

Sociology A-level

Introduction – an outline of the course

Welcome A-level Sociology, sociology is the study of how society shapes and is shaped by individuals and groups. During your time at on the course, you will study a range of sociological theories, develop an understanding of culture, social inequalities and power. You will study topics such as family structures, education systems and crime, whilst also advancing your critical thinking skills. This is a two-year course and is assessed using 3 formal examinations in the summer of year 13. Each exam is equally weighted.

What skills will you develop and learn?

A level sociology will teach you a range of skills that will benefit you not only during your studies but also in your development post-18. These include:

- Building the ability to construct clear arguments and evaluate evidence
- Develop critical thinking skills to analyse social issues
- Improve your research skills by looking at sociological research
- Learn how to interpret data and how studies are designed
- Gain a deeper understanding of society and how it shapes our lives
- Extended essay writing skills

What will we be studying in the first year of Sociology?

Families and households:

In this topic you will examine different types of families, how family roles and structures have changed, the influence of social factors like gender, class and policy. You will also use sociological theories such as functionalism, Marxism and feminism which will help you understand and evaluate these changes.

Education:

In this topic you will explore how education shapes our lives. You will examine the role of education in socialisation and social mobility, and look at how factors like class, ethnicity and gender influence achievement in education. You will also consider what the function of education is in a modern society by using research and sociological theories.

Research Methods:

This topic will focus on how sociologists investigate society. This will include understanding arrange of differed research methods like interviews, questionnaires and observations- you will study both their strengths and limitations and consider when they have been used in the past. You will focus on key concepts like validity, reliability and ethics, you will consider how all of these factors affect the quality of the research.

Beliefs in Society:

This topic will explore different types of belief systems such as religion, ideologies and science- and how each of these plays a role in shaping society. You will examine how beliefs influence social change, stability and individual behaviours. This topic will also look at the decline of traditional religions and the changing nature of religion in modern societies.

What can I do that will help me prepare for A Level Sociology?

You may wish to use some of your summer to carry out some background reading and preparation, the summer gap task contains various research-based tasks which allow you to explore the different psychological theories and concepts which we will look at more closely in September.

It would also be useful to look at the specification for more detail about these topics. You can find this at: [AQA | Sociology | A-Level | A-level Sociology](#)

Summer Gap Task

The best way to prepare for Sociology is to complete the summer gap task that has been set.

If you read the booklet and complete the tasks over the summer, then you will be using the skills that you have developed during your GCSEs. It is easy to let these skills lapse which will make the start of your A levels more difficult, because you will be trying to remember what you did at GCSE and learn new knowledge and skills.

[On the school website](#), if you click on Sixth Form and follow the list until you see Year 11 into 12 Gap Tasks. Click on this and find the Sociology task which is a PDF booklet.

The booklet has been produced with the course and exam board (AQA) in mind. In this transition pack there are various tasks that we would like you to complete, these will be of benefit to you when you start the course. It starts with a course overview, expectations of the course, a maths assessment, and a range of research tasks to help support you with each of the topics. Many of these tasks are research based, it may appear to be a lot of work, but it won't take you long to complete this and you will be rewarded by having a better understanding of the course.

The tasks are designed to help you remember what you learnt at GCSE and give you exercise to practice and develop these skills.

You don't have to complete this work in one go. Why not wait until you have a rainy day? Or do 30 minutes each night?

We are really looking forward to seeing you in September and working with you so that you achieve your goals and aspirations.