

# Flying Start 2018

## Sociology

### Contents:

- Introduction to the course
  - Developing skills
  - Reading Task with activities
  - Essay task
-

# Introduction to the course

A level sociology gives you an understanding of important aspects of society, and of how sociologists study and explain people's behaviour. Studying sociology will enable you to discuss social issues in a more informed and systematic way and it will help you to make sense of your own and other people's experiences.

The skills you develop will help you to think logically about the world. The A level course will give you a firm foundation if you want to study sociology at degree level.

## Topics and exams

We will be following the AQA specification for A Level (7192). Students will study the following topics in the first year: education, families and households, sociological theories, research methods and methods in context.

The formal A level exams will be at the end of your second year (May/June 2018) and comprises of three papers:

- A level Paper 1 Education, Methods in Context, and Theory and Methods (7192/1)
- A level Paper 2 Families and Households plus Global Development (7192/2)
- A level Paper 3 Crime and Deviance plus Theory and Methods (7192/3)

Each of these exam papers require you to write two or more essays.

In the first year students will sit mock exams to ensure they are making progress towards their target grades. These mock exams take place in January and June of 2017.

## What the examiners are looking for

When you sit an exam, your work is marked in terms of three aims or 'assessment objectives':

- **Assessment Objective 1 (AO1): Knowledge and Understanding**  
This requires you to know and understand some of the main ideas and methods sociologists use, and what they have discovered as a result of their studies.
- **Assessment Objective 2 (AO2): Application**  
This skill involves linking ideas, theories and studies to the set question, clearly showing their relevance to what you have been asked about.
- **Assessment Objective 3 (AO3): Analysis and Evaluation**  
Analysis involves explaining things in detail, showing how ideas fit together, comparing and contrasting, organising answers logically and drawing conclusions. Evaluation involves judging something, such as the advantages and disadvantages of different research methods, or the arguments for and against a sociologist's views.

Sociology is a rigorous subject and requires you to read extensively and be confident in your ability to express ideas in essay format. Writing essays is essential to success.

## Developing your knowledge and skills

Developing your knowledge and understanding of sociology and your skills of application, analysis and evaluation is a gradual process and something you will need to work at throughout your course. There is no quick easy fix. However, here are some pointers that will help you:

- Keep up with your course. Attend regularly, do the work you are set, pay attention to the feedback you receive, keep your folder well organised.
- Work with others. Join in class discussions, form study groups with classmates, discuss sociology topics outside class, revise together, and talk to friends who have already done sociology.
- When you don't understand, ask your teacher or classmates, or look it up. Don't be embarrassed - you're probably not the only one who doesn't get it.
- Use your recommended textbook. It contains thorough coverage of the topics you're studying and detailed guidance on exam success.
- Apply what you learn. Sociology is about the real world, and you'll find lots of examples of sociological ideas all around you – in the news, on the street, at home, in school. Use examples in your writing. This will help you with the skill of Application.
- Be critical. When you come across new information, don't take it at face value. Look for the strengths and weaknesses of ideas; ask what evidence there is for someone's argument. This will help you develop the skill of Evaluation.
- Take ideas apart to see how they 'tick'. Try to make comparisons and contrasts between the different ideas, theories and methods you study. This will help you develop the skill of Analysis.
- Answer the question. When doing written work, keep focused on what *you've* actually been asked. Make a plan, and keep checking back to it and the question. Make it clear why you're including the material.

## **Sociology at Chenderit:**

Within this pack and during the induction days you will be given a lot of information about how sociology is taught at Chenderit. Using this information please answer the questions below:

1. How many hours of Sociology will you be taught each week?
2. What are your teachers called?
3. How many hours of homework do you think you will need to complete each week?
4. What equipment will you need to bring the every lesson?
5. How many exams will you have this year?
6. What topics will you will be studying this year?
7. Do you have any questions about the course? If so note them down below and bring them to the first lesson in September.

**SOCIOLOGY IS A SOCIAL SCIENCE CONCERNED  
WITH THE STUDY OF HUMAN SOCIAL  
RELATIONSHIPS AND THE VARIOUS WAYS  
THESE RELATIONSHIPS ARE PATTERNED IN  
TERMS OF SOCIAL GROUPS, ORGANISATIONS  
AND SOCIETIES.**

## **What is sociology?**

### **The Subject Matter of Sociology.**

Sociology is the study of human societies. It is usually classed as one of the social sciences (along with subjects like psychology) and was established as a subject in the late 18th century through the work of people like the French writer Auguste Comte.

