

SOCIOLOGY SUMMER TASK 2019

Summer Task Part 1 – Thinking Sociologically

Speaking like a sociologist

One of the hardest things about studying A-level sociology is the extent of new language and vocabulary you will be expected to use. You will need to learn the definitions of these key terms and will be **tested** on them at the start of year 12.

Norms	social rules, expectations or standards of behaviour.
Values	principles or goals, ideas about what is good or bad
Culture	All those things that are learned and shared by a society or group. It includes norms, values, knowledge, beliefs and skills.
Identity	an individual's sense of self: how they see themselves and how others see them.
Socialisation	the process of learning the culture, norms, values, behaviour and skills to become an accepted member of society.
Stratification	the division of society into an unequal hierarchy. Inequality may be caused by social class, ethnicity, age, gender, etc.
Roles	behaviour expected of a person in a specific position.
Ascribed status	when an individual's position in society is fixed by characteristics they are born with, e.g. gender or ethnicity.
Achieved status	when an individual's position is earned through effort and ability.
Functionalism	a sociological theory which sees society as based on shared values. Each part (institution) works together and functions for the good of the whole of society.
Marxism	a sociological theory which sees society as divided into two classes: the ruling class (bourgeoisie) and working class (proletariat). The ruling class exploit the working class.
Feminism	a sociological perspective which sees society as based on division between men and women. Women are seen to be exploited by a male-dominated society.
Interactionism	a sociological theory which focuses on the importance of free will (social action) and the power we have to shape our own and others' identities.
Postmodernism	a sociological theory which argues that society has become unstable and diverse. This gives individuals more choice over how to live their lives.

Activating your sociological imagination

Learning to think sociologically means developing what C Wright Mills termed the 'sociological imagination', this means breaking down social phenomena and thinking about them in a deep critical way. I would like you to have a go at activating your sociological imagination by completing the tasks below.

Candidates sitting GCE A-level exams: by gender and subject, UK, 2013

Subject	% Male	% Female
Biology	42	58
Computing	93	7
Drama	31	69
English	28	72
Maths	61	39
Further Maths	71	29
French	31	69
History	48	52
Physics	79	21
Sociology	25	75
All subjects	46	54

1. What patterns can you identify above? Which subjects are more likely to be chosen by boys?
By girls?
2. Are there any similarities between the subjects chosen by boys/girls? What are they?

3. Write an extended piece of writing about why you think this is the case. You should aim to structure this as an essay, with an introduction, main body (approximately 3 paragraphs) and a conclusion. Find some useful hints of things to talk about below:

Gender role socialisation (*What characteristics do you associate with being a boy? Being a girl? Do you think boys and girls read different books? Why? What books would they read?)*

Gendered subject images (*Why might an A-level physics class appeal to boys more than girls? Do you think gender subject images would be more influential in a mixed-sex school or a single-sex school? Why? Can you think of a subject which would appeal more to girls than boys? Why would it appeal to girls?)*

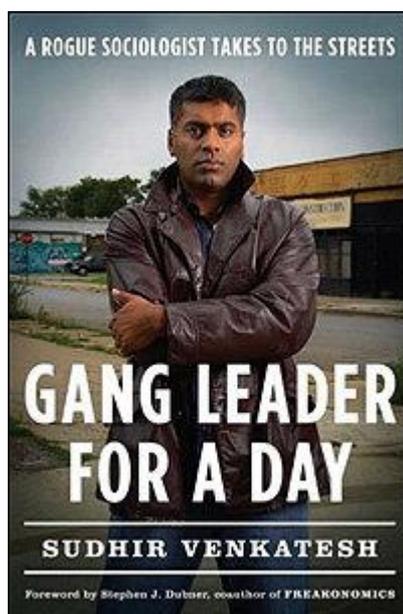
Gender identity and peer pressure (*How can peers influence your choice of subject at GCSE and post-16? What sanctions (punishments) could you face from your peers if you do not take 'gender-appropriate' subjects? What labels could be attached to somebody who does not conform to traditional subject choices? What impact might this have on their identity?)*

Gendered career opportunities (*What jobs do you consider to be stereotypically 'male' and stereotypically 'female'? What makes a job 'male'/'female'? How does this impact on subject choice?)*

4. Do you think it is important to encourage girls into more 'male-dominated' subjects, such as science, maths and engineering? Why/why not?

OPTIONAL EXTENSION: Understanding the work of a sociologist

Part of your A-level sociology course involves reading about research conducted by sociological researchers. A famous study you will learn about is an observation of Chicago gangs by a man named Sudhir Venkatesh. An excellent way to understand what sociology is all about is to read his book 'Gang Leader for a Day' and write a brief summary of the book.



Summer Task Part 2 - Preparation for your A Level sociology course

Step 1: Purchase a lever arch folder

You will need a folder of this size to be able to hold all of your material for the year. Anything smaller than this will not be enough.

Step 2: Purchase dividers

You will need a pack of 20 dividers to use for your folder. It may be useful to buy a pack that has a front sheet where you can write the full title of the section, and then the dividers are numbered, as this gives you plenty of space to label the dividers appropriately. Please label each of them with the following:

1. What is Sociology
2. Education: The role of education in society
3. Education: Class differences in achievement
4. Education: Ethnic differences in education
5. Education: Gender differences in education
6. Education: Educational policy and inequality
7. Research Methods : Choosing a research method and Education: as a research context
8. Research Methods : Experiments and using experiments in an educational context
9. Research Methods : Questionnaires and using questionnaires to investigate education
10. Research Methods : Interviews and using interviews to investigate education
11. Research Methods : Participant observation and using observation to investigate education
12. Research Methods : Secondary sources and using secondary sources to investigate education
13. Families and Households: Couples
14. Families and Households: Childhood
15. Families and Households: Theories of the family
16. Families and Households: Demography
17. Families and Households: Changing family patterns
18. Families and Households: Family diversity
19. Families and Households: Families and social policy
20. Assessed work including Teacher assessed, Peer assessed, Self assessed.

Step 3: Purchase a pad of lined paper with a margin

Ideally, your notebook should have pages that you can take out. Students are encouraged to file their notes away regularly to keep all of their information in one place (your folder). We also sometimes ask you to complete assessments/essays in these that we will need to collect, so we need to be able to remove them from the notebook.

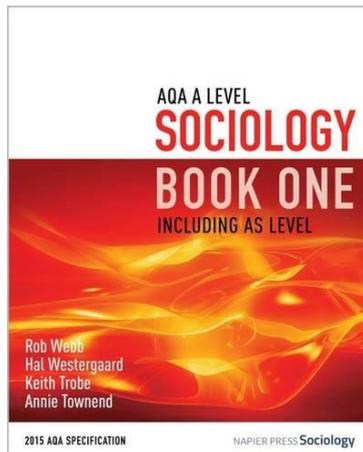
Step 4: Purchase a textbook

The core text that we use during the first year of sociology is:

AQA A Level Sociology Book 1:

Published by Napier Press. Authors are Robb Webb, Hal Westergaard, Keith Trobe, Annie Townend.

ISBN-10:0-9540079-1-3



It is a course requirement that you purchase this textbook as we use it consistently throughout the course. You are expected to bring this, and your (neatly organised) folder to every sociology lesson.

Over the course of A Level Sociology, we have generally found that students who manage to remain consistently organised throughout the course, and who bring all of their resources with them to each lesson, perform better in the exams. This is because they have easy access to all of the material that they need to succeed and they know exactly where to find the information that they need.