

A Level Sociology



Transition work

Welcome to A-Level Sociology!

We follow the AQA specification, and study the following topics:

- Education
- Families
- Beliefs in Society
- Crime and deviance
- Theory and Methods

These are divided into three papers, which are each 2-hour exams and make up 100% of your final grades.

You can find the specification [here](#).



What do BHS students say about studying A Level Sociology?

"I like sociology because it's given me a wider knowledge of society and it has enabled me to contemplate different views of different classes, ethnicity and gender differences. Since starting sociology I have changed my view on people around me, and now think about why people are how they are, and not just automatically label them in my head. This I feel has made me a better person, and I'm really glad I chose to do sociology."

"I like a teacher who gives you something to take home and think about besides homework. That's Sociology."

"Sociology is really interesting and helps you to understand what goes on in the world. It opens your eyes to things around you that you may not have been aware of."

"I like sociology because it teaches you about how people interact in the society all around you. It is different to my other subjects because it changed my outlook on society and how things work."



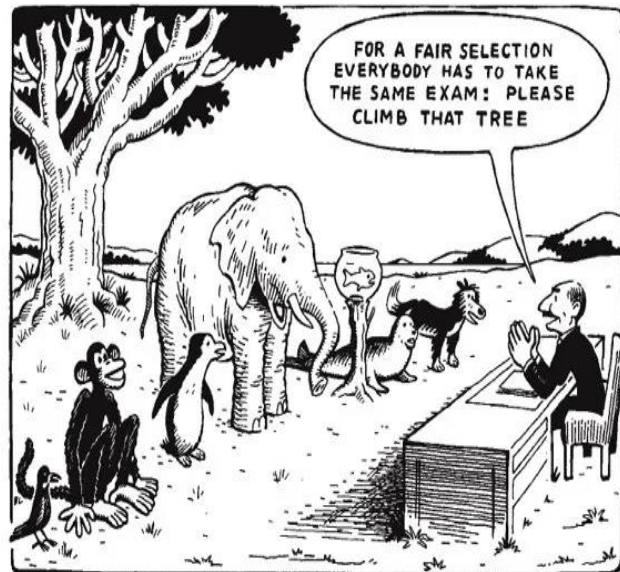
Overleaf are a small handful of preparatory exercises to give you a flavour of the subject and prepare you for what we will study in September.

You will also need to buy a copy of the course textbook - **AQA A Level Sociology Book One**, by Webb et al <https://amzn.to/3iR9GMd>

Introduction

Sociology refers to the study of society – the way people interact together in society, and how society shapes us and our decisions. Studying sociology will help you to understand different perspectives, to write analytic essays and crucially, to understand the same issue can be seen from multiple perspectives.

One of the main issues we study in sociology is **equality** – how and why society is unequal, and why different people have different chances of succeeding in life. This will be the focus of this work pack.



Sociologists believe society can be broken down into different parts: **social institutions**. These include: education, the family, the mass media (TV and newspapers), the criminal justice system, health and religion. These different parts work together and play an important role in shaping our lives. They also believe that every society has a culture, which means a way of life, and a set of norms (expected behaviours) and values (what we hold to be important).

How do we become part of society?

Sociologists argue that children go through a process called **socialisation**, which means learning society's norms and values. At home, children go through primary socialisation, where they learn how to speak, share and other basic behaviours and norms. Secondary socialisation comes later, at school and beyond, where individuals learn from their peers and others.



"Don't use that ring tone with me, young man!"

Our behaviour is influenced by those around us – we are encouraged to conform to society's expectations and **norms** (obey the rules and do what is expected) and discouraged from deviating from this. These expectations are enforced by sanctions from others – positive sanctions when we do the right thing, eg a smile, a laugh, or a reward, and negative sanctions when we do the wrong thing, a disapproving frown, a shake of the head, or a detention. The way society encourages us to conform and discourages us from deviating is known as social control.

Task one: find and write out the definitions of the following words, from the text above, online, or from your new textbook!

