# Introduction to Sociology: Perspectives on Society and the Individual

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# Bridging Work

# Sociology

# Chesterfield College – Sixth Form.

# The Other Sociologist — Neither the life of an individual nor the history...

These activities (activities begin p10) are designed to give you a taster of Sociology and to start developing you ‘sociological imagination’. Read and complete as many of the activities as you can in order to prepare for the beginning of your studies in September.

For context, we follow the AQA Sociology specification. Please direct any further queries you may have, over to me via my email:

[millana@chesterfield.ac.uk](https://www.tutor2u.net/sociology/reference/sociological-theory-consensus-versus-conflict-theories)

# There is no coursework in Sociology

AQA Sociology A-level is a linear course. Year 12 helps you develop the key critical skills, thinking and social comprehension. Whereas as Year 13 allows you to practice these skills and further develop your Sociological Imagination.

We focus particularly on how certain features of a person’s social position (i.e., their gender, social class, and ethnicity) might affect their life chances in society.

Sociology is regarded as a Social Science, largely because it uses a number of research methods to examine society in more detail.

A major part of gaining success in Sociology is by learning the main ideas, concepts and terms used – the language of the subject – and then being able to use this language when you are discussing the topics and issues relevant to the study of society.

The topics that you are assessed on over the two years are:

Year 12 Year 13

Education Crime and Deviance

Families & Households Media

Research Methods Theories & Methods

You will be expected to **know and understand (AO1)** the information about the topics, to **be able to apply (AO2)** that knowledge and understanding and to **be able to analyse and evaluate (AO3)** that knowledge and understanding.

There will be **two exams** at the end of your first year:

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There will be **three exams** in your second year:

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**Textbooks.**

A group of people holding up a picture

Description automatically generatedIn class you will have limited access to:

(First year) SOCIOLOGY FOR AQA VOLUME 1 AS AND 1ST- YEAR A LEVEL: by Ken Browne.

# Topics of focus: Education, Families & Households & Research Methods.

A book cover of a book

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(Second year) AQA A Level Sociology: Book 2 by Rob Webb, Hal Westergaard, Keith Trobe, Annie Townend.

# Topics of focus: Crime & Deviance, Media, Theory & Methods.

A book cover with a couple of people holding laptops

Description automatically generatedIt is highly recommended that you try and buy your own copies of these textbooks asap when beginning the course. In addition to these, other books I would recommend, whilst not exhaustive, are:

(First year) SOCIOLOGY FOR AQA REVISION GUIDE 1 AS AND 1ST YEAR A LEVEL by Ken Browne.

A book cover with a person holding pictures

Description automatically generated(Second year) SOCIOLOGY FOR AQA REVISION GUIDE 2 2ND YEAR A LEVEL by Ken Browne.

Whilst not an exhaustive list, another amongst many, that is worth noting, is:

* How to Be a Sociologist: an Introduction to A level Sociology, by Jennifer Hardes and Sarah Cant.
* Chavs: The Demonisation of the Working Class by Owen Jones
* The Establishment and How They Get Away With It by Owen Jones
* The God Delusion by Richard Dawkins
* Outsiders: Studies in Sociology of Deviance by Howard S Becker
* Folk Devils and Moral Panics by Stanley Cohen
* A Glasgow Gang Observed by Patrick James
* Gang Leader For A Day by Sudhir Venkatesh

Whilst not a textbook per say, pay particular attention to the revisionary resources and guides that are released by some of the websites below, such as Tutor2u.

**Useful Websites:**

* **AQA Specification** – http://www.aqa.org.uk/subjects/sociology/as-and-a- level/sociology-7191-7192/introduction
* **AQA - Example Assessment Material -** http://www.aqa.org.uk/subjects/sociology/as-and-a- level/sociology-7191-7192/assessment-resources
* **Tutor2U** - https://www.tutor2u.net/sociology
* **Hectic Teacher** - https://hecticteachersociology.com/
* **The Sociology Teacher** - https://www.thesociologyteacher.com/
* **The Sociology Guy** - <https://sociology-matters.org/>

# Remember, sociology is…

1. The study of society, large groups of people and individuals.
2. It studies how and why people behave the way they do in society
3. Looks at how structures such as family and Government influence human behaviour
4. A social science which uses research to investigate and predict human behaviour to help governments improve the lives of those in society.
5. A critical and radical subject, it is about questioning why society is as it is. It is about digging under the surface, looking at what is really going on.

