

A Level Sociology Transition Pack

AQA



Welcome!

First of all, welcome to Sociology! This is always a hectic time for students and staff alike, so if you are feeling a bit lost don't panic, you will soon settle into the Sixth Form life. Secondly, well done for selecting Sociology as an area of study. Whatever the reasons for your choice I hope that you enjoy this course and you gain much knowledge and pleasure from it.

Sociology is a popular choice among students, it involves the study of a thing (i.e. society) that we all exist in. So, before you have even opened a sociology textbook you will already have acquired some knowledge of society.

The subject requires open minds, critical thinkers, good organisation skills, and independent study. The subject is constantly updating and as well as looking at 19th century sociologists, it also uses up to date studies and issues that affect us in our everyday lives today. This means it is important for students to have an up to date knowledge on general current affairs, which can mainly be done by exploring the news throughout the two year course.

This induction pack includes tasks which form part of the assessment to judge your suitability to access the course in September. To access the course, you need to complete these induction tasks thoroughly and pass the baseline assessment in September.

Tasks to complete:

- 1. Complete a glossary of key terms with definitions**
- 2. Research five of the main sociological perspectives we will be studying (Functionalist, Feminist, Marxist, Post-modernist, The New Right)**
- 3. Apply these sociological perspectives to an issue in education.**

What is Sociology?

Sociology is the study of human societies-human behaviour and most importantly, human relationships. It was established in the late 1700s (18th century) through writers such as Auguste Comte.

George Ritzer, 1979: "Sociology is the study of individuals in a social setting that includes groups, organisations, cultures and societies. Sociologists study the interrelationships between individuals, organisations, cultures and societies."

Barry Sugarman, 1968: "Sociology is the objective study of **human behaviour** in so far as it is affected by the fact that people live in groups".

Main topics in Year 12

1. **Families and Households and research methods**

This module includes studying the relationship of the family to social structure and social change; changing patterns of marriage, cohabitation, separation, divorce and the life course; gender roles; changing status of childhood; demographic trends since 1900, and sociological research methods.

2. **Education and research methods**

This module includes studying explanations of the role and purpose of education; sociological explanations of differential educational achievements of social groups by class, gender, and ethnicity; relationships and processes in schools such as subcultures and the hidden curriculum; educational policies; and sociological research methods.

Main topics in Year 13

3. **Beliefs in Society**

This module includes studying different theories of religion, sociological explanations of the purpose and role of religion, religious organisations, religions and social groups, and the debate of secularisation.

4. **Crime and Deviance with theory and methods**

This module includes studying theories of crime and deviance; explanations of the social distribution of crime and deviance trends; contemporary issues in the sociology of crime such as effects of globalisation and the mass media; sociological views of the criminal justice system, and the study of suicide.

Assessment outline

<u>AL Paper 1</u> 80 marks	<u>AL Paper 2</u> 80 marks	<u>AL Paper 3</u> 80 marks
<i>2 hrs</i>	<i>2 hrs</i>	<i>2 hrs</i>
<i>Education with Theory and Methods</i>	<i>Families and households, Beliefs in Society</i>	<i>Crime and Deviance with Theory and Methods</i>
4 marks	10 marks	4 marks
6 marks	10 marks with item	6 marks
10 marks with item	20 marks with item	10 marks with item
30 marks with item	10 marks	30 marks with item
20 marks with item (methods in context)	10 marks with item	10 marks (methods)
10 marks (theory/methods)	20 marks with item	20 marks with item (theory)

Please note that there will be extensive monitoring of progress throughout year 12 which will lead to an important mock exam in summer term. Although not an external exam, it is vital that this is passed to ensure success on the two year course.

There is no coursework.

The specification and past exam papers can be explored further at:

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

Task 1 - Knowledge of Key Terms

Complete the *Glossary* of terms from your research. This simply means writing down the definition of the term given. Give examples of each term. Remember, this is a reference document to be used later, so make it count. There can be no blank spaces! Use your initiative!!

