

Post-16 Curriculum - Sociology

Subject Curriculum Overview

Subject	Sociology
Qualification / Specification	A level 7192
Awarding Body	AQA
Level	3
Curriculum Lead	Nick Binfield
Teaching Staff	Mark Whittington
Guided Learning Hours	360
Year(s) Delivered	12 & 13
Last Review Date	June 2026
Next Review Date	June 2027

1. Curriculum Intent

Sociology is essentially the study of society. It is the study of trends and patterns in behaviours of small and large groups of people. It is looking at the structures of society and how behaviours are shaped rather than being 'natural'.

There are two main progression routes and destinations. The first is the academic route through university and onto employment, typically in research areas (private and public), education, police or most public sector roles. The second would be through further training in professional occupations. These could be in police and security, education, civil service, business and marketing, human resources, media companies, journalism and many others.

Sociology A-Level is far more than an academic exercise in studying human behavior. It is structured to develop specific, high-level competencies that are directly transferable to both higher education and to the workforce. In terms of academic needs, A level students will develop academic research skills, theoretical literacy in terms of perspectives and historical context. Essay writing is obviously also a necessary skill. Work place or industrial needs are for people who can recognise biases and contexts and respond appropriately. 'Looking beyond the obvious' or 'The Sociological Imagination', allows sociologists to look further into behaviours to look at social causes.

Ultimately, a successful Sociologist develops an ability to spot structural patterns. When handed an exam question on contemporary society, they do not rely on personal bias or "common sense." They immediately categorise the issue through the characteristics of **class, gender, ethnicity, and age**, mapping out exactly which structural inequalities are most significant.

2. Foundational Knowledge

Area	Essential Knowledge / Skills	Why It Matters
Core theme	Socialisation	The realisation that we do not act on pure instinct.
Core theme	Norms and values	Expected behaviours and what is considered important.
Core theme	Social structure	Choices are shaped by social structures.
Core theme	Consensus/conflict	Key debate in Sociology
Core theme	Social construction	Most human behaviour is learnt and not innate.
Core theme	Ideology	Understanding of dominant groups.
Core theme	Agency vs structure	Key debate in sociology
Research methods	Validity and reliability	Key debate in sociology
Core theme	Anomie	Foundational concept of functionalism.
Core theme	Value consensus	Foundational concept of functionalism.

3. Powerful Knowledge

Powerful Knowledge Area	Why It Matters	Evidence of Understanding
Core theme	Social stratification	A demonstration in essays of the ways in which factors such as social class, gender and ethnicity can be hierarchical or other.
Core theme	Intersectionality.	A demonstration in essays that characteristics such as gender or social class are not isolated and that these and others are often related to each other.
Media, crime and deviance.	Ideological State Apparatus	Used in essays that focus on the role of the social structure in maintaining the appearance of 'common sense' and the status quo.
Education, media, crime and deviance.	Hegemony	Used in essays when discussing what role and power people of high status have over others ideologically.
Research method, social theory.	Verstehen	Used in essays that discuss research methods and also in essays about perspectives that focus on the role of the researcher.
Education, identity, social theory.	Habitus	Used in essays that discuss how someone has a mixed identity and how this allows social differentiation in topics such as education.
Social theory.	Metanarrative	Used to explain differences between modernity and postmodernity.
Crime and deviance.	Master status	Used in essays in crime and deviance, in particular in reference to labelling and also in left realism.
Education, crime and deviance.	Self-fulfilling prophecy	This is used in relation to labelling theory in education, but also in crime and deviance. Behaviour that becomes true because of the label.