**Is Sociology for me?**

Yes, if you’re interested in questions like these…

* To what extent is the individual shaped by society?
* Is there such a thing as a social structure that constrains individual action, or is society nothing more than a figment of our imaginations?
* To what extent does our social class background affect our life chances?
* To what extent does our gender affect our life chances?
* To what extent does our ethnicity affect our life chances?
* What is the role of institutions in society – do they perform positive functions, or simply work in the interests of the powerful and against the powerless?
* How and why has British society changed over the last 50 years
* Are we manipulated by the media?
* Can crime be a good thing?

**Task information/ instruction!**

Whilst you may have never studied Sociology before, do not worry! The following tasks are designed to give us a flavour of your thoughts, opinions, and overall starting point, before beginning with us in September.

For the **first section**, **you must answer either ‘Nature vs nurture’** **OR** ‘Fight the dead, fear the living’.

**Then you must complete all of the following tasks and folder preperation. As per the instructions and guidance at the bottom of this document, please bring your work with you to our first session together in September, or email any evidence over to me in the mean time, at** [**millana@chesterfield.ac.uk**](mailto:millana@chesterfield.ac.uk)

**Nature vs Nurture**

Read both items below, before attempting the below questions.

**Item A.**

**Text

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**Item B**

Socialisation is the process by whereby the helpless infant gradually becomes a self-aware, knowledgeable person, skilled in the ways of the culture into which she or he is born. Children obviously learn a great deal from their parents, but they also learn basic values, norms, and language, from a range of people including grandparents (especially grandmothers), childminders and baby-sitters, siblings and neighbors who act as ‘aunts’ etc. There are other secondary influences such as playgroups and nurseries as well as television, video and computer games and traditional media such as comics and storybooks. Children do not passively absorb these influences. They are from the very beginning active beings. They ‘make sense’ of their experience and decide for themselves how to react.

*Adapted from A. Giddens Sociology (1997) and J. Bernardes Family Studies: An Introduction (1997)*

**Questions:**

1. Describe in your own words what is meant by the term ‘socialisation’.
2. Suggest two ways that socialisation can take place in modern societies.
3. Using information from the Items and elsewhere examine the sociological view that we are the product of our ‘nurture’ rather than our ‘nature’.

**Task - Fight the dead. Fear the living!**

The Scenario:

You wake up after 59 days in a coma and ironically, by some miracle, you have managed to be unscathed and healthily alive in the midst of a zombie apocalypse. No government, no emergency services, no immediate form of replenished resources from shops etc. Without anyone to come to your aid, you will need to try and find others and you will be forced to construct a new society.

How will you do this?

Draw a model of how you view this society (use shapes / key words / images where possible)

Provide a written explanation of your work (**at least a side of A4**) to explain what you have done.

**Include what you see as the main issues/ problems/ solutions you feel as a society we face and why!**

Some questions to potentially consider:

* How would the ‘social norms’ change? Would there be any?
* If no, how would this state of ‘normlessness’ impact the remaining survivors?
* What impact would it have on the bonds that people have with one another?
* What types of ‘deviant’ behaviour, might you see on the increase?
* How might our ‘moral behaviour’ be compromised and so, what could we argue governs what we deem to be, normal behaviour?

**Year 1 Sociology: Preparation for Theory & Methods**

[](https://www.tutor2u.net/sociology/reference/theoretical-debates-in-sociology-modernity-and-late-modernity?sa=i&url=https%3A%2F%2Frevise-sociology-aqa.tumblr.com%2Fcrime&psig=AOvVaw0s_Z9PxxUOdV86gALaq5Hh&ust=1588756787577000&source=images&cd=vfe&ved=0CAIQjRxqFwoTCPjQkqiynOkCFQAAAAAdAAAAABAK)As preparation for the Theory section of your Theory and Methods topic, you will be required to watch a series of Tutor2U tutorials and make notes to build a foundation level of understanding. You may need to watch the videos a couple of times and pause sections to take your notes. We will be teaching Theory and Methods using PowerPoint format and you will also be filling in a study booklet as usual following your preparation activities. Please note down questions for your me on your notes to raise during these sessions. By preparing in this way, you will develop a deeper understanding of the content and have more opportunities to work on exam technique.

**Task Checklist**

Each topic area should take you approximately 30 minutes to complete (10 minutes for video, 20 minutes for notes). There are 8 topic areas which equates to 4 lessons worth of work.

**Notes Guidance**

**Example of notes**

I have written notes for your first video structural theories (below). You will still be required to watch this video and make your own notes.

You will hear about examples from a wide range of areas on the specification. Make notes particularly on links to Research Methods \*, Families & Households\*, Education\*, Crime and Deviance\* and Media\*.