### **What sociologists study**

Sociology is the study of the social world. It involves studying human beings and their patterns of behaviour. In order to do this, we focus on the way people form relationships and how these relationships are represented by the concept of a "society".

The focus of the sociologist's attention is group behaviour i.e. the effect that the groups people join or are born into (family, work, education and so forth) have upon people's social behaviour.

### **How sociologists study the social world.**

Sociologists try to create knowledge that is factual, rather than simply based on opinion. Sociologists try to avoid personal bias intruding into their research. To do this, they use systematic ways of studying social behaviour. This means that they try to use methods of research that are governed by certain rules of evidence. For example, a sociologist will try to test his or her ideas in some way.

As a student you will develop the ability to understand and demonstrate the difference between facts and opinions. Factual knowledge is knowledge that is considered true because we have tried to test it in some way and found that we cannot show it to be false. Opinions can be generally defined as ideas that we believe to be true, regardless of whether or not we have any evidence to support it.

Sociologists attempt to produce factual knowledge about human behaviour. They generate statements about the nature of the social world that are not only true, but can be shown to be true.

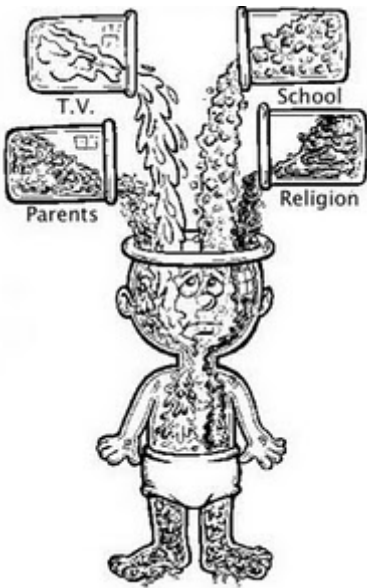
Sociologists are also interested in how facts are produced, by whom and for what purpose. Sociologists ask theoretical questions about these facts because they can only explain facts by constructing possible explanations (theories) and then testing our theory against reality (facts).

**Reading task** (The following extract is taken from Sociology for AQA Volume 1 by Ken Browne)

Over the next few pages you will be introduced to key sociological ideas and themes.

1. As you read, write down every underlined term/concept and organise these into a glossary. The definitions are provided in the interactive glossary found using the link below

<https://www.polity.co.uk/kenbrowne/students/glossary/default.asp#c>



## Socialisation, culture and identity

**Socialisation** is the lifelong process by which people learn the culture of the society in which they live. Socialisation is carried out by agencies of socialisation, such as the family, the education system, religious institutions or the media. **Culture** is socially transmitted (passed on through socialisation) from one generation to the next.

Socialisation plays a crucial part in forming our identities. **Identity** is about how we see and define ourselves and how other people see and define us. For example, we might define ourselves as gay, black, a Muslim,

Welsh, English, a woman, a student or a mother.

Many aspects of our individual identities will be formed through the socialisation process, with the family, friends, school, the media, the workplace and other agencies of socialisation helping to form our individual identities.

However, while lifelong socialisation plays a very important part in forming our identities, individuals also have the free will to enable them to 'carve out' their own personal identities and influence how others see them, rather than simply being influenced by them. Individuals are not simply the passive victims of the socialisation process. While individual identities are formed by various forces of socialisation, the choices individuals and groups make and how they react to these forces can also have an influence. For example, while the media might influence our lifestyles, attitudes and values, and how we see ourselves and how others see us, individuals may also react to what they read, see or hear in the media in different ways.

A woman from a minority ethnic background may define herself as black or Asian, but she may also see herself mainly as a woman, a mother, a teacher or a Muslim. Similarly, we have some choices in the consumption goods we buy, the clothes we wear, and the leisure activities we choose to pursue. Through these choices, we can influence how others see us, and the image of ourselves we project to them. Individuals may also have multiple identities, presenting different aspects of themselves in different ways to different groups of people. People may therefore not adopt the same identity all the time, and different people will see them in different ways.