4. Curriculum Implementation

Term / Unit	Key Content	Foundational Knowledge	Powerful Knowledge	Assessment Opportunities
Year 12 Autumn Term Perspectives and social theory	Functionalism Marxism(s) Feminism(s) Postmodernity Social action	Functionalist views on value consensus and society. Marxist(s) and feminist(s) views on conflict and society. Social action theories and models of society. Postmodernism and society.	Late and high modernity. Neo-functionalism and the new right. Neo-Marxisms, different forms. Different forms of feminisms, including post-structural feminism.	Short questions tasks to help build up to writing the essay question. Essay on perspectives.
Year 12 Autumn Term Research methods	Primary and secondary methods.	Validity Reliability Representative-ness	Verstehen Imposition problem Hawthorne effect	Practical using questionnaires as a research method. Practical using interviews as a research method.
Year 12 Spring Term Education, perspectives, social class and social policy	Social class Social policy changes. Globalisation State vs private	Meritocracy Hidden Curriculum Labelling	Ideological State Apparatus Habitus Parentocracy Symbolic violence Education triage	Class debate on state vs private education. Series of essay questions on key areas.
Year 12 Spring Families and households, perspectives, childhood, couples.	Perspectives on families and households, couples and decision making and power. Childhood, toxic or progress.	Triple shift/dual burden Warm bath theory. Symmetrical family Dependency ratio Traditional nuclear family.	Individualization thesis Personal life perspective Age patriarchy A unit of consumption.	Research and produce information leaflets on demography. Essay on childhood.
Year 12 Summer Term Education social differentiation	Education, gender and ethnicity. Identities. Subject choices. Methods in context.	Ideal pupil Cultural deprivation Institutional racism Gender role socialisation Subculture	Intersectionality Hyper-heteros-exuality. Subcultural polarisation Ethnocentric curriculum.	Essay on methods in context. MOCK EXAM

Year 12 Summer Term Families and households -Demography and social policy	Birth rate, death rate, dependency ratio, migration and the impact of it. Social policy in the uk and globally.	Natural change TFT (Total Fertility rate. Perverse incentives Dependency ratio. International comparisons.	Globalisation of super-diversity Dependency ratio squeeze Feminisation of migration Hierarchies of citizenship.	Timeline construction of demographic changes and social policy. MOCK EXAM
Year 13 Autumn Term Crime and deviance, Perspectives.	Different approaches to the causes and solutions of different types of crime.	Anomie Master Status Relative deprivation Criminogenic capitalism Strain theory Boundary maintenancy	Hegemonic control Deviancy amplification Techniques of neutralisation Liquid surveillance	Research into examples of strain theory. Essay on functionalism and crime. Essay on Marxisms and crime. Research examples of subcultures.
Year 13 Autumn Term Media, Ownerships, news, new media.	Perspectives on how the media is owned and how that can affect the selection and presentation of the news	Digital panopticon Hyperreality (simulacra) Agenda setting Concentration of media. Conglomerate News values	Cultural homogenisation -coco-colonization Hegemonic digital churn (churnalism) Cultural imperialism.	Research on media ownership. Research and presentation on news values in the news. MOCKS
Year 13 Spring Term Crime, gender, class, ethnicity	Explanations on how gender, social class and ethnicity are relevant to the causes, effects and solutions for crime. Also, victimologies.	Institutional ethnocentrism (racism) Hegemonic masculinity Chivalry thesis Secondary victimisation Masculinity crisis. Dark figure of crime.	Victimology Critical or radical victimology Marginalisation Sex role theory. Control theory. Liberation thesis.	Essay on realist views of crime. Essay on victimologies. Research on prisons, role and function. Research and presentation on state crime.
Year 13 Spring Term Media, representations, media models.	Using models to explain different behaviours in the construction and consumption of different media, traditional and new media. Different representations	Deterministic (hypodermic) 2-Step flow Cultural effects Uses and gratifications. Male gaze Tokenism Moral panic (folk devils) Underclass scapegoat	Symbolic annihilation Cultural imperialism Semiotic/decoding Hypermascularity Polysemic	MOCKS Essay question on media audiences and ownership.

	of different social groups.			
Year 13 Summer Term REVISION				

5. Assessment Strategy

Assessment Type	Purpose	Frequency
Diagnostic	Used to identify what areas need more study before or after a key assessment.	On-going in lessons with plenary and short tasks. Presentations and low-stakes assessments are used to evaluate areas of strengths and development.
Formative	Used primarily to give feedback to enhance learning.	Essay questions are primarily used for formative assessment as that is how the A level is assessed by the exam board. 3 Exams. Essay questions are typically every 3-4 weeks.
Summative	Used primary to summarise the ability of a student.	Summative grades are given for essay questions and for mocks.
Synoptic	Used to assess knowledge and ability to link different areas of study. Linking within and between topic areas.	Plenaries in lessons, discussion and other tasks such as book reviews are used to form a holistic view of a student's abilities.