Terms

Absolute aspirations	Affective relationships	Affluent
City Academies	Cultural deprivation	Differentiation
Deferred gratification	Education Action Zones	
Educational Maintenance Allowance		Equality for opportunity
Fatalism	Formal education	Functionalism
Further education	Grammar schools	Hidden curriculum
Higher education	Immediate gratification	Informal education
Instrumental relationships		Linguistic deprivation
Marginalisation	Material deprivation	Mediate
New vocationalism	Official curriculum	Particularistic standards
Private schools	Proletariat	Public schools
Relative aspirations	Reproduction of inequality	
Sink schools	Social mobility	Specialist schools
Stratification	Tripartite system	Trust schools
Universalistic standards		

Task 2: Understanding perspectives

In paragraphs of no more than 10 lines each, give brief explanations of the following perspectives:

1. Functionalist
2. Feminist
3. Marxist
4. Post-modernist
5. The New Right

Task 3: Application of perspectives

Read the newspaper article below and using your knowledge from task 2 explain the view you think each perspective may have on this issue as best you can. Your answer should be no more than one side of A4.

Oxford entrance test is unfair to working class, claim teachers



John Dunford

By Liz Lightfoot, Education
Correspondent, 2004.

The new Oxford University history entrance test is unfair to working-class students, say teachers.

The history admission test, which applicants will sit for the first time next month, is couched in "middle class" language, favouring those who can afford to be coached in exam techniques, they say.

Specimen questions published by the university show that the two-hour paper will be more demanding than A-level. It requires students to understand complicated language and manipulate concepts contained in previously unseen material.

The university says it is being forced to reintroduce entrance tests, which were dropped nine years ago for allegedly favouring privately educated pupils. It blames exam grade inflation and the failure of the A-level to identify the brightest candidates.

Tests for law and medicine were introduced last year and shared by eight universities. They are devised by a private assessment company and an exam board. Oxford has written its own history entrance paper and intends to do the same for English next year.

This year the history test will be one of several factors taken into account when deciding which candidates to invite for interview. Next year it will be used to reduce the proportion interviewed from 85 per cent to 50 per cent.

John Dunford, the general secretary of the Secondary Heads' Association, said it was "the thin edge of a very long wedge".

He added: "I am very concerned about the history test because it is being devised by history dons and there is every chance that it will discriminate against pupils from minority backgrounds or state schools by the language that is used." His concerns are shared by Jo Davey, the head of history at Parliament Hill, a multi-cultural girls' school in Camden, north-west London.

She said: "The middle-class language might put up barriers. Some of our A-grade students have that use of language but they are from high powered homes.

"If Oxford is interested in bright working-class students coaching the test in middle-class language will not help."

The specimen test is made up of comprehension questions on a passage from the early 20th century expounding a theory that people justify submission to authority for three reasons, linked to the origins of power.

The students are asked to evaluate the theory and test it in relation to a historical leader of their choice. The second part asks them to deduce information about 10th century Europe from a source document. A survey of history teachers showed that most admired the intellectual challenge in the paper but even some of the leading independent schools felt it would favour pupils who had been coached or encouraged to think conceptually.

Ian Farrell, the director of studies at Harrow School, in north-west London, pointed to the proliferation of coaching courses being offered by private companies.

"We seem to be heading back to the free-for-all situation which existed before the original Oxbridge entrance exams," he said.

Mr Farrell said he was worried by the potentially bewildering variety of hoops through which candidates were being forced to jump.

This view was shared by Paul Kelly, the headteacher of Monkseaton Community High School, in Whitley Bay, Tyneside.

The school was involved in a controversy when Magdalen College, Oxford, failed to offer a medical place to one of its pupils, Laura Spence.

Mr Kelly said university entrance tests were unnecessary. "Students and schools can get their marks for AS exams so why can't universities?" he asked.

At Bedford School, an independent boys' school, two history teachers who studied the subject at Oxford, said the specimen paper contained little history but was "a good test of general academic ability".

"The well-educated student of today should be able to cope with it," they said.

Philip Evans, Bedford's headteacher, said he regretted the growth of individual entrance tests which students had to tackle while studying hard for their A-levels.

He said: "There would be no need for them if the A-level was made more demanding."