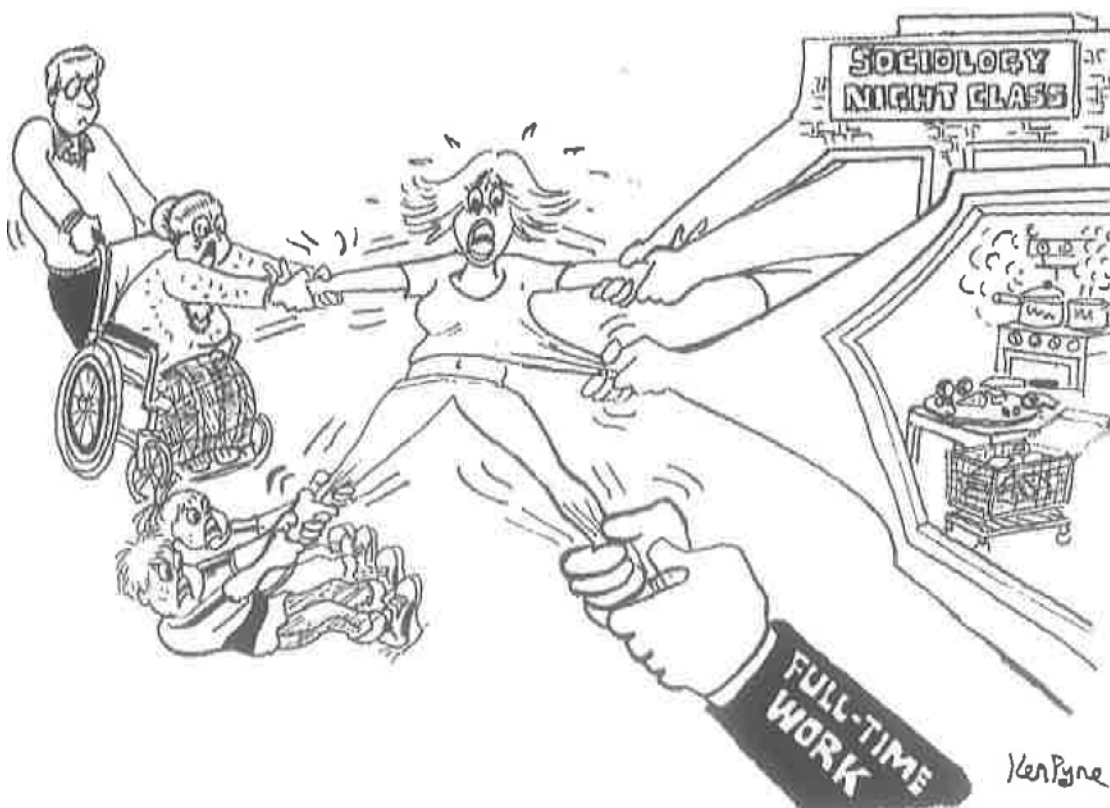
## ROLES, ROLE MODELS AND ROLE CONFLICT

**Roles** are very like the roles actors play in a theatre or television series. People in society play many different roles in their lifetimes, such as those of a man or a woman, a child and an adult, a student, a parent, a friend, and work roles like factory worker, police officer or teacher.

People in these roles are expected by society to behave in particular ways. For example, police officers who steal or take bribes, the teacher who is drunk in the classroom and the parent who neglects his or her children are clearly not conforming to the ways society expects them to behave, and these examples show how important such expectations of others are.

Roles are often learnt by copying or imitating the behaviour and attitudes of others. Children, for example, will often learn how to behave by copying the behaviour of their parents, teachers or friends. Those whose behaviour we consciously or unconsciously copy are known as **role models**.

One person plays many roles at the same time. For example, a woman may play the roles of woman, mother, student, worker, sister and wife at the same time. This may lead to **role conflict**, where the successful performance of two or more roles at the same time may come into conflict with one another.



A woman who tries to balance, and is often torn apart by, the competing demands of being a night-class student, having a full-time job, looking after children and taking care of dependent elderly parents illustrates this idea of role conflict.