*\*= course topics*

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Topic area** | **Video link** | **Video watched?** | **Notes made?** |
| Functionalism | [https://www.tutor2u.net/sociology/reference/sociological-theory-functionalism](https://www.tutor2u.net/sociology/reference/sociological-theory-interactionism) |  |  |
| Marxism | [https://www.tutor2u.net/sociology/reference/sociological-theory-marxism](https://www.tutor2u.net/sociology/reference/sociological-theory-social-action-theories) |  |  |
| Feminism | <https://www.tutor2u.net/sociology/reference/sociological-theory-feminism> |  |  |
| Structural theories | [https://www.tutor2u.net/sociology/reference/sociological-theory-structural-theories](https://www.google.com/url) |  |  |
| Consensus vs. Conflict theories | [https://www.tutor2u.net/sociology/reference/sociological-theory-consensus-versus-conflict-theories](https://www.tutor2u.net/sociology/reference/theoretical-debates-in-sociology-postmodernity-postmodernism) |  |  |
| Interactionism | [https://www.tutor2u.net/sociology/reference/sociological-theory-interactionism](https://www.tutor2u.net/sociology/reference/sociological-theory-marxism) |  |  |
| Action theories | [https://www.tutor2u.net/sociology/reference/sociological-theory-social-action-theories](https://www.tutor2u.net/sociology/reference/sociological-theory-structural-theories) |  |  |
| Modernity, late modernity and postmodernism | [https://www.tutor2u.net/sociology/reference/theoretical-debates-in-sociology-modernity-and-late-modernity](mailto:millana@chesterfield.ac.uk)  [https://www.tutor2u.net/sociology/reference/theoretical-debates-in-sociology-postmodernity-postmodernism](https://www.tutor2u.net/sociology/reference/sociological-theory-functionalism) |  |  |

**Example below.**

|  |
| --- |
| **THEORY** |

**Topic 1: Functionalism**

**5**

**6**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Key points** | | **Notes** |
| Structural consensus  Value consensus  Functional  Durkheim: Positivism, social cohesion.  Parsons: Goal attainment, adaptation, integration, latent functions.  Merton: Internal criticism of Functionalism. Dysfunctional.  Evaluation:  Issues with falsifiability, determinism & ignoring conflict.  Contribution:  Grand narrative, Positivism, New Right. | | *Structural consensus theory. Agencies of socialisation pass on shared norms & values to create a harmonious society (value consensus). Society meets all members of society needs.*  *Key thinkers:*   1. ***Durkheim****: Positivist – uses social facts to make conclusions about society. Social order is maintained through similarity (social cohesion). Society moves forward using deviant behaviours & evolving social norms/values.* 2. ***Parsons****: Society is a system that has 4 functional pre-requisites:* 3. *Goal attainment: Resources need to be allocated to ensure needs of all in society are met (e.g. government)* 4. *Adaptation: Ability of economy to meet material needs of the population* 5. *Integration: How population understands norms & values.* 6. *Latent functions: Pattern maintenance which prepares people for their roles in future society (meritocracy). Tension management which allows individuals to express tension in different ways.*   *Social changes occur in one part of the system which facilitates changes elsewhere in society.*   1. ***Merton:*** *Criticism of concept of universal functionalism (mainly Parsons). Society ca be dysfunctional. Strain theory suggests that inequality in society is the source of criminal behaviour. Sections of society can be independent/replaced (criticises organic analogy).*   ***Evaluation:***   * *Functionalists find explanations for something that has already happened (teleology– working backwards – meaning it is not scientific or falsifiable.* * *Overly deterministic* * *Ignores conflict in society (Feminism/Marxism)*   ***Contributions of Functionalism***   * *First grand narrative – attempt to scientifically explain social behaviours* * *Positivist methodology & influenced development of Sociology as a social science* * *Influenced the development of the New Right & understanding of a wide variety of social structures (e.g. family & education).* |
| **Summary** | Functionalism is a structural consensus theory. Society meets all members of societies needs & creates a value consensus. There are 3 key thinkers. Durkheim, Parsons & Merton. They have differing beliefs on the functions of society & how social change occurs. Functionalists have been criticised for their issues with falsifiability, determinism & ignoring conflict. They have made valuable contributions to understanding society as they were the first grand narrative, they influenced the development of Sociology as a social science with Positivism & the influenced the New Right. | |
| **Questions for teacher** | Can you explain latent functions in more detail please? | |

A checklist with a check mark

AI-generated content may be incorrect.**Final task for your first week in Sociology together.**

**To finish (& how to submit your work!).**

Thank you for completing this document. I hope you have found it of use and an intriguing first step as you embark to study Sociology in September.

Remember – Email me your finished work (or let me know you’re bringing in your physical work during our first sessions together in September) and or any questions you might have, again, at: [millana@chesterfield.ac.uk](mailto:millana@chesterfield.ac.uk)