Sociology	
Sociologist	
Social institutions	
Norms	
Values	
Sanctions	
Primary socialisation	
Secondary socialisation	
Social control	

Theoretical perspectives in Sociology

In Sociology, there are a number of different theories about how best to understand society. Below are three of the main different sociological perspectives we will study in our first year:

1. **Functionalism:** these sociologists believe society runs smoothly, and is made up of different parts which all work together to keep society stable. They believe people agree on what is important (there is a value consensus) and people generally conform to the norms of society. They tend to focus on the positive functions of different parts of society. **Watch this video to find out more:** https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-83vVeSC2_g
2. **Marxism:** based on the ideas of Karl Marx, they focus on inequalities based on social class (how much or little money someone has). They believe this is the main inequality in society. They argue there are two main classes: the working class (proletariat) and ruling class (bourgeoisie) and believe the ruling class own and exploit the workers, treating them badly and giving them low pay so they can make more money for themselves. **Watch this video and find out more:** https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fSQgCy_ilcc
3. **Feminism:** Feminists see gender inequality, inequality between men and women, as the main inequality in society. They argue women are treated badly and exploited by men, and that society is patriarchal (male-dominated). **Watch this video to find out more:** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D6DI-9pSW-4>

Task two: Complete the table to briefly summarise the different perspectives. Try to include any relevant key concepts you picked up on (e.g: consensus, ideology...)

	Summary
Functionalism	
Marxism	
Feminism	

Education

'Education' is the first module we study in Year 12. While the UK has a state education system, many wealthy parents choose to send their child to an independent school. Independent (private) schools usually cost around £11,565 per term which includes boarding.

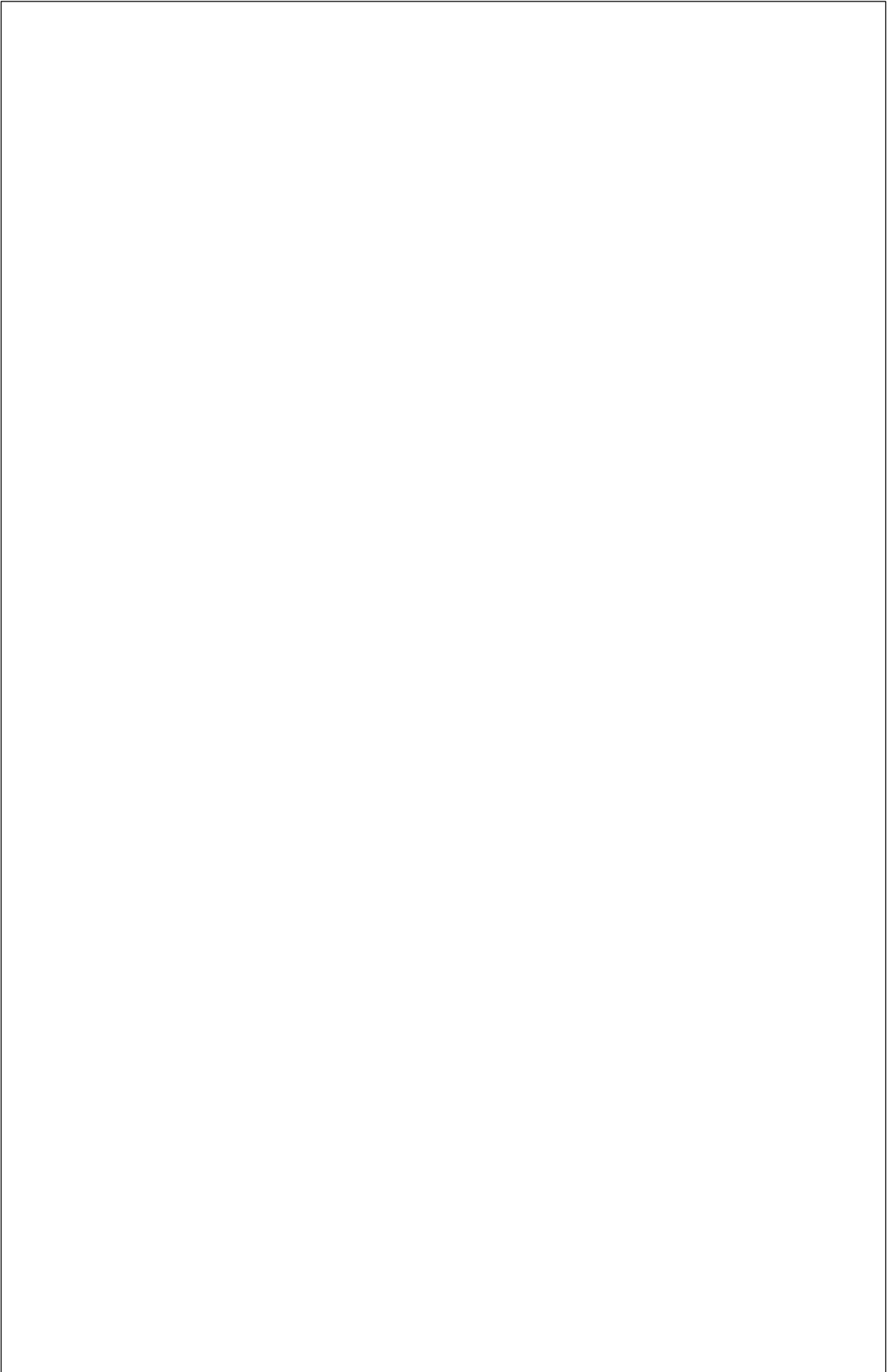
Some sociologists also argue ethnic minorities have a worse experience of education, because they experience racism and institutional racism. Some also argue these inequalities are due to differences in the family structures of different ethnicities.