Role conflict for working women



## VALUES AND NORMS

**Values** provide general guidelines for behaviour. In Britain, values include beliefs about respect for human life, privacy and private property, about the importance of marriage and the importance of money and success. While not everyone will always share the same values, there are often strong pressures on people to conform to some of the most important values in any society, which are often written down as **laws**. These are official legal rules which often deal with matters that many people think are very important. Laws against murder and theft, for example, enforce the values attached to human life and private property in our society. Laws are formally enforced by the police, courts and prisons, and involve legal punishment if they are broken.



**Norms** are social rules which define the correct and acceptable behaviour in a society or social group to which people are expected to conform. Norms are much more precise than values: they put values (general guidelines) into practice in particular situations. The norm that someone should not generally enter rooms without knocking reflects the value of privacy, and rules about not drinking and driving reflect the values of respect for human life and consideration for the safety of others. Norms exist in all areas of social life. In Britain, those who are late for work, jump queues in supermarkets, laugh during funerals, walk through the streets naked or never say 'hello' to friends when they are greeted by them are likely to be seen as unreliable, annoying, rude or odd because they are not following the norms of expected behaviour. Norms are mainly informally enforced – by the disapproval of other people, embarrassment or a telling off from parents or others.





**Customs** are norms which have lasted for a long time and have become a part of society's traditions - kissing under the mistletoe at Christmas, buying and giving Easter eggs or lighting candles at Divali are typical customs found in Britain.

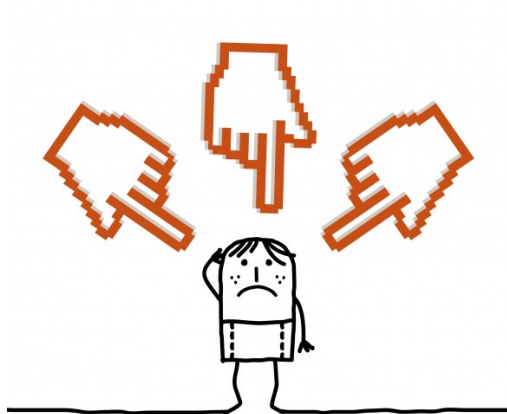
Values and norms are part of the culture of a society, and are learnt and passed on through socialisation. They differ between societies - the values and norms of an African tribe are very different from those of people in modern Britain. They may also change over time and vary between social groups even in the same society. In Britain, living together without being married - a cohabiting relationship - is much more accepted today than it was in the past, and wearing

turbans - which is seen as normal dress among Sikh men - would be seen as a bit odd among white teenagers.

## **SOCIAL CONTROL**

**Social control** is the term given to the various methods used to persuade or force individuals to conform to the dominant social norms and values of a society, and to prevent **deviance** - a failure to conform to social norms.

Processes of social control may be formal, through institutions like the law or school rules, or they may be informal, through peer-group pressure, personal embarrassment at doing something wrong, or the pressure of public opinion.



**Sanctions** are the rewards and punishments by which social control is achieved and conformity to norms and values enforced. These may be either **positive sanctions**, rewards of various kinds, or **negative sanctions**, various types of punishment. The type of sanction will depend on the seriousness of the norm: positive sanctions may range from gifts of sweets or money from parents to children, to merits and prizes at school, to knighthoods and medals; negative sanctions may range from a feelings of embarrassment, to being ridiculed or gossiped about or regarded as a bit eccentric or 'a bit odd', to being fined or imprisoned.

## **SOCIAL CLASS, SOCIAL MOBILITY AND STATUS**

**Social class** is a term you will read a lot about in sociology. Social class is generally associated with inequality in industrial societies. It is often used in a very broad and imprecise way, but generally refers to a group of people sharing a similar economic situation, such as occupation, **income** and ownership of **wealth**.

Often, occupation, income and ownership of wealth are closely related to each other and to other aspects of individuals' lives, such as how much power and influence they have in society, their level of education, their social status (or position in society), their type of housing, car ownership, leisure activities and other aspects of their lifestyle.

An individual's social class has a major influence on his or her **life chances**. Life chances include the chances of obtaining things like good-quality housing, a long and healthy life, holidays, job security and educational success, and avoiding things like unemployment, ill-health and premature death.

**Social mobility** refers to the movement of groups or individuals up or down the social hierarchy, from one social class to another.

