japan>
- <https://nymag.com/intelligencer/2020/04/did-my-fundamentalist-upbringing-prepare-me-for-coronavirus.html>
- <https://www.theatlantic.com/ideas/archive/2020/04/pandemic-shows-what-cities-have-surrendered-cars/610423/>
- <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/science-environment-51944780>

Useful information to know

What specification is it?

AQA A level Sociology 7192

<https://www.aqa.org.uk/subjects/sociology/as-and-a-level/sociology-7191-7192>



What textbook will I use?

Text books for Year 1 and Year 2 will be provided by the Sixth Form, but if you want to purchase a copy this is the amazon link.

<https://www.amazon.co.uk/AQA-Level-Sociology-Book-Including/dp/0954007913>

