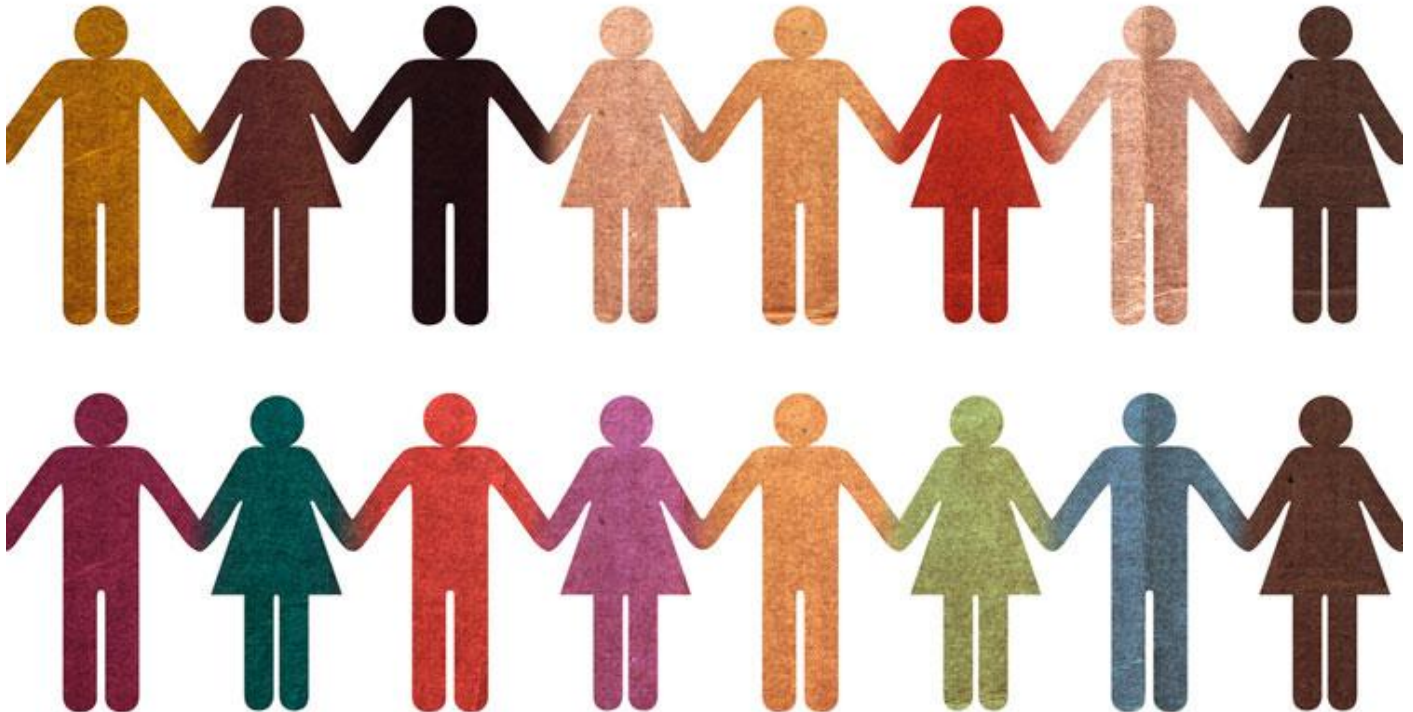


Date:

2025/2026
AQA A-Level Sociology

Name: _____

Preparing for A- Level Sociology Summer Work



Date:

Course Overview

A-Level Sociology will help you to make sense of society and explore issues that impact everyone; from gendered roles within the family to the causes of crime and deviance. You will develop a critical approach to understanding issues around crime, the family, education, identity, and much more.

Sociology is a great choice of subject for anyone interested in a career in teaching, government, policing, social work, and law. It also combines well with other humanities subjects such as Government and Politics, History, RE, and Psychology.

Course Content:

Paper 1: Education with Theory and Methods

- The role and function of the education system
- The differences in educational achievement by social class, gender, and ethnicity
- Pupil identities and subcultures
- The marketisation of education
- The hidden curriculum

Key Discussion Questions: Why do girls achieve higher grades than boys on average? How do teachers' assumptions about gender and ethnicity shape students? Are schools preparing students for life in a multi-cultural society?

Paper 2: Topics in Sociology

Families and Households

- Relationships within the family
- Changing patterns of marriage and divorce

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- Gender roles and domestic labour
- The nature of childhood

Beliefs in Society

- Cults, sects, and New Age movements
- The extent of secularisation
- The relationship between social groups and religious beliefs and practices
- Science and religion

Key Discussion Questions: Why have marriage and birth rates declined? Does the family support the patriarchy? Is there gender inequality in the home? Is religion becoming less influential? Is religion a source of empowerment or oppression? What role does religion play in global conflicts?