To help you to understand the different social classes in modern Britain, the following simplified classification\* will suffice for the purposes of this course.

- The **upper class** is a small class, and refers to those who are the main owners of society's wealth, including wealthy industrialists, landowners and the traditional aristocracy. Often these people do not work for others, as their assets are so large that work is not necessary for them to survive.
- The **middle class** is a large class, and refers to those in non-manual work jobs which don't involve heavy physical effort, and which are usually performed in offices and involve paper-work or ICT (information and communication technology) of various kinds. Some argue that those in the lowest levels of non-manual work, such as supermarket check-out operators and those in routine office work, should really be included in the working class, as their pay and working conditions are more like those of manual workers than like those of many sections of the middle class.
- The **working class** is one of the largest social classes, referring to those working in manual jobs -jobs involving physical work and, literally, work with their hands, like factory or labouring work.
- The **underclass** is a small class, and refers to a group of people who are right at the bottom of the class structure, and whose poverty often excludes them from full participation in society. The term 'underclass' is used in different ways, and is a controversial concept.



\* In his book, *Social Class in the 21st Century*, Prof Mike Savage delves deeper into the class structure of Britain.

A summary is found on a BBC article using the following link  
<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/magazine-34766169>

## Status

The term **status** is used in sociology in two main ways:

- It is often used to refer to the role someone occupies in society, like a father, worker or consumer.
- It is also sometimes used to refer to the ranking of individuals in society according to the differing amounts of prestige or respect given to different positions by other members of that group or society -people's social standing in the eyes of others.

**Ascribed status** is status given by birth or family background, which, in general, cannot be changed by individuals. Examples of such status include a person's age, ethnic group, sex, or place or family of birth.



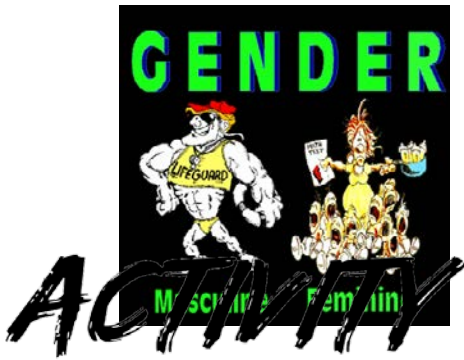
**Achieved status** refers to any social position or position of prestige that has been achieved by an individual's own efforts, such as through education, skill and talent, promotion at work and career success.

## ETHNICITY AND GENDER

Three other concepts you will come across in sociology, and which are also referred to widely in the course, are those of **ethnicity**, **minority ethnic group**, and **gender**.

Ethnicity refers to the shared culture of a social group which gives its members a common identity in some ways different from that of other social groups. A minority ethnic group is a social group which shares a

cultural identity which is different from that of the majority population of a society, such as African-Caribbean, Indian Asian and Chinese ethnic groups in Britain.



Gender refers to the culturally created differences between men and women which are learnt through socialisation, rather than simply sex differences, which refer only to the biological differences between the sexes.

**Using the word list below fill in the blanks in the following passage. Each dash represents one word.**

values	social structure	life chances
norms	underclass	objectivity
Value freedom	upper class	role conflict
working class	status	Social control
identity	social mobility	ethnicity
Social class	Achieved status	Deviance
negative sanctions	Social classes	Social mobility
Minority ethnic group	gender	Negative sanctions
Ascribed status	roles	Social institutions
positive	Socialisation	

Sociology involves studying the social world, but as sociologists are themselves part of this social world they need to take care that they look at things in a detached and impartial way. They should approach research in an open-minded way, considering all the evidence before making up their minds. This is known as \_\_\_\_\_. They should also try not to let their own beliefs and prejudices influence their research. This \_\_\_\_\_ is important if sociology is to be seen as something more than newspaper journalism.

Society is constructed of a range of \_\_\_\_\_ like the family, religion, the education system and the law. These make up the \_\_\_\_\_ - the 'building blocks' of society.

Sociologists generally believe that people learn the culture of their society, and this learning process is known as \_\_\_\_\_. For example, males and females often learn to behave in different ways. This difference is known as \_\_\_\_\_. The learning process influences the formation of the individual's \_\_\_\_\_ - how they see and define themselves and how others see and define them.