Task four: Read the article in The Guardian and listen to the podcast below to get a better understanding of the inequalities in education. Use the information to write a **maximum of 600 words** in the box below and overleaf explaining why education in contemporary Britain may not be fair, including which groups may be more disadvantaged.

The Sociology Show podcast <https://www.spreaker.com/user/thesociologyshow/prof-ecile-wright>

<https://www.theguardian.com/education/2017/nov/21/english-class-system-shaped-in-schools>



If you have any questions about any work in this pack, please don't hesitate to contact me via email: allen-s@beaconsfieldhigh.bucks.sch.uk

Stretch and challenge! Further reading/watching/listening

<p>Documentaries/ TV</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Panorama, Louis Theroux, Stacey Dooley, Mind of a Murderer etc • I, Daniel Blake (Amazon Prime) • Years and Years (BBC i-player) • The 'Up' series (eg. 56 Up, 63 Up - on Netflix or Youtube) • The Secret Life of 5 year olds (Channel 4 series) • McMafia (Netflix) • Freedom Writer's Diary (Amazon Prime) • When They See Us (Netflix) • The Society (Netflix) • Love, Simon (Amazon Prime) • Made in Dagenham (BBC i-player) • Wonder (Netflix) • The Wife (Netflix) • Growing up Gifted (iPlayer) • Sociology TED talk https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gWD6g9CV_sc
<p>Books</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Educated – Tara Westover • Invisible Women – Caroline Criado Perez • Chavs: The Demonisation of the Working Class – Owen Jones • Gang Leader For A Day – Sudhir Venkatesh • The Establishment and How They Get Away With It – Owen Jones • Natives - Akala • The Handmaid's Tale – Margaret Atwood (also a series) • Vox – Christina Dalcher • The God Delusion – Richard Dawkins • Outsiders: Studies in Sociology of Deviance – Howard S Becker • Folk Devils and Moral Panics – Stanley Cohen
<p>Podcasts</p>	<p>http://podcasts.ox.ac.uk/series/departement-sociology-podcasts https://www.spreaker.com/show/the-sociology-show www.anchor.fm/allsociology www.measureradio.libsyn.com/podcast www.socialsciencespace.com/author/socialsciencebites www.thesocialbreakdown.com www.soundcloud.com/thesociologicalreview www.anchor.fm/digital-sociology-podcast</p>