Paper 3: Crime and Deviance with Theory and Methods

- The difference between crime and deviance
- Patterns and trends in crime
- Distribution of crime by ethnicity, gender, and social class
- The media and crime
- Human rights and state crime

Key Discussion Questions: Are men and women treated differently by the criminal justice system? Is crime positive for society? How effective are prisons at reforming offenders? Does the media cause moral panics?

Date:

Activity One: The Study of Society

Sociology is the study of society, including how it is organised and the interactions and experiences of groups of people. Sociologists are interested in human behaviour and the influence of society on this, conducting research through observation, interviews, and questionnaires. The findings are often used to inform government policy and improve society.

Sociology is all around us. Every time we read a newspaper, book, watch a documentary, or engage with popular culture, we are studying society. The more you read, the better your insight into society. Therefore, engaging with current affairs will support you in your studies.

Task:

Read a range of different news articles from various places, with a particular focus on topics we will study, such as education, family, crime, and religion.

Your task is to analyse at least four articles over the summer from a range of sources. You must keep a record of your reading in the table below, providing a short opinion on what you have read.

It would be useful to compare how the same event/story is reported across several sources. Do they report it the same way? Why is there a difference?

Suggested Sources:

National and Local News: BBC, The Guardian, The Times, The Telegraph, Sky News

Government Sources: gov.uk

Social Media: TikTok, YouTube, Instagram, etc.

Date:

Article Date read	Summary	Opinion

Date:

Date:

Date:

Activity Two: Sociological Theory

Sociologists have different opinions on the issues we will study, these opinions are guided by their particular way of looking at the world. There are four main sociological theories/perspectives we will come across:

- Functionalism
- Marxism
- Feminism
- Interactionism

Task: Read the information about each perspective and answer the questions that follow. This will give you a brief overview of their ideas.

Functionalism

Functionalists believe that all individuals in society share the same norms and values, which allows society to function smoothly.

They believe that society is a system made up of different parts, which are all dependent on each other. Functionalists compare society to the human body; the respiratory system would not function without the brain, in the same way that the economy would not function without the education system. If one function is taken away or changed, this impacts society.

1. List three norms and values that you share with others.
2. Does everyone share the same norms and values? Why/why not?
3. Where do we learn shared norms and values?

Date:

4. How would you identify if the human body was not working? What follow up measures would you take?

5. How would you identify if society was not working? What follow up measures would you take?

Marxism
<p>Marxists heavily criticise Functionalist views for believing that the functions of society are beneficial.</p> <p>Marxists believe that we live in a capitalist society which is based on inequality between the rich and the poor. Marxists believe that each of society's institutions (education, police, the media etc.) help to maintain and benefit capitalism, so that the rich get richer and the poor get poorer.</p>

6. What is meant by a capitalist society? (You may need to do some research!)

7. List three examples of inequalities that exist in England.

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8. Marxists argue that the media is an institution that helps to maintain capitalism. How do you think it does this?

9. How is the Marxist view different to the Functionalist view?

Feminism
<p>Feminism is a broad term to refer to a perspective that recognises and opposes the patriarchy (the male dominance of society) and argues for the rights of women.</p> <p>There are a range of different types of feminism: liberal, radical, Marxist, difference, black Feminism. All believe that we live in a patriarchal society but each has a different approach to solving societal issues, such as addressing gender inequality.</p>

1. List three ways in which society may be considered patriarchal.

2. List three ways in which the government has tried to create greater gender equality.

3. How is the Feminism view different to the Marxist view?

Date:

Interactionism

Interactionism is a perspective that sees society as the product of human interactions, and the meanings that individuals place on those interactions.

Instead of trying to explain human behaviour by looking at large social structures or institutions, they look on a smaller level and study the interactions between groups of people. Interactionists seek to understand human behaviour through the meanings that we give to our behaviour and the behaviour of others. For example, they may research the interactions between teachers and pupils, considering how this may impact pupil achievement.

1. How may the following groups feel if they saw a group of police officers in their community?
 - an elderly woman
 - a three-year-old
 - a group of teenage boys
 - two parents and their child

2. A teacher is very critical of a student and gives her the label of 'not clever'. How do you think the student will respond to this label? Why?

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Activity Three: Key Words

Use your own research to find out the definitions of these key words.

Consensus Theory	
Conflict Theory	
Deviance	
Globalisation	
Ideology	
Life Chances	
Norms and Values	
Secularisation	
Socialisation	
Social Class	
Social Construct	