\_\_\_\_\_ refers to the shared culture of a social group which gives its

members a common identity in some ways different from that of other social groups. If a group has a cultural identity different from the majority population of a society, such as black and Asian groups in Britain, it is known as a \_\_\_\_\_.

Everyone in society is expected to behave in particular ways in particular situations, and these patterns of expected behaviour are known as \_\_\_\_\_ but sometimes these come into conflict with each other, causing \_\_\_\_\_.

Every society has sets of guidelines for behaviour. \_\_\_\_\_ establish the important standards about what is important in a society and what is right or wrong. \_\_\_\_\_ provide rules about how to behave in particular situations.

People are encouraged to conform to these rules by \_\_\_\_\_, which is carried out by a range of rewards and punishments known as \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_. Non-conformity to social rules is known as \_\_\_\_\_.

A \_\_\_\_\_ is a group of people who share a similar economic situation, and this can have an important influence on their chances of obtaining the desirable, and avoiding the undesirable, things in life – their \_\_\_\_\_. The two largest \_\_\_\_\_ are the \_\_\_\_\_ and the middle class. The main owners of society's wealth are known as the \_\_\_\_\_ while the very poorest group, which is excluded from full participation in society by poverty, is known as the \_\_\_\_\_. Sometimes people can move up or down between \_\_\_\_\_, and this is known as \_\_\_\_\_.

Some people and some positions in society are ranked by others in terms of different amounts of prestige or respect, and this is known as \_\_\_\_\_. If this is given by birth or family background, it is known as \_\_\_\_\_. However, some people can achieve their \_\_\_\_\_ through their own individual efforts and talents. This is known as \_\_\_\_\_.

Answers will be provided in your first lesson of September.

## Holiday work



This 1000 word essay (5-6 sides of A4) is to be completed as part of your induction to the A level sociology course and should be submitted in your first lesson in September.

### To what extent does poverty impact educational achievement?

Read all the information below to help you complete the essay.

#### Background

#### What influences your success at school?



Intelligence  
Hard work  
Friends  
Teachers  
Parents  
Courses  
Money  
Access to resources  
Job market  
?

1. Using some of concepts that you have read in this booklet, discuss with family members the reasons why some people do well in exams compared to others.
2. Use the notes below, identify whether the reasons you came up with above are internal factors (within school) or external factors

(outside school).

## External Factors affecting educational achievement



- Cultural deprivation
- Material deprivation
- Social Class

CULTURAL DEPRIVATION:	MATERIAL DEPRIVATION:
<b>Definition: lack of appropriate norms/ values which lead to success in education</b>	<b>Definition: lack of things money can buy that help lead to education success</b>
Parents don't have knowledge/ experience/ confidence to 'play the system'	Poor housing leading to illness
Not having money to move into catchment area therefore kids got to local/ poorer school	Overcrowded housing – nowhere to work privately
Parents lack of confidence in challenging education & system	Lack of money for school trips
Parents not motivating/ encouraging children	Poor diet leading to illness
Parents not attending parents' evening through choice	Incorrect/ old uniform = bullying
Parents choice of outside school activities not constructive to education	Lack of resources – books, pens etc.
Instant gratification	Having to look after siblings and working part time
Parents unwilling/ unable to help with homework	Having no money to make it into catchment area for school and having to go to local.
Parents not being involved with school life	

## Social Class



## Internal Factors affecting educational achievement



- Labelling
- Streaming and setting
- Self-fulfilling prophesy



## Labelling

- Definition: to label someone = to attach meaning/ definition/ assumptions to them either positively/ negatively or by a stereotype.
- Upper/ middle class likely to be labelled positively
- Working class likely to be labelled negatively

Streaming/ setting.

### Top Streams (m/c)

- Taught in the same topics in practice as the lower streams however are given more abstract, theoretical and high status knowledge

### Lower streams (w/c)

- More descriptive, common sense, low status knowledge + information.

## Gilborn & Youdell 2001 – streaming study

Shows how teachers use notions of 'ability' to decide which pupils have the potential to achieve 5 –a\*- c grade GCSE's.  
=> Found that w/c + black students were less likely to be identified as having this potential. They are placed in lower sets + are normally entered for lower level exams.

